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CHILDREN IN FICTION AND REALITY
THE BRITISH COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA AND CANADA
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by
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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies

Carleton University
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**The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis**

**"Children in Fiction and Reality
The British Colonies in North America and Canada
in the Nineteenth Century"**

submitted by Tomoko Hagiwara, B.A. Hons.

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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ABSTRACT

Childhood experience in the nineteenth century is examined through novels of Catharine Parr Traill, Robert Michael Ballantyne, Charles William Gordon, James De Mille, and Lucy Maud Montgomery. Through biographical studies and historical research, these works are revealed as fictionalized autobiographies; therefore the depiction of the characters, settings, and incidents approximates reality. The authors share a marked descriptive power based on their keen observation of places and people. Their works present a vivid picture of what it was like to be a child growing up in each particular society.

Historical research of community development in the places portrayed by the five authors and comparison of the fictional worlds and the actual societies in which the authors lived further confirms the accuracy of their portrayals. Childhood in Canada, both fictional and real, fundamentally changed during the nineteenth century due to demographic changes and economic and social development. Children's economic value tended to wane with time, and the goals of socialization shifted from survival skills in the wilderness for both boys and girls to conformity of attitude and behaviour to community standards. The religious beliefs and socio-cultural status of the authors (all of them were of Protestant middle class backgrounds) are explicitly shown in the values held by the heroes and heroines.

It is concluded that the stories studied in this paper in particular, and all realistic Canadian children's fiction in general, can reveal actual childhood experience, and can be used for historical reference. Canadian children's literature before the mid-1970s is numerically insignificant. However, its literary and historical value is enormous due to the paucity of historical sources on Canadian childhood.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.C. *The Backwoods of Canada.*

H.B. *Hudson's Bay; or. Everyday Life in the Wilds of North America.*

The HBC the Hudson's Bay Company.

P.A. *Postscript to Adventure.*

The NWC the North West Company.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Children's literature in Canada is as rich and varied as the history of the country and the dreams and experiences of childhood.

-----Elizabeth Waterston (1992)¹

Canadian children today have a rich selection of Canadian fiction but at one time Canadian children's literature and its scholarly counterpart grew at a very slow pace. Sheila Egoff, the author of *The Republic of Childhood*, estimates that Canada produced only 30 or 40 children's books annually during the 1950s and 1960s, while Great Britain and the United States published 3,000 each year during the same period.² Until recently, according to Stott and Jones, Canadian children's literature had been neglected since British and American books supplied stories for Canadian children.³

With few exceptions, Canadian children's books have been printed in small quantities and have therefore been expensive and soon out of print. The booklist in *Profiles* (Irma McDonough, ed., 1975) shows that most earlier Canadian children's books were out of print in 1975. In addition, there have been only a few secondary books about the subject other than bibliographical and biographical works, since the study of Canadian children's literature is still in its infancy.

The development of Canadian children's literature has lagged not only in the quantity of primary and secondary literature but also in the recognition of writers for children. In the late 1970s at the first Pacific Rim Conference on Children's

Literature, Claude Aubry, a children's author, warned:

[I]f the Canadian author for children is not better encouraged, if the publication of children's books in Canada remains a low priority, our literature for children will die, for it is still in its infancy. Then our children would have nothing of our history, of our geography, of our folklore, of our traditions and of our way of life; they will not have fiction created by Canadian imaginative minds. Our children will then ignore what we are, and what we were, what is Canada, and what made it. And then, they will not feel Canadian any more, and then Canada will have lost its personality, its soul, its identity.⁴

At the same conference, Dr. David Bain stressed that much of the future of the world is in the hands of writers for children because some of the children reading today will be the leaders of the world of tomorrow. In 1987, Professor Judith Saltman pointed out in *Modern Canadian Children's Books* that because of this low priority, Canadian children's literature was littered with one-and-two-book writers who had abandoned the field.

Fortunately, there has been a movement to promote Canadian children's literature since the mid-1970s. This development includes the foundation of the *Canadian Children's Literature* journal in 1975, the establishment of the Canada Council Children's Literature Prizes in 1975, the establishment of a position of Children's Librarian of the National Library of Canada in 1976, the foundation of the Children's Book Centre in Toronto in 1976, and the creation of children's publishing firms such as Groundwood Books, Kids Can Press, Annick Press, and Tundra.

After a decade of effort to promote Canadian books for children, the number of annual publications increased to 150 in 1985.⁵ In 1990, some 65 Canadian publishing

houses printed more than 450 titles.⁶ Children's literature is now booming; even noted authors such as Margaret Atwood have published storybooks.⁷

Not only are there a lot more books, but they are much better--funnier, deeper, more daring and more visually appealing--than they once were. "With a few exceptions, it used to be a patriotic chore to review Canadian children's books", says Michele Landsberg, a *Toronto Star* columnist and member of a children's books panel on CBC Radio's *Morningside*. "Now, it's a pleasure. The books being produced in this country are some of the best in the world".⁸

The growth in the quantity of Canadian children's books has been accompanied by biographical and bibliographical studies in this field. For instance, Irma McDonough's *Profiles* (1971, 1975 and 1982), André and Ann Gagnon's *Canadian Books for Young People* (1988), and Jon C. Stott and Raymond E. Jones' *Canadian Books for Children* (1988) are very useful for the study of Canadian authors and illustrators. Several serious critical works on Canadian children's literature have also been published: Egoff's *The Republic of Childhood* (1967) was revised in 1975 and 1990; Judith Saltman's *Modern Canadian Children's Books* (1987) was followed by Elizabeth Waterston's *Children's Literature in Canada* (1992). These newly published resources have set the basis for scholarly studies of Canadian children's literature.

This paper will analyze five pieces of realistic children's fiction written in English as historical records of nineteenth-century childhood experiences within the present boundaries of Canada. It will examine the lives of Canadian children, their living conditions, the process and goals of socialization according to both literary and historical source materials, as well as the historically changing nature of childhood. The

key question to be answered is whether nineteenth-century Canadian children's literature reflects the reality of childhood of that time. Each author's portrayal of the setting, characters, and events will be compared to the lives of ordinary Canadian children growing up in the same period by using historical material, including biographies and the author's other works.

All young people are included in the term "children", since a terminological distinction between "child", "youth", and "adolescent" is unimportant for the purpose of this study. The word "childhood" is used in this paper to denote either a period of being a child or the nature and function of children. Maureen Baker states: "Childhood is *not* an objective, invariant reality. Rather, the manner in which adults think of children as well as the form of children's relationships with adults alter from epoch to epoch...and from culture to culture".⁹ Childhood is understood as a "social construct" varying by race, social class, religion, and region.¹⁰

Justification for the Study

The potential of using children's realistic fiction for historical study is discussed in this section. The small number of Canadian children's books does not mean that the genre is unimportant. On the contrary, its value is enormous. In his speech delivered during Young Canada's Book Week in 1961, the Canadian novelist, Hugh MacLennan, referred to this potential:

The books we read when we are young are the most important books we will ever read. They reach us freshly. They enter our minds at a time when our minds are as open as the prairies were to the first settlers. They can bring the whole world to us, and if the world they bring is a true one,

they are almost more valuable than school.... Our first books, if they are good, are more than books. They are visions. Moreover, they are private visions, as a moving picture or a television show cannot be. And for a simple reason. No matter how famous or great a writer may be, in his book he talks just to one other person besides himself.... It makes no difference if millions read his book. Each one of those millions, while reading and later while remembering, has been alone with the writer, and he with them.¹¹

The fictional story not only gives children amusement, but is also one of the most important agents of socialization. A good dramatic story invites the reader to live in the fictional world, to share a hero/heroine's feelings and ideas, and to learn attitudes to deal with the trials of life. It imbues children with the values and attitudes necessary to become good Canadian citizens. What a child reads in his/her formative years is of critical importance in the development of his/her future personality. Marshall Saunders, who was a social reform activist and was renowned for her *Beautiful Joe: The Autobiography of a Dog* (1894), had a good reason to write fiction. She states in her novel, *The House of Armour* (1897), that "Good novels have a mission. Many a one preaches a sermon to people that never listen to a minister."¹² Moreover, a national children's literature helps young readers develop their own identity and raise their self-respect. Through books, children can extend their knowledge of Canada and the Canadian people beyond their immediate surroundings. The reading of realistic stories which are true to some aspects of Canadian life is an exciting and indispensable way to understand the geography and people of such a diverse country. Canadian stories have been the unifying ties between the individual child and other Canadian children.

Use of Children's Fiction for Historical Study

Some authors state that literature is interrelated with other disciplines such as history, sociology, or psychology. For instance, according to Richard Hoggart, "Without appreciating good literature no one will really understand the nature of society".¹³ Alan Swingewood similarly states that "most sociologists of literature and literary critics are agreed: one studies great writers and their texts precisely because their greatness implies deep insights into the human and the social condition".¹⁴ He writes, "We would expect great novelists to express world visions in their work since without it,...their novels would lack coherence, validity, and so on".¹⁵

There is no doubt about the usefulness of Canadian literature for students of Canadian history which is enabling to understand the nature of Canadian society in which the authors lived. If we understand the similar value of Canadian children's literature in studying the history of Canadian childhood, we will benefit enormously since historical resources concerning this topic are scarce. For instance, Margaret Conrad states:

Family history, still in its infancy in Canada, bears few of the marks of women's history....We have little information as yet about the experience of girls in the family context....Deborah Gorham has recently published *The Victorian Girl and the Female Ideal* which draws upon British sources but we need a similar study for Canada where class and society for the same period were markedly different.¹⁶

In the six secondary books on the history of Canadian childhood available for this study, there are only two essays containing background information on the children's fiction for this study. One is "Children of the Early Fur Traders" by Jennifer S. H.

Brown in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, and the other is "Guttersnipes and Charity Children: Nineteenth Century Child Rescue in the Atlantic Provinces" by Patricia Rooke and R. L. Schnell in *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective*. The paucity of historical material about Canadian childhood heightens one's expectations about children's realistic stories. However, according to some British and American critics of children's literature, nineteenth-century children's fiction does not reveal actual experiences of children.

For instance, David Grylls points out that children's books "chart not so much the changing ways of childhood as the development of the adult imagination" and what they reveal is "less the true fabric of children's lives than their authors' obsessions and needs." He concluded, "It would be useless, therefore, to examine nineteenth-century children's books in the hope of discovering how children really conducted themselves, and how their conduct changed."¹⁷

Anne Scott MacLeod similarly reviewed American children's fiction of the mid-nineteenth century:

Taken by itself, the children's fiction of any era would be a doubtful source of information about how children actually live and think, and certainly the juvenile fiction of 1820 to 1860, morally purposeful but bare-bones thin as literature, offered no more than an occasional glimpse of the daily lives of real children. What the literature furnished in abundance was an insight into what adults wanted for and from the children of that time, and what their desires for children revealed about their own attitudes.¹⁸

In contrast, J. S. Bratton assumed that Victorian children's fiction does reflect the nature of Victorian society:

For all of these children books were being written throughout the century which were supposed to suit their level of literacy, their stations in life and their expectations of the future, and to reflect their present experience so as to mould through their response to it their moral and social attitudes... we may look to the books to enrich our understanding of the aims of education, and so of Victorian society.¹⁹

Taking all these opinions into consideration, Vicki L. Williams still justified her survey of home training and the socialization of youth in selected works of Montgomery, Saunders and Nellie McClung:

Montgomery, Saunders and McClung all used personal experience in their stories to some degree and all were gatherers of anecdotal material...; Montgomery's son, Stuart, reporting that his mother's books were the "result of constant observation, note-taking, phrase-making and hard work".²⁰

Canadian critics have emphasized the authenticity of the background information in *Canadian Crusoes*, *The Young Fur-Traders*, the "B.O.W.C." series, *Glengarry School Days*, and *Anne of Green Gables*.²¹ For example, Egoff and Saltman state:

[T]he scenes of school and pioneer life in Glengarry County, Ontario... have an authentic ring. Montgomery, McClung and Connor wrote out of their own experiences as Canadians.... They also had an eye for their environment.... They also provided their readers with a rare opportunity to see Canada as something more than wilderness or "a few acres of snow".²²

"Because realistic fiction is based on contemporary life--that is within the period of the author's own experience--it tends to date more quickly than any other type of fiction".²³

"Realism" applied to literature is understood, here, as "fidelity of representation, truth to nature, insistence upon details, showing of life as it is without glossing over what is ugly

or painful".²⁴ A study of Canadian realistic children's literature, therefore, can reveal what Canada and Canadian people were like. Saltman writes, "The best Canadian titles show an integrity, vitality, stylistic versatility, and, in many cases, a particular cultural voice and uniquely Canadian vision that render them significant and memorable".²⁵ To use children's literature for the study of society becomes valid.

Methodology of the Study

Book Selection

Sheila Egoff defines "Canadian books" as those written by Canadians or by writers long resident in Canada. This study accepts this criteria and further limits it to prose fiction based on first-hand experience and observation. The other key standards for selection were as follows:

1. Realistic children's fiction portraying children's lives within the boundaries of Canada in the nineteenth century.
2. Books written both to instruct and to entertain readers.
3. Books which won a wide popularity among the children of the authors' times.

To begin the selection, a list of Canadian children's novels and collections of short stories was developed by consulting the following bibliographical studies:

1. Bernard Amtmann, *A Bibliography of Canadian Books for Young People 1841-1867* (Montréal, 1977).
2. Sheila Egoff, *The Republic of Childhood* (Toronto, 1975).

3. A. Frayne, *Print for Young Canadians: A Bibliographical Catalogue of Canadian Fiction for Children from 1825-1920* (Toronto, 1975).
4. André and Ann Gagnon, *Canadian Books for Young People* (Toronto, 1988).
5. *The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books: A Catalogue*. Vol. 1 (1958) and Vol. 2 (1975).

After a thorough research of the collections at the National Library, the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library and the university libraries in Ottawa and Toronto (Carleton University, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, and York University), the list of twenty-eight authors and fifty-eight titles was made. The following five children's books finally chosen satisfy all criteria for selection. The books selected are C. P. Traill, *Canadian Crusoes* (1852; rpt. 1986), R. M. Ballantyne, *The Young Fur-Traders* (1856), C. W. Gordon (pseudonym Ralph Connor), *Glengarry School Days: A Story of Early Days in Glengarry* (1902; rpt. 1975), J. De Mille, *The "B.O.W.C.": A Book for Boys* (1869), and L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908; rpt. 1992). All other books were rejected for one or more reasons. Of the five titles, three are set in colonial British North America, one at the time of Confederation and one in Canada. Geographically, two books are set in Upper Canada, one in Rupert's Land, and two in the Maritimes.

Project Procedure

The actual children who are the models for the central characters in the five children's books are as follows:

1. The first settlers' children in the backwoods of Upper Canada during 1832-1852.
2. Young fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1841-7.
3. Pioneer children in Glengarry County, Upper Canada, in the 1860s.
4. Boarding school boys in Horton, N.S., 1847-9 and 1861-4.
5. An orphan child in a farming community on P.E.I. in the 1880s.

The selected children's books will be closely examined to learn how fictional characters in particular and ordinary Canadian children in general grew up in the nineteenth century. Then, a historical survey relevant to the subjects and the settings portrayed in the children's books will be undertaken. The fictional and real worlds will be compared in the main body of this thesis.

The primary and secondary historical sources to be used in this study are from the following categories: autobiographies and other publications by the nineteenth-century authors, periodicals, biographies (Canadian & British), literary sources (Canadian, British and American), Canadian history, Census records, and international history on childhood and family.

In Chapter One, early nineteenth-century childhood is examined through Catharine Parr Traill's *Canadian Crusoes* (1852). Chapter Two, focusing on the mid-century, includes two writers, R. M. Ballantyne and Charles W. Gordon. Chapter Three discusses the middle-and-late-century Maritimes as revealed by James De Mille and L. M. Montgomery.

CHAPTER II: CANADIAN CRUSOES

CANADIAN CRUSOES (CATHARINE PARR TRAILL, 1802-1899)

Catharine Parr Traill was Canada's first English-language children's author. She was born to a new industrial middle-class family in England in 1802, the fifth daughter of Thomas Strickland, manager of the Greenland Dock. He retired shortly after Catharine's birth, and began to educate his daughters at home. Everybody in the family adored Catharine for her sunny disposition, and her father idolized her.¹

The roots of Catharine's British middle-class values, beliefs, and interests belong to her girlhood in Suffolk.² The outlook of the Strickland family "was thoroughly middle-class, puritanical in matters of individual responsibility, evangelical in recognizing social duty."³ Both parents were strict with their children as in the following passage:

There must be no noise, no talking, no crying - and disobedience was punished in the very youngest child.... Telling an untruth was always punished severely, or angry quarrels with one another, or rebellion to the nurse or other servants.⁴

Catharine and her younger sister Susanna were, like other gentlewomen of the same generation, raised in a society where "the polarization between 'masculine' and 'feminine' responses and attributes was extreme."⁵ Fowler writes:

Men were physically strong, competitive, controlling, unsentimental, aggressive, rational. They opted for rhetoric: they asserted, imposed their views, were active in the larger world, and when necessary, violent and tough. Women, on the other hand, were physically delicate, retiring, submissive, sentimental, passive, intuitive. They opted for lyricism: they day-dreamed, deferred to others, sat quietly at home embroidering,

were always refined and tender.⁶

In addition, the Evangelical religion "stressed the need for a pious life, and accepted the authority of the Scriptures unconditionally, including St. Paul's prescription for women's submission to male authority."⁷

Children of both sexes were dressed and treated similarly until the age of 5 or 6, when boys were taken out of petticoats. Then the upbringing of children began to be differentiated by gender. Boys were given toys associated with physical activities; while girls, who remained in petticoats, were given dolls and needlebooks. Boys' dirt and untidiness were to be tolerated. On the contrary, "[a]s cleanliness and order became central parts of middle-class culture, girls had to develop a shame about dirt and slovenly behaviour as part of their femininity."⁸ During Catharine's formative years, a "growing number of middle-class young ladies, whose fathers had prospered in trade and manufacturing, aped their social superiors by acquiring polite accomplishments so sedulously that they had no time for academic subjects.... The educational fare was particularly frivolous in boarding schools."⁹ Responding to these radical economic and social changes, some courtesy book authors such as Hannah More advocated educating girls to acquire both reason and religion.¹⁰

Thomas Strickland was well aware that many young women were no longer eager to attain solid knowledge or to improve their minds in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Like Hannah More, however, he advocated both mind and faith. To cultivate his daughters' minds by instilling solid knowledge, he taught Catharine and her five sisters literature, history, the classics, arithmetic and science.¹¹ Catharine's

mother also had a progressive idea of what the girls' education should be. Despite the fact that the Stricklands, like other middle-class families, had servants, she "insisted that the girls acquire more domestic skills than were considered necessary for genteel young ladies; they had to know their way around kitchen, dairy and still-room."¹² This is a remarkably advanced view when "there were many more young ladies...passing their days in drawing-rooms, embroidering their petticoats and painting on china," and when "[f]rivolity and idleness were the marks of gentility."¹³

The Strickland daughters were trained to become rational, active and pious new middle-class ladies. As a result, all of them, except Sarah, became authors. Catharine was the first to do so by publishing *The Blind Highland Piper, and Other Tales* in 1818. (It was afterwards re-issued as *The Tell-Tale: An Original Collection of Moral and Amusing Stories*.) She achieved a reputation as a children's author in England. Her books ranged from moral tales such as *Little Downy; or, The History of a Field Mouse: A Moral Tale* (1822) to handbooks of natural science such as *Sketches from Nature; or, Hints to Juvenile Naturalists* (1830). She also wrote *The Young Emigrants; or, Pictures of Life in Canada, Calculated to Amuse and Instruct the Minds of Youth* (1826) based on the letters from friends who had emigrated to Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1821.¹⁴

Samuel, one of Catharine's brothers, emigrated to Upper Canada in 1825. By his marriage to the eldest daughter of Robert Reid, a niece of Frances Stewart, in 1827, these two families became the Stricklands' intimate relatives.¹⁵ He settled in the backwoods near present-day Lakefield in Douro Township in 1831.¹⁶ Catharine and her younger sister Susanna were destined to follow him across the Atlantic like many others

of those times.

In Britain, distress and unemployment following the Napoleonic War drove many to seek new opportunities overseas.¹⁷ Between 1815 and 1850, a massive human wave moved across the Atlantic, approximately 800,000 coming to British North America. About 100,000 British immigrants settled in the Atlantic colonies and some people, particularly the Irish, remained in Montréal or the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada (now the Province of Québec) but a great many immigrants moved on to the Upper Canadian life of pioneer forest-clearing. In 1832 alone, some 66,000 arrived in Upper Canada.¹⁸ (Catharine Parr Traill was one of them.)

Among these British immigrants, the dominant group was a large number of military officers retired on half pay. They were relatively well-educated members of the upper middle class and sought their independent way of life in the colonies.¹⁹ Both Catharine and Susanna married retired subaltern officers who decided to emigrate to Upper Canada. The veteran soldiers who had commuted their pensions for four years' purchase and a land grant were "sent far up into the bush...where there were no roads, no markets for their produce if they did raise it."²⁰

There were no disposable government lands nearer, since by 1815 most arable land of the townships along the upper St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes in Upper Canada was occupied, mainly by United Empire Loyalists, who were American refugees of the Revolutionary War, and post-Loyalists from the United States. In 1832, almost immediately after their marriage, Lt. Thomas Traill and Catharine immigrated to Canada to take up his military land grant.²¹ He drew his 400-acre grant in the newly opened inland

townships of Verulam and Douro.²²

The first settlement in the Township of Douro, Peterborough County, occurred in 1822, a year before the township was surveyed. Thomas Alexander Stewart and his brother-in-law Robert Reid from Ireland were each granted 1,200 acres in South Douro, near the site to be surveyed as the County Town, Peterborough, in 1825. In the same year, about 2,000 immigrants arrived from southern Ireland financed by the British Government under Peter Robinson. "Those who settled in South Douro were for the most part Irish peasants, while those in North Douro and along the waters were mainly half-pay army officers or the British middle classes."²³

Having arrived in Upper Canada, Thomas Traill purchased a further lot adjacent to that of Catharine's brother, Samuel. He was anxious to settle in Samuel's neighbourhood, "thinking it would rob the woods of some of the loneliness that most women complain so bitterly of."²⁴ The Traills' property was located on the shore of beautiful Lake Katchewanook, one of the Kawartha chain of lakes, just before its waters flow into the rapids of the Otonabee River.²⁵ Until the Traills' house was built in December 1832, they lived with Samuel, his wife and their three sons. In February 1834, Susanna with her husband, John W. D. Moodie, an ex-fellow officer of Thomas in the Twenty-first Royal Scottish Fusiliers, and their daughter moved from Cobourg to the lot adjoining the Traills' homestead.²⁶ Thus, a brother and two sisters of the Stricklands were reunited. They started their own families as neighbours in the backwoods of Upper Canada.

The three families lived there as an extended family until 1839, the year when

the Traills left the bush for the eastern area of Peterborough, and the Moodies moved to Belleville. The hardships of pioneer life endured by gentlemen and ladies are recounted in Traill's best known book, *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836), and Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852). The Traills suffered increasing debts and the burdens of a fast-expanding family. Catharine gave birth to nine children between 1833 and 1847. The family was so destitute that they accepted a friend's offer to live rent-free in a garrison-home, Wolf Tower, in the Gore's Landing area south of Rice Lake in 1846. Catharine lived there for thirteen years until her husband's death in 1859. She then moved back to Lakefield near Samuel's homestead.

To supplement the family's income, Traill contributed regularly to Canadian magazines as well as to a number of British periodicals. For instance, her sketches of pioneer life, "Forest Gleanings," appeared thirteen times in *The Anglo-American Magazine* from 1852 to 1853. She also published several versions of stories of the lost-and-found child theme in British periodicals such as *Chambers' Edinburgh Journals*, which culminated in *Canadian Crusoes* (1852), later republished as *Lost in the Backwoods*.

Canadian Crusoes was well reviewed in British publications of the day.²⁷ However, recent Canadian reviews are more critical of the book, describing both its weaknesses and strengths. While its "flowery style", overt didacticism, pious dialogue, and racial stereotyping are now seen to be outdated,²⁸ its realistic depiction of the landscape and pioneer living has been praised in several reviews as in the following examples:

[T]he grandeur and originality of her setting for a long time saved Traill from the fate of those writers who produced what came to be called "Robinsonnades"--deliberate imitations of the plot of Defoe's work without its "sense and sensibility" and good writing.²⁹

Canadian Crusoes...was placed in a Canadian setting and depicted pioneer life in a realistic and interesting manner.³⁰

The local historian and botanist in Traill provide a solid basis of authentic detail against which her attempt to transplant the Crusoe myth forcibly to Canada can be measured.³¹

Canadian Crusoes is regarded as the most accomplished "Robinsonnade" and "the first notable work of Canadian children's fiction".³² Successfully employing a "Robinsonnade" plot of isolation-survival-return home within a Canadian setting, *Canadian Crusoes* is by far the best of Traill's books for children. The book is valuable not only as the first Canadian children's novel, but also as an historical document.³³ M. T. Kelly writes in his review of the scholarly edition of *Canadian Crusoes* (1986) that it "presents a haunting picture of Canada the way it once was, giving us glimpses of a vanished, green world."³⁴

Traill's works in general are similarly received: Carl Ballstadt writes, "A full assessment of Catharine Parr Traill's literary career must acknowledge the richness and variety of the cultural contexts which she knew and within which she wrote."³⁵ Similarly, Patricia Demers writes, "Her close observation of Canadian life and naturalist's curiosity formed the basis of all her subsequent [post-immigration] works."³⁶

Two studies of gentlewomen in Canada also emphasize the historical merit of the works by Traill and her contemporaries. Lloyd Scott writes of Traill and Moodie that

"their keen observations, their insight into human problems and, perhaps most important of all, their frank self-portraits, have bequeathed us a valuable historical perspective."³⁷

Marian Fowler considers five gentlewomen including Traill and Moodie, who recorded the nineteenth-century Upper Canadian society, "our fore-mothers". She writes, "In their attitudes to nature, to society, to the Indians, to themselves, we can perceive their individual progress and our collective profile."³⁸ Understanding Traill's point of view (discussed below) when she was writing *Canadian Crusoes* explains why the fictional characters act as they do.

The author/narrator lives on the south shore of Rice Lake in the mid-nineteenth century. The story is set in the 1770s in an area corresponding to the small mid-nineteenth century settlement of Cold Spring on the Rice Lake plain. She tells the story of Hector Maxwell (14), his sister Catharine (12), children of a Scottish immigrant and his French-Canadian wife, and their cousin Louis Perron (14). Hector, Catharine and Louis become lost while searching for stray cattle. Catharine's ankle, sprained in her flight from a wolf, prevents them from wandering for a fortnight. On the fertile shore of Rice Lake, they make seasonal shelters. Hector rescues an injured Mohawk girl, whom they name Indiana. They teach her English and the Christian religion; in return, Indiana teaches them her language and many wilderness skills. After three years have passed, Catharine is carried away by an Ojebwa (sic) Indian. Indiana risks her life to rescue Catharine, and Catharine in turn succeeds in saving Indiana from execution. The boys meet Old Jacob, a friend and old comrade of Louis' father, and the children are reunited with their families. Hector, now a fine industrious young man, marries the newly baptized

Indiana on the same day as Catharine and Louis hold their wedding.³⁹

Although Traill sets the story in the 1770s, what she actually portrays is the pioneer settlement in which the Strickland brother and sisters lived. The author frequently contrasts the landscape of the time when she is writing with the time the story actually takes place, as in the following excerpts:

What changes a few years make in places! That spot over which the Indians roved, free of all control, is now a large and wide-spreading town. Those glorious old trees are fast fading away, the memory only of them remains to some of the first settlers, who saw them twenty-five years ago, shadowing the now open market-place (209).

At the time my little history commences, this now highly cultivated spot was an unbroken wilderness.... I speak of the time when the neat and flourishing town of Cobourg, now an important port on the Ontario, was but a village in embryo--if it contained even a log-house or a block-house it was all that it did (1-2).

As evidenced in the above passages, in her comparison of the settlement of now and then, she means by "then" the early 1830s. Thus, the setting of *Canadian Crusoes* is based on the early years of the pioneer era and the topography of the Rice Lake plain to which the Traills moved in 1846. Ballstadt explains why she sets her story at a time seven decades preceding her immigrating to Upper Canada:

[T]he Indian in Upper Canada could still be thought of as enemy and the woods a few miles from major waterways were unknown or travelled only by the trapper. In choosing such a period and a setting, Traill intensifies the problems of pioneer life, creates her own story of the maze and enigma of the forest, and depicts the qualities of character necessary to confront it and survive in it.⁴⁰

In this story, the author successfully combines the legend of the Indian war between the Mohawks and the Ojebwas⁴¹ with the theme of survival in isolation. In addition, the author is aided by the setting of an untapped territory, which heightens suspense and makes Indian motifs such as tribal war, Indian mores and practical skills more convincing. Since *Canadian Crusoes* is a typical Robinsonnade whose theme is survival in isolation, it is set in the Canadian wilderness. The book reveals an enormous amount of information on the lives of pioneer children. An examination of childhood in the fictional world as compared with the reality of the pioneer settlement follows.

In *Canadian Crusoes*, the two features of the children's living conditions are their home's isolation and the type of family economy -- self-sufficient agriculture. The fathers of the protagonists take possession of a tract of land in the unsurveyed forests. Their log houses are still surrounded by deep, dark forests in which the three children become lost, and into which their farm animals have strayed. In their wanderings, the lost children walk on the hills, fearing to entangle themselves in the pathless mazes of wild woods.

This portrayal is true to Traill's observation in 1832. It took three days to travel from Cobourg to their destination in Douro, ten miles north of Peterborough. They travelled thirteen miles in a light wagon, then passed the night at a tavern on Rice Lake. There were only five or six settlers on the Rice Lake Plains.⁴² They left the tavern at nine o'clock in a little steamer and transferred to a scow, a flat-bottomed boat, in the middle of the Otonabee River. By ten o'clock at night, the rowers of the scow, tired by overwork, refused to go further and discharged all the passengers on the bank two miles

below Peterborough. It was near midnight before the Traills arrived at the only inn in Peterborough. The trip further northward from there led them to real wilderness conditions. The wagon in which they travelled could hardly push its way through the paths. Traill writes:

We soon lost sight entirely of the river and struck into the deep solitude of the forest.... There was no passable road on the Douro side. I had to cross the river at Auburn--to the south side and to re-cross to Douro again at the narrows to get to my brother's house.... The tapping of the red-headed woodpeckers on the trunks of the decaying trees, and the shrill whistling cry of the little striped squirrel, called by the natives "chipmunk," were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the wild.... With the exception of the aforesaid chipmunk, no living thing crossed our path during our long day's journey in the woods (*B.C.*, 124-5).

At night the driver of the wagon got lost and abandoned the Traills in the middle of the deep forest. In the starlight, they walked to the bank of a lake where Catharine sat in anxious expectation of some answering voice to her husband's long and repeated halloo to rouse Samuel and his men:

We could see no sign of any habitation, no gleam of light from the shore to cheer us.... We began now to apprehend we had really lost the way. To attempt returning through the deepening darkness of the forest in search of anyone to guide us was quite out of the question, the road being so ill defined that we should soon have been lost in the mazes of the woods (*B.C.*, 130).

Finally the Traills were rescued by Samuel in a canoe.

The Traills, like the other privileged settlers, enjoyed the advantage of a water frontage, but Catharine wondered,

[W]hat must those do whose clearing is first opened in the depths of the

forest, hemmed in on every side by a thick wall of trees, through the interminable shades of which the eye vainly endeavours to penetrate in search of other objects and other scenes; but so dense is the growth of timber that all beyond the immediate clearing is wrapped in profound obscurity. A settler on first locating on his lot knows no more of its boundaries and its natural features than he does of the North-West Passage (B.C., 203-4).

"Settlers frequently became lost and were never heard from again."⁴³ According to Samuel Strickland, newcomers in particular "are very apt to lose themselves at first, until they get acquainted with the creeks and ridges; and even then, on a dark day or during a snow-storm, they are very likely to go astray."⁴⁴ At the forest homes, "the females of the family had some cause to fear, since the absence of the father, son, or husband, was not always followed by his safe return."⁴⁵

Sammuel Strickland relates stories of people being lost, as well as some of his own experience of losing his way while hunting. One of his stories reveals that even Indians got lost.⁴⁶ Therefore, during Catharine's sojourn at the Stricklands', two of her nephews, just old enough to go walking with their aunt, were strictly forbidden to wander from the clearing. The only road then was the "water road" (B.C., 259).⁴⁷

In her journals, Traill copied an advertisement in *The Cobourg Star* for 2 August 1837 offering a reward for the discovery of a lost child near the Rice Lake plain five days previously. She added to her entry an article in the same issue of *The Cobourg Star* reporting the discovery of the child near Cold Springs. She continued to collect accounts of other children lost and found in the Upper Canadian wilderness. One of them concerned the loss of three children who entered the forest in search of cows. In

1843, "A Canadian Scene," an article about the search for a neighbour's child in which Catharine and her husband took part, was printed in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*.⁴⁸

Getting lost was a reality in the early Upper Canadian settlements.

The pathless mazes of the woods were most hazardous for both the fictional and actual backwood settlers. Other dangers were also present in those days. "Fire, snowstorms, accidents, and wild animals took their annual toll."⁴⁹ In 1833, and again in 1834, Traill wrote her mother about storms. "Canada is subject at times to sudden storms" (*B.C.*, 207). "Not a breeze ruffled the waters.... This perfect stagnation of the air was suddenly changed by a hurricane of wind and snow that came on without any previous warning" (*B.C.*, 140). Like the Crusoes, Traill experienced a narrow escape from a storm. Standing in the middle of the clearing she heard Samuel's call to come back home at full speed:

Instinctively I turned towards the house, while the thundering shock of trees falling in all directions at the edge of the forest, the rending of the branches from the pines I had just quitted, and the rush of the whirlwind sweeping down the lake, made me sensible of danger with which I had been threatened. The scattered boughs of the pines darkened the air as they whirled above me; then came the blinding snow-storm: but I could behold the progress of the tempest in safety, having gained the threshold of our house (*B.C.*, 141).

The Traills and other pioneer families were tormented by the rigorous Canadian climate of storms, iron winter and damp summer (*B.C.*, Chapt. 10).⁵⁰

As portrayed in the novel, fire actually threatened the settlers' lives. The houses of the Traills and the Moodies both burned down. When Susanna Moodie stayed at home with her children, the fallow surrounding her house burnt, and she found that

"our utter helplessness annihilated all hope of being able to effect our escape--I felt stupefied."⁵¹ With no medical help available, sickness or accidents were frequently life-threatening. When John Moodie was injured by his harrow, he crawled back to the house and bandaged his leg with Susanna's help. They tried to fetch a doctor from Peterborough but as usual none came.⁵² Traill portrays this same sense of helplessness when Catharine is injured in the story. Furthermore, as in the story, there were dangerous wild animals to contend with. The journal of a settler in Upper Canada in the 1830s reveals the threat of wild beasts at his forest home. He encountered a bear around his house. One night he was awakened by his dog. From a low short growl, he guessed that visitor was a bear.⁵³ According to Frances Stewart:

The wild animals came about the settlers' house. The wolves, dangerous and exceedingly troublesome animals, would sometimes prowl early in the night in our [the Stewarts'] neighbourhood.... Bears also were very plentiful and troublesome and would fearlessly attack the animals near the house of man.⁵⁴

Samuel Strickland also reported various wild animals seen in the Canadian forests.

This physical isolation has a strong influence on the mind of the fictional characters. At night when the three children do not come back, "terrors filled the minds of their distracted parents" (18). After the end of a week the "only idea that remained was, that one of these three casualties had befallen the lost children: death, a lingering death by famine, death, cruel and horrible, by wolves or bears, or yet more terrible, with tortures by the hands of the dreaded Indians" (19-20).

Susanna Moodie writes of her anxiety similar to that of the Crusoes' parents. When her husband and the hired man went out and their return seemed to her

unreasonably late, she asked herself a thousand torturing questions as to the reason for their unusual absence. She cried, conjuring up unreal terrors and fanciful illusions all night through.⁵⁵ In the isolated small settlement, the illusory fears were limitless, and powerfully tormented her. Thus, like fictional characters, real settlers were physically and psychologically exposed to the menace of isolation.

Nevertheless, in *Canadian Crusoes*, nature is depicted as more beneficial than dangerous. On the one hand, the Canadian wilderness causes misfortune and hardships; on the other hand, nature is a source of delight and nutrition. The three young characters are always fascinated with the beauties of nature. The second day of their wanderings brings them to Rice Lake. "All feeling of dread and doubt and danger was lost, for the time, in one rapturous glow of admiration at a scene so unexpected and so beautiful as that which they now gazed upon from the elevation they had gained" (22).

Likewise, Canadian nature gave the Strickland brother and sisters more joy than misery. Traill "had the priceless sense of wonder at both the magnificence and the precision of nature."⁵⁶ She with Samuel's children roamed the woods near the clearing. She writes, "I can extract a thousand sources of amusement and interest wherever I take my walks" (165). "The simplest weed that grows in my path, or the fly that flutters about me, are subjects for reflection, admiration, and delight" (37). During the first spring in the bush, Susanna came to share "Catharine's delight in Lake Katchewanooka and the floral display put on by the once-hated bush."⁵⁷ Susanna Moodie valued the positive effect of nature on children. According to her, they "can always derive entertainment and instruction from nature and her beautiful works."⁵⁸

In *Canadian Crusoes*, the beautiful lake and the plains around it are filled with fish, rice, berries, fruits, partridges and animals such as deer, hare and squirrels. Hector assures Catharine and Louis that they cannot starve. They, as their parents do at home, procure food, fuel, shelter, furniture, utensils, and clothing from mother nature. Catharine Maxwell, like Mrs. Traill, gathers each in season and preserves a variety of wild fruits, berries, plant roots, rice, fish and meat. The Canadian wilderness may cause misfortune and hardship, but it ultimately provides the Crusoes with more in the way of emotional and material benefits.

If isolation is not the most decisive factor of the living conditions in *Canadian Crusoes*, then the type of economy is. The two families earn a livelihood by self-sufficient agriculture. The production of almost all necessities of everyday living requires endless hard toil and privation.

To be up and doing, is the maxim of a Canadian; and it is this that nerves his arm to do and bear [sic]. The Canadian settler,...learns to supply all his wants by the exercise of his own energy. He brings up his family to rely upon their own resources (162).

The Maxwells have four children and the Parrons even more. Every child does his/her share of work around and in the house.

These hard-working families live a simple life:

Early accustomed to the hardships incidental to the lives of the settlers in the bush, these young people had learned to bear with patience and cheerfulness privations that would have crushed the spirits of children more delicately nurtured. They had known every degree of hunger and nakedness; during the first years of their lives they had often been compelled to subsist for days and weeks upon roots and herbs, wild fruits, and game (28).

Knowing nothing of luxuries, the Crusoes are happy in the summer hut made after the fashion of an Indian wigwam.

In September of the first year in the wilderness, the Crusoes erect a winter house:

It was a joyful day when the log walls of the little shanty were put up, and the door hewed out. Windows they had none, so they did not cut out the spaces for them; they could do very well without, as hundreds of Irish and Highland emigrants have done before and since.... A dwelling so rudely framed and scantily furnished would be regarded with disdain by the poorest English peasant. Yet many a settlers' family have I seen as roughly lodged (88-9).

Fortunately, these children have been brought up "to endure every privation with cheerful fortitude" (162).

The two main living conditions, the isolated settlement and the children's labour value in a family economy, serve to confine the Maxwell and Perron children in a small world. Their two-family settlement is far from any village or town. The forest beyond their household is dangerous. There have been visitors such as fur traders and friendly Indians, but their visits are not frequent. The children have rare opportunities to be socialized by anyone outside of their extended household.

With neither school nor church, both education and worship take place at home. The fathers are the boys' role models and teach them attitudes and survival skills. They have "been initiated into the mysteries of the chase. They [can] make dead-falls, and pits, and traps, and snares" (28). The boys aspire to grow up to be brave, wise and strong farmers just like their fathers. Mrs. Maxwell and Mme Perron train their daughters. The two twelve-year-old girls, Catharine and her cousin Mathilde, have learned such skills as knitting, spinning, and milking. Moreover, Catharine has already

become a wise cook and housekeeper.(76). It is this home training that enables Catharine to play a mother's role and sustain the health and spirit of her wandering companions for more than two years in the bush. Without knowing other ways of living, the girls aspire to become perfect farmers' wives like their mothers.

Home for the children means the place of their whole existence, the place where they work, live, learn, and amuse themselves. In the lonely wilderness, far from their beloved parents and social hearth, Hector recalls "all the wild and wondrous tales with which his father was wont to entertain the children as they crouched round the huge log-fire of an evening" (51). Between the children of the two families "the most charming harmony prevailed. They grew up as one family, a pattern of affection and early friendship" (5-6). The parents and their children are united by mutual love. Recalling all their happy days at home, the three children always talk of their parents, brothers, and sisters. The three wandering children "mutually cheered and animated each other to bear up against the sad fate that had thus severed them from every kindred tie, and shut them out from that home to which their young hearts were bound by every endearing remembrance from infancy upwards" (85).

Traill, like the heroes of her story, enjoyed the same harmonious extended household. Living at Samuel's home for the first few months, Catharine soon acclimated herself to the new environment. Then the Stricklands, the Traills, and the Moodies, side by side, lived happily for several years. Although they had to endure hardships and trials in their struggle against the forest, they were busy and hopeful, helping each other and sharing their joys and sorrows. By 1839, Susanna had another

daughter and three sons, while Catharine had two girls and two boys.

Every pioneer child in the backwoods contributed to the family economy. The boy was a great help to his father, who had so much hard work in the field. Clearing and ploughing land, planting and harvesting crops, and tending farm animals were some of the men's work. E. A. Talbot reported:

[T]he farmer is not only compelled to devote himself entirely to the cultivation of his ground, but also to call in the aid of his sons, as soon as they are able to assist him. Boys of seven or eight years old are put to work, in Canada, and are kept at it during the remainder of their lives.⁵⁹

Samuel Strickland states: "The working man with a family of grown children, when fairly established on his farm, is fully on a par, as regards his prospects, with the gentleman, the owner of a similar farm, and possessing an income of 100 / per annum."⁶⁰

The three Stewart daughters, all under sixteen, performed what would be the duties of a female servant in England.⁶¹ Mrs. Frances Stewart says that they make all the preserves and pickles, cakes, etc., care for the younger children, mend all the stockings and their clothes for the little boys, raise poultry and plants.⁶² The mother and daughters of the Stewarts thus shared the heavy responsibility of household tasks.

Thomas Traill had to clear his land of the omnipresent forest before it could be cultivated. Thomas, with the hired choppers, cleared three acres for spring crops, and built a loghouse into which they moved on December 11th. The Traills continued to clear eight to ten acres annually, and grew a crop of wheat, potatoes, oats, turnips and Indian corn (*B.C.*, 324). The pace of the Traills' clearing of forest was twice as fast as the average rate of the backwoods townships in Upper Canada. Peter A. Russell

attributes the variation in average rates to "the availability of more labour for clearing owing either to large families or to settlers having more capital to hire choppers."⁶³

Because of the labour value of children, "nineteenth-century parents were taught to equate children with prosperity."⁶⁴ Traill notes: "The sons and daughters will be help to them instead of a drawback, and the more there are from six years old and upwards to lend a hand in the work of clearing, the better for them."⁶⁵ "If a farmer has a family to work his land," observed Rev. Isaac Fiddler in 1832, "three or four years of labour will generally render him independent."⁶⁶ In general, pioneer settlers wanted to live in the vicinity of their relatives' homestead if possible, and to have many children.

The trend of having large families is evidenced in the 1842 census of Upper Canada, the first census that contains substantial information on the profile of the people and the province. Children account for about half of the total population; the percentage of boys under eighteen is 53 per cent of the male population; and the children of both sexes under fourteen were 46 per cent of the total population of Upper Canada in 1842 compared with 20.4 per cent in Ontario in 1991.⁶⁷

Due to children's labour value, Margaret Conrad states that, "Upper Canadian farm families gave education a low priority, at least before the 1840s."⁶⁸

Children as well as parents were absorbed in a struggle with an environment from which, for some years at least, little was to be gained beyond a mere livelihood....the comparatively primitive conditions which existed, while they gave little time for the conventional training of the school, also made little demand for it. To be able to handle the axe and the plough was a more necessary accomplishment even than to read, write and cipher.⁶⁹

In consequence, the great mass of the people were completely ignorant even of the rudiments of the most common learning in the early 1820s.⁷⁰ J. G. Bourinot attributes the prevailing illiteracy of the province to the isolation of the settlers' lives as well as to the necessity of having children at home. "The post-office, the school and the church were only to be found in the majority of cases at a great distance from their homes. Their children, as likely as not, grew up in ignorance even with educational facilities at hand; for in those days the parent had absolute need of the son's help in the avocations of pioneer life."⁷¹

In fact, except at Cobourg, there was no church, post office or store anywhere in Hamilton Township, which extended from Lake Ontario to Rice Lake in 1832.⁷² According to Lord Durham's observation at the end of the 1830s, "even in the most thickly peopled districts there are but few schools, and those of a very inferior character; while the more remote settlements are almost entirely without any."⁷³ During the 1830s, the legislature of Upper Canada was gradually working for an improved school system, but the consensus that helped make it possible had to wait until the following decade.⁷⁴

Prior to the establishment of a common school system in Upper Canada, Norma Martin writes, "The home offered the only opportunity for children's education and for worship."⁷⁵ Both Catharine Parr Traill and Frances Stewart gave their children some instruction at home, but it was not as much as they would have wished. Frances confessed in 1833:

[M]y whole time is occupied by Family duties.... I find it impossible to attend to the improvement of the children with that quietness and regularity which alone can bring success. It harasses me greatly and

disheartens me when I find how very backward my poor little dears are in common learning.⁷⁶

Caught between the responsibilities of farmer's wife and parent, she later again revealed her dilemma:

I have now ten children, four boys and six girls, all healthy and sound in mind, well disposed and amiable, but sadly deficient in education, from want of time on my part to attend to them. It is impossible for me with such a set of little ones and so much to do for them to attend to teaching sufficiently to bring them on as well as I could wish.⁷⁷

The same situation was not uncommon throughout the backwoods settlements of Upper Canada in those days. Lack of schooling and tutoring at home was typical of Upper Canadian pioneer children in the early decades of the nineteenth century. They acquired attitudes, behaviour and skills according to their sex while working with their parents. As in the fictional world, for the early pioneer children, their home was the whole world.

Most pioneer families lived the simplest life. Unlike the Traills and the Moodies, most families had no house to receive them when they arrived at the allotted land. The usual first home of settlers in the woods was a hut or shanty until a site for the home was cleared and a log house built. At Samuel's home, who was already settled, Catharine waited for her own log house to be built, but it turned out not to be what she expected.

I went to survey the newly-raised edifice, but was sorely puzzled, as it presented very little appearance of a house. It was merely an oblong square of logs raised one above the other, with open spaces between every row of logs (*B.C.*, 146).

The humble dwelling of the Traills was furnished with simplicity as was that of the

Stewarts (*B.C.*, 153).⁷⁸

Catharine once visited the house of a resident clergyman in a distant part of the country, which was now surrounded with flourishing farms in a rising village. Catharine comments:

I was struck by the primitive simplicity of the mansion and its inhabitants.... The dresses of the children were of a coarse sort of plaid, a mixture of woollen and thread, the produce of the farm and their mother's praiseworthy industry. The stockings, socks, mufflers, and warm comforters were all of home manufacture. Both girls and boys wore moccasins, of their own making" (*B.C.*, 273).

The clergyman told Catharine about the hardships of his family in their first years of settlement: "[I]t was to endure cold, hunger, and all its accompanying evils; to know at times the want of every necessary article of food. As to the luxuries and delicacies of life, we saw them not" (*B.C.*, 277). The life of austerity was common among pioneer families.

When the most necessary articles of provisions were not available, Traill said, "You must have recourse to a neighbour, if you have the good fortune to be near one, or fare the best you can on potatoes....the poor man and his family who are without resources without the potato must starve" (*B.C.*, 137-8). In her struggle to ensure subsistence, Susanna fished with her eldest daughter; she trapped and cooked squirrels and chipmunks.⁷⁹ Hard work, privation and sacrifice of each person were crucial to the survival of the pioneer family.

Due to their living conditions and upbringing, fictional and real children alike were imbued with the qualities and outlooks necessary for survival in the woods. The

children in *Canadian Crusoes* are "simple and untaught" but "guileless and earnest," and there was "nothing vulgar or rude in their minds or manners." They "possessed much that was useful and practical, which had been taught by experience and observation in the school of necessity"(45). Hector, Catharine and Louis are sturdy and healthy. These children have been raised to be resourceful, diligent, optimistic and pious. One of the elder Maxwell's maxims is, "Never let difficulties overcome you, but rather strive to conquer them" (28). Energy and perseverance were early instilled into the minds of his children.

Throughout their wandering years, they exhibit ingenuity and perseverance in building shelters, furnishing them, hunting, fishing, making clothes, procuring provisions, hollowing out canoes, and all other activities. These industrious youths are optimists. Their youthful hope is always sustained by their belief in God. The young Crusoes are thankful to God for giving them health and the strength to help themselves, leading them to the fertile Rice Lake plains, and for rescuing Indiana, from whom they have learned many skills useful in the wilderness.

Although Catharine is resourceful and brave like her brother, and is an equal partner in decision making, her feminine quality and behaviour are striking. Her nature is kind and "dovelike"(14-5). Usually, Catharine speaks and behaves like a lady. During her wandering years she is "always very particular and punctual in performing her personal ablutions" (119). She helps Indiana do the same, while showing her sisterly care, as if Indiana were Catharine's gentle, beloved sister.

Catharine, who behaves with a thoughtful and well-disciplined mind, plays a

mother's role in many respects. She tries to keep the emotional unity of the little party, and to maximize its domestic comfort:

[H]er woman's heart taught her that the surest means of reconciling the cousins would be by mutually interesting them in the same object,--and she was right. In endeavouring to provide for the comfort of their dear companion, all angry feelings were forgotten by Hector, while active employment chased away Louis's melancholy (16).

Louis and Hector both love Catharine, and strive to soften, as much as possible, the hard life to which she is exposed. In return, she endeavours to cheerfully endure all privations, to make light of all their trials, and to take a lively interest in all their plans.

Catharine always keeps herself and her lodge tidy and clean. She seeks not only good cheer but also the good health of her companions. She is an efficient homemaker, and Louis calls her "my wise little cook and housekeeper" (76). Hector, Louis, and Indiana often go out hunting, fishing or exploring, while Catharine usually prefers staying at home and preparing the meals. She enthusiastically performs her duties of gathering, preserving, and cooking.

These pioneer children survive three summers and two winters in the Canadian wilderness through their skill, hard work, and optimistic beliefs. Jacob, an old lumbering comrade of Louis' father, praises the boys for their industry and energy at the first sight of their hut and corn field:

Had these young people been idle in their habits and desponding in their tempers, they must have perished with cold and hunger, instead of enjoying many necessities and even some little luxuries in their lonely forest home. Fortunately they had been brought up in the early practice of every sort of usefulness, to endure every privation with cheerful fortitude; not, indeed, quietly to sit down and wait for better times, but

vigorously to create those better times by every possible exertion that could be brought into action to assist and ameliorate their condition (161-2).

They have become wiser, stronger and more confident in themselves through their trials.

Each of these virtuous children is by no means perfect as a person:

The young press gaily onward, gathering the flowers, and following the gay butterflies that attract them in the form of pleasure and amusement; they forget the grave counsels of the thoughtful, till they find the path they have followed is beset with briars and thorns; and a thousand painful difficulties that were unseen, unexpected, overwhelm and bring them to a sad sense of their own folly (54-5).

This is especially true with regard to Louis:

[I]t was a part of his character to think only of the present, little of the past, and to let the future provide for itself. Such was Louis' s great failing, which had proved a fruitful source of trouble both to himself and others (20).

The most serious fault of all, however, is his dishonesty, which caused the calamity.

Louis persuades Catharine to look for the cattle in the woods by saying that her mother has consented.

Trill frequently stresses the importance of honesty as in the following address to young readers:

Louis' s want of truthfulness had caused this uncertainty.... Alas, poor thoughtless Louis, how little did you think of the web of woe you were then weaving for yourself, and all those to whom you and your giddy companions were so dear! Children, think twice, ere ye deceive once! (19)

The moral of *Canadian Crusoes* is that misfortune befalls the children due to

multiple causes: Louis' deception, Catharine's negligence of her household duties, and the three children's lack of prudence. The Crusoes learn hard lessons from their errors and out of hardships, they become good young adults. Their racial tolerance results in their befriending Indiana and benefiting from her great assistance. As a result of remedying their defects and giving full play to their strengths, they are rewarded with happiness, family reunion and the marriage of the two couples, Hector to Indiana, and Catharine to Louis.

Some critics see these children's resourcefulness, piety and adaptability as unrealistic. Certainly, the fictional characters are idealized since Traill's purpose in writing *Canadian Crusoes* is both to amuse and instruct readers. However, the portrayal of Catharine Maxwell is not far from reality as seen in Anna Jameson's report:

[A] fair and elegant girl, was acquiring, at the age of fifteen, qualities and habits which might well make ample amends for the possessing of mere accomplishments. She acted as a manager in chief, and glided about in her household avocations with a serene and quiet grace which was quite charming.⁸⁰

Being both genteel and active, this actual pioneer girl observed by Jameson was identical to Traill's heroine.

Good taste and refined habits, the ideals which the British middle-class immigrants brought to Canada, changed to give primacy to the values key to their survival in pioneer conditions. For example, in the first decades of nineteenth-century England, middle-class girls were trained to be clean, dainty, quiet and modest. Next to these virtues, "table manners were a test of status, not surprising when so much business as well as social life was transacted over meals."⁸¹

Traill warns prospective British emigrants, "Young ladies who have been brought up at fashionable boarding-schools, with a contempt of everything useful or economical, make very indifferent settlers' wives" (*B.C.*, 185). According to her:

Nothing argues a greater degree of good sense and good feeling than a cheerful conformity to circumstances, adverse though they be compared with a former lot.... Since I came to this country I have seen the accomplished daughters and wives of men holding no inconsiderable rank as officers, both naval and military, milking their own cows, making their own butter, and performing tasks of household work that few of our farmers' wives would now condescend to take part in. Instead of despising these useful arts, an emigrant's family rather pride themselves on their skill in these matters. The less silly pride and the more practical knowledge the female emigrant brings out with her, so much greater is the chance for domestic happiness and prosperity (*B.C.*, 189).

Therefore, a young woman was prized according to her cheerful endurance and domestic usefulness.

Frances Stewart resigned herself with regard to her daughters' lack of polite accomplishment. "I should like very much to have my daughters taught any of those pursuits which would certainly make them more pleasing to others, yet I never expected I could do so. Nor will this be a loss, as after marriage I find that these things are always laid aside in this country in its present state."⁸² However, lacking genteel accomplishment, they had acquired the attitudes and skills to become perfect farmers' wives, the goal of socialization of the day.

The status of women in Upper Canada in the late 1830s was seen differently by Anna Langton and Anna Jameson: "Woman is a bit of a slave in this country," admitted the former, who was keeping house for her pioneer brother. "[T]he sheer quantity of

housework to be done...took 'ladies' right into the kitchen with their servants."⁸³ A British feminist and traveller, Anna Jameson's point of view on women's work in the backwoods was very different; she noted "how essential to survival the labour of women was in any primitive society and...the importance of that labour conferred dignity on those who performed it."⁸⁴

Trill's work after her immigration illustrates her efforts to conform to the latter stance. Catharine Strickland had grown up to be acutely class-conscious as well as aware of her race and gender. However, she gradually modified her social attitudes as a result of her own emigration and Canadian experience as a farmer's wife.⁸⁵ As Ballstadt explains, she "adjusts her belief in the English class system and [her] Puritan values to the Canadian realities of pragmatism and hard work, [but] she does not abandon those values."⁸⁶

The tension between Trill's social values as a Protestant English lady and her endeavours to accept the reality of the New World prevails throughout her works. On their way to Douro in 1832, both Mrs. and Mr. Trill were irritated by a young engineer of the steamer who insisted on treating them as his equals. In the same year, she reported home:

[I]t is no uncommon circumstance to see the sons of naval and military officers and clergymen standing behind a counter, or wielding an axe in the woods with their fathers' choppers; nor do they lose their grade in society by such employment. After all, it is education and manners that must distinguish the gentleman in this country, seeing that the labouring man, if he is diligent and industrious, may soon become his equal in point of worldly possessions. The ignorant man, let him be ever so wealthy, can never be equal to the man of education. It is the mind that forms the

distinction between the classes in this country—"Knowledge is power!"
(*B.C.*, 101-2)

Engaging in the same labour as other settlers, she still insists her husband is a gentleman and she a gentlewoman.

In fact, her backwoods life "gave Catharine a function and fulfilment domestically which she never could have found in England" without injuring her dignity.⁸⁷ She boasts:

Our society is mostly military or naval; so that we meet on equal grounds, and are, of course, well acquainted with the rules of good breeding and polite life; too much so to allow any deviation from those laws that good taste, good sense, and good feeling have established among persons of our class. Yet here it is considered by no means derogatory to the wife of an officer or gentleman to assist in the work of the house, or to perform its entire duties, if occasion requires it.... We pride ourselves on conforming to circumstances; and as a British officer must needs be a gentleman and his wife a lady, perhaps we repose quietly on that incontestable proof of our gentility, and can afford to be useful without injuring it (*B.C.*, 271).

Catharine, who increasingly expanded her domestic usefulness, referred to herself and other female settlers of her class as "we bush ladies", distinguishing them from other women (*B.C.*, 271). As Fowler states, "Her role in Canada of housewife and mother enhanced her self-image."⁸⁸

Despite the fact that Catharine acquired "masculine" qualities of strength, self-reliance, and resourcefulness, she liked to emphasize her femininity. Fowler suggests that Catharine's Canadian experience has made her a hypocrite. "Internally, she is newly androgynous, but on the surface she is more 'female' than ever."⁸⁹ She tries to portray herself as a loyal and submissive wife.⁹⁰

Like other English middle-class immigrants, Traill believed it was her mission to help the colony bring order and prosperity to the wilderness, and have Christianity prevail. Traill insists that a colonist's "struggle up the hill of independence is often a severe one, and it ought not to be made alone. It must be aided and encouraged by the example and assistance of an active and cheerful partner." She continues:

[T]heir children may be placed in a situation in which, by industry and activity, the substantial comforts of life may be permanently obtained, and a landed property handed down to them and their children after them (*B.C.*, 25).

A heap of worldly goods acquired by hard work and habits of thrift, she assumes, will make one happy.⁹¹

The Puritan ethic of diligence and thrift, brought by British emigrants, increased in importance in Canada. The words "diligence" and "hard-working" are the most frequently mentioned by various pioneer authors as the key to economic success and domestic welfare. Traill also repeatedly emphasizes such qualities as adaptability, positive thinking, ingenuity and perseverance as necessary to surmount the difficulties of the pioneer life.

British middle-class values transplanted by the immigrants were exposed both to the pioneer condition and the American influence of equality and practicality. Although the British gentlewomen "had been programmed to be delicate and passive," the Canadian wilderness encouraged them to develop "masculine" attributes. If they wished to survive, they had to be brave, aggressive, and resourceful.⁹²

Not only femininity but also class distinctions tended to disappear throughout

rural Upper Canada. In Clark's words, "The poverty, hard work, and deadening routine of pioneer farming discouraged efforts to maintain social or cultural standards."⁹³ Clark comments:

[T]he frontier did not produce a labour group which became distinguished from the body of farm employers, and attempts to maintain traditional master-servant relationships soon had to be abandoned. The social demands of the pioneer society reinforced the economic demands, and select social circles disappeared in face of the need among neighbours for mutual help and sympathy.⁹⁴

In the Canadian backwoods, as on the American frontier, it was necessary for neighbours to help one another.

The centuries-old American social custom of mutual help among neighbours for survival called a "bee" became widespread here. Neighbours would voluntarily meet to build a house or barn, or carry out other major works such as chopping or logging. Traill commends the "bee" as a laudable practice grown out of necessity. "In no situation, and under no other circumstances, does the equalizing system of America appear to such advantage as in meetings of this sort. All distinctions of rank, education, and wealth are for the time voluntarily laid aside" (*B.C.*, 134-5).

By 1842, only 6.7% of the total population of Upper Canada had been born in the United States; while those born in the British Isles comprised 32.6% and those born in Canada 53.7%.⁹⁵ Despite this low percentage of people born in the United States, American influences continued to penetrate rural Upper Canada because of the geographical proximity. Traill observed that, of all people, Americans were the most industrious and ingenious for the following reasons:

They are never at a loss for an expedient: if one thing fails them they adopt another, with a quickness of thought that surprises me, while to them it seems only a matter of course. They seem to possess a sort of innate presence of mind, and instead of wasting their energies in words, they act (*B.C.*, 296).

Merged with American equality and practicality, British middle-class values were transformed to become more suitable to wilderness conditions although race, class, and gender distinctions were not totally abandoned.

Considering the nature of pioneer farming in the thinly populated New World, several Canadian and American authors similarly define the word "childhood". For instance, Fowler writes, "In colonies like Canada, children were one's wealth; the more hands there were, the better to help with the never-ending round of chores both inside and outside."⁹⁶

In their American survey, John and Virginia Demos argue that:

[M]ost farm families are characterized by a high degree of internal unity. Children and adults share the same tasks, the same entertainment, the same friends, the same expectations. There is a continuum between the generations. The child appears not so much as a child per se but as himself a potential farmer; he is, then, a miniature model of his father.⁹⁷

The same was true of the Canadian pioneer families. In Demos' words, the child was like a "scaled-down version of his father," or in Bobbie Kalman's terms, a "little adult."⁹⁸

Anna Jameson observes that, in spite of hard work and privation, Canadian children who were born here, or brought here early by their parents and relations, seemed to be very happy and many of them had adopted a sort of pride in their new country.⁹⁹

There is abundant evidence that farmers' children were loved by their parents regardless of the high rates of both birth and infant mortality (*B.C.*, 198).¹⁰⁰ There was no trace of infant neglect nor child abandonment as in urban Europe at the turn of the last century. Upper Canadian children were more likely to live a hard but happy life loved by the members of their extended household. The child was an economic as well as an emotional asset.

Twenty years after her immigration Traill

identified herself as a Canadian, while retaining a loyalty to the British Crown which was completely unmarked by social pretentiousness. Long ago, in *Backwoods of Canada*, she had stated her confidence in her position as a lady, and the wife of a gentleman-officer. Her security as an English-woman remained intact and required no exterior trappings to support it, while her feeling of Canadianism grew as her family's fortunes took root in the land.¹⁰¹

She had deep concern for the political and social problems facing the young colony that was the homeland of her children. Two decades preceding the publication of *Canadian Crusoes* witnessed a rapid development of political and racial dissension, and economic depression in British North America.¹⁰² Upper Canada went through the Rebellion of 1837 and the union of Upper/Lower Canadas in 1840.

In 1852 Traill, referring to the Rice Lake plain, said, "I know of no place more suitable for the residence of an English gentleman's family."¹⁰³ By then, she had come to appreciate the pluralism of her community where many peoples, including British settlers, French Canadians, and the Indians, had to share the same land. She envisioned a Christian nationhood with an English social order achieved by the co-operation of all

racess.

Canadian Crusoes is written from the perspective of an English middle-class lady whose social values were Canadianized by her confidence as a successful pioneer farmer's wife. Traill represents the British middle-class immigrants of her time. As Lloyd M. Scott points out, "the sentiments of this powerful minority have become, to a large extent, the mood and temper of a nation, and have been influential in shaping Canada's own social structure."¹⁰⁴

To conclude, the children's living conditions depicted in *Canadian Crusoes* indicates, first, that nature dominates the lives of the children both physically and psychologically; second, the home is the whole world for the children where parents train their children by example and guidance, and where the children feel secure and happy; third, the family size is large and everyone in this extended household contributes to the family industry, i.e., subsistence farming; fourth, they lead a simple life; finally, the family members are closely knit, and the children are not only an economic asset but also have emotional value for their parents. This depiction represents the childhood experience regardless of race, social status, or gender in the backwoods settlements of Traill's time. According to Ballstadt:

[F]or its own time Traill's *Crusoes* expresses the myth of Canadian virtue deriving from contact with the immense wilderness. Her children are not brutalized by the experience, but made whole. Given evidence of Traill's fascination with the lost child, her story may indeed be motivated by her own success in meeting the challenge of pioneer life, so different from what she had known in England.¹⁰⁵

The living conditions at their parents' home correspond to the pioneer life of the

backwoods townships in the early 1830s. Moreover, the forest home of the Crusoes is a microcosm of the real pioneer settlement in Upper Canada.

Young Catharine is largely a self-portrayal of Mrs. Traill. Therefore, the characterization of Catharine Maxwell is most fully developed. She, like Mrs. Traill, is as active as the boys and the Indian girl, but she behaves like a lady in the bush. The Canadian Crusoes are characterized as ideal settlers: they are poor and uneducated but hardy and diligent; they possess both the attitudes and skills for survival in the woods. *Canadian Crusoes* is a fictionalized autobiography of Catharine Parr Traill.

The social values and aspirations of the fictional characters also reveal those of the settlers. Demers asserts, "With I am a the same accuracy of detail and keenness of observation found in *The Backwoods of Canada*, *The Canadian Crusoes* is a tribute to the indomitable pioneer spirit."¹⁰⁶ Traill visualizes the Crusoes' forest home as a metaphor of the future Canada, where the strengths of various races are united, and where all people can attain a prosperous and happy life.

CHAPTER III: TWO MID-CENTURY BOYS' BOOKS

In this chapter, two different ways of life portrayed in books for boys in the mid-nineteenth century are examined: they are the young fur trader's life in Rupert's Land in *The Young Fur-Traders* (1856) by Robert Michael Ballantyne and the school boy's life of a rural Upper Canadian community in *The Glengarry School Days: A Story of Early Days in Glengarry* (1902) by Charles W. Gordon. In C. P. Traill's novel, the harsh reality of nature dominates the lives of children, and their daily activities are confined to their homesteads in the newly opened backwoods settlement. In the more developed communities in both the Red River Colony and Glengarry County, the settings of *The Young Fur-Traders* and *Glengarry School Days*, nature is no longer a menace to the pioneers. The heroes live in wider communities than in the previous period of the early backwoods settlements. With the introduction of universal schooling and permeation of religious organizations, children are socialized by a variety of agents. The theme of *Canadian Crusoes* is survival in isolation, and that of *The Young Fur-Traders* and *Glengarry School Days* is the heroes' character building through manly activities. The two authors to be discussed in this chapter are both coincidentally of Scottish background.

Ballantyne and Gordon drew on their own childhood and young manhood experiences for their stories. They show contrasting pictures of boys' lives that reflect the geographical diversity and different processes of community development.

(1) ***THE YOUNG FUR-TRADERS* (ROBERT MICHAEL BALLANTYNE, 1825-1894)**

"One of the most accomplished nineteenth-century writers of adventure stories,"¹ Robert Michael Ballantyne was born on April 24, 1825, the ninth child of an Edinburgh family of publishers. He received his education from his mother and older sisters with the exception of a two-year stint at Edinburgh Academy, a school for boys. His academic career was undistinguished. "His boyhood passions were angling, hunting, and bird's nesting."²

Understanding Robert's adventurous disposition, his father recommended that he go into the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, perhaps to discover the Northwest Passage. Robert was barely sixteen years old when he signed an agreement to become an apprentice clerk for a period of less than five years on May 31, 1841. The next month, he sailed from Gravesend and landed in August at York Factory, a depot on the Hudson Bay. Ten days later, he was sent with the "Portage la Loche brigade"³ of six or seven boats to Fort Garry (present-day Winnipeg) in the Red River Settlement.

During his nearly six-year stay in Rupert's Land and later on the lower St. Lawrence, Ballantyne was stationed at several trading posts including Fort Garry, Norway House at the north end of Lake Winnipeg, York Factory, and Seven Islands on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. After returning to Scotland, he turned his letters home and his journals into his first book, *Hudson's Bay; or, Everyday Life in the Wilds of North America* (non-fiction). The original edition for subscribers was published in 1847 and was followed by

a second edition in 1848.

Hudson's Bay was praised by the press, and was also a commercial success. This record of his life in the Hudson's Bay Territory was then to provide the basis for Ballantyne's first fiction. William Nelson of Thomas Nelson and Sons, who was impressed with the interesting character in *Hudson's Bay* and with Ballantyne's literary power, asked him to write a boy's adventure story for his publishing firm. (*H.B.*, xii) The result was *Snowflakes and Sunbeams; or, the Young Fur-Traders* (1856). (After three editions, the first part of the title was dropped.) *The Young Fur-Traders* was an immediate best seller:

[It] launched his career as the foremost writer of romances for boys. Assembled by scenes rather than skilfully plotted, richly detailed in its descriptions of the exotic Canadian North, filled with scenes of exciting adventure, it set the pattern for the children's books he later wrote.⁴

Ballantyne's Canadian experiences also provided material for other stories such as *The Dog Crusoe: A Tale of the Western Prairies* (1861), *Away in the Wilderness: or, Life Among the Red Indians and Fur-Traders of North America* (1869) and *The Buffalo Runners: A Tale of the Red River Plains* (1891).

"Ballantyne's stories are to a large extent autobiographical, and it is in this sense that he deserves the title of 'Ballantyne the Brave' affectionately given him by his successor as a writer for boys, R. L. Stevenson. (1850-1894) makes it clear in the prefatory poem of his *Treasure Island* (1883) that Ballantyne is one of his three principal models. (*H.B.*, ix) As Sheila Egoff and Judith Saltman write, he had considerable influence on the adventure story in Canada as well as in Britain.⁵

The strength of *The Young Fur-Traders* largely derives from the author's knowledge of the settings and the principal characters. *The Athenaeum* reviewed the first edition as follows:

This is a charming book, and will be the delight of high-spirited boys. It is full of fun and adventure. The description of hunter-life in the backwoods, and the society and manners at the trading-stations of the Hudson's Bay Company, are excellent, and have unmistakable signs of having been drawn from life. The adventures and escapes are very exciting, and are told with great freedom and spirit. It is one of the most fascinating books of the kind: and fortunate will those youngsters be who find it hanging on their branch of the Christmas-tree.⁶

Ballantyne's powers of observation and talent for story-telling enabled him to recreate Hudson's Bay Company life in the 1840s.

Recent critics of children's literature similarly praise Ballantyne's accurate depiction of scenes. For instance, Egoff writes in her *Republic of Childhood*, "To a modern reader much of Ballantyne would appear heavy-handed, moralistic, and full of circumlocutions." She continues, however, that

he had a lively pen and a good eye; his stories always move at a brisk pace and the descriptions of life in the wilds, the fur-trading posts, and the early settlements are full of striking details. Above all, as he was familiar with the Canadian wilderness, he could escape the hackneyed view of it as a vast unknown and show it in all its guises and even as a friendly playland.⁷

Eric Quayle also sees the strength of his writing in the meticulous accuracy of the backgrounds in which he set his tales.⁸

According to *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, "Modern readers are also irritated by the moments of sentimentality or piety which occur with some

frequency", but "the books--especially the earlier ones--are redeemed by the degree of information they offer about unusual ways of life, and they have a no-nonsense briskness which makes them still very readable."⁹ In general, Ballantyne is regarded as an important contributor to both Canadian children's literature and Canadian history.

Furthermore, the hero of *The Young Fur-Traders*, as in Ballantyne's other stories, "leads an adventurous and daredevil life such as any boy might envy, packed full of exciting and often bloodthirsty incidents." The narration of the various adventures that befall the young hero "derive an unusual force and vividness from the author's personal experience of the scenes he describes, and his hero being of much the same age as the young stalwarts who read the book, made it easy for them to identify themselves with the brave deeds and daring escapes with which the pages are filled."¹⁰ As a result, his Canadian books served to involuntarily recruit a number of apprentices into the service of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The details of the young trader's life also fascinated spirited English boys. Philip Godsell, who entered the service of the company in 1906, speaking of Ballantyne's influence, states in his *Arctic Trader*:

I am not quite sure where I got hold of R. M. Ballantyne's book called "Hudson Bay" but as I read it my boyish imagination conjured up a thousand possibilities of adventure on the forest trails beneath the northern lights. Here, indeed, was a career simply awaiting me!¹¹

Similarly, J. W. Anderson relates how he was impressed by the book:

During my school days in the early years of the present century, the fur trade stories of R. M. Ballantyne...were at the height of their popularity. They were probably the most widely read boys' books of the day.

Certainly I read them avidly, for who could fail to be thrilled with the romance of the fur trade? I was in a receptive mood to the merest suggestion that I should become a fur trader.¹²

Ballantyne's influence on the literary genre of adventure stories as well as on the minds of boys during and after the Victorian Age was phenomenal.

The story of *The Young Fur-Traders* is set in the Red River settlement and the Hudson's Bay Company's outposts in Rupert's Land. The events take place over a period of four years during which the season of snowflakes alternates four times with that of sunbeams. There are two heroes. One is Charles Kennedy (15), who lives with his parents and surviving sister Kate (14) (the other children having died of smallpox). Charley and Kate are the children of an old furtrader, Frank, and his Métis wife. The other is Charley's best friend, Harry Somerville (14), a clerk of Fort Garry who left his quiet, happy home in the West Highlands seven months earlier to lead an adventurous life.

The novel is loosely structured by scenes and incidents presented in thirty-one chapters. The first seven chapters take place in Charley's home and nearby Fort Garry in the Red River settlement. The next five chapters are about the two heroes' voyage from Fort Garry to Norway House, where they are destined to separate. Then the narrative leaps ahead two years, and the subsequent four chapters follow Charley, now 17 years old. The next nine chapters show Harry at York Factory, at Norway House, and in the wilderness while on a journey. The friends are together again in the last five chapters. Charley refuses his father's wish to become a clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company and embarks on the life of a voyageur. Joined by his friend Harry at the first brigade camp, the two boys have a hilarious time travelling together through the wilds in

boats. On arriving at Norway House, Harry is told to go to York Factory as a clerk.

Two years later, Charley and the interpreter Jacques Caradoc are sent to a nearby Indian camp by Mr. Whyte, the chief trader of a new establishment. Harry is sent to the Saskatchewan district where he is reunited with Charley. Mr. Whyte is so rough and overbearing that Misconna, the leader of the agitation against him, kills Mr. Whyte. Injured in his pursuit of Misconna, Harry is granted leave under a doctor's care at Red River Settlement. Charley's father arranges his son's new post in a managerial position at Lower Fort Garry. In the spring, Charley brings Harry home in Jacques' canoe. The story ends with Harry's marriage to Kate.¹³

The central characters of *The Young Fur-Traders* have a unique growing-up experience due to their living environment. Their colony was composed of Indians, Scotsmen, and French Canadians and was known as the Red River Settlement. It lay in the very centre of the great continent of North America, far removed from civilization, and about 20 miles south of Lake Winnipeg. At the time in which *The Young Fur-Traders* is set, the settlement contained as many as 5,000 inhabitants, and extended upwards of 50 miles along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers (13).

The colony of Red River "is quite a populous paradise" compared with "the desolate, solitary establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company" where "the population generally amounts to eight or ten men" (12-13). The colony is a sort of haven for many retired traders like Mr. Kennedy, who "left home as boys 50 or 60 years before" and who "cannot hope to remodel tastes and habits long nurtured in the backwoods so as to relish the manners and customs of civilized society" (13). This portrayal of the Red River

Settlement is based on Ballantyne's observations during the time he worked at Fort Garry between September 1841 and June 1842. First we will examine historical sources on the settlement, and then analyze childhood as revealed in this story, compared with the historical facts.

The territory of 320 k m² in the upper Lake Winnipeg basin, which was to be known as the Assiniboia or Red River Colony, was ceded to Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820), by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1811. He had been an enthusiastic advocate of planned emigration from the distressed areas of Scotland and Ireland to British North America.¹⁴ The grant stipulated that one-tenth of the district be set apart for the use of retiring servants.¹⁵

Lord Selkirk appointed Miles Macdonell as Governor of the colony. Macdonell and the first settlers landed at York Factory in late September 1811, and settled at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers (present-day Winnipeg) in September 1812. They were joined by the second and third parties of Scottish and Irish emigrants in 1813 and 1814.¹⁶

Gerald Friesen, a historian of the Canadian Prairies, speculates on Selkirk's choice of the Red River District for his new colonization experiment (his previous emigration enterprises were to Upper Canada and Prince Edward Island): first, the fertility of its land; secondly, the exhaustion of the fur resources of the district; thirdly, the proximity of the buffalo plains (the valleys of the Assiniboine and the Missouri); and lastly, the easy access to the company transportation route from York Factory on Hudson Bay.¹⁷

The Red River Colony, the first western agricultural settlement, intensified the trade war between the HBC and the Montréal-based North West Company (NWC), primarily managed by Highland Scots. This vast tract for colonization was located at the entry to Lake Athabasca, a rich fur region, cutting into the trading route of the NWC from Montréal and Québec. The result was, in A. S. Morton's words, "that the period 1812 to 1820, was the fiercest, most violent and most bloody"¹⁸ in the history of the North West.

The Nor' Westers and their allied Métis destroyed the infant settlement in 1815; and they killed twenty-two settlers including Robert Semple, newly appointed Governor of Rupert's Land, at Seven Oaks in 1816.¹⁹ "With great courage on the part of the remnant of the settlers, and British determination on the part of Lord Selkirk, who arrived in Rupert's Land in 1817, it was re-established."²⁰ Fort Garry was built in 1817-8. After Selkirk's death in 1820, the HBC from Fort Garry came to administer the Red River Community.²¹ The Red River Settlement had a conclusive impact on the fur trade competition, in favour of the HBC. The company already had a great advantage in the shorter route to the London market through Hudson Bay. The company's position was further strengthened since the colony was able to supply the trading posts with domestic produce and with the labour of the sons of the settlers.

In contrast, the operation of the NWC was expensive, due in large part to high transportation costs.²² Fernand Ouellet describes how competition encouraged expansion, and how the cost of transportation increased in proportion to territorial expansion: "It also led to armed peace and to war; and these, in turn, led to military investments. Since the

seventeenth century, the fur trade had necessitated the establishment of a chain of forts and fortified outposts."²³ The competition for the NWC became increasingly expensive with the expansion of trade to the northwest, employing about 5,000 voyageurs and servants in the early nineteenth century.²⁴

At the time a twenty-year agreement between the NWC and the wintering partners (or winterers -- inland traders and shareholders) was about to expire. There were Nor' Westers "hardened in fur trade rivalry, who were uneasy about the war on settler families, and concerned about the increasing violence and cost of the competition for furs."²⁵ "The new agreement would come into effect in 1822 but the contracts must be made some years before hand."²⁶ Instead of renewing the agreement, the wintering partners turned to the HBC, who met their proposal with generous terms.²⁷

Thus the Hudson's Bay Company took the form under which it operated from 1821 to Confederation. Both parties contributed their best to the United Company. The Englishmen gave, along with their Charter, the short route by the Bay, and the very efficient management of the Governor and Committee in London. The NWC gave vigorous personnel, a cooperative relationship with the Indians and a fine control of the business in the interior.²⁸ The union of the two companies, according to Glyndwr Williams, "had infused some of the best qualities of each into the new concern."²⁹

After the merger, almost half of the trading posts in Rupert's Land had to be closed;³⁰ almost 1,300 employees such as voyageurs and the old HBC staff lost their jobs. "About 15 percent of the 'retired' employees made their way to Red River in the 1820s."³¹ Among these was Alexander Ross, who moved to the Red River Colony in

1825. The following year, he settled on a farm with his Indian wife and their children.³²

The Selkirk settlers were joined by French Canadian and Swiss immigrants.³³ In 1824, three years after the merger, Cuthbert Grant, the Métis leader of the Seven Oaks incident, led 80 to 100 Métis families to settle some twenty miles up the Assiniboine, at White Horse Plains (Grantown, later St-François-Xavier). In 1828, he was appointed warden of the Plains by George Simpson, the Governor of Rupert's Land.³⁴

Fort Garry suffered from the Red River flood of 1826; Lower Fort Garry was built to replace it in 1831. Upper Fort Garry, established near the original site of Fort Garry in 1835, became the Hudson's Bay Company's administrative centre in the Northern District.³⁵ In the same year, the colony acquired a legislative council, courts of justice, and a code of laws. The affairs of the colony were chiefly transacted there. As the seat of the Colony Governor, Upper Fort Garry became "a lively and attractive station, full of business and bustle."³⁶ In 1836, the Selkirk Grant was returned to the HBC.³⁷

Despite the drain of migrants to the United States, caused by the destruction of the colony in 1815 and the flood of the Red River in 1826, the population of Assiniboia numbered 4704 in 1840 (3588 in Red River and 692 in Grantown). Of the heads of families, 489 were natives, 171 were born in Canada, 114 in Scotland, and 31 were from other places in the world. Four hundred and forty-eight of the families were Catholic and 357 were Protestant. The same census shows that there were 2470 children under 16 years of age.³⁸ This census included no records of the total population of children by race.

As families were growing in the colony, education became necessary. The

settled community made it possible for churches and church societies to do Christian work both among Natives and non-Natives. Although the first school in the present-day province of Manitoba was established at the settlement of Red River, subsequent schools provided the real foundation for education in the province.

From its early days, the HBC was interested in the education of both white and native children, both for humanitarian reasons and in its own self-interest. The company had been criticized for not pushing exploration, promoting settlement or paying proper attention to the welfare of native peoples. Almost all servants of the company had formed alliances with full-blood or mixed-blood Natives. Sometimes when fathers left HBC service, they abandoned their children. The company was then obliged to care for them and education became an issue. Naturally, educated members of the new nation would be better customers and employees for the HBC. Lastly, good appointees to isolated posts could be found more readily if educational facilities for children were made available.

Education at HBC establishments in earlier times is documented. In 1794, the Board of Governors in London approved sending spelling books to children in Rupert's Land. In 1808, a schoolmaster was sent to a York Factory School where 15 children were in attendance. At Red River, the first school organized by the settlers lasted only five months, due to the crisis of 1815. After order was restored, schools were developed under the aegis of missionaries sent by various churches. The first of these missionary groups consisted of three Roman Catholic priests sent by Bishop Plessis of Québec in 1818. The most successful of them was Joseph-Norbert Provencher, who established

secondary education at St-Boniface. By 1845, he had five elementary and secondary schools; and in 1847, he became the first bishop of St-Boniface.³⁹

The Rev. John West, the first Episcopal missionary, arrived in 1820 and his successors, the Rev. David Jones and Archdeacon Cochrane, organized common schools modelled on the parochial system. Mrs. Jones, who joined her husband in 1829, saw a need for boarding and day school for the children of HBC workers. A school for young ladies and a classical school for boys were founded. The Rev. and Mrs. Jones were succeeded by John McCallum (afterwards ordained at Red River). Merging the two earlier schools, he established the Red River Academy to serve both boys and girls, day students and boarders, in 1836.

A visitor to the Settlement in 1854 reported the existence of as many as sixteen schools: eight common schools, five wholly or partially supported by the Church Missionary Society, two dependent on the bishop, and one attached to the Presbyterian Church and dependent on tuition fees for support.⁴⁰ A few years previously, the Governor and Council of Assiniboia had given £130 (ca. \$650) to the missionaries to support education (£65 to the Roman Catholics, £50 to Anglicans, and £15 to Presbyterians).⁴¹ Also, the HBC gave indirect aid in the form of a yearly grant to each missionary, both Protestant and Catholic. For the Métis, French, Catholic Scots, and Irish population, Catholics had seminaries at St-Boniface, and by 1869, 16 parish schools were being operated in different parishes of Rupert's Land.

Not only education but also religion was important in the new colony. Provencher, the first Catholic missionary sent to Red River, in 1818, had several

important tasks to undertake other than educating settlers' children. He had to help the troubled colony find stability, convert the Natives, and sustain Catholic settlers. Similarly, the Church of England began its work in the Red River settlement in 1820. By the 1840s, the colony boasted six churches and three meeting houses. There were nine places of public worship for 5,500 people and two more were under construction.

Let us now compare the childhood experiences of the heroes in *The Young Fur-Traders* and those of actual children in the colony in the 1840s. We turn to the fictional family of the Métis boy, Charles Kennedy, whose father is a retired fur trader in the Red River Colony, an HBC company town. The colonists enjoy the benefits of the social fabric the company provides. For instance, there is an excellent school. At the Red River Academy, the children receive good education while acquiring "a certain degree of polish," a very different polish from "the conventionalities and refinements of the Old World," but "not the less agreeable" (293).

In addition, there are missionaries who not only promote Christianity and operate schools but also infiltrate the life of each family. The presence of a doctor is another benefit. Above all, the Hudson's Bay Company offers job opportunities to the sons of the settlers. Fort Garry, the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, is the centre of community life. Here, Mr. Kennedy has comfortably retired from the Mackenzie district, purchased a house, and sent his children to school.

At home, Charles' father, Frank Kennedy, exercises authority over his family. He is a man of an irascible and stubborn nature who, however, shows true devotion to his family. When Charles is fifteen and Kate fourteen years old, Mr Kennedy says to

himself:

There' s my wife,...she' s getting too old to be looking after everything herself..., and Kate' s getting too old to be humbugging any longer with books; besides, she ought to be at home learning to keep house, and help her mother, and cut the baccy..., and that young scamp Charley should be entering the service...he must be reined up a bit now. I' ll clap on a double curb and martingale. I' ll get him a situation in the counting-room at the fort (15-6).

On the following day he brings back his children from school, and Kate is installed as a housekeeper and tobacco-cutter. "Quiet, warm-hearted, affectionate Kate [is] overjoyed at the thought of being a help and comfort to her old father and mother" (16).

Mr. Kennedy tells his son that the best thing for him is to get a place in the counting room of the HBC, with the prospect of rapid promotion in the service. "[R]eckless, joyous, good-humoured, hare-brained Charles [is] cast into the depths of despair" (16). He generally does what his father bids him, but not this time. After unsuccessfully begging his father to let him become a voyageur, he decides to run away from home.

There is, however, an underlying tenderness in the father-son relationship. Charles promises Kate to refrain from doing anything to annoy the old man, but his resolve is soon forgotten and the father' s equanimity is upset two or three times a day. Ballantyne emphasizes affection between each family member, for example, Charles' s heartbreaking farewell with Kate and his distress at the news of his mother' s death.

Mr. Kennedy frequently says to Kate that Charles is "a great happiness to him" (265). He waits eagerly for a letter from his son. Before his homecoming, the father

goes to the riverbank everyday for about a week; and when he finally arrives home, he embraces his son in tears. Charles brings back his injured companion Harry Somerville, the other hero of the book, the Scottish apprentice clerk of the HBC. Mr. Kennedy invites him to stay at his house while recovering his health. By the end of the book, Charles is provided with a managerial position at Lower Fort Garry by his father. Harry marries Kate the following winter, and takes an important post of the company, settling in Red River Colony.

To compare children's growing-up experiences in fiction and reality, let us examine the life of one man of the times. Alexander Ross was born in Scotland and emigrated to Canada as a schoolmaster. He then served in the Pacific coast fur trade and married the daughter of an Okanagan Indian chief (he formally remarried her in Red River). Later, he worked for the NWC (which merged with the HBC after 1821) until his retirement to the Red River Settlement in 1825. He had at least 13 children.

We know that he was very close to his children. His household was run by his eldest unmarried daughter because of the ill health of his wife. The characteristics of the Ross family life are typically Victorian. The patriarchal Ross' household had at its centre the father who shaped the upbringing of his half-Indian children. He ensured that their religious and secular education would enculturate them with British middle-class values and Christianity.

In this family, there was a clear separation of work-life and home-life: home was the central social unit for "the transmission of culture, the maintenance of social stability, and the pursuit of happiness."⁴² The family members exhibited the new Victorian attitude

toward emotion, labelled "sentimentalization".⁴³ They showed each other feelings on some approved topics related to home and family: love, death, and marriage. Expectations of and training of boys and girls were quite different as seen in each child's personal life.

The young boys all attended the Red River Academy or its successor, St. John's College, a grammar school in the British tradition. The first son died, so the second boy took over the father's business interests and the third son, James, went away to university in Toronto to prepare for the ministry. In those days, the Red River Settlement was perceived as a "colony of semi-civilized half-breeds."⁴⁴ Métis children had to deal with racial hostility and James spent his adult life attempting to prove that "half-breeds" were as good as anyone else.

James' marriage to Margaret Smith, the daughter of a respected Scottish Presbyterian family in Toronto, surprised his father. A man of British-Indian descent marrying a white woman was almost unheard of in the Red River settlement and it represented a considerable achievement.⁴⁵ We know that marriage was an important means of social and career advancement.

Race was always an issue in this society. For example, James Hargrave, Ballantyne's superior officer between July 1843 and June 1845, a bourgeois Chief Trader at York Factory, did not want to yield to the temptation of an early marriage to a native of the fur trade country during his clerkship in the 1820s and 1830s. Speaking of his own marital intention he told his mother his choice would be "one from the Old Country." At the age of 40, he made a "suitable marriage."⁴⁶

Alexander Ross wanted his daughters to become accomplished ladies who played musical instruments and danced. For them, household management was important and onerous. Long house visits, a custom in remote colonies, added a greater burden to their responsibilities. With the exception of the two youngest daughters and unlike their brothers, the Ross girls received little formal education and most of them married in their teens.

For mixed-blood girls, marriage was the ultimate goal and a key to assimilation into the British population in nineteenth-century Red River settlements, where the derogatory stereotypes of mixed-blood people (even though they were the majority) filled people's minds. Four out of the six Ross daughters married white men. Margaret, who married Hugh Matheson of Kildonan in 1831, was eventually listed in the Red River census as white. Henrietta (born 1830) became the wife of John Black, a Presbyterian minister who tutored Ross's younger children. Her younger sisters also married prominent whites, but experienced prejudice as Henrietta did. Henrietta's elder sister, Mary, was the most well-adjusted in the family. Instead of suppressing her Indian heritage, she considered her familiarity with the Indian language and customs an advantage. Marrying the mixed-blood Orkneyman George Flett, she eventually helped him establish a Presbyterian mission among the Natives.

Unlike the French-Native Métis with their distinct cultural identity based on the duality of their heritage, the Anglo-Native population vanished with the decline of the fur trade in Canada. Consequently, "Métis has become the label which has tended to subsume all of the mixed-blood people of Western Canada."⁴⁷ Many aspects of the lives

of the Ross family correspond with those of Ballantyne's fictional family with the exception of racial issues. Ballantyne might have realized the problems of identity and prejudice during eight or nine months in residence. The race problem is naturally not included, however, in *The Young Fur-Traders*, which is an adventure story for boys but not a novel of social realism focusing on social issues or psychological problems such as the quest for one's identity.

Frank Kennedy is, like Alexander Ross, a Scottish gentleman who left home in his boyhood. Kennedy exercises power over his children's education, employment, and marriage. In his consideration, affection always takes precedence over other feelings. As a devoted husband and father, he is active and happy surrounded by his beloved children at home. This portrayal of family life is true to the reality of the life lived by the Ross family.

Charles Kennedy, like the Ross boys, is trained at the Red River Academy, a boarding school, to become an efficient fur trader, while acquiring the lifestyle of a civilized Christian. He finds employment within the Company domain as did many sons trained in the colony. Charles' success in his career is the prime interest of his father, as James Ross' ambitious activities were his father's greatest concern.

His sister, Kate, like the younger Ross girls, receives a good education and a certain degree of polish at the Academy and grows up to be a young woman "surrounded by every nameless and nameable grace that makes women exasperatingly delightful". (272) At the age of fourteen, she becomes a housekeeper to help her weak mother, like the eldest unmarried Ross daughter. Kate marries a non-Native in her teens as did four

of the Ross girls.

According to Sylvia Van Kirk, a fur trade historian, the social world of the fur trade played a significant part in the early development of Canada.⁴⁸ Ballantyne's novel mirrors at least one family, it has validity as a source of social history. He portrayed his fictional characters in a way that reflects the reality of the Red River Settlement. This historical research confirms the thesis that the childhood of the main characters in *The Young Fur-Traders* mirrors the nature of the Red River Colony in the early 1840s. In the multi-racial community, isolated by vast distance from other settlements, European religious, moral, and educational values were perpetuated by European colonists, incoming employees of the HBC, and by the most powerful group of all, the missionaries who operated schools supported by the HBC.

Religion and education went hand in hand to civilize the Métis-dominated population. Sound education was imperative for a boy's upward social and economic mobility, and for a girl's fortunate marriage. Schooling is the main occupation of childhood in the fictional world, and so it was in the Red River Colony.

GLENGARRY SCHOOL DAYS (CHARLES WILLIAM GORDON, 1860-1937)

Like the two heroes in *The Young Fur-Traders* the protagonist, Hughie, of *Glengarry School Days* is Scottish. Childhood in these two settlements is separated by a vast distance, but there are similarities with regard to family, religion, and education. The settlers in both colonies are religious and male-dominated. The establishment of a common school system in each settlement reveals the Scottish immigrants' earnest support of universal education. Like Ballantyne, Gordon recreates these features of life in his story.

Charles William Gordon was a "crusading churchman and active social reformer" widely known as the best-selling novelist "Ralph Connor."⁴⁹ He was born in Glengarry County, in the region then called Canada West (now Ontario), a son of a minister of the Free Church of Scotland who had immigrated to Canada East (now Québec) in 1853. Charles Gordon spent his first ten years in the district of the Indian Lands, Glengarry, until his family moved to Oxford County, Ontario. In 1890 Gordon was ordained in the Presbyterian ministry before arriving at his station in the new Banff National Park where he served two mining villages and some lumber camps. Then he accepted a new mission in Winnipeg in 1894. During World War I, he served overseas; and in 1918 he returned to Winnipeg and remained there as a minister for the rest of his life. It was at St. Stephen's church on the outskirts of Winnipeg that he first began to write about his experiences of missions in western Canada in the early 1890s, and of childhood in Glengarry in the 1860s.

Between 1898 and 1937, Charles Gordon published 24 volumes of fiction under the pseudonym of "Ralph Connor", one biography, and many articles and religious booklets. In addition, *Postscript to Adventure: The Autobiography of Ralph Connor* was posthumously published in 1938. Gordon was surprised at the enthusiastic comments in both British and American periodicals since he made little effort at a polished literary style; "things just came to him and he put them down".⁵⁰ Keith Wilson, a biographer of Charles William Gordon, estimates that the total sales of Ralph Connor's novels during Gordon's lifetime reached thirty million. "This tremendous literary output was achieved despite his local and national church duties, and his active participation in social reform."⁵¹

Gordon identifies two reasons for the popularity of Ralph Connor books: their authentic pictures of life drawn from personal experience and their religious motif in fiction form. (*P.A.*, 150) Clara Thomas remarks that the belief and attitudes of Charles Gordon were dramatized in every Ralph Connor story, and those values matched and mirrored the needs and ideals of millions of readers in the first two decades of this century.⁵² Thomas, like other literary reviewers, has criticized his novels for their shallow and stereotypical characterizations as well as for their loose, sentimental plots.⁵³

However, Thomas claims that Gordon was a natural storyteller and dramatizer of men and women and their lives. She concludes: "Both the strengths of his writing and the qualities of the man that made that writing famous are evident in it [*Postscript to Adventure*]."⁵⁴ Judith Skelton Grant defines Ralph Connor's work as a whole:

In Ralph Connor's stories Christian principle always wins through in the end. His action-packed plots allow ample opportunity for the display of

the physical courage that is as much a part of a Connor hero as the more-important moral courage. Like many earlier Victorian writers, Connor deliberately stirred his readers' softer emotions with scenes of pathos; like them, he appeared to find such feeling morally valuable.... Connor wrote for the many readers who liked their fiction to combine adventure, lively characterization, and Christian uplift.⁵⁵

The very qualities of Gordon's fiction such as pathos and evangelism that had "a spellbinding effect upon his generation"⁵⁶ are also the main factors which have made his books seem dated to later generations.

Of the three literary fashions rooted in Gordon's time, pathos and religious didacticism are now his main weaknesses. In contrast, the third quality to win him an enormous popularity, graphic depiction of life drawn from personal experience, has been his strength then and now. For instance, *Black Rock* and *The Sky Pilot* are "authentic, almost documentary, records of the era and area they describe, though they are presented in fictional form".⁵⁷

He, like the other nineteenth-century English and American local colourists such as Kipling and Mark Twain, portrayed in detail the unique aspects of local communities and their people, customs, manners, speech, folklore and land. John Lennox states in Lecker's *Canadian Writers and their Works* that Gordon's books exist "as signposts of a Canada that no longer exists. If, however, we are to understand who we are and how we have come to be who we are, we need to acknowledge those signposts and understand the cultural, social, and historical geography they recreate for us."⁵⁸

In Canada, only two of Gordon's fiction books, *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) and *Glengarry School Days* (1902) are in print. Clara Thomas asserts: "It is the

Glengarry books, of course, that demonstrate Charles Gordon's best successes in scenes and episodes from a heritage and a boyhood that he treasured."⁵⁹ Carl Klinck also commends the Glengarry books in which he "did much of his most effective writing." Sketching Gordon's boyhood experiences of pioneer life in the tradition of the local colourist, "he displayed a skill and an artistry."⁶⁰

These two Glengarry books were very popular with children. Ten thousand copies of the first Canadian edition of *Glengarry School Days* were "sold out before the day of publication and went into immediate reprintings. The English edition of 15,000 copies sold on a par with Kipling's *Just So Stories*...Doran's American edition was 200,000."⁶¹ *The Man from Glengarry* and *Glengarry School Days* became available to present-day children through publication in the New Canadian Library paperback series by McClelland and Stewart. They are read today for their authentic depiction of scenes and characters of pioneer communities.

In *Glengarry School Days*, Gordon wrote about his experiences growing up in Glengarry. Thirty years after leaving Glengarry, he published tales of Upper Canadian pioneer life based on his memories, in an attempt to record the "manner of life and type of character to be seen in those early days."⁶² A series of related sketches of his childhood first appeared in the American *Leslie's Magazine* and the Canadian *The Westminster* before the book version. The initial serialization may explain its loose structure.

Glengarry School Days consists of thirteen episodes that take place at and around school, and at the homes of the hero named Hughie and his friend on Indian Land in the 1860s. We see five years in Hughie's life, from the ages of 8 to 13. The plot is

sustained by the fascinating process of the hero's growing up into young manhood, as well as by a strong theme: the practice of Christian faith which is always rewarded in the end.

The two years under Archibald Munro's direction have been a golden age at the Twentieth School. The next term, the big boys who can't stand the new master leave the school after the third day. As the master begins to thrash Jimmie Cameron for snickering, Thomas Finch asks the master to thrash him in the place of little Jimmie, who stands numb in terror. After beating Thomas with a rawhide switch, however, the master also thrashes little Jimmie, and so Thomas and the other boys challenge him to a fight. As a result, the master is replaced by a female teacher.

"Foxy" Ross comes to dominate the school with his "store" and "Injuns" games. To pay "Foxy" for a pistol, Hughie, the hero, steals money from his mother and father. Weary and sick of his secret, he confesses his sin to Mrs. Finch. Hughie's mother allows him to leave school for a while and stay with the Finches, helping with their farm. Hughie's attempt to organize a shinny (a game sport similar to hockey) club attracts the interest of John Cravan, the new master. The school is filled again with big boys. With Hughie as the captain, under Cravan's coaching, they win the game against the Front team. At the request of the minister's wife, Cravan carries on a college preparatory class, and after a good year's work, ten boys who wish to enter the ministry are ready for college. Hughie is going to take the full university course, and Cravan decides to go to a college of theology with the boys he has taught.⁶³

Gordon's portrayal of Glengarry in the 1860s presents an enchanting scenario of

rural life in the heavily forested territory of Canada West. The forest dominates the landscape. The great forest around the school is the playground of the boys and girls. The people travel on bob-sleigh and horseback through the deep pine and cedar swamps where bears, foxes, and wolves live. With few exceptions, all the pioneers are Scottish. To examine the accuracy of Gordon's description, we turn to historical surveys of the community development of Glengarry County.

Glengarry was first settled by the Scottish United Empire Loyalists, disbanded soldiers of the American Revolutionary War and their families, who had fought for the British cause. Lake Township (later Lancaster) and Township No. 1 (Charlottenburgh), at the eastern extremity of present Ontario, were allocated by Sir John Johnson, the Commander of the King's Royal Regiment of New York, to the Scottish Loyalists, many of whom were Highland Catholics. These first settlers were joined by successive refugees from the American Revolutionary War.

These Loyal Townships gained fame as a Scottish colony, and so attracted immigrants from all parts of Scotland.⁶⁴ At the same time, Québec was divided into the two separate governments of Upper and Lower Canada in 1791. The following year, the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, divided Upper Canada into nineteen counties. The county consisting of the townships Lancaster and Charlottenburgh was then christened Glengarry.

Rev. Alexander Macdonell decided to help the disbanded soldiers from the Glengarry Fencibles in 1802, who no longer had homes to which they could return, since whole districts of the Highlands of Scotland had been turned into sheep farms and small

tenants had been ejected. With a government promise of 200 acres to every soldier, he and 800 emigrants left for Glengarry County, Upper Canada, where so many of their relatives and friends had already settled.

The immigrants who arrived in the later years were allocated land to the new townships of Kenyon and Lochiel, laid out behind Charlottenburgh and Lancaster, in 1798 and 1818 respectively. In addition to the free land, a settler could rent or buy a lot. After 1801, the Crown and Clergy reserves in the four townships in Glengarry were leased or sold. Also, Indian Land, a one-and-three-quarter-mile strip in western Glengarry extending from the first Concession at the St. Lawrence River to the Twenty-first Concession, was open to the Scottish settlers. Glengarry became the new home of many Highlanders, who were determined to become farmers.

These early Glengarrians' efforts to change the forest into productive farmland were successful or at least competitive with the other Loyalists in Upper Canada. When we remember that the land was swampy and stony, the achievement of the Scottish pioneers in Glengarry was comparable to that of the Germans in Stormont and Dundas Counties in the same Eastern District by 1815.

After the war of 1812-14, the establishment and growth of the lumber industry in the upper Ottawa Valley doubly influenced the nature of agriculture in Glengarry County. In contrast to the farmers west of Kingston, who concentrated increasingly on the production of wheat during the 1820s and 1830s, Glengarry farmers grew a variety of vegetables, as well as oats and hay for the lumber shanties.⁶⁵

More significantly, the farmers' involvement in logging and driving timber to

Québec through the winter and much of the spring had a negative effect on the development of agriculture. An 1830 report on provincial progress compiled for Governor Colborne states: "The progress of the Glengarry settlers has been slow, many of them having engaged in the lumber trade on the Ottawa."⁶⁶ The large lumber operations in the Ottawa Valley determined the type of agriculture available to the settlers and slowed the progress of improving their land. By the 1860s, both the lumber industry and agriculture were in decline, so that economic opportunities for youth were very limited. As a result, the population growth of Glengarry was very slow. The county lost some population in 1829 and 1861. For the 30 years between 1831 and 1861, the population of Glengarry only doubled, compared to Upper Canada's population, which septupled during the same period.

With regard to education, Rev. John Bethune and ten other Glengarry men petitioned the legislature of Upper Canada to establish common schools in 1804; their principle of public elementary education was not approved until 1816.⁶⁷ The Scottish immigrants believed in the importance of a sound education. They were used to a system of small local schools for all children. From the beginning, they followed Scottish tradition in the establishment of schools.⁶⁸

The number of common schools in Glengarry increased notably from 14 in 1816 to 33 in 1830, 60 in 1850 and 70 in 1867.⁶⁹ This meant that in 1867 there were 3.9 schools on every Concession road, which was approximately $9\frac{1}{4}$ miles long including the Indian Lands, with one school at every 2.4 miles. By 1867, most of the common schools in the County had become free of charge.⁷⁰ The schools were accessible to all children,

regardless of the location of their home or their family' s economic status.

Consequently, the illiteracy rate of Glengarry was very low. For example, in the northern Indian Lands (Census Enumeration 8 in Kenyon) in 1860, there were only 19 adults (3.2% of the total population) who could not read or write, 9 of whom were Scots born in Scotland, 5 French Canadians born in Lower Canada, and 4 Scottish Canadians born in Upper Canada.⁷¹

In 1860, the population of Census Enumeration 8 in Kenyon (Concession 13-21 of Indian Land) was 589. Two hundred and forty-six were children of ages between 5 and 16. The proportion of children attending school of the above school age was 55%, reflecting sporadic attendance of children, especially older boys, caused by energy-consuming farming operations and declining prospects in the county. However, one can deduce from the low illiteracy rate that almost all school-age children received some formal schooling.⁷²

By 1860, the year of Gordon' s birth, the communities of Glengarry had been developed by several generations of pioneers as examined above. The log school at present-day Athol, the model for the Twentieth School in *Glengarry School Days*, was built in 1859. It was located about one mile north of the manse, and attended by Charles Gordon from 1865 on. Let us compare the childhood of the fictional characters with that of actual children who lived in Glengarry at the time of Confederation.

The first person narrator describes the small one-room school house of the Twentieth School and the landscape around it. The school house is built of logs hewn on two sides. The cracks are "chinked and filled with plaster," which falls out during

the summer months. The holes "which always appeared on the boys' side, [are] found to be most useful, for looking out of the window [is] forbidden. Through these holes boys [can] catch glimpses of the outer world," the great forest all around. (13)

North and south in front of the school the road ran through the deep forest.... Here and there set in their massive frames of dark green forest, lay the little farms, the tiny fenced fields surrounding the little log houses and barns. These were the homes of a people simple of heart and manners, but sturdy, clean living, and clear thinking, with their brittle Highland courage toughened to endurance by their long fight with the forest and with a self-respect born of victory over nature's grimmest of terrors (25-6).

A mile straight south of school stands the manse, the hero Hughie Murray's home, and two miles north, the homestead of Thomas Finch, Hughie's friend.

On hot Friday evenings, the boys from school turn into the shady path beaten smooth "with the passing of many bare feet"(26). They always stop at the site of the old Lumber Camp. Soon, they are at the Deep Hole, or "Deepole", as they call it, where "the big creek [takes] a great sweep around before it [tears] over the rapids and down into the gorge"(29). After one hour of swimming and diving in naked, they dress and hurry home where much work waits for them.

The great forest around the Twentieth School is not awesome for the children, but rather their playground during noon-hour and recesses. It is for them a wonderful place "to live in, to know, and to love, and after days to long for" (14). In addition to the joy that Hughie has in nature, all roads and paths that wind right through the heart of the bush, in summer and winter, are filled with things of wonder and beauty (88).

Obviously Hughie loves this natural environment, and to be a farmer is his

present wish. He happily helps with potato planting and stone removing at the Finch homestead. The family produces the food and clothing necessary for their subsistence. The days are filled with work, for they each have their share to do, and bear the sole responsibility for its being well done. The work on the farm takes priority over school. Therefore, the children's school attendance is irregular, and the older boys go to school only during the winter.

The purpose of the school is to fit children for the struggle into which their lives will thrust them, so that the boy who can spell and read and cipher is supposed to be ready for his life work. (66-7) Moral education takes precedence over the study of the three "R's" as is indicated in the following speech given by Archibald Munro:

It is a good thing to have your minds trained and stored with useful knowledge, but there are better things than that. To learn honour, truth, and right; to be manly and womanly; to be self-controlled and brave and gentle--these are better than all possible stores of learning (74).

The moral value most frequently stressed in the book is obedience to authority. The fictional children also learn fair play through the shinny game.

The Twentieth School is the centre of the society. For instance, exam day, the greatest school event of the year, is also a social day for the community. Its excitement is shared by children and parents alike in the whole school district. The school house is cleaned and decorated by the pupils. Dinner is prepared by the girls and their sisters who recently graduated. Children come in their Sunday clothes.

Now let us see if the material about Glengarry life contained in *Glengarry School Days* has been corroborated by historical texts. In Gordon's childhood, much of

the land in Glengarry was still covered with forests. According to the 1861 Census, the percentage of cleared holdings of occupied land recorded in Glengarry was 36% compared to 62% in Durham, and 66% in York.⁷³ The percentage was apparently much smaller in the backwoods community.⁷⁴

The long struggle of the Glengarrians with the forest brought little change in the economics and life of the farmers, or in the appearance of the community. In the northern Indian Land (Concession 13-21) where Gordon spent his boyhood, 62% of the farmers held less than 50 acres of cultivated land and the remaining 38% had between 50 and 100 acres in 1860.⁷⁵ In the same year, 79% of the houses in Glengarry were log houses compared to the other Loyalist settlements, for example, 30% in Durham and 31% in York Counties.⁷⁶

One can deduce, therefore, that the typical Glengarry farmer in the 1860s was living in a log house, cultivating miscellaneous produce with the help of all his family members on a small farm. In contrast, the typical farmer in Durham and York Counties was living in a frame house, operating labour-saving machinery on a large farm and raising an increasing number of improved livestock as evidenced in the 1861 Census. Glengarry, unlike the progressive settlement to the west, never succeeded in expanding its economy beyond mere subsistence farming.

The fictional world of *Glengarry School Days* is peopled in the majority by Scottish settlers. The homestead of Thomas Finch, Hughie's friend, is typically Scottish. "Order [is] its law" (92). Order pervades the house and its surroundings. Another law rules in the household-- "the law of work." Each family member has his

or her "share to do, and [bears] the sole responsibility for its being well done"(93).

Donald Finch is an obstinate husband and father, "with a man's love of authority, and a Scotchman's sense of his right to rule in his own house" (93). After supper, he reads the Bible and says prayers in Gaelic. Then all sit in a happy circle around the kitchen stove. When Hughie spends a night with the Finches, the eight-year-old daughter performs a Celtic dance to Thomas' fiddle. The school educates children to fit this agrarian society, instilling in them a sense of Scottish identity and Highland virtues. According to Gordon, Glengarry folk, sturdy, industrious, patient, and courageous, were, like the fictional characters, mostly from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. They were conservative devoted Christians who paid reverence to the Crown and established religion. Both talking back and disobedience to the school master and parents were forbidden.

Glengarry men inherited a fighting spirit from past generations of wild Highlanders. Just as Gordon depicted the spelling match in the novel, the traditional love for learning and for competition usually carried the day. "All learning was, in fact, fiercely competitive and, despite its obvious shortcomings, stimulated many a sharp young mind," writes Gordon in his autobiography (*P.A.*, 17).

The collective attitude of Glengarrians toward sports during Charles Gordon's boyhood is vividly recreated in *Glengarry School Days*. The game of shinny is central to the life of all the schoolboys. Cravan, the master, coaches the Twentieth team in systematic play. Hughie, as captain, develops a genius for organization, a sureness of judgment, and tact in management as well as skill and speed in play. During the weeks

of training, the responsibility of his position also helps him conquer his weakness, which is his fiery temper.

These qualities assist him when his team plays against the Front, a formidable team in weight and muscle, which tries to win by foul play and breaks Hughie's ankle. Hughie falls to the ice but asks the master not to stop the game for him, saying, "We must win this game. We've only a few minutes. Take me back to goal and send Thomas out" (327). The crowd of the whole Twentieth section goes wild with joy after winning their great game.

As in *Glengarry School Days*, shinny was a favourite sport of boys in Gordon's generation. However, according to him, organized sports had been previously unknown in Glengarry. "Shinty or shinny, as we called it, was an importation from Scotland and was usually played on the hard beaten snow of the school yard" (*P.A.*, 19). A great transition in sports occurred in the last half of the nineteenth century. The concept of "muscular Christianity" originated in the British novels of Charles Kingsley (*Westward Ho*, 1855), and Thomas Hughes (*Tom Brown's Schooldays*, 1857).⁷⁷

Briefly, the essential elements of this timely gospel were that sports (especially team games) contributed significantly towards the development of moral character, fostered a desirable patriotism, and that such participation and its ensuing virtues were transferable to other situations and/or to later life.⁷⁸

The cult of athleticism permeated the public schools and universities of Victorian England and Scotland.⁷⁹

The doctrine of muscular Christianity was adopted in North America, too. In British North America, as in Britain, playing sports, especially team sports, was

considered desirable to test personal traits and skills.⁸⁰ Among pioneers, certain sports and athletic games nurtured "the manly qualities of robustness, mental vigour, determination, discipline, fair play, and integrity, and symbolically revealed that true success went to those who possessed these virtues."⁸¹ Team ball games became very popular among Victorian Canadians in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.⁸²

Another fact of childhood in pre-Confederation Glengarry portrayed in this novel is that of school attendance. Rev. Murray, Hughie's father, is the superintendent of education for the whole district. "Attendance at school [is] a sacred duty in her [the minister's wife] eyes"(200). However, seeing Hughie's distress and his recovery after his talks with the saintly Mrs. Finch, she allows her son to take leave from school to help the Finches with potato planting. Mrs. Murray believes that "leaving school for a time [will] be no serious loss, and a week or two with the Finches may be a great gain" (223). The big boys at the Twentieth School attend school only in the winter, and they leave school each time when they dislike the master.

As portrayed in *Glengarry School Days*, the school masters in Canada West were plagued by low average attendance rates and irregular attendance patterns throughout the 1850s and 1860s. "Many parents kept their children at home after taking a dislike to the teacher for 'scarcely any reason', in a large number of cases dislike for the teacher was well-founded."⁸³ Before the 1871 Ontario School Act by which compulsory attendance became law, schooling was not a high priority. Most children went to school for at least a few years but only when responsibilities were met.⁸⁴

In the fictional world, the violent master is dismissed from the Twentieth School,

while Thomas' father is condemned by the minister in his sermon for his son's revolt against authority and for the parent's neglect of duty toward his family. In the real world, "the teachers were instructed to pay the strictest attention to the moral and general conduct of their pupils. They were to take every opportunity to teach the principles of truth and honesty; the duty of respect to superiors, and obedience to all persons placed in authority over them."⁸⁵ There was a popular belief in the 1860s that corporal punishment in any form should be prohibited. However, to enforce moral discipline and to punish insubordination, corporal punishment was frequently applied.⁸⁶

Another issue in the fictional school is the female teacher. The feminization of teaching showed a marked increase during Charles Gordon's school years in Glengarry. The ratio of female teachers increased from 37.9% in 1865 to 46.7% in 1870. In 1871, the female teacher became dominant for the first time in Ontario history.⁸⁷

Charles Gordon confirmed his faithfulness to reality in his autobiography, commenting that "[a]ll that is set down in *Glengarry School Days* is true" (*P.A.*, 16). The fictional children, like actual Glengarry children of Gordon's time, little influenced by the outside world, are proud and content. "Living twenty-five miles from the railroad in the heart of the forest", Gordon writes, "we had little knowledge of the larger world" (*P.A.*, 21).

In 1867 Canada became a Dominion. I was seven years old. I don't remember hearing a word about this great achievement, even in the manse.... Life in the backwoods...of Indian Lands was immune from the influences, good and evil, of the great world outside (*P.A.*, 22).

Living in their closed world, Glengarry children were entirely ignorant of contemporary

peoples, "their thought, their manner of life, their systems of government" (*P.A.*, 18-9).

Childhood, as portrayed by Gordon in *Glengarry School Days*, is grounded in historical facts. As a Scot who had grown up in the county, the author colourfully depicted the people and their lives. One important feature of Charles Gordon's fiction is that it contains extensive documentation of social realities such as the way of life, social customs, values, and the nature of the community. The small log house of the Twentieth School symbolizes the state of the community at large, remote from progressive ideas of the era.

CHAPTER IV: TWO BOOKS SET IN THE MARITIMES

This chapter focuses on childhood in the Maritimes in the middle and late nineteenth century. It examines two sources in detail: the boarding school life of Nova Scotia in *The "B.O.W.C.": A Book for Boys* (1869) by James De Mille and an orphan child in a farming community on Prince Edward Island in the 1880s in *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by Lucy M. Montgomery. Maritimers, like the Glengarry farmers who were engaged in the lumber industry of the Ottawa Valley in addition to farming and fishing, earned their income from forestry.

(1) *THE "B.O.W.C.": A BOOK FOR BOYS* (JAMES DE MILLE, 1833-1880)

James De Mille was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1833, the third child of Loyalist parents. He died in Halifax in 1880 at the age of 47. James's father, Nathan De Mill (the family used De Mill, but James wrote under the name of De Mille after 1865),¹ was a prosperous merchant and shipowner in Saint John. Affiliated with the Baptist church, De Mill was active on the board of governors of Acadia College, a Baptist school in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.² James and his three brothers were educated at Baptist Horton Academy, a boarding school for boys in Wolfville, before continuing at Acadia College. The De Mill brothers' adventures at the academy form the substance of the "B.O.W.C." series. During his short life, De Mille wrote at least 26 books,

including popular novels and children's books.

Before entering Brown University in Rhode Island, James, with his elder brother Budd, set out on an 18-month trip to Europe in 1850. Italy was the most memorable country for them, and later it provided James with scenes and incidents for more than half of his novels.³ He obtained an M. A. from Brown University in 1854. After spending a year and half in Cincinnati, he returned home to help with the family's failing lumber company. At the same time, he opened a book store with a partner in Saint John, but it failed, leaving many debts.⁴

In 1859, James De Mille married Elizabeth Ann Pryor, daughter of Dr. John Pryor. Pryor had been the head of Horton Academy from 1830 to 1839 and then went on to become the first president of Acadia College, which opened in 1839. In 1860 De Mille was appointed professor of classics at this college. He then, in 1865, left Acadia to become a professor of history and rhetoric at Dalhousie College, Halifax, where he remained until his death.⁵

Thus De Mille established his academic career in the 1860s. Meanwhile, he was also determined to pay off his debts by the use of his pen. Therefore, he had to write what would sell. To this end, he chose the American market and publishers. He wrote for the readers of American popular fiction. He combined mystery and adventure, and stressed action and situation. Like typical American popular fiction of the time, most of his stories have a happy ending demonstrating that justice can prevail, the attitude shared by the community he portrayed.⁶

Several novels by De Mille appeared serially in American magazines before

being published as books. For instance, *The Dodge Club*, based on his trip to Europe, was printed in *Harper's Magazine* in 1868. This amusing novel of the adventures of an American tourist group (the Dodge Club) in Italy gave him public recognition with his American audience.⁷ He wrote at the rate of about two books a year for leading American publishers.

His novels, whether they were melodramas such as *Cord and Creese* (1869), comedies such as *The Dodge Club: Or, Italy in 1859* (1869), or historical novels such as *Helena's Household: A Tale of Rome in the First Century* (1867), turned out to be both popular and profitable as evidenced by their many reprints.⁸ De Mille, with his American style, publishers, and material, was able to successfully exploit the American market of popular fiction.

In general, there are many elements in De Mille's novels, such as action, humour, parody, eccentric characters and extraordinary situations. Guy Sylvestre writes:

De Mille's fictional style is engagingly rapid-fire and daringly extravagant. Like Twain and later Leacock, he endeared himself to his readers by such spontaneously witty and exaggerated sketches as "Minnehaha Mines". His reputation in this vein won him the distinction of being included in Twain's "Library of American Humour."⁹

De Mille's commercial success derived from his comic and sensational "potboilers".¹⁰

The main criticism of De Mille's popular fiction is a trace of haste shown in the majority of his novels and short stories.¹¹ W. G. MacFarlane comments:

The great fault with De Mille lay in the fact that he was too rapid in his execution. He dashed off everything at lightning speed and never thought of revision. His work was the rare product of a very fruitful natural genius, he did not resort at all to refining processes.¹²

He produced a large output of popular fiction for adults in his spare time from his teaching job, not to satisfy his artistic sense, but to appeal to public taste. As a result, he won wide popularity but not fame as a great author.

In addition to adult books, De Mille published about ten children's books between 1865 and 1877. During his lifetime, his work received little attention by the central Canadian press. In the 1870s, none of his books had been reviewed by the most influential Canadian periodical, *The Canadian Monthly*, or its successor.¹³

Two of De Mille's books were published posthumously: a Gothic social satire, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888), and a volume of poems, *Behind the Veil* (1893). In his review of the latter book, a New Brunswick writer, Charles G. D. Roberts, claims:

The name of de Mille [sic] is all too little known among Canadians. The recent growth of interest in Canadian literature has called forth many articles on our native writers, but in these articles de Mille's name seldom appears. Yet both the quality and the bulk of James de Mille's work entitle him, I think, to be ranked as one of the most distinguished of Canadian writers.¹⁴

De Mille's main contribution to children's literature is two series of adventure stories for boys. The first, the Young Dodge Club series, includes *Among the Brigands* (1871), *The Seven Hills* (1873), and *The Winged Lion; or, Stories of Venice* (1877). This series about a group of boy travellers was written in the same comic vein as *The Dodge Club*.¹⁵

De Mille's other series, the "B.O.W.C." (Brethren of the Order of the White Cross) series based on Canadian settings, contains the following six titles: *The "B.O.W.C.": A Book for Boys* (1869), *The Boys of Grand Pré School* (1870), *Lost in the*

Fog (1870), *Fire in the Woods* (1872), *Picked Up Adrift* (1872), and *The Treasure of the Sea* (1873). In the "B.O.W.C." series, De Mille draws on his knowledge of boarding school life, and adventures and events at Horton Academy. Compared with the Young Dodge Club series, the "B.O.W.C." series was notably successful due to its "sure-footedness and authenticity."¹⁶ The series proved that boys' adventure books set in Canada could succeed both in Canada and the United States.

The "B.O.W.C." books are significant in the development of Canadian children's literature for several reasons. De Mille employed an innovative style in children's literature. As *The New Republic of Childhood* states, "His style gives rise to the greatest surprise; it is chiefly staccato and conversational, quite in keeping with his boyish characters and unusual for its time."¹⁷

More importantly, the "B.O.W.C." titles were the first serial children's books by a Canadian author. They appeared before the British schoolboy stories, which became popular and highly commercialized in 1879. Interestingly, De Mille glorified neither the schoolboys nor manliness. Instead, he told for the most part, episodes of carefree, insouciant boys' life, and his stories "display none of the schoolboy cruelty--or intellectualism--that later characterized Kipling's famous *Stalky and Co* (1890); for their time, for Canada, they were startlingly original."¹⁸

George Patterson believes that the first two books of the "B.O.W.C." series, *The "B.O.W.C.": A Book for Boys* and *The Boys of Grand Pré School* are the best because the happy school days of James De Mille are conveyed.¹⁹ "Unfortunately," he wrote in 1941, "the youth of our country do not know these books and have little or no opportunity

to know them."²⁰ Similarly, Patricia Demers regrets that De Mille has been unjustly forgotten. She writes in *A Garland from the Golden Age*: "Though his books are quite uncharacteristic of Golden Age juvenile fiction...they are still appealing today."²¹

The "B.O.W.C." is the story of a sailing expedition around Minas Basin and the Bay of Fundy in May 1860 (135).²² The narrative focuses on five students of the "Brethren of the Order of the White Cross" (25). They are Bart Damer, the founder of this secret society, the Rawdon brothers, Bruce and Arthur, Tom Crawford, and Phil Kennedy. They experience a succession of life-threatening misadventures. The five B.O.W.C. members, seven other boys with Mr. Simmons, a math teacher, and Mr. Logan, an English teacher, are on the *Antelope*, a time-worn vessel, on a week's expedition, searching for minerals. On the first island, the B.O.W.C. climb a steep cliff to the summit. The rock under Bruce crumbles away but Bart and Arthur manage to rescue him. At the beach of Pratt's Cove, Capt. Pratt suddenly appears at the campsite and invites them all to stay at his farm house. The following night, the B.O.W.C. leave his house and sleep in the schooner, which drifts away. The teachers, Capt. Pratt and two boys set out for the rescue of the B.O.W.C. Pat, one of the four boys left at Pratt's Cove, opens every basket and trunk on the beach. In his disgust at finding nothing to eat but stones, he throws them over the bank into the water. When they return to Grand Pré, the schooner, unable to get to the wharf because of the low tide, runs into the mud flat of Grand Pré. The B.O.W.C. decide to traverse the two miles of mud. After a hard trip, they come back to school greeted by their teachers and all the small boys.

De Mille set his story in May 1860, the year when he returned to Wolfville as a

professor. However, the incidents and students portrayed are based on his experience as a student at Horton Academy 13 years earlier. To understand the communities where the fictional Grand Pré School and the actual Horton Academy were located, let us look at their history and how they developed.

The territory that is now the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island was named Acadia by the first French colonists who arrived in 1604. England also claimed the same territory and changed Acadia's name to Nova Scotia in 1621. However, the region changed hands many times through treaties and wars between England and France until it permanently fell into the hands of the English in 1713.

Significant schemes for British settlement did not occur for the next half century; in the meantime the Acadians developed self-sufficient agricultural communities along the Bay of Fundy. The Acadians were the majority at the time of the founding of Halifax in 1749. The British government demanded that the Acadians swear an oath of unconditional loyalty. The Acadians refused, and so, of about 13,000 Acadians, three quarters were expelled from the colony between 1755 and 1762. The expulsion of the Acadians was followed by successive waves of English immigration.

France surrendered present-day Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton in 1756. During the 1750s, about 7,000 British colonists arrived in Nova Scotia. With the end of the Seven Years' War between France and England, the colonial administrator of Nova Scotia recruited settlers in New England. As a result, up to 8,000 New England planters immigrated to what is now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick between 1759 and 1768.²³

The planters made an important contribution to the development of Nova Scotia, in occupying the land, establishing societies, and creating communities.²⁴ The first Baptist churches within the present boundaries of Canada were formed by ministers from Massachusetts at Sackville in the future province of New Brunswick in 1763 and Horton (later renamed as Wolfville, Nova Scotia) in 1765. The planters in Nova Scotia also had a strong effect on the economy of Atlantic Canada. For instance the "Planter settlement of Liverpool maintained close economic ties with Massachusetts and Connecticut, as did other townships."²⁵

Attracted by market opportunities in fish, timber, and farm produce and pushed by the pressure of population on the land in more densely settled regions, New Englanders flocked to Nova Scotia during the 1760s.... [T]hey were sufficient to make Nova Scotia a "new New England" and help bring the region into Boston's expanding commercial orbit.²⁶

Nova Scotia was integrated into New England's economy through the migration and aggressive commercialism of American merchants.

The planters were followed by immigrants from Ireland and Yorkshire between 1772 and 1774 and by about 30,000 refugee Loyalists fleeing from the Thirteen Colonies.²⁷ Fourteen thousand of the Loyalists settled on the north shore of the Bay of Fundy. Their petition for a colony separate from Nova Scotia was granted in 1784, and "New Brunswick" came into existence. Immediately, they established the city of Saint John, which was incorporated in 1785. Present-day Cape Breton also became the home of American Loyalists, and was separated from Nova Scotia in 1784. In 1800, about 75,000 or 80,000 people lived in the four British colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island.²⁸

Between 1815 and 1851, after the end of the War of 1812, about 55,000 Scottish, Irish, English, and Welsh immigrants came to the Maritime colonies. Cape Breton returned to Nova Scotia in 1820. The Acadians who returned after the Treaty of Paris (1763) received grants of land in the Memramcook area and became the nucleus of the Acadian population in New Brunswick, which dramatically increased after Confederation.

Throughout the Maritimes, these early colonists earned their livelihood from farming, fishing, and the timber trade. Ernest R. Forbes writes about the impact of the timber trade on New Brunswick during the first half of the nineteenth century:

Blessed with rivers which made accessible rich stands of spruce and pine, New Brunswick's squared-timber became a source of development leading to new settlement and giving its own peculiar cast to the economy and to politics and society. Population grew from perhaps 25,000 to almost 200,000 by mid-century.²⁹

Indeed, the timber trade "hastened the coming of English-speaking immigrants who crossed the Atlantic in empty timber ships returning to Canada."³⁰ The extensive forest of the Maritime colonies provided material for shipbuilding. Numerous shipyards on the rivers and coasts built both fishing vessels and full-rigged large ships.

The "Loyalist City," Saint John, located at the mouth of the Saint John River, grew rapidly as a shipping centre, controlling its vast hinterland along the 673 km river valley. Saint John, although not selected as the political capital of New Brunswick, grew as the commercial capital into the largest city in the Atlantic region and remained so throughout the nineteenth century:

In 1820, apart from a few shipyards, sawmills, and flour mills, Saint

John's secondary industry consisted of a wide variety of traditional crafts practised in dozens of small workshops. Over the course of the next three decades, in response to the needs of a rapidly expanding provincial society, the city and its environs was transformed into an important manufacturing centre.³¹

Along with the growth of the shipbuilding and sawmilling industries, various industries producing for local consumers flourished. "Nearly half of the industrial output of New Brunswick was produced in and around the city of Saint John."³² The similar process of transition from the merchant capitalist system into industrial capitalism occurred in the other urban centres in the Maritimes such as Halifax and Pictou in Nova Scotia, and Charlottetown and Summerside on Prince Edward Island.

For example, the 1851 Census by occupation of Saint John County reveals the economic diversity: 764 people were of the agricultural class, 720 were of the commercial class, 3,166 were of the industrial class, 87 were of the professional class, and 3,713 were not classified. Those engaged in the industrial sector were more than four times the number of farmers. If we see the population of New Brunswick as a whole by occupation in the same year, 46.8% was agrarian, 25.2% was non-agrarian, and 28% was not classified. The ratio of the first two was about 11 to 6.22.³³

Increasing numbers of parents from the non-agrarian classes sent their sons to boarding schools. Barry M. Moody writes: "Maritimers were increasingly aware of the changes taking place in the world around them and they expressed the growing conviction that they must not be left behind." He agrees with an 1838 editorial in the *Christian Messenger*, which said that if Maritimers had any desire to keep pace with the age in which they lived, "it was necessary to provide much better educational facilities."³⁴ The

number of Baptists rapidly grew in the Maritimes, and became the largest Protestant denomination. For example, in Nova Scotia, 42,643 people in the colony were Baptists, compared to 36,115 Church of England, and 23,593 Methodists in 1851.³⁵

The members of the Baptist Church strongly advocated common schools. The Nova Scotia Government passed in 1811 a School Act to provide a school for every community with more than 30 residents. Its objective was not realized but the number of parish schools increased. Although a special committee on education appointed by the House of Assembly in 1825 recommended free schools supported by general assessment, this goal was not attained until 1864.³⁶

Horton Academy, founded by the Baptist Education Society of Nova Scotia, had two leading objectives. One was training for the ministry, and the other was the general instruction of young men to fit them for their professional lives.³⁷ "The growing fear that the bright young men of the Maritimes would be lured off to New England for an education and never return was another reason for the establishment of suitable institutions in their own region."³⁸ Horton was chosen as the site of the Academy because of its natural beauty and central location, 75 km north-west of Halifax, which made it convenient for students from both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.³⁹ In March 1829, Horton Academy was opened with Dr. Asahel Chapin from Massachusetts as the principal. He was succeeded the next year by Rev. John Pryor, a native of Halifax.

The Baptists also fought for nondenominational higher education in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Their institutions at Wolfville, Horton Academy and Queen's College (renamed Acadia College in 1841) did not impose denominational tests

for students or instructors. Between 25 and 40% of the students at Horton Academy came from non-Baptist homes during the years after its foundation in 1829.⁴⁰ Rev. Pryor remained devoted to Horton Academy until 1839 and then joined forces with Dr. Alberne Crawley to found a college at Horton. The classes of Queen's College began in 1839 using the facilities of Horton Academy. Dr. Crawley and Rev. Pryor assumed a joint presidency until 1847. For the subsequent three years, Rev. Pryor was the president of what is now Acadia College.⁴¹ For his contribution to founding and developing Acadia College, Rev. Pryor received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the college in 1848.

We move now to a comparison of life at the fictional and the real boarding schools: Grand Pré School in *The "B.O.W.C."* and Horton Academy. The fictional "Grand Pré School, under the care of Dr. Porter," is "a highly popular and efficient boarding school" for boys (28). It stands on the slope "which yields to no other in the world for varied charms of land, sea, and sky" (28), and on its foot lies an "Eden-like" valley "sequestered from the world" and "full of that strange charm of repose that may so seldom be met in this busy age" (30). The majority of the students are unable to go home for the short spring recess, but "its advent creates the greatest delight" (11). Their happiness derives from the pleasant boarding house, decent diet prepared by Solomon, a kind-hearted cooking expert, mild discipline, and above all, the teachers' affection for, and parenting of, their students.

Dr. Porter, Messrs. Simmons and Long with their families live on campus and give the boys individual guidance. After running away from school twice, Bart has a

conversation with Dr. Porter.

What he said or did no one else knew; but his mode of treatment was so effectual, that Bart from that time forward gave up his wandering ways. A long composition was allotted him as a punishment, and Bart bore the penalty of his misdeeds like a man. After this he diverted his active powers into a more legitimate channel, and rapidly became one of the best scholars in his class (24).

Another student, Pat, is also given special care by the teachers. He begs Dr. Porter to admit him into the school, offering to pay his way by working. He can read and write well but is "intensely ignorant" (168) in many respects, and so he is chosen for the trip of the Antelope "to give him all the advantages possible" (169). When he confesses his misdeed of throwing away the specimens of precious stones, Mr. Long makes a hard decision between keeping the incident secret to save Pat from humiliation and asking everyone to help him search for the lost stones on the beach.

The younger boys in *The "B.O.W.C."* make mistakes caused by their ignorance during the trip. The older boys manage to survive misfortunes through their perseverance, courage, and energy. Pat has "not been at the school long enough to acquire anything like the general information which the rest of the boys [possess]" (168). The students of Grand Pré school "learn lessons in prudence and responsibility by encountering situations in which they must exercise their own judgement, while their teachers take advantage of the school's location by incorporating classroom learning with field trips and on-the-spot lessons in geology, biology, and local history."⁴²

Like Dr. Porter in *The "B.O.W.C."*, Rev. Pryor devoted his time and talents to education at Horton Academy, laying a solid foundation, both physically and

academically.⁴³ Horton Academy flourished, and the first boarding house was erected in 1831, to which two more residences were subsequently added. De Mille was at Horton Academy and Acadia College between 1847 and 1849, the years of Rev. Pryor's presidency of the college.

The boarding students were placed under the constant and careful supervision of the principal of the Academy. The rules for the government of the house and the scholars were clearly drawn: "The influence exerted is sought to be of the most paternal and affectionate character, but without vicious lenity;...and while perfect liberty of conscience is permitted, pious character is carefully cherished, and correct moral behaviour diligently enforced."⁴⁴

Considering that his special duty was to turn out educated Christian young men, Rev. Pryor was particularly concerned about the spiritual welfare of his students.⁴⁵ James De Mille and his three brothers lived and studied at the boarding schools in Wolfville during the formative period of their lives. They received both formal and moral education.

On looking back upon Acadia's 150 years, Dr. J. R. C. Perkin, President of Acadia University in 1988, said that Acadia was more than a place of academic education, it was a way of life in which the academic was part of a whole experience which includes the athletic, the cultural, the social and the spiritual....the extra-curricular activities at Acadia were an important part of the total picture.⁴⁶ The cruising about Minas Basin and the Bay of Fundy in *The "B.O.W.C."* is based on De Mille's experience at Horton Academy. W. G. MacFarlane's *New Brunswick Bibliography: The Books and Writers*

of the Province reveals that the custom of taking annual excursions by sail or steam still prevailed in 1895.⁴⁷ Therefore, Carole Gerson writes, "Education is presented as part of, not an appendage to, the experience of growing up," in the story.⁴⁸

In *The "B.O.W.C."*, as in the nineteenth-century Maritimes, two geographical features are very important in the shaping of children's mentality: the proximity to New England and the intimacy of the sea. The village of Grand Pré is a seaport on Minas Basin, which is the inner water of the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia. Every seafaring man has gone to Boston, lured by the high prices of potatoes, except Capt. Corbet, whose baby prevented him from having his share in the golden harvest (51). The close economic tie with New England is thus portrayed with a concrete example.

In reality, the boundary between New England and the Maritimes "had remained relatively undefined for generations" until the War of 1812. In the mid-nineteenth century, regional rather than national outlooks prevailed in New England and the Maritimes, reflecting "a multitude of historical and geographical links between the two components of this international region."⁴⁹

Living for the most part in isolated towns with their backs to inland North America, both New England and Maritime communities faced outward toward the Atlantic. Over many decades the people of this region shared a mixture of cooperation and rivalry within a common export-oriented economy based on fish and lumber. Many of the seaports on both sides of the boundary had become satellites of the region's one great metropolitan center--Boston. Though Americans jealously excluded Maritime shippers from their coastal trade, the level of economic and social interaction between New England and the Maritimes remained high. No great cultural chasm separated most New Englanders from Maritimers.⁵⁰

Thus the people of New England and the Maritimes had closely interacted with each other since the beginning of the settlement of the anglophone population. Andrew Spedon observed in 1862 that the people in Saint John possessed more American characteristic than of the British.⁵¹

The most striking aspect of American children compared to English children was the equality between children and adults. British travellers in the nineteenth-century described American children as precocious, lacking reverence for their superiors. In contrast, revering their superiors was one of the necessary ingredients of an aristocratically oriented society. The precocious child was "symptomatic...of the pervasiveness in American society of the principle of equality. In fact no generalization about America was made more forcefully or repeatedly by the commentators en masse than that the thrust of the American belief in equality...was ubiquitous; it extended into every corner of the daily institutional fabric of American life."⁵²

Willystine Goodsell points out the principle of the equality of man expanded to family life. He states that in the nineteenth century, "there is a mass of testimony...to the effect that children were accorded to an unusual degree that the relations of father and older sons tended to approach equality."⁵³ In a democratic American family as early as in the 1830s, "the father exercises no other power than that which is granted to the affection and experience of age."⁵⁴

American children were seen as very different from English children:

The children of America...have the qualities of their nation, simplicity, common sense, and self-reliance. They are not so bashful as English boys

and girls, and they are free from the little constraints of nursery etiquette which make so many English children afraid to open their mouths. They are also free entirely from that juvenile snobbishness which is still cultivated in English society, where boys and girls of well-to-do parents are taught to look down with contempt upon children of the poorer classes.⁵⁵

American children from 1845-1935 are depicted by British travellers as "saucy, self-reliant, wild, spontaneous, immodest, independent, demanding, irreverent."⁵⁶

The boys in *The "B.O.W.C."* are characterized by their democratic attitudes influenced by New Englanders living in an egalitarian society. Capt. Corbet, with his liberal mind, represents those who were influenced by New Englanders. He insists on sharing the enjoyment of taking care of his baby with his wife. "Wal, Mr. Logan," he asks, "I s' pose you' re kind o' blamin' me; but what could I de? Ef a man has a babby, mustn' t he nuss it?" (257) He is depicted as comic but wise, and takes an equal stance with both teachers and students.

For the pupils of the Grand Pré school, the teachers are like companions rather than authority figures. The teacher-pupil relationship is characterized by mutual respect and equality. During the excursion, the boys engage in friendly discussions with their teachers and are befriended by local people of their parents' age. For example, Mr. O' Rafferty, who accidentally encounters the heroes, treats them to breakfast, and says, "It' s fairly heart-broken I am to part wid ye;...and wid the hope that you won' t forget owld O' Rafferty. And many' s the drame I' ll be drammin' about yes, till me owld eyes gets a look at yes again" (149). Regardless of race, age, or social status, all men in the story are equal. Old Solomon, a black cook of the dormitory, is a member of the

B.O.W.C. No one exercises his authority over others and no one humbles himself. The boys in *The "B.O.W.C."* exhibit qualities obviously influenced by American traits of childhood of the time.

The sea also has a powerful effect on shaping the boys' minds in the story, reflecting the reality of the Atlantic outlook. The response to Dr. Porter's invitation to a week's cruise was sensational:

A hundred incoherent shouts and words like these burst from the boys as they dashed about in wild and frantic delight, overwhelmed with joy at the proposal to all of them. It seemed a thing so glorious that nothing of which the mind could conceive was to be compared with it.... It meant anything and everything, and far more than even their vivid fancies can very well portray (38-9).

Bart Damer was most delighted because his longing for the sea would now be realized. "His father was a merchant of the town of St. John, and Bart had gathered, from the atmosphere of his native place, a passionate desire to go to sea. With the idea of curing him of this fancy, his father had taken him to Grand Pré School" (22).

In his biographical study of James De Mille, Douglas MacLeod writes about the very important role of the sea in his life:

Saint John was a very busy port-of-call when De Mille was growing up there, and his connection with the sea and its commerce was more than simply that of spectator. His father was a shipowner, and James himself was gradually introduced to the mechanics of his father's lumber business. But he acquired something else even more important to a writer: a sense of the mystery of the sea and a fascination with travel.... The vision of young James extended to seas and countries far beyond the reaches of his home city.⁵⁷

According to MacLeod, De Mille "gives himself the name of Bart Damer and reveals his early love of sea" in *The "B.O.W.C."*⁵⁸

De Mille grew up in the middle of what is called by some historians the "golden age of wood, wind, and water."⁵⁹ "The most colourful and profitable days of Canadian shipbuilding were from 1849 to 1895, when many famous full-rigged ships and barques were built. In 1853 some 80 ships of between 1,000 and 2,000 tons each were launched in the Canadas and the Maritimes.... The shipping Register of Liverpool showed that more than 85% of the ships over 500 tons were built in Canadian shipyards."⁶⁰

In *The "B.O.W.C."* the boys as a group are portrayed as naive and reckless, causing one trouble after another. Although Mr. Long counts on the physical strength of Bruce who has "in him the germ and the promise of mighty strength and structure" (75), he is not as competent as Mr. Wade, Capt. Corbet's mate. The boys of Grand Pré School are physically and morally immature. Their misconduct is caused by their ignorance.

Obviously, children are inferior to adults in general. Capt. Corbet and Mrs. Pratt are wiser than the boys because of more life experience. "[R]egarding the boys with the indulgent smile of a superior being," Capt. Corbet talks freely with every boy. In his response to Bart, he says as a man "bein' a man old enough to be your feyther, an' a seafarin' man, too, an', what's more, a man that read his Bible" that the compass existed before the fourteenth century (285-6). Similarly, Mrs. Pratt takes it for granted that she, as an adult, will educate the boys who are inexperienced in the actual world.

In his *The Child and Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nature*,

Bernard Wishy defines the ideas of the child established during the period from 1830-1860:

The principles of maturity, to be learned through gentler nurture, were ideals worthy of children. The child had been increasingly viewed as an innocent but the aim of nurture was to bring that innocence to maturity and to leave childhood behind. The adult had confidence in his standards and raised the redeemable child to live by the same ideals (85).

Childhood was a preparation period to become a stronger and wiser adult. The goal of education at the boarding school was to prepare students for the wider world. De Mille shows in *The "B.O.W.C."* how the heroes learn through real life situations to become more thoughtful and prudent during the trip. As they do, so did De Mille, who matured at the boarding school into a young adult possessing a variety of qualities and skills and ready to smoothly function in society and to pursue his chosen profession.

With the increasing economic diversity, children began to lose economic value in the mid-nineteenth-century Maritime communities. Although the Baptist boarding school was a new venture in the region, it took advantage of an opportunity. Many parents who were pious Baptists expected their children "to pursue a responsible and where possible, rewarding career."⁶¹ During Rev. Pryor's time, Horton Academy educated a large number of young men of all creeds, and won the school high reputation.⁶² Many of the graduates of the Academy and the College later attained eminence, including a large number of lawyers, physicians, ministers of various denominations, and educators.⁶³ Some became judges, merchants, architects, geologists, engineers, legislators, and financiers.⁶⁴

Pat in *The B.O.W.C.* has "drifted, by some extraordinary chance, into the

school" (168). His very strong desire to get an education touches kind-hearted Dr. Porter. He becomes an industrious student gaining "the good will of the teachers; while his flow of good spirits" makes him "popular among the boys" (168). Horton Academy in the early years, like the fictional Grand Pré School, did admit scholars from less fortunate families who could not afford the tuition but strongly desired to be taught. However, such a case was unusual.

Secondary education was still limited to well-to-do families as shown by the following New Brunswick census figures. In 1851, there were 53,324 children between the ages of 6 and 16. Of these, 18,386 were in parish schools, but only 506 were in grammar schools. Of the school age children, 35.4% were in school with a very small number of them in grammar schools. The figures of Saint John County, a more urbanized area are similar: 35.6% of 5,598 school age children living in the county were in school, with 1946 in parish schools and 46 in grammar schools."⁶⁵

If only a few children received higher education, this tendency is important for the history of childhood reflecting the economic and social changes such as industrialization and urbanization. Children's economic contribution to the family economy began to wane. It was the turning point of children from an economic asset into an economic burden. With increasingly complex economic opportunities, more parents sent their children, especially their sons, to school for longer training. The school children as a group came to be conspicuous in society. Children's special needs and aptitudes were also beginning to be recognized.⁶⁶

2) *ANNE OF GREEN GABLES* (LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY, 1874-1942)

This chapter has attempted to reveal childhood in the Maritime region in the nineteenth century as reflected in children's fiction. We have seen historical, geographical, and social factors influencing boys' life in the region through De Mille's *The "B.O.W.C."* written out of his own experience. We turn now to the last children's author of this study, Lucy Maud Montgomery, the creator of Canada's most famous literary heroine, Anne. *Anne of Green Gables*, written by a "strongly regional writer,"⁶⁷ is especially interesting since it reveals what it was like to be a girl in a small community during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Montgomery was born to Hugh John and Clara Woolner (Macneill) Montgomery in the village of Clifton (later renamed New London), Prince Edward Island, on November 30, 1874. Both her paternal and maternal great-great grandfathers had immigrated from Scotland around 1770 and were the earliest English-speaking settlers on present-day Prince Edward Island.

After Montgomery's birth, her mother fell ill, and so her father moved the family to her maternal parents' homestead in Cavendish where Montgomery's mother died in 1876. From 1882, her father made several trips to Saskatchewan on a new career, and then in 1887 he settled there with a new wife. Montgomery remained in the care of her grandparents, Alexander Macneill, a farmer-postmaster, his wife, and their youngest daughter.

Montgomery started at the district school when she was six. When Montgomery was seven years old, two cousins, seven-year old Wellington and six-year old David Nelson, arrived to board with the Macneills while attending school. She enjoyed three happy years of companionship with them. In 1889, when Montgomery was fourteen years old, she began writing a journal which she would keep for fifty-three years until her death. The year of 1890 she spent with her father in Saskatchewan and during her visit she sent a poem to the Charlottetown *Patriot* which was printed.

In 1893, she entered Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown to study for a teaching licence. After one year of teaching, she went back to school, and in 1896 received from Dalhousie in Halifax a first class certificate in teaching. She taught in the villages of Belmont and Lower Bedeque on the Island. In 1898, her grandfather died. Giving up her job, she returned to Cavendish to help her 77-year-old grandmother with her work around the house and as postmaster.

For the next thirteen years in Cavendish, Montgomery established herself as a professional writer by publishing numerous poems and short stories in American and Canadian periodicals. It was during this period that she wrote her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), its sequel, *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), and two more books, *Kilmeny of the Orchard* (1910) and *The Story Girl* (1911). In *Anne of Green Gables*, she introduced Avonlea, the imaginary setting she was to use for the subsequent novels. In 1911, after her grandmother's death at the age of eighty-seven, she married the Rev. Ewan Macdonald, a Presbyterian minister to whom she had been engaged for five years.

The couple then settled in Leaskdale, a farming settlement fifty miles from

Toronto. Here, Montgomery fulfilled her duties as a minister's wife, mother, and popular author. Their first son, Chester Cameron, was born in 1912, their second son was stillborn, and their third and last son, Ewan Stuart, was born in 1915. She published books of poems, an autobiography, and non-fiction. She also wrote two adult novels, *The Blue Castle* (1926) and *A Tangled Web* (1931) as well as seventeen more books for children, eight of which were about Anne and her family. In 1923, Lucy Maud Montgomery became the first Canadian author to be made a Fellow of the British Royal Society of Arts. She was invested with the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by King George V, and admitted to the Literary and Artistic Institute of France in 1935. After her husband resigned from the ministry due to ill health, the Macdonalds retired to Toronto in 1936, where Montgomery died at age sixty-seven on April 24, 1942. She was buried in Cavendish Cemetery. Two books of her letters and the first two volumes of her journals (1889-1910 and 1910-1921) were published posthumously.

Mary Rubio, Montgomery's biographer, writes: "Montgomery's literary output was enormous - 497 short stories, 502 poems, 23 books, and 10 volumes (5,000 legal-size pages) of hand written journals publication of which began in 1985."⁶⁸ Rubio describes Montgomery as follows:

Canada has a strong tradition of regional writers, but Montgomery has been the most successful of all: she has created such a vivid sense of place in her novels that tourists from all over the world travel to see her native province, Prince Edward Island, making tourism its most secure industry.⁶⁹

Cavendish, a village of 200 on the north shore of Prince Edward Island, provided many a memorable landscape in Montgomery's stories. Recollecting her childhood in

Cavendish during the 1870s and 1880s, Montgomery wrote: "I have written at length about the incidents and environment of my childhood because they had a marked influence on the development of my literary gift. A different environment would have given it a different bias." She concluded: "Were it not for those Cavendish years, I do not think *Anne of Green Gables* would ever have been written."⁷⁰

Montgomery finished writing the book in October 1905, and sent the manuscript of her novel to several American publishers. *Anne of Green Gables* was published by the S.C. Page Company of Boston in June 1908. "The book instantly appealed to an incredibly large market, and one not limited to girls."⁷¹ Of sixty reviews she received for the first edition, according to Montgomery, "fifty-five were kind and flattering beyond my highest expectations."⁷²

Here is a literary bouquet full of life and naturalness and quiet humour and pathos. (Chicago *Record Herald*)

One of the most delightful characters in juvenile fiction--with graceful touches of fancy and in an original and captivating vein of humour. (Philadelphia *North American*)

A very engaging miss. She is too precocious a youngster for real life but very diverting as a book heroine. The story is fresh and entertaining and the author is to be congratulated on her maiden effort. (Boston *Budget*)⁷³

Mark Twain wrote Montgomery that in *Anne* she had created "the dearest, and most loveable child in fiction since the immortal Alice."⁷⁴ *Anne of Green Gables* ran through thirty-two editions in its first five years.⁷⁵

However, Montgomery as a author had three strikes against her. Mary Rubio explains: "She was a female writer, she wrote for the children's and young women's

market, and her books were extremely popular."⁷⁶ Academic critics assumed that best-selling children's books could not have literary merit. *Anne of Green Gables* and Montgomery were neglected by scholars and literary critics until the 1970s; during the 1970s many studies on the book were published.⁷⁷ *Anne of Green Gables* has also been studied in several academic theses since then. Since the publication of Montgomery's journals in 1985 and 1987, which brought her complex inner life to light, Montgomery's life has become a matter of great interest to scholars.

"In spite of the large number of books Montgomery wrote," Jon C. Stott and Raymond E. Jones state, "she is best remembered for one book and its title character. In *Anne of Green Gables*, she undoubtedly created her finest work."⁷⁸ In the 1990s, Anne Shirley is still "the best known fictional character in Canadian history, and *Anne of Green Gables* has been read by more people than any other Canadian book."⁷⁹ The book has been translated into more than 15 languages. For instance, the first Japanese edition, *Akage-no Anne*, (Anne with Red Hair) appeared in 1954. Shinchosha, its publisher, has "sold more than 2.5 million copies, and its 10 Anne titles have been purchased by over 13 million Japanese."⁸⁰

Anne of Green Gables is set in a small late-nineteenth-century community, Avonlea, on the north shore of Prince Edward Island. An omniscient third person narrator tells the story of an orphan girl, Anne Shirley, from the age of 11 to 16. Marilla and her brother Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables farm receive a girl, Anne Shirley, from an orphan asylum even though they had asked for a boy, and they decide to raise her. However, it takes a while for Anne to settle in. When a busybody neighbour, Mrs.

Lynde, comments on Anne's looks as "skinny and homely", "freckles" and "hair as red as carrots," Anne loses her temper. She is wrongly accused of stealing Marilla's amethyst brooch, but the brooch is later found. After three weeks at school, Anne breaks her slate on the head of Gilbert Blythe because he calls her "carrots" while holding the end of her long braid. Anne invites Diana, her best friend, for tea and serves her currant wine mistaking it for raspberry cordial. As a result, Mrs. Barry prohibits Diana's friendship with Anne until she saves Diana's sister's life.

Anne learns lessons through various mistakes: she flavours a cake with anodyne liniment; she breaks her ankle by falling off the roof while playing a game of "dare", she almost drowns while acting a romantic role at a pond; and she tries to dye her hair black but it turns out green. These mistakes help to cure her of such shortcomings as carelessness and vanity. In one year at Queen's College Anne obtains a First Class Teaching Licence and an Avery scholarship. Matthew suddenly dies and Marilla arranges to sell Green Gables Farm and board somewhere. Anne gives up going to Redmond College and decides to live with Marilla. Gilbert withdraws from his teaching post in Avonlea so that Anne can take it. She forgives his joke of five years earlier. The two good enemies become good friends.⁸¹

To understand the communities in which Anne and Montgomery were raised, let us look at the history of these places and how they developed. Nearly two centuries after Jacques Cartier's exploration of the present-day Prince Edward Island in 1534, French settlement of the island (named île St-Jean) began in 1720. The expulsion of the Acadian population in 1755 was followed by British colonization. The name of the

island was anglicized to the Island of Saint John.

The colonial government adopted the proprietary system of landholding, expecting quick settlement by immigrants and capital brought by proprietors.⁸² In 1767, the Island was divided into 67 Lots. Sixty-four of them were distributed to proprietors in England by lottery.⁸³ "Loyalists, Scots, Irish, and Acadians who made their way [to P.E.I.] found it impossible to gain title to lands they often worked hard to improve."⁸⁴ An 1838 letter from Lord Durham, the newly appointed Governor of all British North America Colonies, to Lord Glenelg, the Secretary of the British Colonial Office, confirms the slow development and settlement: "The absent proprietors neither improve the land, nor will let others improve it. They retain the land, and keep it in a state of wilderness."⁸⁵ As the tenant farmers' protest movement increased, land reform became a major public issue.⁸⁶

In spite of the unfavourable land system, the population grew dramatically with the influx of Loyalists after the American Revolution, and more significantly with Scottish immigrants who were the majority of the newcomers in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The predominant Scottish population secured the supremacy of the Presbyterian Church on the Island.⁸⁷ In 1799, the island was renamed Prince Edward Island to honour Prince Edward, who was stationed with his army in Halifax at the time. The population increased from about 4,000 in 1798 to 62,000 in 1850.⁸⁸

Responsible government was granted to the colony in 1851, and George Coles, a Reformer, headed the first elected administration. During his first term as Premier, he extended the franchise to all adult males, established a free public school system, and

enabled the government "to purchase large landed estates and sell them to the occupying tenants and squatters."⁸⁹ The Free Education Act of 1852 established 475 school districts of approximately five square miles each so that children could walk to schools which were centrally located. Each district was entitled to at least a one-room school for grades 1-10 taught by one teacher. The district schools were governed by locally elected school boards whose responsibilities included hiring teachers. Children's ethnic and religious backgrounds were considered. "With homogeneous ethnic and religious districts, a firm association between schools and social communities was created."⁹⁰ By the Public School Act of 1877, school attendance of children from 8 to 13 for at least 12 weeks per year was made compulsory.⁹¹

Most Islanders were farmers in Montgomery's time. Of the total population, 85.5% was still rural in 1891.⁹² The Island farmers, like those in other Canadian provinces, commonly acquired British orphan children. Farmhands were not easily obtained, and the demand for British orphan children was always in excess of the supply.⁹³ Through organized juvenile emigration sponsored by a number of receiving centres (homes), 2,000 boys and girls were shipped out between 1868 and 1874, and scattered upon the farms of the Maritime provinces, Québec, and Ontario.⁹⁴ For the ten years between 1871 and 1881, the number of orphanages in Canada doubled from twenty-three to forty-six.⁹⁵ The largest agency in this field, the Dr Barnardo Homes, brought over 25,000 children to Canada from 1868 to 1923.⁹⁶ Between 1868 and 1925, as many as 80,000 of them, known as "Home Children" or "Barnardo boys/girls", were sent to Canada for "adoption" (i.e. the placement of homeless children) by rural families.⁹⁷

The arrival of immigrant children in rural communities in Prince Edward Island was quite frequent in those days.⁹⁸ Montgomery's mother's first cousin and her husband had applied for a boy, but they concluded that a girl was sent since no boy was available. The name of this girl was Ellen, and the people of Cavendish knew that Ellen and her brother Ray, who arrived on the same train from Halifax in 1892, were "Home Children". Montgomery confessed:

In the spring of 1904 I was looking over this notebook in search of some idea for a short serial I wanted to write for a certain Sunday School paper. I found a faded entry, written many years before: "Elderly couple apply to orphan asylum for a boy. By mistake a girl is sent them."... Then the thought came, "Write a book. You have the central idea. All you need do is to spread it out over enough chapters to amount to a book...." The result was *Anne of Green Gables*.⁹⁹

Anne's life as a household drudge at two foster homes before her coming to Green Gables implies the possible plight of these child immigrants.

Montgomery refuted an assumption of Ellen as the model for Anne. She wrote in her journal, "There is no resemblance of any kind between Anne and Ellen Macneill who was one of the most hopelessly commonplace and uninteresting girls imaginable."¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, she interwove reality and fiction into the book. She wrote:

Any artist knows that to paint *exactly* from life is to give a false impression of the subject. *Study* from life he must, copying suitable heads or arms, appropriating bits of character, personal or mental idiosyncracies, "making use of the real to perfect the ideal." But the ideal, his ideal, must be behind and beyond it all. The writer must *create* his characters, or they will not be life-like.¹⁰¹

Montgomery wrote: "Cavendish is to a large extent *Avonlea*" and "Anne's naming

places was an old one of my own. I named all the pretty nooks and corners about the old farm."¹⁰²

The lives of Anne and her creator are parallel in many ways: Anne is raised by an elderly spinster and her brother at Green Gables. She is a solitary child. She is trained by Marilla who is reserved, narrow-minded, and has a rigid conscience. Uncompromisingly, Marilla orders Anne to ask Mrs. Lynde to forgive her rude behaviour despite the fact that Anne insists "I can't say I'm sorry when I'm not" (77-8).

Similarly, Montgomery was brought up by her grandparents in a Cavendish farmhouse surrounded by apple orchards; the 10-year-old Montgomery had no young companions; and also experienced isolation. She felt, "In material respects [my grandparents] were good and kind to me and I am sincerely grateful to them, but in many respects they were unwise in their treatment of me."¹⁰³ Her grandmother was extremely strict with her:

She was forced by her grandmother to kneel on the floor and pray to God to be forgiven for being such a bad girl. Grandmother "meant well," but could never have pictured the impotent anger and "queer sense of degradation" the child was feeling at what was an invasion of personal privacy and dignity.... "Something inside me was outraged.... To force a human soul to utter words of prayer and contrition when not in a fit state to do so--when stormy rebellion and bitterness filled it!"¹⁰⁴

Marilla gives Anne religious training and teaches her house work so she can become a conventional woman. Neighbouring Rachel Lynde and Mrs. Barry join forces to socialize Anne. The stability of Avonlea as a homogeneous community is thoroughly maintained by these models of womanhood. They "are purveyors of the moral and religious ethos which controls the lives of Montgomery's heroines. It is a highly

ritualised society, supported on the twin pillars of church and work.”¹⁰⁵

Montgomery, too, felt the oppression of living in a patriarchal closely knit society. As Janice K. Keefer observes:

Montgomery was able to communicate in a work like *Anne of Green Gables* not an adulterated idyll of childhood, or a harmonious pastoral symphony, but rather, the inescapable injustices, malice, and authoritarianism to which children are heir even in the pleasantest of physical surroundings.¹⁰⁶

According to F. P. Bolger, “The experiences of a temperamental and imaginative girl in an exceptionally strict environment were almost inevitably bound to be traumatic. Her literary success, however, is proof positive that she skilfully managed to make a balanced adjustment.”¹⁰⁷

Anne, like Montgomery, suffers from not having her desires understood. Beauty-loving Anne is occasionally reproached by stern and practical Marilla who tries to correct Anne’s vanity. Anne is disappointed with new dresses made by Marilla because none of them has puffed sleeves. They don’t look pretty in Ann’s eyes.

“Pretty!” Marilla sniffed. “I didn’t trouble my head about getting pretty dresses for you. I don’t believe in pampering vanity, Anne, I’ll tell you right off. Those dresses are good, sensible, serviceable dresses, without any frills or furbelows about them, and they’re all you get this summer.... I should think you’d be grateful to get most anything after those skimpy wincey things you’ve been wearing” (87-8).

On her way to church, Anne decorates her sailor hat with wild roses and buttercups. It is, according to Marilla, “ridiculous” and Anne is “the most aggravating child” (94). At Sunday school, when she finds that every girl in her class has puffed sleeves, she feels

that life is "really not worth living without puffed sleeves" (91). Matthew later recognizes the way Marilla dresses Anne is "positively ridiculous" (215).

Montgomery also wanted to be like other children: when she first went to school, "she so much resented in the company of barefoot fellow pupils" having to wear buttoned boots; and "mortification and teasing had to be endured with the wearing of 'baby' pinafores, detestable long sack-like garments with the sleeves that no other child wore."¹⁰⁸ She also felt deprived of the enjoyment of a schoolyard lunch, sitting in sociable groups under playground trees like children from more distant homes. She had to go home for midday dinner.¹⁰⁹

Like Montgomery, Anne turns to nature, daydreaming and books for solace. Anne is enchanted by the natural beauty of Avonlea. By naming each tree and other natural object, she personifies it. In her imagination, she can live in another more exciting or pleasant world. In addition, Anne has a taste for literature, which also helps relieve her loneliness. Anne's unusual intelligence comes from her random reading. Reading, however, is not a universal value; examine, for instance, Diana's mother's reluctant attitude toward her daughter's reading. "This is my little girl, Diana," Mrs. Barry says, "Diana, you might take Anne out into the garden and show her your flowers. It will be better for you than straining your eyes over that book." (96)

Montgomery, like Anne, gloried in the scenery of Cavendish, and during her college life she felt a desire to return to the Island. Despite all the frustrations she experienced in her home life, Montgomery was subject to overwhelming homesickness whenever she was away from the Macneill homestead. Her own room, the village life,

and above all her nearness to the seashore and access to the unique beauty of the Island hills and fields and woods--these constituted the pull of home.¹¹⁰

Although she was lonely and isolated, Montgomery often lived a richly imaginative life. "I had, in my vivid imagination," she said, "a passport to the geography of Fairyland."¹¹¹ Montgomery, like Anne, entertained herself by reading. She "was a great reader and devoured every book [she] could lay hands on no matter what it was. Novels were taboo but fortunately there was no ban on poetry."¹¹²

Little Cavendish...was not a backwater. Her community had an active "lending library" of continental and American books; in addition, periodicals flowed up from the United States giving the latest trends in fashion, home decoration, household management, as well as political and other events of the day.... Montgomery grew up a lively, impetuous, but bookish child, and her framing of her own ideals of womanhood were as much influenced by the heroines she read about in fiction as by the people around her.¹¹³

Education and career choices are limited for Anne due to her gender. Marilla believes "in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not" (262). Anne is bright and diligent at school, attends Queen's College for one year, and becomes a teacher in a local district school. Among her Avonlea classmates:

Jane and Ruby are just going to study to be teachers. That is the height of their ambition. Ruth says she will only teach for two years...then intends to be married. Jane says she will devote her whole life to teaching and never, never marry because you are paid a salary for teaching, but a husband 'won't pay you anything, and growls if you asks for a share in the egg and butter money.... Moody Spurgeon is going to be a minister.... Charlie Sloane says he's going to go into politics and be a member of Parliament (263-4).

Anne tells Marilla that Mr. Allan, a young minister, "says everybody should have a purpose in life and pursue it faithfully" (262). She asks: "If I were a man I think I'd be a minister.... Why can't women be ministers, Marilla? I asked Mrs. Lynde that and she was shocked and said it would be a scandalous thing. But I can't see why. I think women would make splendid ministers" (270).

Montgomery's life course was, like that of Anne, limited by her gender. John Demos points out the profound influence of economic and social changes on American families and women's status.

Then came the nineteenth century, with its massively transformed human ecology--and, for women, a severe loss of status and function.

"Homemaking" proved to be a form of domestic imprisonment; polite culture was sheer vapidty; public life remained (more than ever) off limits. And when, at mid-century, organized feminism was born, it expressed an anguished cry from the depths of oppression.¹¹⁴

In Canada, new opportunities for paid employment had been created for women in a number of areas by the 1860s, but "educational and social trends blocked their employment in others, most notably in the learned professions."¹¹⁵

Mary Rubio writes:

Men in her family who had sufficient intellect were sent off the island to get good educations but she knew that as a woman, she could not expect her grandfather to educate her. She grew up with a strong feeling for the many "traditions" in her family. But she also knew that as a woman, she was expected either to marry or to earn her own living, and there were few ways besides country-school teaching that a woman could do that.¹¹⁶

However, although teaching was "the obvious career for a bright, articulate girl" Montgomery's grandfather had antipathy for a female teacher. Therefore, he was

unwilling to pay to send his sixteen-year-old granddaughter to Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown for a teachers' training course.¹¹⁷ In contrast, her "schoolmate Nate Lockhart could plan to go to Acadia University in preparation for professional life as a lawyer."¹¹⁸ When her father and grandmother promised to pay expenses for a teachers' training course, she returned to the Cavendish district school to prepare for the college entrance examination.

Montgomery managed to finish the two-year curriculum at Prince of Wales College in a single year. In 1894, she found a teaching position in Bideford, 66 miles west of Cavendish. She earned enough money for a further year of college education. In spite of her grandfather's disapproval, her grandmother paid her school expenses for one year at Dalhousie in Halifax. At the end of the year her money ran out. No support for a promising young scholar was forthcoming from her prosperous relatives.¹¹⁹

Anne both resists and conforms to social conventions of the period just as Montgomery did. Her "forte was writing humorously of the collisions that occurred when rebellious heroines (who were interesting because they were always getting into 'scrapes') upset the standard notions of social propriety."¹²⁰ However, Anne learns to conform to the social standards of girlhood. After one year at Green Gables, Anne makes fewer mistakes than before; in three years she becomes "real steady and reliable" (268). Thus she is fully socialized.

Anne feels unwanted on her arrival at Green Gables, but her emotional attachment to Green Gables is very strong as seen in her many dialogues: in the beginning of the story, she promises Marilla, "I'll do and be anything...if you'll keep me" (55).

Returning home from Charlottetown, she says, "I've had a splendid time,...and I feel that it marks an epoch in my life. But best of all was the coming home" (256). A quiet and thoughtful Anne at the threshold of adulthood tells Marilla that the little Anne whom Marilla is missing "will love you and Matthew and dear Green Gables more and better every day of her life" (296). When Marilla tells Anne of the plan to sell Green Gables, Anne responds, "Nothing could be worse than giving up Green Gables....Nobody could love it as you and I do--so we must keep it" (324-5). The home which provided her with security, stability, and much happiness is of utmost importance.

Therefore, Anne is willing to give up the hard-won scholarship to stay home with Marilla after Matthew's death. Montgomery writes: "Many people have told me that they regretted Matthew's death in *Green Gables*. I regret it myself.... But when I wrote it I thought he must die, that there might be a necessity for self-sacrifice on Anne's part."¹²¹ Anne decides to stay at Green Gables and study at home every evening. "The joys of sincere work and worthy aspiration and congenial friendship" are to be hers (330).

Montgomery, like Anne, was motherless. She felt deserted by her father, and saw herself as a vulnerable, homeless child. Montgomery's journal revealed the difficulty of coping with life at puberty. She resented her excessively strict and repressive upbringing. On the surface, however, she grew up to be an efficient housekeeper. After her grandfather's death, Montgomery, like Anne, returned home to take care of her grandmother who had generously provided a home for her, and who was now too old to live alone. Her grandfather had left the house and farm to his son living on the farm next-door, but allowed his wife to live at her own home as long as she could

maintain it. Montgomery believed that it was her responsibility to help her grandmother. Self-sacrifice was an important female virtue along with propriety, diligence and thriftiness.

To win popularity, it was necessary for her to present "a surface reinforcement of all the prevailing ideologies which her early 20th century audience demanded," writes Mary Rubio:

[B]eliefs, for instance, that women's place was in the home and that they should confine their activities to the domestic sphere; that they should be subservient to men; that female heroines should be sexless, refined "ladies" of spiritual purity who conformed to society's expectations; that any "bad" girls should be punished with bad fortune or death; that the ideal closure for a "good" young girl's story must be marriage. Montgomery's society and readership were patriarchal, whether we look at the largely Presbyterian Prince Edward Island about which she wrote or at the multi-denominational world-wide readership which devoured her novels.¹²²

The tone of the story is, however, dominated by Anne's cheerful optimism. Montgomery's "books were substitutes for a glowing life she was unable to lead; at some level, too, they were angry attacks on the life in which she felt trapped. In her journal, few adjectives appear so frequently as 'bitter.' " "Thank God," she wrote, "I can keep the shadows of my life out of my work. I would not wish to darken any other life -- I want instead to be a messenger of optimism and sunshine."¹²³

The reasons for the popularity of *Anne of Green Gables* are not only the beautiful landscape of Prince Edward Island, Anne's charming personality, and exciting incidents. The strengths of *Anne of Green Gables* lie deeper. Based on her own experience in her journal and memory, Montgomery created life-like characters and

scenes. Behind these are her ideals of family, society, and childhood. Avonlea is a microcosm of the turn-of-the-century Prince Edward Island communities. Margaret Atwood comments that "for a Canadian woman - once a Canadian girl - *Anne* is a truism. Readers of my generation, and of several generations before and since, do not think of *Anne* as 'written.' It has simply always been there."¹²⁴

In addition, the success of *Anne of Green Gables* lies in Montgomery's sympathetic treatment of children. She wrote it from Anne's point of view to show children's needs. It is one of the landmarks of children's books which reflects the prevailing view of childhood in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The "acceptance of childhood and adolescence as distinct phases in the human life cycle eventually affected the literature that was written specially for children....authors of children's books even started to judge society by how well it treated the children..., rather than judging children by how well they adapted themselves to society's expectations."¹²⁵ The interaction of Avonlea children with the main socialization agents, the family, the community, the school, and the church is vividly described from Anne's eyes. It is all these features of the book that make Anne immortal.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This work has pursued two main objectives: the first has been to analyze the lives of fictional characters in five major nineteenth-century realistic children's novels set within present-day Canada; the second has been to show them in an historical light. The primary children's books studied were *Canadian Crusoes* (1852) by C. P. Traill, *The Young Fur-Traders* (1856) by R. M. Ballantyne, *Glengarry School Days* (1902) by C. W. Gordon, *The "B.O.W.C."* (1869) by J. De Mille, and *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by L. M. Montgomery. Their authors were raised in a piously religious middle-class environment. The periods they portrayed and in which they wrote largely fell in the Victorian era (1837-1901). The powerful Victorian culture strongly influenced these authors and the settlers alike in the British North American colonies and post-Confederation Canada.

The key question to be answered is whether nineteenth-century Canadian children's literature reflected the reality of childhood. To reach an answer, we have seen how the fictional characters and actual children grew up with regard to their living conditions, familial relations, socialization processes and goals and values. All authors used the places they knew well as their settings, each of which were unique one from another: a backwoods settlement in Upper Canada, the Red River Colony on the Rupert's Land, a Scottish settlement in Glengarry County, a boarding school on the Atlantic seaboard, and a rural community on Prince Edward Island. The authors' backgrounds,

the impact of the Victorian era, and the nature of the societies they perceived resulted in both similarities and differences in the protagonists' childhood experiences.

We have seen striking contrasts in the lives of the heroes and heroines portrayed by the five authors. First, the different living conditions in the five books develop from the types of household economy and the stage of community development of each community. The Maxwell and the Parron families in *Canadian Crusoes* procure every necessity of life from nature. The children work together with their parents every day. Everyone's hard work, ingenuity and cooperation are crucial to the survival of the family. Their lives are characterized by hardship, privation, and the menace of the wilderness.

In contrast, the largely Métis population in the Red River Colony earn their livelihood from the Hudson's Bay Company. Charles and Kate Kennedy are children of a typical Victorian patriarchal nuclear family. The father who controls every aspect of family life is strong but tender. The Métis mother, aging and weak, dies early. The two children are sent to a boarding school to receive rudimentary education and to attain the manners and values of the British middle class. In this colony, there is a clear distinction of gender roles, men as breadwinners and women as housekeepers. Mr. Kennedy withdraws fifteen-year-old Charles and fourteen-year-old Kate from school, considering Charles ready to be an apprentice clerk, while Kate must learn to keep house and help her mother.

The Scottish settlement in Glengarry County at the time of Confederation is portrayed by Gordon as a closed community surrounded by a great forest. Although wild animals still live there, the forest is no longer threatening. Rather it is the

playground of the children who know every path winding through it. They attend school, but work on the farm has precedence over education. The big boys are at school only during winter, and withdraw if they do not like a schoolmaster. The farming operation in this community is small-scale and energy-consuming. The families in Glengarry are, like those in the Red River Colony, patriarchal with an authoritarian father.

The heroes of *The "B.O.W.C."* growing up in the residence of Grand Pré School enjoy comfortable living conditions, mild discipline, and varied extra-curricular activities. The school is isolated from cities and their evil influences and stands in the bosom of nature. The sea and land around the school provide the boys with testing grounds to develop their strengths and wisdom. The students, full of youthful vigour, appear to get along; neither teachers nor older boys dominate. The principal and other teachers live on campus and give the boys parental care.

The title character of *Anne of Green Gables*, set in the last decades of the nineteenth century, grows up in the established community of Avonlea on Prince Edward Island. Anne is adopted by a self-sufficient farmer and his sister. Here, since most living necessities can be purchased, farming operations are less intensive than in *Canadian Crusoes*. Father and mother in Avonlea have separate responsibilities. Father is responsible for farming and mother for running the household. Home training in morals, manners, and practical household skills is depicted by Montgomery as entirely the mother's role. Ordinary children of both sexes attend school for a longer time than those in the earlier decades of the century. Thus children's lives are very differently described by the five authors.

The relationships between the family members in the children's fiction studied are clearly portrayed. In the extended household of the Maxwells and the Parrons in *Canadian Crusoes*, harmony and happiness prevail. The parents and their children love one another, and cousins grow up as brothers and sisters. Also in Glengarry family life is very close-knit. In the Kennedy family of *The Young Fur-Traders*, despite the fact that the father gives way to fits of passion, he tenderly loves his mischievous son. In return, Charles regrets every time he acts defiantly against his father. He too loves his father, but his relationship with his sister Kate is closer.

In *Glengarry School Days*, mother-son relations are solidified by mutual trust and love. Both Thomas and his older brother adore their mother. Hughie and his mother are great friends; he shares all his secrets with her with one exception. In his suffering from a guilty conscience for stealing money, he thinks he will break her heart if she knows it. Understanding his feelings, she spares his confession, and promises to trust him as always. His sense of guilt is left to his conscience. Mothers, in the fictional Glengarry, are saint-like and the centre of the private domain.

The heroes and heroines in the five books are not uniformly socialized due to the distinct nature of the societies within which they live. The goal of socialization in *Canadian Crusoes* is to teach the qualities and attitudes necessary for survival in the woods. Children learn by practice, observation and parental guidance. The heroes aspire to become wise and strong farmers like their fathers. The boys of fifteen and fourteen years and the fourteen-year-old girl are similarly hardworking, resourceful, and brave.

The brother and his younger sister in the fur trade country portrayed by Ballantyne have a unique experience of socialization. Their authoritarian father exercises power over the education of his children. He retires to Red River Colony where good boarding schools exist. At Red River Academy, Charles Kennedy is given both the necessary academic skills and a civilized life style to become an efficient fur trader. His sister Kate is sent to the same boarding school where she learns to become a gentle-mannered housekeeper and the future wife of a fur trader.

The Glengarry children are socialized to fit into the steady farming community. The study of the three "R's" is not considered as important as moral education or maintaining a Scottish heritage. The father is responsible for any immoral conduct of his children. The worst misdeed is disobedience to authority figures such as the father and schoolmaster. Thrashing is exercised to maintain authority and correct misconduct. The goal of socialization in *Glengarry School Days* is making manly Christians.

In contrast with the boys at the boarding school in the same Maritime region, girls in *Anne of Green Gables* are trained to do housework and learn manners and religious practices from their mothers. Their role models, the respected women in Avonlea, keep their households perfectly and generously volunteer for the social good. Anne is socialized to conform to the ideals of womanhood. She becomes a competent housekeeper by the age of fourteen. The socialization agents influencing Anne include the home, school, church, community, peers, and books. New ideas obviously instilled by American periodicals influence her critical view of the conventional woman, and her educational and vocational ambitions.

All of the heroes and heroines are good Christians who are unselfish, honest, kind, and gentle. However, each author emphasizes different virtues. Traill stresses diligence, resourcefulness, and optimism as crucial to survival; Ballantyne glorifies unselfish and brave Christian manliness; obedience is the first consideration with Gordon; honesty, thoughtfulness, and prudence are regarded as important by De Mille; and propriety, diligence, and thriftiness are designated as female virtues by Montgomery.

The ideas of childhood, children's status, functions, and adults' attitudes toward them changed over time. In the earlier period as in *Canadian Crusoes*, children are not segregated from their parents. There are no differences between the lives of children and adults. The children's labour is the key to prosperity. The heroes and the heroine of the book have many siblings. They grow up early and marry young. Children are both emotional and economic assets to the Maxwell and the Perron families.

In the stories set in the mid-nineteenth century, schooling is the main occupation of childhood. The children in both *Young Fur Traders* and *The "B.O.W.C."* grow up at church-operated boarding schools. In addition to academic learning, the students receive spiritual, and moral education. They also acquire the common civilities of life at school. Childhood is the preparatory period for the independent life of boys. The heroes of *The "B.O.W.C."* stay at Grand Pré School from childhood to adolescence, and then go on to receive post secondary education. In contrast, Charles and Harry in *The Young Fur-Traders* start working at the ages of fifteen and fourteen respectively.

The Glengarry children go to day school where they get both formal and moral education. The older boys' attendance is sporadic, however, because they are needed at

home for endless work. The younger children too have some responsibilities at home. Strict Calvinist upbringing is practised in this closed Scottish society. Thomas' mother's secret ambition is to see him in the pulpit.

In *Anne of Green Gables*, the heroine makes blunders and ignorant mistakes, but she learns from them and never makes the same error twice. She quickly becomes a great help to Marilla. At the beginning, Anne is mischievous but pure-minded. Progressively she fits into the society, and her warm loveable disposition affects other people. For example, she brightens Matthew's life, and mellows stern Marilla's heart as she learns to love the little Anne with affection. The slim, grey-eyed child has become "dearer than anything on earth" to Marilla (202).

The four authors other than De Mille show how the heroes and heroines step across the threshold from childhood to young adulthood. At the beginning of *Canadian Crusoes*, we meet Louis who darts off in panic at the sight of the Indians. By the end of the book, he feels he is a man and it is no longer necessary to be afraid of a stranger on the lake. Catharine, too, after long sufferings, no longer feels herself a child. Her brave acts result in saving Indiana from execution. In *The Young Fur-Traders*, it is the father who decides when children become members of the adult world. Because of the encouragement of their father, Charles becomes independent and Kate settles in as a housekeeper.

In contrast, Hughie in *Glengarry School Days* psychologically leaves childhood behind when, in his early teens, he kills a bear at the cost of his pet dog Fido. In talking about the incident to his family, he gives most of the credit to Fido despite the fact that he

did a man's deed. For the first time in his life he feels it unnecessary to glorify his achievement; during that terrible hour of the battle against the bear, he "entered the borderland of manhood, and the awe of that new world [is] now upon his spirit" (252). Anne's maturity comes more gradually, and by the end of the book she is no longer a vulnerable orphan. She has matured into a smart, sympathetic, strong young woman, and decides of her own will to look after Marilla and Green Gables. All of the heroes and heroines are adolescents at the end of these books. Interestingly, *Canadian Crusoes* and *The Young Fur-Traders* end with the marriages of the heroes and heroines who have grown up early; while *The "B.O.W.C."* and *Glengarry School Days* suggest the continuity of the heroes' dependent lives, and *Anne of Green Gables* implies Anne's economic independence and romance.

In conclusion, as we have stated, the protagonists, the settings, and the kinds of problems faced by the characters are uniquely Canadian. Each author recreates a convincing picture of a representative Canadian child's life. The scenes of pioneer life, school life, and other activities are accurately described in the narratives. All of the authors wrote their children's stories out of their own experiences. The biographical studies and historical research have confirmed the authors' honest portrayals of Canadian reality in their works.

We have seen that the childhood experiences in the fictional and actual worlds match in each chapter. The comparison of childhood in the five books reveals the historically changing nature of childhood as a consequence of economic, social and demographic development in British North America. The shift from an agrarian

economy to diversified economic structures and the introduction of schooling have an enormous impact on the lives of the authors and characters. The potent influences of the ideas of Victorian childhood in Britain as well as the American democratic and practical views of child rearing are also manifested in the novels.

Contrary to some British and American critics of children's literature discussed in Chapter I, children's literature at least in the nineteenth century does reveal the actual experiences of children. As Elizabeth Waterston states, "children's books can be regarded as products of time and place".¹ The hypothesis that nineteenth-century Canadian children's literature reveals the growing-up experiences of actual children is justified in this study. The fictional world in Canadian children's stories can be seen as a microcosm of Canadian society.

The nineteenth-century Canadian children's books have not only literary merits but are also marvellous records of the Canadian people -- their lives and minds, and the factors which affected them. These books are indispensable for the study of the history of Canadian children because of the paucity of historical sources on this subject.

It is hoped that this thesis has provided some insight into Canadian childhood from a historical perspective. Canadian children's literature since its origins in the mid-nineteenth century has bequeathed us with a valuable document of Canadian childhood.

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