

The Historical Roots of Métis Communities
North of Lake Superior

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Introduction

This report was prepared at the request of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The terms of reference for this report included:

1. To prepare a report based on historical research on the Métis in and around Lake Superior, Lake Nipigon and Michipicoten, as part of the Métis Nation.
2. The general focus of the historical research will be on those members of the Métis Nation who lived, used and/or occupied the areas around upper Lake Superior and Lake Nipigon.
3. The particular focus will be on historic settlements including but not limited to, Fort William (Thunder Bay), Nipigon, Rossport, McDiarmid, Longlac, Geraldton, Terrace Bay and Michipicoten (Wawa).
4. The report will cover the political, cultural, social and economic history of the Métis living in and around the Upper Great Lakes generally and the Lake Superior/Lake Nipigon/Michipicoten region specifically, including its ethnogenesis, early influences and persistence.
5. The report will look at historic Métis patterns of use and occupation including resource harvesting, with a particular focus on Métis use of the fisheries on Lake Nipigon and Lake Superior region.

The study area includes the territory north of Lake Superior, from Sault Ste. Marie to Fort William/Thunder Bay, south of the height of land separating waters draining into Lakes Superior and Nipigon from those draining into Hudson's and James Bay. These boundaries are not intended to define a territory based on use or occupancy by a specific population, but rather to provide a geographical frame within which to study activities and populations over time. The study relies on documentary evidence only and does not include an oral history or interview element.

The precise genealogical and ethnic origins of much of the population of the area north of Lake Superior prior to 1821 are not clear, because of the sparseness of the documentary record from this time period. However, it is evident that there was significant interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the study region from the late seventeenth century onwards, together with the development of a distinctive way of life and economic structure drawing on

Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and newly-created elements. Because of the uncertainties surrounding the identification and genealogies of specific individuals involved in this way of life, I have chosen to call it a “fur trade culture” instead of ascribing a biologically-specific term, as it developed as a result of the requirements and characteristics of the fur trade. The available historical record strongly suggests that many of the participants in this culture were of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry, and that mixed-ancestry children were raised in this culture in increasing numbers in the study region in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many elements of what scholars have identified at a later period as “Métis culture” clearly emerge prior to 1821. Therefore, although I have not characterized this “fur trade” culture as being exclusive to mixed-ancestry people, it is directly relevant to the lives and identities of people and families labelled in later documents as “half-breeds” or “Métis”. I have also emphasized that this culture was transmissible to succeeding cohorts in ways that did not depend on genetics, so that even if individuals within the culture were highly mobile (a characteristic requirement of the fur trade), the distinctive elements of the culture developed and persisted over time.

Between 1821 and 1850, this distinctive fur trade culture and the populations associated with it continued to thrive, despite a reduction in the number of people directly involved in the fur trade and changes in the work environment. Families of mixed ancestry were raised together in this setting around the posts, and were joined by newcomers who were hired based on their familiarity with the skills and culture of the trade. “Half breeds”, “Canadians”, “Métis”, “voyageurs”, “freemen”, “engagés”, “servants”, traders and clerks were all a part of this way of life. Including both heads of households and families, people of mixed ancestry were the majority in the fur-trade community north of Lake Superior during this period. The historical sources reveal a strong sense of shared identity and traditions in both a larger fur trade community that extended from the Great Lakes to the Athabasca-Mackenzie, and a specific Lake Superior (Sault Ste. Marie/Nipigon/Fort William) community. The few outside non-Aboriginal observers that passed through this area between 1821 and 1850 could easily distinguish the members of this community both from themselves as Europeans and from the “Indians” or “Savages”, who with a few “half-breed Indians” participated as fur trappers and customers at the posts. Unfortunately, although we know that fur-trade marriages were being made and

families expanded during this period, the lack of birth, marriage or death records obscures the ways in which an interrelated community may have been developing genealogically as well as culturally. The few families for which we have genealogical data demonstrate a tendency for fur-trade families to marry within the culture and strengthen their connections over generations.

Terminology in research on mixed-ancestry peoples is often problematic. As much as possible, I have tried to follow the terminology used in the source historical documents, which may or may not reflect the words that people used to describe themselves. “Indian” is an unsatisfactory term that has become overlaid with legal and historical implications I do not intend, but I have used it in the absence of definite ethnological identifications for indigenous North American people who probably did not have any European ancestry. It is the usual term for such people in the documents from this time period. “Aboriginal” is a term I use as implying descent from indigenous North Americans. I have used the term “mixed ancestry” as a relatively neutral descriptor for people in the study area of mixed Aboriginal (which could include Métis) and non-Aboriginal ancestry. For non-Aboriginal people, I often use the term “European” to describe ethnic origin, without implying that everyone to whom I apply the term was born in Europe. “Canadian”, in this time period, could have different meanings depending on who was using the term. Prior to the merger of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, Hudson's Bay Company men used it in a generic way to mean anyone who was affiliated with the fur trade exporting out of Montréal. It was used in contradistinction to someone affiliated with the HBC, which exported out of Hudson's and James Bay. A “Canadian”, to an HBC author, could include someone born or living in the Great Lakes region as well as someone from the St. Lawrence River valley, regardless of ethnicity. Some North West or independent fur company authors narrowed the definition to mean a person descended from French settlers in New France (with or without Aboriginal ancestry). After the merger of the HBC and the NWC, “Canadian” could be used by HBC managers or visitors to describe someone hired in or with ancestry in “Canada” (which could include the Great Lakes), usually with some connection to the fur trade, without excluding the possibility that they might have Aboriginal ancestry. I have tried to clarify definitions in the text, following the context of the document, where necessary, but there are many instances where the precise ancestry of the person being described is obscure without further genealogical research. A person from “Hudson's Bay”, in HBC parlance during

this time period, was a mixed-ancestry person, usually the child of an HBC employee, born in HBC Charter territory (not necessarily on or near Hudson's Bay). Other terms, such as "half breed", "Métis" or "Creole" are shown in the context of the documents in which they appear.

Most of the historical documents that can be located today were written by people of solely non-Aboriginal descent. They wrote their descriptions as outsiders and with their own perspectives and purposes in mind. Although we get occasional glimpses of mixed-ancestry peoples' descriptions of themselves and their lives, much of what we read in the documents is mediated through observers who did not hesitate to interpret using their own standards and assumptions. Much of the everyday life and perspectives of mixed-ancestry people is missing from the historical documents, which were never intended to record them. The following report, based on these documents, should be read with that absence in mind.

Section I: The Early Fur Trade and Populations to 1821

The Fur Trade on Lakes Superior and Nipigon, 1600 – 1763

The roots of the fur trade, and contact between European and Aboriginal cultures, run very deep in the Superior/Nipigon area. By the mid-1620s, the French fur trade in the St. Lawrence River Valley was collecting 12,000 to 15,000 beaver skins per year in exchange for European goods. Much of this traffic was transferred through Aboriginal trade networks that carried furs and trade goods as far inland as Lake Superior. Europeans, both north and south of the St. Lawrence, were discouraged from travelling inland by the key Aboriginal intermediary traders that controlled major transportation routes, such as the Algonquin and Mohawk.¹

Between 1630 and 1655, epidemic diseases and warfare cleared the non-Iroquoian trading people with whom the French had dealt out of the area between the Ottawa River Valley, the St. Lawrence River, and the north shores of the Great Lakes, as far north as Lake Nipissing. Some of the people who had lived in this area travelled as far west as Lake Nipigon and the south side of Lake Superior to escape their well-armed and well-organized Iroquoian enemies. The disruption and conflict during this period strangled the fur trade of New France. The Jesuit order of missionary priests, who had come to New France in 1625, were the only Europeans allowed by the French and by Aboriginal peoples to enter the area west of the Ottawa River, and by the 1640s some Jesuits were living in Huron settlements (dispersed by 1650) east and south of Georgian Bay.²

In a brief truce period between 1654 and 1657, a convoy of Ottawa and Wyandot people displaced from present-day southern Ontario to south of Lake Superior came to Montréal to trade. The Governor of New France and the Ottawa/Wyandot agreed that a French trader, Medard Chouart des Groseilliers, would be allowed to travel back with Ottawa/Wyandot to their new territories. des Groseilliers returned in 1656 with the first European description of the

¹ R. Cole Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas of Canada*, Vol. I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 84, plate 35.

² Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 84 - 86, plate 35.

western Great Lakes region, and in 1659 returned to the southern Great Lakes with a Mississauga convoy, accompanied by Pierre Esprit Radisson. On this journey, they also gathered information from Cree people about the area north of the Great Lakes to Hudson Bay. The 1659 - 1660 expedition, however, was not authorized by the government of New France, and Radisson and des Groseilliers had their furs confiscated when they returned to New France in 1660. This event set off a series of transactions which led to Radisson and des Groseilliers engaging to trade on behalf of the English out of Hudson Bay, resulting in the incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670.³ The Jesuit order also returned to the field during the 1660s, and in May of 1667 Father Allouez visited some of the Jesuits' former converts, dispersed from Lake Nipissing, at the mouth of the Nipigon River.⁴ Around this time, some dispersed populations began making their way back to their original territories, and the French, bolstered by several hundred troops newly arrived from France, pushed back militarily against the Iroquois, leading to a peace treaty in 1665.⁵

Also at this time, despite official edicts to the contrary, individual traders known as *coureurs de bois* (wood runners) began travelling with Aboriginal groups back to Aboriginal hunting territories to the west after the groups came in to New France to trade. By the late 1660s, scholars estimate that perhaps 100 to 200 of these traders were operating in the upper Great Lakes (the *pays en haut*, north and south of the Great Lakes),⁶ a number that increased to as many as 800 (or one-fifth of the male population of New France) by 1680.⁷ The 1660s and early 1670s also saw the founding of several Jesuit missions near Aboriginal gathering places at Sault Ste. Marie, St. Ignace (in present-day Michigan, across the narrow Straits of Mackinac from Mackinac Island),⁸ and Chequamegon Bay (on the south shore of Lake Superior, near present-

³ Victor Lytwyn, *The Fur Trade of the Little North: Indians, Pedlars, and Englishmen East of Lake Winnipeg, 1760 – 1821*, (Winnipeg: Rupert's Land Research Centre, University of Winnipeg, 1986), 3.

⁴ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas of Canada*, Vol. I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 86, plate 35; Lorenzo Cadieux, "Missionnaires au Lac Nipigon", (Sudbury, Ontario: La Société Historique du Nouvel-Ontario, Documents Historiques no. 33, 1957), 32.

⁵ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 86, plate 35.

⁶ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 86 - 87.

⁷ Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: a Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis", *Ethnohistory* 25/1 (Winter 1978), 47.

⁸ The place name "Mackinac" has been through many permutations. I use it as a term for the geographic location now called by that name. Trading and military forts by the name of Michilimackinac have been constructed at different sites at that geographic location, and when I intend to refer specifically to the Fort I use that name.

day Ashland, Wisconsin). These missions attracted not only the Aboriginal targets of Jesuit conversion efforts, but the *coureurs de bois* travelling and trading through the Upper Lakes. Two Sulpician priests visited the Sault Ste. Marie mission in 1670 and noted that there were often as many as twenty to thirty Frenchmen there.⁹ As the years passed, these gathering places became semi-permanent villages. In 1695, French commandant La Mothe Cadillac described Mackinac Island as one of the largest trading centres in “Canada”, composed of sixty bark-covered dwellings housing traders with their Aboriginal wives and mixed-ancestry children.¹⁰ By 1700, this number had grown to 104 traders with their wives and children.¹¹

There is no doubt that many of these traders were operating on the north shore of Lake Superior and around Lake Nipigon, and some of their wives and children may have originated there. By 1673, a Jesuit missionary at Sault Ste. Marie reported to the Governor General of New France that the new English (Hudson’s Bay Company) trading fort on James Bay (Fort Albany) was drawing away “inland” Aboriginal people who had previously visited missions and traders on Lake Superior. Some of these people were reported to be from as far west as Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake. Daniel Greysolon Dulhut (an explorer-trader who had opened a trading post at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River in 1679)¹² proposed to the Governor the construction of a ring of forts to divert the trade back to French control, and he was given a commission in 1683 to trade and explore in the *pays en haut*. His first trading fort, as part of this plan, was constructed in the fall of 1684 on Lake Nipigon.¹³ It is not clear exactly where this post was located, although some evidence suggests the mouth of the Ombabika River.¹⁴ Dulhut’s choice demonstrates the extent to which the Lake Nipigon area was integrated into the fur trade (both

⁹ Ontario Historical Society *Papers and Records*, Vol. 4, “du Casson and Galinée: Explorations of the Great Lakes”, cited in Carolyn Harrington, “Development of a Half-Breed Community in the Upper Great Lakes”, paper prepared for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (n. d.), 13.

¹⁰ Quoted in Peterson, “Prelude to Red River”, 47 – 48.

¹¹ Peterson, “Prelude to Red River”, 48.

¹² Victor Lytwyn, “The Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade”, in Jean Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake: Three Centuries of Fur Trade History*, (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2003), 28. Historian Marcel Giraud identified the mouth of the Kaministiquia River and Lake Nipigon as “active trading centres” and “meeting places of the *coureurs de bois*” from as early as 1681 (Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West*, Vol. I [George Woodcock, translator, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986; originally published by Institut d’Ethnologie, Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France, as *Le Métis Canadien*, 1945], 98 -99.

¹³ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 4.

¹⁴ K. C. A. Dawson, “A Report on Lake Nipigon Fur Trading Posts”, report prepared for the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board, [1969], 8 – 11; see also Giraud, *Métis*, 99, 101.

the English trade to James Bay, and the French trade to New France) and represented a key strategic point in trading networks. An additional French post may have been constructed between 1684 and 1697, possibly north of Windigo Bay.¹⁵ It is not clear how long these Nipigon posts were in operation. Although some French trading posts (including Kaministiquia, but not including Michilimackinac/Mackinac) were closed by official edict in 1696 as a result of an oversupply of furs on the European market, unauthorized *coureur de bois* activity from New France and trading at the Hudson's Bay Company posts on James Bay continued.¹⁶

By 1717, the external situation affecting trade in the *pays en haut* had changed. France and Britain had signed the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, by which France recognized British claims to the Hudson's Bay Company's territories on James and Hudson Bay, and Aboriginal peoples of the interior were officially permitted to trade with either the French or the British. The oversupply of fur in Europe had been reduced (apparently, most of the stockpiles were eaten by vermin). Officially-sanctioned posts were opened at Kaministiquia and Mackinac, among other places. More traders from "Canada" than ever before flooded into the Great Lakes region to join the increasingly mixed-race population that had never left. In 1716, as the French completed work on an expanded Fort Michilimackinac and the first official trading licences were issued, an estimated 600 traders gathered there at the peak trading and transshipment time in the summer.¹⁷ During this period of official and unofficial expansion, a "Canadian" post was opened at the mouth of the Nipigon River on Lake Superior, with an outpost at Michipicoten.¹⁸

Documentation from this period on the activities and identity of the interior traders is very slight. The holders of official licences (of which only twenty-five were issued) employed hundreds of men who went unrecorded, and unlicensed traders and the purchasers of their furs avoided official paperwork. A marriage and birth registry kept by the Jesuits at Mackinac provides some family names of those who chose to formalize their relationships through the church. As only 62

¹⁵ Dawson, "Lake Nipigon Posts", 11 – 12.

¹⁶ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 87, plate 39; Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade", 28; Giraud, *Métis*, 101 – 102.

¹⁷ Jacqueline Peterson, "Ethnogenesis: The Settlement and Growth of a 'New People' in the Great Lakes Region, 1702 – 1815", *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 6:2 (1982), 35.

¹⁸ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 5. In 1728, La Verendrye was in command of the "northern posts" of Kaministiquia, Nipigon and Michipicoten, as he prepared to push further west (Giraud, *Métis*, 108, 539 {fn. 95}).

marriages were recorded in the period 1698 – 1765, this record clearly does not include all the family units that congregated at Mackinac during that time.¹⁹ An online copy of the register, commencing in 1725, includes the surnames Chaboiller (or Chaboillez), Grignon, Pelletier, Chevalier, Bourassa, Jourdain, Tellier, Langlade, Cadot (or Cadotte), Metivier, Boyer and Villeneuve prior to 1763.²⁰ As Fort Michilimackinac was a garrison town as well as a fur trade centre, some families of wholly European descent were present and not all of these marriages involved Aboriginal people.

One example of a mixed-ancestry individual who does not appear in the Mackinac registers is Joseph La France, a “French Canadese Indian” born at Mackinac in about 1706, of a “Saulteur” mother and a French father, whom HBC trader Arthur Dobbs interviewed in approximately 1742. La France went to Montréal twice to exchange furs for trade goods; the second time he applied for a permit to trade but was denied. He then “stole away” with two Indians in three canoes and went back to the *pays en haut* via the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing, and the French River. On returning to Montréal via the same route, he had the misfortune to encounter a large canoe brigade carrying the brother-in-law of the Governor of New France, was arrested, and had all his furs confiscated. He escaped custody, returned to Sault Ste. Marie, and decided to try to defect to the English on Hudson Bay in 1739. During the winter of 1739 – 1740, he “hunted and lived with the *Indians* his Relations the *Sauteurs*, on the North Side of the upper Lake [Superior], where he was well acquainted, having hunted and traded thereabouts for fourteen Years”. These Indians were living in the vicinity of Michipicoten. He travelled “about 100 Leagues farther Weft” to another river, “which runs from the North-west into this Lake, which he calls the River *du Pique* from a fharp Rock at the Mouth of the River...it is only navigable for about three Leagues to a Fall, above which is a Lake about fix Leagues long”. This river, about 300 miles or 485 kilometres from Michipicoten, was separated by two long portages from the “River Du Pluis”, which fell in to “Lake Du Pluis”, and so is not today’s Pic River but may be the Pigeon

¹⁹ Peterson, “Ethnogenesis”, 38 – 39.

²⁰ MIGenWeb, Mackinac County Marriage Records, http://www.mifamilyhistory.org/mimack/marriages/data/nameindex.asp?MackinacMarriagesOrder=Sorter_mckmarrID&MackinacMarriagesDir=ASC&MackinacMarriagesPage=1 (accessed December 2012). The Chaboillez family later was prominent in the fur trade in the Missouri River region; see for example an 1805 reference by NWC clerk Daniel Williams Harmon in his *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America*, Daniel Haskel, ed., introduction by W. L. Grant (Toronto: A. S. Barnes, 1911), online at <http://books.scholarsportal.info/viewdoc.html?id=60300> (accessed January 2013), 101.

River, site of the future North West Company rendez-vous and dépôt Grand Portage.²¹ La France then travelled to York Factory, where Dobbs interviewed him, *via* Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, and the Nelson River. La France provided information to Dobbs to develop a map of the north shore of Lake Superior and the rest of the route he travelled to reach York Factory.²²

In the 1730s and 1740s the officially-sanctioned French fur trade extended to Rainy Lake (1731), Lake of the Woods (1732) and the watershed of Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba. However, trading and transportation work continued out of the established posts at Kaministiquia, Michipicoten, Sault Ste. Marie, Michilimackinac, and posts south of the Upper Lakes, as well as many ephemeral trading sites around Lake Nipigon and the north shore of Lake Superior.²³ Nipigon, Kaministiquia, Michipicoten and Sault Ste. Marie contributed relatively small amounts of fur under permit, but were important transshipment and logistical points.²⁴ In 1755, notarized contracts of men hired by official trading licencees in the old settlements along the St. Lawrence River Valley showed that 20 were contracted in that year for Michipicoten or Nipigon, and 55 for Kaministiquia, out of a total of 478 (317 were engaged with a destination of Michilimackinac or Detroit).²⁵ The Montréal-exporting traders made serious inroads on the fur returns of the Hudson's Bay Company, which still expected Aboriginal people to come to its coastal forts to trade.²⁶ In 1743, the Company made its first experiment with an inland post, at Henley House 150 miles upstream from Fort Albany. However, the inland trade was still carried on primarily by small-scale mobile traders at ephemeral "posts",²⁷ with an export point of Montréal, an

²¹ Arthur Dobbs, *An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay in the North-West Part of America* (London: J. Robinson, 1744), online at University of Alberta, "Peel's Prairie Provinces" website, (<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/18/7.html>), 26 – 34 (accessed January 2013). La France, or any man who could be his father, does not appear in the database of voyageur contracts hosted by Le Société Historique de Saint-Boniface described below.

²² Arthur Dobbs, *An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay*, map at beginning of book (<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/18/7.html>).

²³ Ian Stuart, "The Organization of the French Fur Trade, 1650 – 1760", in Jean Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake: Three Centuries of Fur Trade History*, (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2003), 20 – 21; Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 6 – 7.

²⁴ See Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, plate 40.

²⁵ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, plate 41.

²⁶ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 7 – 8.

²⁷ See Giraud, *Métis*, who characterizes these as "huts", "shelters", or "shacks", 124 – 125, 154 - 155.

increasing proportion of whom had family ties to Aboriginal populations in the Great Lakes region.

In the late 1750s, the resources of the French colony (which was still financed primarily by the fur trade) were stretched to the limit in defence against British troops as part of the Seven Years War, and some western trading sites were shut down or captured by the British.²⁸ However, the capitulation of the French in 1760 was by no means the end of the inland fur trade exporting through Montréal, or the end of the development of a mixed-ancestry population around the Upper Great Lakes. As Marcel Giraud emphasizes, many French-Canadian and mixed-ancestry members of fur trade families had established ties to the way of life and the people west of the settled areas of New France, and did not feel obliged to return to defend the colony in the Seven Years' War or to retreat at the war's end. Subsequent waves of traders and travellers were incorporated into pre-existing trade and transportation networks well-known to earlier arrivals.²⁹

Post-Conquest Organization of the Fur Trade, 1761 - 1784

The conclusion of the Seven Years' War caused only a brief pause and reorganization in the fur trade in the early 1760s. Traders from New York and Montréal arrived before the British troops in Fort Michilimackinac in 1761. British merchants began to take an increased share of business from French-Canadian fur companies, but on the ground the skilled and experienced French-Canadian and mixed-ancestry traders, interpreters, and canoemen continued their work.³⁰ In 1777, 2,431 "voyageurs" were officially licenced to participate in the fur trade out of the St. Lawrence River valley, although one scholar has estimated that the number actually working inland after the end of the French licensing system ended could have been twice that.³¹ A database of all surviving contracts with men engaged for the fur trade in the vicinity of Montréal, including over 35,000 contracts and covering a time period from approximately 1714 to 1840 (with a preponderance of contracts dating between 1755 and 1815), does not include many of the men named in other primary sources as operating north of Superior in the eighteenth and early

²⁸ See Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 89, plate 42.

²⁹ Giraud, *Métis*, 126 – 127, 154 - 155.

³⁰ Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas*, Vol. I, 144.

³¹ Grace Lee Nute, quoted in Peterson, "Great Lakes Métis", 49.

nineteenth centuries. The contracts do not cover men who were trading on their own or who employed others. The employees that are included often have only one or two contracts on file, although they were hired for positions that required significant experience.³² It seems unlikely that such men were taken on in these positions as novices or that they spent only a year or two in the fur trade after acquiring a high level of skill and responsibility. These features of the official records appear to indicate that many experienced individuals had worked without a notarized contract for some time prior to signing an official document, and/or that many fur trade employees were not hired in the St. Lawrence River valley but at inland locations for which record series have not survived.³³ These inland employees may have also been the most likely to have started families and established roots in the Great Lakes region. The characteristics of the written records for the fur trade in the *pays en haut* tend to reinforce the view that they greatly understate the presence and persistence of traders, employees and their families in the Upper Great Lakes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

While some French-Canadian and mixed-ancestry residents moved out of the stockades of Fort Michilimackinac after the British troops moved in, a “suburb” of from eighty to one hundred families or households persisted in the vicinity of the fort, connected to the fur trade and/or harvesting and preparing provisions such as maple sugar and fish. Twenty-six of the forty-three marriages recorded at Mackinac between 1765 and 1818 involved at least one Métis partner, and an additional six marriages were between a non-Aboriginal person and an “Indian”.³⁴ At Sault Ste. Marie, Alexander Henry the Elder found four houses in 1761, occupied by the trader/interpreter Jean Baptiste Cadotte and his Métis family; by 1777 there were ten log houses there occupied by traders, and about ten to twelve traders and their families were in residence in 1789.³⁵ Kaministiquia was abandoned after 1759, but Michipicoten was taken over by British

³² See for example Jean-Baptiste Cadotte *fils*, hired for three years to work in the vicinity of Lake Nipigon in 1742, tasks to include going to trade with the Indians as well as transporting goods, hunting, fishing and cutting wood; or Merry Allard, hired as a steersman (the most senior and skilled job in the canoes) at very high wages in 1803 to travel to and winter at Grand Portage for three years; or Joseph Arsenaux, hired for one year as a steersman to winter at Grand Portage in 1758 (entries in Voyageur contracts database hosted by Le Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, <http://voyageurs.shsb.mb.ca/en/search.aspx>, accessed January 2013).

³³ See also Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 35 – 36.

³⁴ Peterson, “Ethnogenesis”, 41 – 43.

³⁵ Peterson, “Ethnogenesis”, 49. According to a genealogy of the Cadotte family, Jean Baptiste Cadotte’s maternal grandmother was a Huron woman. Jean Baptiste married Anastasie Nipissing, a woman probably of the

traders.³⁶ Grand Portage, south of Kaministiquia near the Pigeon River, quickly developed in the 1760s and 1770s as the staging place for brigades to and from the North West for the Montréal-exporting trade.³⁷ These settlements should be understood as landing places, meeting grounds, or in some cases retirement communities, in an essentially mobile business that required active traders and voyageurs to travel most of the year to make transactions and move goods between suppliers and customers. Traders with their voyageurs ranged as far west as Lake Winnipeg and north of Lake Nipigon, as well as in the territory south of the Great Lakes.³⁸ Sedentary activities such as agriculture were not an important part of the economies of settlements such as Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie. Some of the males that gathered at Mackinac during the summer had inland families in their trading or employment areas and used the documented settled area as a summer meeting place.³⁹

Michipicoten was operated by Alexander Henry the Elder between 1761 and 1778, when he sold the business to Jean Baptiste Nolin⁴⁰ and Venant St. Germain. By this time an independent trader, Ezekiel Solomon (a German Jew operating out of Montréal and Mackinac) was becoming a major factor in the Lake Nipigon trade. In 1778 and 1779, Solomon had engaged twenty-seven and thirty-seven men respectively on contracts from the Montréal area for the fur trade around Pays Plat and Nipigon.⁴¹ In the late 1770s, traders recorded finding Solomon's employees at Lake Minnitaki, Pashkokogan Lake, Lake Escabitchewan, Lac Seul, Shikag Lake, and Sturgeon Lake. The rendezvous point for this trade was at Pays Plat, and the travel route to these lakes

eponymous nation who died in 1766. By 1761, the family had travelled and operated in the fur trade for three generations; Cadotte's grandfather may have been engaged for the "Western" trade as early as 1671 (<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/dgarneau/cadot1.htm>, accessed January 2013). A Jean Baptiste Cadotte "fils" was recorded as a voyageur engaged for Lake Nipigon in 1742 (see Voyageur database) but as the spouse of Anastasie Nipissing was the son of a Jean-François Cadotte, they are likely two different people.

³⁶ Stuart, "French Fur Trade", 20.

³⁷ Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade", 29. The Athabasca brigades unloaded their cargo and picked up supplies from a dépôt at Rainy Lake, although the Athabasca supplies and furs passed through Grand Portage. The term "North West" means, at its most basic level, territory north and west of the St. Lawrence River Valley. As more posts were opened between Lake Winnipeg and the Athabasca-Mackenzie between 1786 and 1800, the term became more commonly used for the region west of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains and north to the Arctic Ocean.

³⁸ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 9.

³⁹ Peterson, "Great Lakes Métis", 50; "Ethnogenesis", 41 – 42, 49.

⁴⁰ Jean-Baptiste Nolin was engaging men from Montréal on a small scale for trading operations at Sault Ste. Marie in 1789 and 1790; possibly as late as 1819 (Voyageur database).

⁴¹ Voyageur database, search term "Solomon".

was through Lake Nipigon at Wabinoosh Bay.⁴² John Long, a Solomon trader, travelled to Sturgeon Lake from Montréal in 1777 and described arriving at Pays Plat, repacking his goods, passing through the “Grand Côte de la Roche” portage, “the route that all the traders are obliged to take”, with a “customary” rest afterwards. Running short of provisions at his post, he went back to Sturgeon Lake in early 1778 *en route* to another trader (Shaw), who had a more substantial and better-supplied post at a lake he called Monontoye.⁴³ In the summer of 1778, Long brought his 140 packs of furs to Pays Plat, exchanged them for “fresh goods”, and went back “to winter another year among the Nipegon Savages”, heading for Jackfish River. In the summer of 1779, Long came out again to Pays Plat, “where we stayed some days in the society of traders, who had also wintered in the inlands, and others who arrived with goods to supply those who were engaged to return”, but he returned to Michilimackinac as his engagement had concluded.⁴⁴ In 1779 – 1780, the first HBC trader at Sturgeon Lake reported that his neighbour, a Solomon trader, had described two “Canadian” trading houses on Lake Nipigon, two at Michipicoten, and thirteen others north of Lake Superior and east of Lake Winnipeg.⁴⁵ However, a smallpox epidemic in 1782 – 1783 around Sturgeon Lake and Lake Nipigon killed many of Solomon’s customers, and he did not return to trade in the area after 1783. Solomon and his family settled along the north shore of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, and became the progenitors of a large Métis extended family with residential focal points at Killarney and Penetanguishene.⁴⁶

The North West Company took over the Michipicoten post in 1784. This Company, an alliance of traders with access to the capital required to establish an integrated trading network from north of Athabasca to Montréal, gradually began to absorb or crowd out the plethora of small

⁴² Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 12 – 23. Many of the contracts made in the vicinity of Montréal for men hired by Solomon have a destination point of Pays Plat. See Voyageur contracts database, search term “Solomon”.

⁴³ John Long, “Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader”, (London: 1791), extract reprinted in *Nipigon to Winnipeg: A Canoe Voyage through Western Ontario by Edward Umfreville in 1784*, R. Douglas, ed. (Ottawa: R. Douglas, 1929), 55 – 57. Long does not appear in the Voyageur database.

⁴⁴ Long, “Voyages and Travels”, extract reprinted in Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 61 – 63.

⁴⁵ George Sutherland, quoted in Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 36. Another HBC employee, Edward Jarvis, had visited two “Canadian” trading posts at Michipicoten in 1776 (*ibid.*, 28).

⁴⁶ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 44. For more about the Solomons, see Gwynneth C. D. Jones, “Dancing with Underwear: Charivari, Community and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Killarney, Ontario”, paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 2008.

traders in fur-producing regions. An HBC trader visited Lake Nipigon, on which “Canadians” were reported to have one trading establishment, in 1784, and although he thought access from existing HBC posts was too difficult to be practical, he wrote that he believed the area “swarms with beaver”. The HBC also identified Lake Nipigon as a key strategic area and the entry point for the “Canadian” fur trade north, east and west of the Lake.⁴⁷

The North West Company were also focussing increased attention on Lake Nipigon in 1784. Edward Umfreville was a former Hudson’s Bay Company clerk who had briefly been in charge of York Factory, but had joined the North West Company after a dispute over unpaid wages. In 1783, the Treaty of Paris had determined that the Montréal traders’ entrepôt of Grand Portage was within American territory, and the NWC gave Umfreville the task of exploring and documenting an alternate route to Lake Winnipeg from Lake Nipigon.

Umfreville left with his party, which included foreman Venance St. Germain (the former proprietor of Michipicoten post), steersman Raymond, Jean Roy and Dubay (or Dubé), from an island in Lake Superior close to the mouth of the Pays Plat River in June of 1784.⁴⁸ An “Indian guide” was engaged at Pays Plat to pilot them to Lake Nipigon. As they travelled, Umfreville recorded the names of each portage, most of which were in French, remarking at the conclusion of his journal that

The portages are all called by names given them by the guide and where he has known none, it is always mentioned by whom the new name was given. As to my Indian information I refer you to Mr. St Germaine, who is a much better master of the Indian language hereabouts. I endeavoured to obtain the French names which I thought of more consequence to the voyageurs.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 47.

⁴⁸ Umfreville journal published as *Nipigon to Winnipeg: A Canoe Voyage through Western Ontario by Edward Umfreville in 1784*, R. Douglas, ed. (Ottawa: R. Douglas, 1929), 8, 13. Douglas, the editor of this journal, observes that Alexander Henry the Elder, a North West Company partner, also described camping on an island across from Pays Plat in 1775.

⁴⁹ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 15, fn. 3. Daniel Harmon noted that a “Mons. St. Germain” had “the charge of a small Fort, belonging to the North West Company” when he passed along the north shore of Lake Superior in 1800. The “small Fort”, not far from Sault Ste. Marie, may have been Batchewana. Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 14.

Umfreville thus observed that most of the portages had already been named by previous generations of voyageurs, and that these names would be recognized by experienced men and should be taught to newcomers.

Upon arriving at the Nipigon River's intersection with Lake Nipigon, Umfreville did not mention any remains of earlier trading posts. A few miles northwest, the Umfreville party met "a family of Indians", one of whom recognized Umfreville from visiting the Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Fort Severn. This "Indian", wrote Umfreville, "belongs to Sturgeon Lake and has agreed to pilot us to portage de l'Isle" (at the present-day Ontario/Manitoba boundary on the English River). The party left their first guide at this point.⁵⁰ After a few days, they turned Champlain Point on the west shore of Lake Nipigon and after travelling northwest three miles, came to "a place where a settlement has formerly been erected, but no traces are now to be seen of it except the wood being cut away". Umfreville described this "settlement" as "the old French house", or trading establishment.⁵¹ By 1784, evidence of earlier trading sites was already vanishing or completely gone. About fifteen miles north and north-east, the party "passed another place where a house had formerly been erected". At the "bottom" of the bay now named Wabinosh, they reached "the beginning of the river we have to enter" (the Wabinosh River). At Wabinosh Lake, they parted company with their guide, and for a day or two Umfreville was in a quandary as to what to do, thinking perhaps he could wait "till the French people pass by".⁵²

But, thank God, our gloomy apprehensions were in a great measure obliterated in the afternoon by the arrival of a canoe, with a Frenchman and Indian in it. The former is called Constant, and is a guide in the service of Monsieur Côté...Constant says a Canadian is near hand, who is not at present engaged to any one, is well acquainted with the road, and he thinks will be willing to engage with us...[the next day] Mr. St. Germaine set off...in quest of the man we are in hopes to engage...He is named Pierre Bonneau; he knows the way as far as Sturgeon lake...⁵³

Gabriel Côté, or Cotté as he was also known, was a successful trader who had obtained a permit to send canoes to Nipigon in 1778. Umfreville noted in his diary that sixty "packs"

⁵⁰ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 15 – 16.

⁵¹ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 17 – 18. HBC employee George Sutherland was told by a "Canadian" trader at "Piskocoggan Lake" that the "Canadians" had only one operating post on Lake Nipigon in 1784 (Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 46).

⁵² Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 19 - 21.

⁵³ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 21 – 22. The Voyageur database does not contain any entries for a Constant in the Great Lakes region between 1780 and 1790; or any records for a Pierre Bonneau.

(approximately 90 pounds each) of beaver skins has been collected by Coté “in his quarter” in the winter of 1783 – 1784, although “four of their men have been eat by the savages through extremity of hunger”. While Umfreville and his party were preparing to leave Wabinoosh Lake, two more canoes “in the service of Mr. Coté” went by.⁵⁴ Umfreville reached Sturgeon Lake, passing “an old settlement where a Mr. James wintered six years ago”, on 10 July. This was as far as Bonneau “knows the way”, but Umfreville remarked that he knew the route from Pays Plat to Sturgeon Lake “very well”.⁵⁵ Under an “Indian” guide, the party continued on to Portage de L’Ile, recording French and Ojibway names for landmarks and portages and occasionally bestowing new names where an existing name was unknown. Umfreville noted of his last “Indian” guide that “he has been brought up among the Canadians and seems very fond of them”.⁵⁶

This route may have been new to Umfreville, who had stayed close to the Hudson’s Bay coastline as an employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, but despite not being the usual east-west travel corridor commencing at Grand Portage used by the “Canadian” fur trade, it was well-known to experienced fur trade men. The landscape (or the features most important to the voyageurs, being the portages and some of the most salient water features) already had been named in French and described by them, in such useful ways as “Portage Plat” (flat portage),

⁵⁴ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 21 – 22. Douglas notes that Coté married twice, once at Mackinac in 1765 and then at Montréal in 1783 (Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 9). There were four children by his first wife and five by the second; and at least three of his daughters married fur-traders (Alexis Laframboise, Jules Quesnel and François Larocque). He died in Montréal in 1794. It is very likely that his first wife, Agathe Desjardins, was of mixed ancestry, as she was described in the Mackinac marriage records as being “of this post” (Mackinac marriage records online at http://www.mifamilyhistory.org/mimack/marriages/data/record.asp?s_GroomSurname=cote&s_mckmarriD=150 (accessed January 2013). The marriage record also notes that the witnesses to the formal marriage (which took place in 1768) were “Mr. Catine sargt.” (evidently in the military garrison at Mackinac), Pierre Chaboiller (of a well-known fur trade family), friends of Coté; and Sieur Jacques Giasson and “Therese Campion wife of Pierre Ignace Dubois”, friends of Agathe. An Etienne Campion was a fur-trader active in Mackinac; the Voyageur database contains contracts from the 1770s and 1780s for men hired by his company to travel to Mackinac and winter in the region, and his own contracts of 1754 and 1761 (http://voyageurs.shsb.mb.ca/en/Results.aspx?AC=PREV_BLOCK&XC=/en/Results.aspx&BU=http%3A%2F%2Fvoyageurs.shsb.mb.ca%2Fen%2Fsearch.aspx, accessed January 2013). Coté’s second wife, Angélique Blondeau, is described by Douglas as the “daughter of a bourgeois” (a fur-trader or partner in a fur-trading firm) and it is possible that she was also of mixed ancestry. See also Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 26.

⁵⁵ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 33. Bonneau was hired as a guide by the HBC for the Cat Lake post in 1790 (Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 63).

⁵⁶ Umfreville/Douglas, *Nipigon to Winnipeg*, 38.

“Portage le Petit Jour” (relatively short, “over a good road”), portages “Petite Côte de Roche” (1100 yards long) and “Grande Côte de Roche” (4550 yards long). Portages also bore the names of individuals and past events, such as “portage Campion” or “lac des Morts”, preserving the stories and history of the route. A distinctive fur trade body of knowledge and culture was being built up and transmitted to successive waves of new employees or traders as they came into the Lake Nipigon area, generated partly from existing Aboriginal knowledge and partly from the viewpoint of those working in the trade.

Nipigon, Michipicoten, Grand Portage, and Mixed-Ancestry Fur Trade Employees, 1789 - 1804

The North West Company and other “Canadian” traders continued to use the Grand Portage rendez-vous and travel route as their main passageway west after Umfreville’s report. However, Lake Nipigon and vicinity were still desirable locations for trading posts. In 1789 – 1790, the HBC trader at Cat Lake reported that a John McKay was trading on Lake Nipigon for the Montréal-exporting firm of Cotté and Shaw. Donald McKay (apparently unrelated) was trading on his own account at Sturgeon Lake. The size of the complement at Lake Nipigon was unknown, but at Cat Lake the “Canadian” trader brought ten men with him.⁵⁷ By 1791, the HBC’s reluctance to hire defectors from the “Canadian” trade was dwindling, as the Company saw the obvious advantages of using such experienced and skilled men with established trade connections inland. John McKay was engaged by the HBC to open a post on Lake Nipigon (opened in the fall of 1792), while Donald McKay went west to Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods and Portage de l’Isle.⁵⁸ When John McKay returned to the location of his former post, he discovered that another trader, Chavaudrille, had taken it over for Cotté and Shaw, so he built the new HBC post beside it. These posts may have been located on Ombabika Bay.⁵⁹ In 1793 –

⁵⁷ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 58.

⁵⁸ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 64 – 65, 72. The HBCA finding aid for Nipigon post indicates that it was established in outfit 1792 – 1793, and the first surviving post journal dates from 1792 (<http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/27316/1/7/524?RECORD> , accessed January 2013).

⁵⁹ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 72.

1794, McKay moved the HBC post to Wabinoosh Bay.⁶⁰ This post was in operation until at least 1803.⁶¹

In 1796, a son of Ezekiel Solomon returned to Lake Nipigon to trade on his own account, but apparently retreated from the area after a couple of unsuccessful seasons.⁶² Also in 1796, Duncan Cameron, formerly a trader for Cotté and Shaw who had operated in the vicinity of Lake Nipigon since about 1784, joined the North West Company and returned to Lake Nipigon to trade and direct the Company's operations in the *Petit Nord* ("Little North"), roughly the area east of Lake Winnipeg, north of Superior and inland from Hudson's Bay.⁶³ By 1799, Cameron had seven "clerks" or "commis" and at least twelve posts under his charge in the Nipigon Department.⁶⁴ Many of the North West Company employees in the Department were seasoned hands who had worked for Cotté and Shaw or Ezekiel Solomon.⁶⁵

The North West Company also maintained at least one post at Michipicoten during the 1790s. Alexander Henry the Younger, nephew of the Alexander Henry who had operated the Michipicoten post between 1771 and 1768, was in charge of Michipicoten from approximately 1796 to 1799, and two of his sons with his Aboriginal wife were born there.⁶⁶ In May 1797, the Hudson's Bay Company established a post adjacent to the North West Company post, with a

⁶⁰ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 72.

⁶¹ HBCA records description for Nipigon House, (<http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/27316/1/7/524?RECORD> , accessed January 2013). See also the discussion and maps of potential locations for these posts in Dawson, "A Report on Lake Nipigon Fur Trading Posts", 13 – 17, 21, 27.

⁶² Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 78. Jacob Corrigal, chief trader at the HBC's main Nipigon post in 1796 – 1797, referred to an "agreement" with "Mr. Solomon" regarding not setting out to collect furs from Aboriginal trappers without Corrigal's knowledge (HBCA, B.149/a/5, fol. 10d, 7 January 1797). Corrigal also referred to meeting Solomon on Lake Nipigon in the winter of 1796 – 1797, when Solomon retracted an accusation he had made that Corrigal had hired Indians to murder him (HBCA, B.149/a/5, fol. 20d, postscript).

⁶³ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 86.

⁶⁴ The clerks were Ranald Cameron, John Dugald Cameron (brother of Ranald; unknown relationship to Duncan), Jacques Adhemar, Jean-Baptiste Chevallier, Allan McFarlane, Jean-Baptiste Pomainville, and Frederick Shultz (Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 88). Duncan Cameron later referred to "Dougle Cameron" as his "name sake...always ready to undertake as well as undergo any hardship for the Interest of the Concern [NWC]", which may indicate that John Dugald was a relative (Duncan Cameron, "The Nipigon Country: A Sketch of the Customs, manners and ways of living of the Natives in the barren country around Nipigon", online at http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm (McGill University), images 59 - 60 (accessed January 2013).

⁶⁵ Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 89.

⁶⁶ Barry M. Gough, "Introduction", in *The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger, 1799 – 1814* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1988), Barry M. Gough, ed., xxiii. By the 1790s, Alexander Henry was a partner in the North West Company; he had brought his nephew into the Company by 1792 (see *ibid.*, xxii, xxvii – xxviii).

trader and three men. The HBC post was closed in 1803, under an agreement between the two companies regarding trading territories, but the HBC had not succeeded in competing against the established NWC trade there.⁶⁷

In 1793, a newly-recruited North West Company clerk, John Macdonell, was sent to Lake Winnipeg to trade. He wrote a daily journal detailing his trip via the usual route through the Ottawa, Mattawa and French Rivers and Lakes Superior and Huron. When he passed through Sault Ste. Marie, he enjoyed the hospitality of “Mr Nolin”, probably Augustin Nolin, who was in charge of the NWC business at the Sault. At this time, all the “settlements” at the Sault were on the south shore; the North West Company had “much the best improvements of any of those settled here”. The brigade dropped off another NWC trader, Lemoine, “to shift for himself”, and a few miles past the Sault found a Mr. Nelson building a large boat for the NWC trade on Lake Superior. The brigade passed “the Bay of Michipicoton in which the North West Company have a trading post”, and then “the entrance of the Pic River where there is a Trading Post belonging to Mr Côté and associates situated within half a mile of our encampment”.⁶⁸ They passed a canoe of “Forsyth Richardson & Cos, that had wintered in Nipigon alongside of the H. B. Company’s traders”, and the day after meeting this canoe passed the entrance to the Nipigon River.⁶⁹ A few days later, they reached Grand Portage, which Macdonell described as follows:

The pickets [high fence built of vertical logs] are not above fifteen to twenty paces from the waters edge...

The Gates are shut [always] after sunset and the Bourgeois and clerks Lodge in houses within the pallisades...

The North men while here live in tents of different sizes pitched at random, the people of each post having a camp by themselves and through their camp passes the road of the portage. They are separated from the Montrealeans by a brook. The Portage is three leagues from one navigation to the other...

All the buildings within the Fort are sixteen in number...Six of these buildings are Store Houses for the company’s Merchandize and Furs &c. The rest are dwelling houses shops

⁶⁷ Ian T. Stuart, “Indians and the Lake Superior Trade”, in Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake*, 88 – 89.

⁶⁸ The NWC post at Pic River traded for thirty packs of furs in 1790, according to Harold Innis (*The Fur Trade in Canada* {New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930}, 268, fn., cited in John Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, reprinted in Charles M. Gates, ed., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest* {St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965}, 90, fn. 49).

⁶⁹ Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, 88 – 91.

compting house and Mens House – they have also a warf or kay for their vessel to unload and Load at. The only vessel on the Lake Superior is the new [one] Mr Nelson was building...Part of the Company's Furs are sent Round the Lakes in Shipping, but the major part goes down the Ottawa in the Montreal Canoes. Every improvement about this place appertains to the North West Company. Between two and three hundred yards to the East of the N. W. Fort beyond the Pork eaters camp is the spot Messrs David and Peter Grant have selected to build upon, as yet they have done nothing to it...⁷⁰

Macdonell in this passage highlighted the social and geographical divide between the “North men” (those who wintered in the fur country and made the round trip from their posts to Grand Portage), and the “Montrealeans” or “Pork eaters”, who made the brigades’ return trip from Montréal to Grand Portage. Among the North men, the men of each post camped together. The canoemen and tradesmen of both groups were in turn separated from the Bourgeois (partners) and clerks (trader/post managers, who if they performed well might be offered a partnership). Although the North West Company was by far the largest operator in the “inland” region, other companies trading out of Montréal were still active at this time, as well as the HBC. Macdonell, as Umfreville had done nine years earlier, also carefully recorded the French names used by the experienced travellers in the brigade for the portages, rapids and other notable landmarks along the route, as well as the stories and lore (derived from both Indian and voyageur sources and histories) associated with the names and sites.

In 1795, Roderick MacKenzie, a partner of the North West Company, emphasized the continuity and distinctiveness of the wintering employees of the NWC:

Most of the Voyageurs in the service of the North West Company have been here for a great many Years. Some of them often speak of leaving the Country – but being thoughtless they seem to care little about it. These Voyageurs in general are equal to any thing, I might add, good or bad just as they are commanded – they are well acquainted with the Country, the ways of the Natives, and the nature of the trade – they may be employed to advantage in every capacity. In the voyage they are patient, emulous, indefatigable, and capable of performing seeming impossibilities, out of it extremely indolent – fond of their pleasures – careless of the future.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, 93 – 94.

⁷¹ AO, F471, file F471-1-0-15, B003021, “An Account of the Athabasca Indians by a partner of the North West Company”, 1795; also in AO, F471-1-0-18, MU2199, “Some Account of the North West Company”, B803022; also online at http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm (McGill University), pages 3 – 7, 54. Although MacKenzie refers to the Athabasca Indians in the title of this document, the description of the voyageurs is contained in a broader discussion of the NWC across the continent.

The arrival of the HBC on Lake Nipigon marks the beginning of more descriptive documentation about the Nipigon region. HBC post managers were required to keep a daily post journal outlining activities at the post, the weather, arrivals and departures, and other information considered relevant to the conduct of trade. As well, depending on the time period, they also kept account books, submitted annual and special reports, compiled incoming and outgoing letterbooks of the regular correspondence with senior management and other posts that they were required to maintain, and kept up employment records. As these records were often made in duplicate and were submitted to a large central office in London, much (although certainly not all) of this documentation has been preserved. North West Company and independent traders generated much less paperwork and, after their absorption by the Hudson's Bay Company, less of it has survived. Nipigon House HBC journals have been preserved from the years 1792 to 1800, 1802 – 1803, 1827 – 1839, 1842 – 1844, and some later years.

The Nipigon House journal for 1796 – 1797 begins with the arrival of Jacob Corrigan, the trader, and his men from Marten Falls (a 25-day journey). The men were John Kipling, William Corrigan (Jacob's brother), Thomas Johnson, John McDonald, Christopher Harvey, Alexander Groundwater, William Corsie and Magnus Tait. A few days later, Jacob Corrigan left with most of the men to establish a trading house adjacent to a "Canadian" trader who had set up across the lake, leaving William Corrigan in charge of the "old house" with John Kipling and Magnus Tait to assist him.⁷² These men were experienced hands.⁷³ Jacob Corrigan, of Birsay in the Orkney Islands, had joined the HBC in 1790, as had Groundwater, also of the Orkney Islands. Harvey had joined in 1792 and Johnson and Tait in 1793. All three were Orkneymen. Kipling was a young man of seventeen, but was from "Hudson's Bay" (and therefore of mixed ancestry), capable at tasks foreigners did not usually learn, such as building canoes.⁷⁴ McDonald, a "Canadian", had evidently been previously employed by Duncan Cameron and possibly by Solomon, as in February Jacob Corrigan got wind of a scheme by the "Canadians" to take

⁷² Dawson believes the NWC post and the "new post" may have been located at or near the mouth of the Wabinoish River on Wabinoish Bay, while the "old post" may have been around the Ombabika River near the south Ombabika peninsula, adjacent to a post occupied by Shaw in 1788 – 1790 (Dawson, "Lake Nipigon Posts", 14 - 17. The journals indicate the two posts were a day or two's canoe travel apart.

⁷³ The employment and parish of "residence" information given here comes from HBCA, A.30/9, "List of Servants in Hudson's Bay 1799", Albany, fols. 1 – 14.

⁷⁴ HBCA, B.149/a/5, 26 September, 1 October, fol 4, 4d. "Hudson's Bay" as a parish of "residence" at this period is not necessarily limited to the Hudson's Bay coastline, but could refer to the Hudson's Bay charter territory.

McDonald prisoner to force him to repay debts owing to Cameron.⁷⁵ Corrigan eventually sent McDonald back to the “old house” to keep him out of the “Canadians” way.⁷⁶ In mid-June, Jacob Corrigan returned to the “old house” with all his men and a good trade of 767 made beaver.⁷⁷ At the end of June, the entire crew left for Marten Falls with a cargo of 1800 made beaver.⁷⁸

In mid-September 1797, Jacob Corrigan brought William Corrigan, Johnson, Groundwater and Corsie back to the “new house”, noting that owing to a shortage of men it was not possible to leave William Corrigan at the “old house”. He also brought James Yorston, an Orkneyman who had joined the HBC in 1786, John Taylor, Hugh Patric and Angus McDonald (another “Canadian”). The “Canadians” had been at their house for about three weeks already.⁷⁹ Shortly after arriving, Jacob Corrigan had to send away a group of Indians who had come to guide “Englishmen” to “Jack River” as agreed on with Corrigan the previous season, again because of a shortage of men. Corrigan observed that the trade of Jack River (about 300 made beaver) would probably all go to a “Canadian” already established there.⁸⁰ Corrigan and his men stayed on Lake Nipigon, with a few visits to the “old house”, until 10 June 1798, when they left in three large canoes for Marten Falls.⁸¹

On 1 August, he returned to the “old house” with his brother, Johnson, and six others, including John Sanderson (or Sanderson), a 22-year-old (of mixed ancestry) from “Hudson’s Bay”.⁸² A week later they decamped for the “new house”, arriving there before the “Canadians” and succeeding in dealing with Indians before their rivals.⁸³ On 17 August, Duncan Cameron appeared with a brigade from Grand Portage headed for Osnaburgh.⁸⁴ On 16 September, “Solomon”, with a Mr. Clark, showed up at the “new house” and began building a third trading establishment beside the HBC and the North West Company, having brought trade goods from

⁷⁵ HBCA, B.149/a/5, fol. 12, 1 February 1797.

⁷⁶ HBCA, B.149/a/5, fols. 16d – 17, 8 May 1797.

⁷⁷ HBCA, B.149/a/5, fol. 19, 13 – 14 June 1797.

⁷⁸ HBCA, B.149/a/5, fol. 20, 30 June 1797.

⁷⁹ HBCA, B.149/a/6, 13 September 1797, fol. 2d.

⁸⁰ HBCA, B.149/a/6, 17 September 1797, fol. 3.

⁸¹ HBCA, B.149/a/6, 10 June 1798, fol. 18.

⁸² HBCA, B.149/a/7, 1 August 1798, fol. 2d.

⁸³ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 10 August 1798, fol. 3.

⁸⁴ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 17 August 1798, fol. 3d.

Mackinac “on his own account”.⁸⁵ On 18 September, the NWC, under chief trader W. Frederick, arrived from Grand Portage.⁸⁶ By 6 October, Corrigan was observing of the Indians that “Their seeing so many traders here makes them very pragmatic and insulting”.⁸⁷ The fierce competition prompted Corrigan to rethink his original plan of sending his brother to “Jack River”, keeping all his men around the “new house”. On 10 June 1799, they all set off to the “old house”, noting that Frederick was staying for the summer at the NWC house.⁸⁸ Solomon and Clark had left on 7 June for Mackinac, having traded a pack and a half of furs.⁸⁹ On 19 June, Corrigan and his crew left Lake Nipigon for Marten Falls with 21 “bundles” of furs and 5 of parchment (skins processed by the Indians with guard hairs intact).⁹⁰

By August 1802, Jacob Corrigan’s brother William was in charge of the HBC’s Nipigon trading house. His plan was to supply the Indians with trade goods on lake Nipigon (he did not specify the “old” or “new” house), and then travel “several days Journey to the W. ward” to be closer to the Indians’ hunting grounds. Competition from “Canadians” was still intense.⁹¹ On 1 September 1802, Thomas McNab, Thomas Stanger, John Daniels, and Robert Moad left for a “wintering ground” in company with a group of Indians. McNab, a native of “Hudson’s Bay” (as was John Daniels), was in charge of this party.⁹² On 4 September, William Corrigan left for the west side of the Lake, to a “small rivers mouth which we Intend to go up”.⁹³ The Corrigan party stopped two weeks later at “Small Trout Lake”, “several days Journey short of the place I intended to be at”, because of a shortage of food.⁹⁴ The men in the Corrigan party included Thomas Richards, John Twatt, Magnus Flett, William Waters, James Corston, John (Jack) Kipling, and Nicol Scarth.⁹⁵ Of these, Richards and Kipling can be identified as having mixed-

⁸⁵ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 16 September 1798, fol. 5d.

⁸⁶ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 18 September 1798, fol. 5d.

⁸⁷ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 6 October 1798, fol. 6d.

⁸⁸ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 10 June 1799, fol. 20d.

⁸⁹ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 7 June 1799, fol. 20.

⁹⁰ HBCA, B.149/a/7, 19 June 1799, fol. 21.

⁹¹ HBCA, B.149/a/9, 25 August 1802, fols. 2, 2d.

⁹² HBCA, B.149/a/9, 26 August 1802, 1 September 1802, fol. 2d.

⁹³ HBCA, B.149/a/9, 4 September 1802, fol. 3.

⁹⁴ HBCA, B.149/a/9, 23 October 1802, fol. 3d.

⁹⁵ HBCA, B.149/a/9, 19, 25 November 1802, 6 December 1802 (fol. 4d), 17, 22 December 1802, 3, 14 January 1803 (fol. 5).

ancestry origins in “Hudson’s Bay”.⁹⁶ Richards left the Small Trout Lake post on 6 December to live with his father-in-law to alleviate chronic food shortages at the post, an indication that he had married a woman from the vicinity.⁹⁷ The parties would meet at Lake Nipigon in the spring to travel back to Marten Falls.

The journals provide an on-the-ground description of fur trade activity on Lake Nipigon in the last years of the eighteenth century. They confirm that the posts were occupied nine or ten months of the year, and closed in the summer when traders were travelling to intermediate supply points such as Grand Portage, Mackinac, or Marten Falls. Post locations were flexible and could shift rapidly to meet competition from other traders or to be closer to customers. The names and some personal details of post employees can be confirmed from HBC journals and employment records. The HBC journals do not refer to wives or children around their posts, and do not describe the NWC or independents’ posts in enough detail to be able to determine if mixed-ancestry families lived there. However, some HBC employees can be identified as being of mixed ancestry. The same crew would not come back to the HBC post every year, although there were usually some returnees familiar with the area and the Aboriginal people who would have been able to pass knowledge on to newcomers. The journals also provide some insights into the activities and resource use patterns of the post. These will be further discussed in the section on “Fur Trade Culture to 1821”.

John Sanderson and John Kipling, the sons of HBC employees, also worked at other *Petit Nord* HBC posts supplied out of Fort Albany and Marten Falls in the early nineteenth century. In 1804 they collectively demanded better wages, and the chief HBC trader at Albany was obliged to give them substantial increases. He explained the situation as follows in his post journal:

the greatest trouble I have experienced this year is from the Half Breed or Creoles, who complain their Wages are much less than others, and as they are all Boat Steerers they think they have a right to better wages than they have. Mr. Sanders[on] has 3 stout sons who all steer Boats, besides there is Hugh Linklater [son of John Linklater], and John Kipling [jr.]; all stout men. They act as Interpreters and are in every respect most useful

⁹⁶ The employment and parish of “residence” information given here comes from HBCA, A.30/9, “List of Servants in Hudson’s Bay 1799”, Albany, fols. 1 – 14. The records for Albany and its inland posts between 1799 and 1812 are missing.

⁹⁷ HBCA, B.149/a/9, 6 December 1802, fol. 4d. On the same day James Corston and John Twatt were also sent off to live with other groups of Indians.

people, for they hunt equally as well as the Natives, and it is by their endeavours frequently in hunting, the several Posts fare much better than they otherwise would do without them. I cannot get a man to undertake to steer a Boat...they universally refuse to undertake the charge among the Falls...I wish to be bringing up a few young hands...⁹⁸

North West Company men or other “Canadian” traders are less well described in the surviving records, but some fragmentary evidence is available. Duncan Cameron, the North West Company partner in charge of the Nipigon district from 1796 to 1807, wrote a monograph entitled “The Nepigon Country: A Sketch of the Customs, manners and ways of living of the Natives in the barren country around Nepigon” in 1804. He described, but did not name, some poorly-equipped “Canada” traders who had come into the Nipigon area before he arrived as a clerk in 1785 (although he appears to have underestimated the extent to which these traders had penetrated inland).⁹⁹ He referred to “Perrault”, who had been with Cameron “some years ago”, attempting to baptize a dying Indian, who refused to deviate from his own tradition.¹⁰⁰ However, Cameron noted that “several of the [Indian] women that were living with the white men” did not follow some of the dietary taboos of their tribe.¹⁰¹ He also described how he managed the Nipigon trade to produce good returns, “by shifting from place to place Every year, and augmenting the Number of posts”, reinforcing the impression given in the HBC journals of the transient character of most of the trading establishments in the region.¹⁰²

Grand Portage, Kaministiquia, and North West Company families, 1799 - 1805

Grand Portage had a relatively small permanent contingent of employees, despite its importance as a transfer point. A list of NWC employees in 1799 shows seven men in the “Grand Portage

⁹⁸ Quoted in Lytwyn, “Fur Trade of the Little North”, 107.

⁹⁹ Duncan Cameron, “The Nepigon Country: A Sketch of the Customs, manners and ways of living of the Natives in the barren country around Nepigon”, online at http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm (McGill University), images 55 – 60 (accessed January 2013).

¹⁰⁰ Cameron, “The Nepigon Country”, http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm, image 17. John Johnston, another NWC trader, recalled meeting a “Mr. Perrault, a very ingenious Trader” in 1792 on the south shore of Lake Superior (John Johnston, “An Account of Lake Superior”, online at http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm (McGill University), image 47 (accessed January 2013). Jean-Baptiste Perrault was the author of a manuscript entitled “Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of North America Leaving Montreal the 28th of May 1783 (to 1820)”, cited in Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, 90, fn.49.

¹⁰¹ Cameron, “The Nepigon Country”, http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm, image 36.

¹⁰² Cameron, “The Nepigon Country”, http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/toolbar_1.htm, image 60.

Department”: “Doctor Munro”, Charles Hesse, Zachary Cloutier, Antoine Collin, Jacques Vaudreuil, François Boileau, and “Bruce”.¹⁰³ Daniel Harmon, a clerk and later a partner with the North West Company, described Grand Portage in 1800 as follows:

The Fort, which is twenty four rods by thirty, is built on the margin of a bay, at the foot of a hill or mountain, of considerable height. Within the fort, there is a considerable number of dwelling houses, shops and stores, all of which appear to be slight buildings, and designed only for present convenience. The houses are surrounded by palisades...There is also another fort, which stands about two hundred rods from this, belonging to the X. Y. Company, under which firm, a number of merchants of Montreal and Quebec, &c. now carry on a trade into this part of the country. It is only three years since they made an establishment here; and as yet, they have had but little success.

This is the Head Quarters or General Rendezvous, for all who trade in this part of the world; and therefore, every summer, the greater part of the Proprietors and Clerks, who have spent the winter in the Interior come here with the furs which they have been able to collect, during the preceding season. This [mid-June], as I am told, is about the time when they generally arrive; and some of them are already here.¹⁰⁴

Harmon remarked that no one at Grand Portage observed the Sabbath, continuing to work at “making and pressing packs of furs”. He noted that “the people...who have been long in this savage country, have no scruples of conscience on this subject”. While Harmon was at Grand Portage, the

Natives were permitted to dance in the fort, and the Company made them a present of thirty six gallons of shrub. In the evening, the gentlemen of the place dressed, and we had a famous ball, in the dining room. For musick, we had the bag-pipe, the violin and the flute, which added much to the interest of the occasion. At the ball, there were a number of the ladies of this country; and I was surprised to find that they could conduct with so much propriety, and dance so well.¹⁰⁵

These “ladies” would all have been of Aboriginal ancestry.

In 1803, the North West Company moved its dépôt and rendez-vous site north to Kaministiquia from Grand Portage, after the U. S. government threatened to begin levying customs duties on the goods transferred there. The Kaministiquia site was renamed Fort William, after partner

¹⁰³ Lytwyn, “The Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade”, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 15 – 16. A rod is 5.5 yards in length (5.03 meters). The XY Company did not last much longer; its partners were incorporated into the North West Company in 1804.

¹⁰⁵ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 17. “Shrub” was rum or brandy mixed with sugar and fruit.

William McGillivray, in 1807.¹⁰⁶ An 1802 map of the Kaministiquia site shows two “old French” building locations and the cleared plots for North West Company buildings.¹⁰⁷

The origins of some NWC mixed-ancestry families from the Nipigon-Lakehead region around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been outlined by historians Ruth Swan, Edward Jerome, Elizabeth Arthur and Jean Morrison. Swan and Jerome have assembled some data for the Collin mixed-ancestry family, which appears to have originated in the Grand Portage/Lakehead area possibly as early as the 1760s but certainly by 1799; part of a New France family that may have had roots in the fur trade in the Great Lakes area as early as 1713.¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Arthur has traced the family of Roderick McKenzie, a North West Company and then HBC trader on Lake Nipigon, from his country marriage to a “Nipigon Indian” woman in 1803 to the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Jean Morrison has described the origins of several mixed-ancestry families, including those of Edward Harrison, who had been near Grand Portage in 1797, was at Fort William by 1806, and by 1816 had six children with his Aboriginal wife; the McLoughlin/M[a]cKay/McCargo/Taitt interconnected families based around Fort William, with origins around 1802; the Masta/Dauphin families originating in Fort William; the MacKenzie/Bethune families living in the Grand Portage/Fort William area with mixed-ancestry origins prior to 1782 and in 1793; the McKenzie family resident around Fort William, with second-generation mixed-ancestry births occurring prior to 1800; and the McGillivray family (the patriarch of whom was the namesake of Fort William), originating around 1790.¹¹⁰ The Donna Cona consulting firm also located biographical data for Nicolas Chatelain, Jean Baptiste Jourdain, “Vesnis”, Joseph Primeau, and Louis Rivet that indicated that they were born of mixed-ancestry unions near North West Company sites at Grand Portage and Fond du Lac

¹⁰⁶ Harmon reported that when the Fort was renamed, “the Company made a present to their Voyagers, of a considerable quantity of spirits, shrub, &c. and also a similar present to the Indians, encamped about the fort” (*Voyages and Travels*, 126).

¹⁰⁷ Reproduced in Stuart, “French Fur Trade”, 16.

¹⁰⁸ Ruth Swan and Edward Jerome, “The Collin Family at Thunder Bay: A Case Study of *Métissage*”, in Jean Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake*, 105 – 108. Harmon mentions a “Collin” who was an interpreter for him at Fort Alexandria near Lake Winnipeg in 1804 (*Voyages and Travels*, 95).

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Arthur, “Angelique and Her Children”, in Jean Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake*, 117 – 123.

¹¹⁰ Jean Morrison, “Fur Trade Families in the Lake Superior-Rainy Lake Region”, in Jean Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake*, 93 – 104.

around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹¹ Some of these families originated outside the Lake Superior region, but from these isolated instances traceable in the records it seems clear that by the second decade of the nineteenth century, there was a significant proportion of first and second-generation mixed-ancestry families around Fort William and other North West Company trading sites.

Alexander Henry the Younger, a NWC partner from 1801, estimated that there was a total of 1,610 “white” men, associated with 405 women and 600 children in the “North West” in 1805, from Pic River to Athabasca, including 16 men, 2 women and 3 children at Pic; 62 men, 16 women and 36 children living at Kaministiquia/Lac des Milles Lacs and Lac des Chiens (Dog Lake); and 90 men, 20 women and 20 children in the Nipigon district.¹¹² A list of NWC employees from the year 1805 has survived, although it does not offer any information about wives or children. The list of NWC employees “at the Lake Nipigon, Lake of the Isles and its Dependencies” for 1805 enumerated 73 men who stayed over the winter in the region, and 12 “summer men”. Of these, four were described as interpreters: Louis Chevalier, Alexis Frambay, François La Lancette, and Pierre Dumas, and one, Joseph Monier, was qualified as a guide. Guides and interpreters were generally more highly paid and had been in the country long enough to pick up a reliable knowledge of the local Aboriginal languages and geography. At “the Pic Departement”, fourteen men were listed, including two interpreters, Louis Boileau and William Harris. Only one page has survived of the list of men at Kaministiquia, enumerating 29 men, but not identifying them by occupation. As well, there are lists for Lac la Pluie (33 men), Red Lake and Lac Seul (29 men), “Mille Lacs” (8 men), Lac du Flambeaux south of Lake Superior (18 men), Point Chaguoanigon (near present-day Ashland, Wisconsin) (5 men), and Fond du Lac (Minnesota/Wisconsin) (52 men). At Fond du Lac, Eustache Roussin, Baptiste

¹¹¹ Donna Cona consultants, “Historical Profile of the Lake of the Woods Area’s Mixed European-Indian and Mixed European-Inuit Ancestry Community”, prepared for Canada Department of Justice, 4 February 2005, 18. Daniel Harmon referred in 1805 to a Louis “Chattelain” who had been in charge of a NWC fur trading post on the South Saskatchewan *circa* 1790 (*Voyages and Travels*, 117). In 1833, Angus Bethune, in charge of the Lake Superior District, instructed John Swanston at Pic to pay Nicholas Chatellaine’s mother an amount owing to her (HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to John Swanston, 18 March 1833, 36d).

¹¹² Alexander Henry, “Report of North West Population 1805”, reprinted in *The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger*, Barry M. Gough, ed., 188. As Gough points out in his notes on this census, there were no “white” women in the North West at this time. It is also probable that some of Henry’s “white” men were in fact of mixed ancestry. Henry’s census is not restricted to NWC men.

Beaudrie, Joseph LaGarde, François Boucher, Toussaint Laronde, and Vincent Roy were identified as interpreters.¹¹³

In July 1805, North West Company trader Daniel Harmon came down to Kaministiquia from Lake Winnipeg via Rainy Lake and Lac la Croix, a river which he called the Nipigon (but which is clearly not today's Nipigon River) and Dog Lake. He described this as "the rout, by which the French, in former times, passed into the interiour". He saw Kaministiquia, or the "New Fort" for the first time, noting that "here the French, before the English conquered Canada, had an establishment". He met "gentlemen" from Montréal and "different parts of the Interiour", and remarked on the presence of "one thousand labouring men, the greater part of whom, are Canadians, who answer better in this country, for the service required by the Company, than any other people would probably do".¹¹⁴ In his first trip into the interior from Montréal, he had described a "Canadian" "fellow clerk" travelling with him whose mother had been an Indian, as well as remarking on how "the Canadians resemble their ancestors, the French". For Harmon, born and raised in the United States, the word "Canadian" applied generally to people of French descent, with or without Aboriginal ancestry.¹¹⁵ To his Hudson's Bay Company rivals, of course, Harmon himself would have been a "Canadian", meaning an employee or partner of a trading company exporting out of Montréal.

Posts and Settlements, 1807 - 1817

NWC trader Daniel Harmon was assigned to the post at Sturgeon Lake for the winter of 1807 – 1808, and left Fort William with three canoes in the last week of July 1807. For a few days, he travelled with several other NWC traders, (Haldane, Leith, Chaboillez, McLoughlin, Russel and Dougal Cameron, and Roderick McKenzie). Harmon left Chaboillez and Leith, who were going to take over the Pic and Michipicoten posts respectively, at the entrance to the Nipigon River. Four days after leaving Lake Superior, the brigade arrived at "Fort Duncan at the north end of

¹¹³ AO, F471-1-0-18, MU2199, B803022, in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company Containing Analogy of Nations Ancient and Modern". That the "Fond du Lac" list pertains to Wisconsin and not to Lake Athabasca is confirmed by Henry's classification of the Fond du Lac returns for 1805 in the "South Lake Superior" department (reprinted in *The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger*, Barry M. Gough, ed., 189).

¹¹⁴ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 114.

¹¹⁵ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 5.

Lake Nipigon”. Roderick Mackenzie stayed to winter at Fort Duncan. Harmon, his wife and five other men wintered at Sturgeon Lake; one of Harmon’s children was born there. On 22 June 1808, the brigade from Red Lake, Sturgeon Lake, and other outposts of the Nipigon department arrived at Fort Duncan, where they paused for a few days before resuming their voyage to Fort William. Another few days were spent on an island in Lake Nipigon, “in fishing for trout, which are here in plenty, and are of excellent quality”.¹¹⁶

In 1809, NWC trader John Johnston wrote a description of Sault Ste. Marie, through which he had travelled on his way to Fond du Lac.

On the farthest stream on the North side the North West Company have a fine Saw Mill. Here they have also several Houses and Stores for the reception of their Goods from Montreal...The Goods are carted over the Portage which is half a mile in length, and deposited in a store from whence they are conveyed in Bateaux to the Vessel that transports them to Caminitiquia, the chief settlement of the Company on the North Western extremity of the Lake. The meaning of the word Caminitiquia in the Chipeway language is, the river of difficult entrance...

The eddies formed around the rocks are the best places for taking the white fish...[which] are the chief support of both the Indians and White people here.

The situation of the Village is pleasing and romantic; the ground rises gently from the edge of the river, the Houses if they merit that name, are scattered irregularly over the ridge, and continued to within Four hundred Yards of the Fall...the scene...is agreeably heightened by the swarms of little Children gambling [gambolling] in every direction; and the sleek and peaceful Cattle...

When the Vessels of the North West Company are at anchor on the opposite side...there is a variety and contrast in the scene creative of the most pleasing ideas...

Those who go to the expense and trouble of inclosing and draining have as fine oats and Vegetables as in the world; and I have seen several heads or ears of Wheat and Oats which had fallen into the gardens by accident come to perfect maturity.¹¹⁷

Jacqueline Peterson describes the Sault *circa* 1800 as the residence of “a growing number of French Canadian, Métis, and Scots and Irish traders [who] had fanned out along both sides of the rapids with their Native wives and children”, including Jean-Baptiste Nolin and Jean-Baptiste

¹¹⁶ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 126 – 132.

¹¹⁷ AO, F471-1-0-16, B80302, John Johnston, “An Account of Lake Superior”, with a letter of 21 September 1809 from Johnston to Roderick Mackenzie (transcripts), 3 – 6.

Cadotte. Farming was limited; fish and other country foods supported the population.¹¹⁸ North West Company clerk Daniel Harmon, when passing by Sault Ste. Marie in 1800, observed the North West Company buildings on the north side of the river and the locks the Company had built, as well as “a few Americans, Scotch and Canadians, who carry on a small traffic with the Natives, and also till the ground a little”.¹¹⁹

The old fur trade population centre at Mackinac had been shifted back and forth between British and American jurisdiction three times by 1815, with population migrations resulting each time. In 1796, the post was transferred peacefully to the United States, and the military garrison and many of the “Canadian” fur trade families moved to St. Joseph Island nearby. In 1812, a contingent of 160 volunteers from these fur trade families combined with a small number of British regular troops to recapture Mackinac for the British. However, under the Treaty of Ghent, Mackinac was deemed to be within American territory. The British garrison and most of the “Canadian” families then moved to Drummond Island.¹²⁰

North West Company trader Gabriel Franchère provided a written sketch of Fort William in 1814 in his memoirs. Travelling through Cumberland House at the outlet of the Saskatchewan River at Cumberland Lake in present-day Saskatchewan, he noted that “at this place the traders who resort every year to Fort William, leave their half-breed or Indian wives and families, as

¹¹⁸ Peterson, “Ethnogenesis”, 49. Johnston himself was married to an Ojibwa woman and had several children (*ibid.*, 54).

¹¹⁹ Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America*, Daniel Haskel, ed., introduction by W. L. Grant (Toronto: A. S. Barnes, 1911), online at <http://books.scholarsportal.info/viewdoc.html?id=60300> (accessed January 2013), 12. In June 1800, Harmon left Sault Ste. Marie for Grand Portage with a North West Company brigade of 300 men in 35 canoes.

¹²⁰ A. C. Osborne, “The Migration of *Voyageurs* from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828”, Ontario Historical Society *Papers and Records*, Vol. III, 123. As the title of the article implies, this community moved again in 1828 after boundary surveys determined that Drummond Island was in American territory. These people became the ancestors of many modern-day Métis people on Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, especially around Penetanguishene. Captain Joseph Delafield of the American boundary survey party recorded visits with “Mrs. Solomon” on his visit there in 1821. He described Mrs. Solomon as “of the Jewish faith and a very clever and kind woman”. She gave Delafield some “Indian” crafts, told him that large quantities of maple sugar were made on the Island (although there was little agriculture) and that between 1,500 and 2,000 “Indians” assembled in the fall at Drummond Island to receive presents from the U. S. Government and trade their goods. Her “garden” was about half an acre in size (Joseph Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary: A Diary of the first survey of the Canadian Boundary Line from St. Regis to the Lake of the Woods*, New York: privately printed, 1843), 318 - 321). Delafield also recorded supplying provisions to “a Mr. Solomon with two little children” from Drummond Island, windbound on Goose Island close to Mackinac (*ibid.*, 461).

they can live here at little expense, the lake abounding in fish”.¹²¹ Coming down the Kaministiquia River, at the end of a long and difficult portage about a day’s travel from Fort William, Franchère and his party “found a sort of *restaurant* or *cabaret*, kept by a man named *Boucher*”. Despite the difficulty of the subsequent portages around falls and rapids, the journey proceeded “without a murmur from our Canadian boatmen, who kept their spirits up by singing their *voyageur* songs”. Franchère described the Fort in some detail as it was in July:

Fort William has really the appearance of a fort, with its palisade fifteen feet high, and that of a pretty village, from the number of edifices it encloses. In the middle of a spacious square rises a large building elegantly constructed, though of wood, with a long piazza or portico, raised about five feet from the ground, and surmounted by a balcony, extending along the whole front. In the centre is a saloon or hall, sixty feet in length by thirty in width, decorated with several pieces of painting, and some portraits of the leading partners. It is in this hall that the agents, partners, clerks, interpreters, and guides, take their meals together, at different tables...On either side of this edifice, is another of the same extent...they are each divided by a corridor running through its length, and contain each, a dozen pretty bed-rooms. One is destined for the wintering partners, the other for the clerks. On the east of the square is another building similar to the last two, and intended for the same use, and a warehouse where the furs are inspected and repacked for shipment. In the rear of these, are the lodging-house of the guides, another fur-warehouse, and finally, a powder magazine...At the angle is a sort of bastion, or look-out place, commanding a view of the lake. On the west side is seen a range of buildings, some of which serve for stores, and others for workshops; there is one for the equipment of the men, another for the fitting out of the canoes, one for the retail of goods, another where they sell liquors, bread, pork, butter, &c., and where a treat is given to the travellers who arrive. This consists in a white loaf, half a pound of butter, and a gill of rum. The *voyageurs* give this tavern the name of *Cantine salope*.¹²² Behind all this is another range, where we find the counting-house, a fine square building and well-lighted; another storehouse of stone, tin-roofed; and a *jail*, not less necessary than the rest. The *voyageurs* give it the name of *pot au beurre* – the butter tub. Beyond these we discover the shops of the carpenter, the cooper, the tinsmith, the blacksmith, &c.; and spacious yards and sheds for the shelter, reparation, and construction of the canoes. Near the gate of the fort, which is on the south, are the quarters of the physician, and those of the chief clerk. Over the gate is a guard-house.

As the river is deep at its entrance, the company has had a wharf constructed, extending the whole length of the fort...The land behind the fort and on both sides of it, is cleared and under tillage. We saw barley, peas, and oats, which had a very fine appearance. At the end

¹²¹ Gabriel Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814*, J. V. Huntington, translator and editor (New York: Redfield, 1854), online at <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/80/2.html?qid=peelbib|franchere|%28peelnum:000080%29|score> (accessed January 2013), 327.

¹²² Donna Cona translate this term as “Trollop’s Tavern”. “Historical Profile of the Lake of the Woods Area Mixed European-Indian...Community”, 22.

of the clearing is the burying-ground. There are also, on the opposite bank of the river, a certain number of log-houses, all inhabited by old Canadian *voyageurs*, worn out in the service of the company, without having enriched themselves. Married to women of the country, and incumbered with large families of half-breed children,¹²³ these men prefer to cultivate a little Indian corn and potatoes, and to fish, for a subsistence, rather than to return to their native districts, to give their relatives and former acquaintances certain proofs of their misconduct or their imprudence.

Fort William is the grand dépôt of the Northwest Company for their interior posts, and the general *rendezvous* of the partners. The agents from Montreal and the wintering partners assemble here every summer, to receive the returns of their respective outfits, prepare for the operations of the ensuing season, and discuss the general interests of their association...The wintering hands who are to return with their employers, pass also a great part of the summer here; they form a great encampment on the west side of the fort, outside the palisades. Those who engage at Montreal to go no further than Fort William or *Rainy lake*, and who do not *winter*, occupy yet another space, on the east side. The winterers, or *hivernants*, give to these last the name of *mangeurs de lard*, or pork-eaters. They are also called *comers-and-goers*. One perceives an astonishing difference between these two camps, which are composed sometimes of three or four hundred men each; that of the pork-eaters is always dirty and disorderly, while that of the winterers is clean and neat.

To clear its land and improve its property, the company inserts a clause in the engagement of all who enter its service as canoe-men, that they shall work for a certain number of days during their stay at Fort William. It is thus that it has cleared and drained the environs of the fort, and has erected so many fine buildings. But when a hand has once worked the stipulated number of days, he is for ever after exempt, even if he remain in the service twenty or thirty years, and should come down to the fort every summer...¹²⁴

The scale, facilities and organization of the fort were indeed astonishing, especially by the rather spartan standards of fur-trade accommodation at many posts. The thousand-plus men and those of their wives and families who accompanied them each had their place socially and geographically: the partners, clerks, guides, winterers, summer men, skilled trades, and retired residents with their families. This sorting strategy would tend to reinforce identities by hierarchy and occupation, while the common experience of meeting at Fort William offered a broader

¹²³ The original French gives this phrase as "mariés a des femmes du pays, et chargés des familles nombreuses". See Gabriel Franchère, *Relation d'un Voyage à la Côte du Nord-Ouest de l'Amerique Septentrionale, dans les années 1810, 11, 12, 13, et 14* (Montréal: L'Imprimerie de C. E. Pasteur, 1820), online at <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/81/8.html> (accessed January 2013), 271.

¹²⁴ Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 339-344. Former North West Company partner Andrew Stewart gave a similar description to Captain Joseph Delafield of the American boundary survey party in 1823. Stewart recalled that in 1818 he had 800 "North men" camped in the field traditionally reserved for them above the Fort, a similar plain below the Fort being customarily the camp for "Pork Eaters" or men making the round trip in the summer from Montréal. "There was always a constant riot in the camps, there being a sort of warfare existing", Stewart told Delafield (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 401).

Company identity. Other geographic spaces were occupied by the Indians that camped near the fort in the summer time, and the women and children who were left either at the posts or at common meeting places such as Cumberland House. The logistics of feeding, equipping, and regulating this army of summer visitors, let alone the business of shipping in goods and shipping out furs, were impressive. The equivalent Hudson's Bay Company establishments, at York Factory and to a lesser extent Churchill, Albany and Moose, were also impressive but could not match the scale of activity at Fort William's single funnel point from the fur trade country (including north of Superior) out to Montréal.

Franchère continued his journey to Montréal via the usual route through Lake Superior, Lake Huron, the French River, Lake Nipissing, the Mattawa River, the Ottawa River, and finally the St. Lawrence. He left Fort William in a large canoe with fourteen *voyageurs* and six passengers. On the fourth day out from Fort William, the group "dined at a small trading establishment called *Le Pic*, where we had excellent fish". A few days later, they crossed Michipicoten Bay, where they met a small canoe coming the other way containing Captain McCargo and the crew of the NWC schooner. He brought the news that Sault Ste. Marie had been attacked by the Americans. Two and a half days later, Franchère and his party reached "Batchawainon, where we found some women, who prepared us food and received us well. It is a poor little post". At the Sault, they saw "the ruins the enemy had left" of the North West Company houses, stores, and sawmills. The Americans had attacked and pillaged this establishment in revenge for the Company's raising of a *voyageur* regiment and arming some Indian people to fight against them in the War of 1812 – 1814.¹²⁵

Also at Sault Ste. Marie, the travellers found "a certain number of houses" just below the rapids. On the south side was the residence of "a Mr. Nolin, with his family, consisting of three half-breed boys and as many girls, one of whom was passably pretty. He was an old Indian trader, and his house and furniture showed signs of his former prosperity".¹²⁶ Franchère continued,

¹²⁵ Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 347 – 350.

¹²⁶ Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 351. The French original reads, "Mr. Nolin, avec sa famille, consistant en trois garçons et trois filles, dont une était passablement jolie" (*Relation d'un Voyage*, 278). Delafield visited a Mr. Johnson, a trader, with his Indian wife and "a large family of children" on the American side of Sault Ste. Marie in 1822. He also commented that one of Mr. Johnson's girls was "a fine-looking girl", while her sister was "much of

On the British side we found Mr. Charles Ermatinger, who had a pretty establishment: he dwelt temporarily in a house that belonged to Nolin, but he was building another of stone, very elegant, and had just finished a grist mill. He thought that the last would lead the inhabitants to sow more grain than they did. These inhabitants are principally old Canadian boatmen, married to half-breed or Indian women. The fish afford them subsistence during the greater part of the year, and provided they secure potatoes enough to carry them through the remainder, they are content...¹²⁷

Ermatinger was an established fur trader with a mixed-ancestry family of his own.¹²⁸ Although he entertained his North West Company visitors, he also recruited temporary employees for the Hudson's Bay Company's Lake Superior posts from among the Great Lakes fur trade families that gathered around the Sault, Mackinac, St. Joseph's and Drummond Island.

In 1816, in the context of the conflict between the HBC and NWC that had culminated in the Seven Oaks incident at the Red River settlement, HBC proprietor Lord Selkirk and soldiers from the des Meurons regiment seized the NWC establishment at Fort William. When the HBC relinquished Fort William in 1817, a new HBC post, named Point Meuron, was constructed across the river from the NWC's extensive developments. The HBC used this Point Meuron post for similar purposes, albeit on a much smaller scale, as the NWC used Fort William; as a staging area for transportation of goods, people, and furs between the smaller inland canoes used to access posts not easily reached from Hudson's Bay, and the large Great Lakes freight canoes used between Lake Superior and Montréal. In 1815, the HBC had stepped up its recruiting of employees from "Canada", usually from the parishes around Montréal, increasing the importance of the Great Lakes route for personnel transfers.¹²⁹

the squaw in looks, and consequently kept in the dark, altho equally well behaved" (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 370).

¹²⁷ Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 351 – 352. The French of the third sentence reads: "Ces habitants sont la plupart de vieux voyageurs Canadiens mariés à des femmes du pays" (*Relation d'un voyage*, 279).

¹²⁸ Charles Ermatinger's father Laurenz had been involved in the fur trade since 1761 and was a founding partner of the North West Company (although he did not remain in the partnership). Laurenz married his business partner's sister (Charles' mother) in Montréal, further cementing ties in the fur trade family networks. Charles married an Indian woman from the Upper Mississippi while trading there in the late 1700s. He and his family moved to Sault Ste. Marie in 1808 (Gladys McNeice, *The Ermatinger Family of Sault Ste. Marie* [Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario: Creative Printing House, 1984], 1 - 11). In 1822, Joseph Delafield described Ermatinger as "an individual trader [on the Canadian side of Sault Ste. Marie] of considerable capital" (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 370).

¹²⁹ Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade", 35 – 36.

Long Lake, 1815 - 1818

The next Hudson's Bay Company journal available for the region north of Lake Superior is for Long Lake post, commencing in August 1815. This post was established as an outpost of Henley House the previous season. Two labourers, Edward McKay, from Hudson's Bay, and John McDonald, from "Canada",¹³⁰ had stayed the summer at Long Lake. The crew arriving from Henley House, under the direction of Donald McPherson from Argyle in Scotland, included William Clouston, from Stromness in Scotland; Robert Dudley and Jacob Daniel,¹³¹ steersmen from Hudson's Bay; and Thomas Brahoney and William Malone, from Sligo in Ireland.¹³² Other employees at the post for at least part of the year were Roderick Davidson, a clerk from Inverness in Scotland; William Taylor from the Orkney Islands; Joseph Clouston from Ireland; Hugh Linklater, a steersman from Hudson's Bay; an apprentice, John Taylor, from Hudson's Bay,¹³³ and Hugh Craigie from the Orkney Islands.¹³⁴ Dudley was also a junior trader and was sent to manage an outpost at Cat Lake with the Cloustons and Hugh Linklater for several months of the winter.¹³⁵

One feature of life at Long Lake was that the men were often sent out to travel with hunting Indians, or to other locations in the vicinity to trade, hunt or fish. On most of these trading, trapping or hunting expeditions, to such places as Lesser Long Lake and Cat Lake, one of the "Hudson's Bay" men would be paired up with one of the Europeans, presumably to take

¹³⁰ John McKay had opened the Nipigon post for the HBC in 1792, after having worked in the same area for Cotté and Shaw. Donald McKay also joined the HBC in 1792 after trading on his own account at Sturgeon Lake. It is not known if Edward McKay was related to either of these men. John McDonald, a "Canadian" who had previously worked in the Lake Nipigon area for Cameron and possibly for Solomon, was working for the HBC at Nipigon post in 1796 – 1797. It is not clear if the John McDonald of 1815 is the same person.

¹³¹ John Daniels, a native of "Hudson's Bay", worked for the HBC Nipigon post in 1802. The spelling of "Daniel" and "Daniels" is sometimes not consistent in the records. It is not known if Jacob was related to John.

¹³² HBCA, B.117/a/1, 25 August 1815, fol. 1. The information about the origins of the employees comes from HBCA, A.30/15, fols. 7 – 8 (handwritten numbers).

¹³³ It is not known if this is a descendant of the John Taylor who worked at Nipigon House in 1797, or a relative of the William Taylor who was working at Long Lake.

¹³⁴ HBCA, B.117/a/1, 30 October 1815, fol. 8; 28 November 1815, fol. 10d; 1 January 1816, fol. 14d; 20 February 1816, fol. 19d; 1 June 1816, fol. 30.

¹³⁵ HBCA, B.117/a/1, 27 November 1815, fol. 10d; 30 May 1816, fol. 30.

advantage of the native-born person's bush and/or language skills.¹³⁶ No women or children were mentioned in this journal; indeed Jacob Daniel was noted as netting snowshoes¹³⁷ and other men were recorded as hunting small game such as hares and partridges, tasks that were performed by women at other posts. Fishing, an important activity for the post, took place at various locations, and was engaged in by both the native-born and the Orcadians, who had doubtless learned this skill in their home country. The role of the "Hudson's Bay" men, however, was clearly critical to the HBC's operations, as the Albany trader had observed in 1804, and their numbers in the service were increasing.

Competition from the North West Company was intense; the "Canadian" house nearby was under the direction of a Mr. Nelson or Neilson (possibly the same person, or a relation, who had directed the boat-building near the Sault witnessed by John Macdonell in 1793). Desertion back and forth between houses appears to have been common; McKay, Daniels, Brahoney, Craigie, and Malone all deserted or attempted to desert to the NWC during the winter season, and two "Canadians" attempted to join the HBC.¹³⁸ The NWC also sent people from Long Lake to Cat Lake and Lesser Long Lake to trade.¹³⁹ The Long Lake NWC post was apparently supplied from a post at "Pic".¹⁴⁰ The trading year came to a dramatic end when Chief Trader McPherson was arrested by his NWC neighbours and taken away to Montréal via Pic in early June 1816.¹⁴¹

James Tate (also spelled Tait), of Ronaldsha or Ronaldsay in the Orkney Islands, took over Long Lake House for the HBC in 1816 and brought a crew of eight men to Henley House.¹⁴² Five men accompanied Tate to Long Lake: Jacob Daniel, William Clouston, and Robert Dudley returned; William Taylor (possibly of the Orkneys) and Hugh Rich (home parish unknown),

¹³⁶ See for example HBCA, B.117/a/1, 2 October 1815 (Dudley and William Clouston sent off to trade with Indians), fol. 5; 30 October 1815 (Davidson and John Taylor hunt partridges and hares), fol. 8; 2 November 1815 (Davidson and McKay hunting), fol. 8; 1 January 1816 (Daniel and Joseph Clouston sent off "with the Indians"), fol. 14d.

¹³⁷ HBCA, B.117/a/1, 11 March 1816, fol. 21d.

¹³⁸ HBCA, B.117/a/1, 29 August 1815, fol. 1d; 31 August 1815, fol. 2; 28 November 1815, fol. 10d; 23 December 1815, fols. 13 and 13d; 30 December 1815, fol. 14.

¹³⁹ HBCA, B.117/a/1, 4 April 1816, fol. 24.

¹⁴⁰ HBCA, 23 December 1815, fol. 13d; 1 June 1816, fol. 30.

¹⁴¹ HBCA, 5 June 1816, fols. 30d, 31.

¹⁴² The men who stayed at Henley House were Joseph Clouston, William Cursiter of Rendall in the Orkneys, and Andrew Thompson and Andrew Haddle or Heddle of the Orkneys. These men, with the exception of Joseph Clouston, returned to Henley the following year.

were newcomers.¹⁴³ The HBC thus provided Long Lake with men familiar with the area, including two native-born men, to assist the newcomers and outsiders in the work of the post. *En route*, Daniel and Tate had had an altercation over which of them should have command of the boat. Daniel was the steersman and had both skills and knowledge of the route, but Tate was his superior as the master of the post.¹⁴⁴ Tate identified the HBC post as located about two miles southwest of the entrance to the lake from the north; the “Canadian” house, with a master and eight men, was north about 200 meters or 650 feet.¹⁴⁵ The Canadian master’s name was Solomon Mittelberger, and Tate learned the names of two of his men, Landrie and Charette.¹⁴⁶ The Canadian post was once again supplied from “Pic”.¹⁴⁷

The Tate journal of 1816 – 1817 is the first to mention Jacob Daniel’s wife and family. Daniel and his family were sent by Tate to fish, “follow Indians”, and snare small game such as rabbits and marten. Daniel also had carpentry skills, having assisted in building the house the previous season, and making window frames in October 1816.¹⁴⁸ Tate observed that Daniel was the “best man for procuring the trade in this district”, and therefore some “triffling mistakes” (including, presumably, challenging Tate’s authority in the boat) were overlooked.¹⁴⁹ Daniel’s wife and kin connections may have assisted him in securing the trade of the local Indian population, and he also would have had language and cultural knowledge that would have given him an advantage in his relationships with the HBC’s customers. Dudley also continued to trade and hunt, at one point bringing in 400 rabbits, 1 goose, 1 duck and 11 muskrats.¹⁵⁰ Tate left the post in May of

¹⁴³ The information regarding parish of origin for 1816 – 1817 and 1818 – 1819 comes from HBCA, A.30/16, List of Servants in Hudson’s Bay 1818 – 1819, fols. 157 – 202. This is the next available register. The men for Henley and Long Lake are listed in HBCA, B.117/a/2, 10 August 1816, fol. 1; letter of James Tate to William Thomas, 1 September 1816, fols. 3 – 4.

¹⁴⁴ HBCA, B.117/a/2, letter of James Tate to William Thomas, 1 September 1816, fols. 3 – 4.

¹⁴⁵ HBCA, B.117/a/2, 23 September 1816, fol. 8.

¹⁴⁶ HBCA, B.117/a/2, 23 September 1816, fol. 8; letter of James Tate to Solomon Mittelberger, 28 August 1816, fol. 9.

¹⁴⁷ HBCA, B.117/a/2, 23 September 1816, fol. 8.

¹⁴⁸ See for example HBCA, B.117/a/2, 6 September 1815, fol. 2d; HBCA, B.117/a/2, 29 September 1816, 3 October 1816, 4 October 1816, fol. 10; 10 October 1816, 16 October 1816, fol. 11; 26 November 1816, 28 November 1816, 29 November 1816, 3 December 1816, fol. 16; 27 December 1816, fols. 18 – 19.

¹⁴⁹ HBCA, B.117/a/2, letter of James Tate to William Thomas, 15 March 1817, fol. 34. The employment register for 1818 – 1819 includes the following remark about Daniel: “Very capable of his duty and an excellent hand in procuring trade, but thinks too much of his own abilities and in case of a miscarriage can cloak it with a lie” (A.30/16, fol. 48).

¹⁵⁰ HBCA, B.117/a/2, 14 May 1817, fol. 46.

1817 for Henley House, leaving William Clouston in charge, and Jacob Daniel and Hugh Rich to continue at Long Lake over the summer. Daniel travelled with Tate as “pilot for part of the way”.¹⁵¹

Tate returned to Long Lake in August of 1817, bringing back Daniel (who had made a trip up to Albany), William Taylor, Hugh Rich, William Cursiter (who had been at Henley the previous season) and newcomers Charles Groux (parish of origin unknown), clerk Nicol Finlayson (from Great Britain), John Brady or Brodie of the Orkneys, and William Cromartie or Cromarty, an apprentice from “Hudson’s Bay”. William Clouston was left in charge at Henley House with William Scarth, James Flett, and Andrew Thompson, all of the Orkney Islands.¹⁵² Long Lake was staffed again with a mixture of returning and new hands, including some mixed-ancestry individuals. Mittelberger was back at the “Canadian” house with nine men, including Charette, Pyette, and Legarde. Tate wrote to Henley House that each of the “Canadian” employees could do business with Indians and converse in the “Indian tongue”, at least one of them being “Indian or half Indian”.¹⁵³ Daniel was sent out frequently with the Orkneymen to fish, trade, and hunt furbearers. Locations for these activities included Pike River, Keenogamyshick, Blackwater Lake, Big Lake, Cat Lake, Wappuscuaca Lake, the “chain of lakes”, and Raw Bone Lake.¹⁵⁴

This sample of early Long Lake HBC post journals highlights the presence and importance of mixed-ancestry men from “Hudson’s Bay” in the fur trade during this period. The Company clearly attempted to staff inland posts with a mix of men experienced in the region and newcomers, and the “Hudson’s Bay” men were a key element to ensure a post’s success. Men like Daniel and Dudley (and even the apprentices like John Taylor and William Cromartie) not only traded, hunted and fished to support the post, but also made the incoming Orkneymen useful by taking them to fishing and trading locations, facilitating communication with the Indians, and using skills specific to the fur trade country such as netting snowshoes, steering

¹⁵¹ HBCA, B.117/a/2, 26 May 1817, fol. 48. Tate appended to this journal a useful map identifying the locations mentioned as fishing, trading, or travelling sites, and also the route taken back to Henley.

¹⁵² HBCA, B.117/a/3, 12 July 1817, fol. 1; 3 August 1817, 7 August 1817, fol. 3.

¹⁵³ HBCA, B.117/a/3, letter of James Tate to Solomon Mittelberger, 29 September 1817, fol. 20; letter of James Tate to William Thomas, 3 February 1818, fols. 25 - 27; letter of 1 April 1818, James Tate to Solomon Mittelberger, fol. 39.

¹⁵⁴ HBCA, B.118/a/3, 12 September 1817, 15 September 1817, fol. 8; 3 February 1818, fol. 25; 25 March 1818, fol. 34; 8 April 1818, fol. 40; 16 April 1818, fol. 42; 1 May 1818, fol. 44a.

through rapids, or making canoes. After some exposure to this knowledge, some Orkney employees learned to “follow Indians”, find fishing locations, trade, hunt, and trap on their own, but these were not skills that they brought with them from the Old Country. Tate at Long Lake identified the facility of the majority of “Canadian” employees, some of whom were of mixed ancestry or had been involved in the fur trade for decades if not generations, in speaking Indian languages and dealing with Indian customers as a key competitive advantage for the North West Company. The “Hudson’s Bay” employees of the HBC, for their part, were aware of their unique abilities and position in the Company, and intermittently demanded more respect and recognition, whether it be through better wages or acknowledgement of their authority in specific situations.

Michipicoten, 1817 - 1821

In the HBC Michipicoten District for the trading year 1817 – 1818, under the direction of Andrew Stewart from Scotland, ten employees were listed. Unfortunately, complete employment records for Michipicoten and Fort William for the 1817 – 1821 time period similar to those for Nipigon and Long Lake have not survived, so compiling information about the origins of these employees is more difficult. The Michipicoten District report for 1817 – 1818 offers some data about the ten employees. George Budge, a 20-year HBC veteran identified in 1814 as an Orkneyman,¹⁵⁵ was described by Stewart as “very dissatisfied with his Situation...he wanted to go to the [Red River] Colony with his family”. Budge was dispatched to Brunswick House, much against his will, but his family remained at Michipicoten.¹⁵⁶ John Vincent, clerk, was listed in 1818 – 1819 as a native of Hudson’s Bay.¹⁵⁷ Dominique Deminies, a clerk from Canada hired at Sault Ste. Marie, had decided to leave for Red River.¹⁵⁸ James Barr, an axeman, was from Red River, as was Neil Weatherwuto. Another woodcutter, Benjamin LaCosh, was “Canadian”, as was labourer Lawrence Stone or Sterne. Magnus Kirkness, labourer, was an

¹⁵⁵ HBCA, A.30/14, fol. 45.

¹⁵⁶ HBCA, B.129/e/1, fols. 3d, 4. Budge was transferred to Point Meuron for outfit 1818 – 1819, and his family was not recorded as staying at Michipicoten that year (HBCA, B.129/e/2, fol. 2).

¹⁵⁷ HBCA, B.129/e/1, fol. 4; HBCA, A.30/16, fol. 63.

¹⁵⁸ HBCA, B.129/e/1, fol. 4d.

Orkneyman. The origins of Robert Jones, clerk, and Andrew Nelson, sawyer, are unknown, although Nelson was formerly stationed at Fort Churchill.¹⁵⁹

Stewart described the North West Company operations at Michipicoten in some detail in his report. Donald McIntosh was the partner in charge of the NWC's Michipicoten District, which included posts at Batchewana (staffed by three men, where maple sugar was an important product) and three other locations in the HBC's Brunswick district. John Robertson, a "half breed...brought up in our service he deserted from Mr Geo Gladman when master at New Brunswick many Years ago", McIntosh and five other men stayed at the post in the winter, and ten to twelve men were there in the summer. The NWC had built a structure 21 yards from the HBC post to observe their rivals' activities.¹⁶⁰

According to Stewart, Michipicoten was not an important fur post, but was significant as a provisioning post and a supply depot for both companies, especially for canoes moving into the interior. Fishing was a critical part of the post's work, at locations 25 and 18 miles away and others nearby. At least four men were required to work the fishing nets used in the peak summer season. Few Indian people frequented either the NWC or the HBC post; Stewart commented that some from Sault Ste. Marie and Drummond Island had visited in the summer of 1817 and helped to collect cedar bark for the exteriors of the post buildings.¹⁶¹

The summary of the post journal that Stewart included with his annual report tends to confirm Stewart's characterization of the post's functions. In the navigation season, canoes and boats from Sault Ste. Marie, Fort William/Point Meuron, Montréal and Red River stopped at the Michipicoten posts, delivering or picking up supplies and provisions. Brunswick House (the winter residence of the Governor of the HBC's Southern Department) was also supplied from Michipicoten, and communications to and from the Governor passed through Michipicoten after freezeup. George Budge and sometimes John Vincent led the crews of boats that were sent out from Michipicoten.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ HBCA, A.30/16, fol. 52; HBCA, B.129/e/1, fols. 4d – 5.

¹⁶⁰ HBCA, B.129/e/1, fol. 5d.

¹⁶¹ HBCA, B.129/e/1, fols. 5, 6.

¹⁶² HBCA, B.129/e/1, fols. 1 – 3.

Stewart's summary of the post journal for 1818 – 1819, submitted with his report for that year, showed a similar pattern. During navigation season, the port bustled with traffic to and from Red River, Montréal, Fort William/Point Meuron, Sault Ste. Marie, Lac la Pluie, Drummond Island and Brunswick House. From September to November, the "fall fishery" was in full swing, bringing in 4900 fish, although the site on Lake Superior eighteen miles from the post on was not as productive as hoped, "as we were ignorant of the proper method of catching them". Firewood collecting took up most of the post's manpower from November to January, as the North West Company had harvested much of the easily accessible wood in the twelve years prior to the establishment of the HBC post. By April, the lake was navigable again. Few Indians visited; Stewart estimated that only one starving family came to the NWC post all winter.¹⁶³

The NWC post had outposts at Brunswick, Capinacagamis Lake, Matawgomie Lake, and Batchewana, where an "old Canadian trader" and three men continued their hold on the trade. Stewart was able to name the clerks at the NWC post: Baptist Rousseau, John Robertson, D. Clarke and François Hillury.¹⁶⁴ In August of 1818, Stewart made a bold competitive move, intercepting two "heavy loaded canoes" from trader Augustin Nolin at Sault Ste. Marie in the charge of clerk Joseph Dufaut, who was headed inland to oppose the HBC's Brunswick post. He entered into an agreement with Dufaut, who was "personally known to all Indians in that quarter", to instead trade for the HBC at Matawgomie Lake. Dufaut and Morrice were also to spend at least part of the winter at Michipicoten post. As well as trading, Dufaut had with him "three Sauter hunting Indians from Fond du Lac" to trap for the post, and "Canadians" (Nolin employees) Michel Batien, François Paquette, François Biron¹⁶⁵ and Nicholas Morrice.¹⁶⁶

At his own post, Stewart had lost some of his most experienced employees, such as Budge and Vincent, perhaps explaining why the fishery had not been as successful as before. George Morin, clerk and interpreter, François Charlebois, Drummond Craigie and Joseph Labombard all came from "Canada". Labombard had been engaged by Stewart at Sault Ste. Marie and had been

¹⁶³ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fols. 1 – 4, 6d.

¹⁶⁴ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fols. 6 – 6d.

¹⁶⁵ Biron was a progenitor of a large extended family with this surname in the Métis community of Sault Ste. Marie, Batchewana and Garden River.

¹⁶⁶ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fols. 2, 2d, 6d – 9.

essential for the fishery, but he was too highly-paid to retain.¹⁶⁷ James Flett, John Harcus, and John Mowat were all Orkneymen. Magnus Kirkness, a holdover from the previous year, had been Stewart's best man, but had been injured in December and unable to work.¹⁶⁸ Stewart applied to Governor Vincent in September of 1818 for the "services of his son" John, and John Vincent came to Michipicoten from Christmas to 8 March to help cut and prepare wood for the building of a house.¹⁶⁹ The lack of men skilled and experienced in fur trade work and knowledgeable about the region, including mixed-ancestry men, had apparently led to Stewart's hiring Labombard at Sault Ste. Marie, at wages over one-and-a-half times what regular employees at the same level were paid; and Augustin Nolin's crew of traders with established ties to the Aboriginal population and the ability to "go after Indians". Stewart did not refer to any families around his own post, except for the family of Patrick McNulty "belonging to the Colony" (Red River), who had stayed at the post and been supported there during the winter of 1817 – 1818, returning to Red River in the spring of 1818.¹⁷⁰

In August of 1819, shipwright Edward Taylor (origins unknown) arrived with his wife and two assistants at Michipicoten, and shortly afterwards Stewart and Taylor set out to choose a suitable site for the construction of a boat to carry supplies from Sault Ste. Marie to Point Meuron. The project came to a disappointing end when Taylor declared that there was no suitable place to launch a boat of the size required, nor enough wood between Michipicoten and Sault Ste. Marie to build it.¹⁷¹ As in previous years, a fishery at a site 18 – 20 miles away from Michipicoten was undertaken at the beginning of September, and at the end of September a "fall fishery" was underway until the end of October. This year, the fishermen were apparently successful. However, for the second year in a row, Stewart was obliged to purchase moose hides for leather from a passing traveller, in this case "Canadian" Jean Gannion making a round trip to Montréal from Red River, as none were available around Michipicoten. As in case of other commodities

¹⁶⁷ Labombard's ethnicity has not been confirmed, although there is a 1802 contract in the Voyageur database for a Joseph Labombarde from Pointe-Claire with William McGillivray, a NWC partner, to travel to Mackinac and Kaministiquia and winter in the "Nord Ouest". It is likely that this is the same man. There are also earlier contracts from the mid-1700s for men with this surname to travel to Mackinac and Detroit. Labombard's "half-breed" son Alexis, born in 1811, was later a guide for John James Audubon on the Missouri River near Fort Union (Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and his Journals*, Elliott Coues, ed. [New York: Dover Publications, 1986], 529).

¹⁶⁸ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fols. 4d – 5d; HBCA, A.30/16, fols. 43, 45, 48, 50, 52, 55, 56.

¹⁶⁹ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fol. 4.

¹⁷⁰ HBCA, B.129/e/2, fol. 1.

¹⁷¹ HBCA, B.129/e/3, fol. 1d.

such as fish, Michipicoten had to supply not only its own needs but the requirements of other posts and travellers.¹⁷² The North West Company post was staffed by partner McIntosh, clerks Allan and Robertson, and four other men; their Michipicoten district employed fourteen men in all. The furs NWC obtained from locations other than the Michipicoten outposts such as Batchewana and Matawgamie came from “Indians along Lake Superior”, according to Stewart.¹⁷³

Stewart, in 1819 – 1820, had the benefit of some seasoned employees. Jean-Baptiste Perrault, about sixty years of age, had been hired at Sault Ste. Marie in 1817 by the HBC, but had worked in the Lake Superior/Lake Nipigon area fur trade since at least 1783. “I have not the least doubt but that Mr. Perrault is still inclined to make himself useful but as he labours under two Severe bodily infirmities Rhumatism Rupture he cannot be actively employed”.¹⁷⁴ Perrault came to the post with a “large family”.¹⁷⁵ Drummond Craigie returned to the post, a good labourer but “totally unacquainted with the management of a canoe”. James Flett, John Mowat, Magnus Kirkness and John Harcus also carried over from the previous year; Harcus had learned to drive a dog team, and Flett and Kirkness were capable of travelling to interior posts. Michael Hyland, a sawyer, origins unknown, was the only newcomer.¹⁷⁶ As trading with the Indians had become such a small part of Michipicoten’s business, Stewart could manage with these few men who had picked up some bush skills and local knowledge, perhaps from some of the men brought in from Sault Ste. Marie the previous year.

Perrault, Flett, Hyland, Kirkness and Mowat all remained at the post for the season of 1820 – 1821. In September of 1820, Perrault led the group of fishermen at the early fishery site 20 miles away from Michipicoten. The NWC men were also there; and results were mediocre for both parties. The NWC post was staffed by the partner and twelve men. Stewart believed that the NWC fur returns were better than in previous years because of the “unusual good hunts made by many of the Michippicoton Indians” and a “large family of Indians from the Pic quarter”. He emphasized to his superiors that “we had no chance of procuring any trade at Michippicoton.

¹⁷² HBCA, B.129/e/3, fols. 1d – 5.

¹⁷³ HBCA, B.129/e/3, fols. 5 – 6d.

¹⁷⁴ HBCA, B.129/e/3, fol. 5d.

¹⁷⁵ HBCA, B.129/e/4, fol. 2d.

¹⁷⁶ HBCA, B.129/e/3, fols.

Indeed when Michippicoton was established five years ago it was then clearly understood that it was with the view of supplying New Brunswick [House] with Provisions and to keep up regular communications with Canada”.¹⁷⁷

On 25 May 1821, Stewart received a dispatch from Montreal with the dramatic news of the coalition of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company. On 6 June, Nicholas Garry, Deputy Governor of the HBC, and Simon McGillivray, senior partner of the NWC, arrived by canoe from Montreal and instructed Stewart to begin the process of disbanding the post. Stewart and McIntosh together took an inventory of all the goods and equipment in the HBC and NWC posts, and then

All of the effects of the former Company were then transferred to the NWCo managing partner. Two of the men stationed at Michippicoton were then sent to Moose Factory, Mr Perrault and the other man John Mowat were permitted to leave the Service, they departed for Canada on the 28th June.¹⁷⁸

It is not known if Perrault took all of his “large family” back with him to “Canada”, or if in fact he travelled all the way back to his original Quebec home. He had likely not lived there for almost forty years.

Fort William/Point Meuron, 1817 - 1821

Across the river from Fort William, Jean-Baptiste Lemoine arrived at the Point Meuron site in the fall of 1817 with sixteen men.¹⁷⁹ It appears that this first contingent did not remain at Point Meuron; by June 1818 the list of names of men at the post was completely different. The men listed in June 1818 were Charles Giasson, post master;¹⁸⁰ Pierre Savoyard, Pierre Thibault,¹⁸¹ Jean Baptiste Lefevre, Joseph Larente, Baptiste Major, Antoine Paquette, Antoine

¹⁷⁷ HBCA, B.129/e/4, fols. 1,1d, 3, 3d.

¹⁷⁸ HBCA, B.129/e/4, fols. 2, 2d.

¹⁷⁹ HBCA, B.231/d/1, “Livre de Compt Pour Les Hommes avec J. B. Lemoine, 16 Sept 1817”. This may be the same man as the “Lemoine”, a NWC trader, who was dropped off at the Sault by John Macdonell’s party in 1793.

¹⁸⁰ It seems likely that this is a relative of Jacques Giasson, witness to the 1768 wedding of Gabriel Côté or Cotté, trader on Lake Nipigon, to Agathe Desjardins at Mackinac. See footnote 54. It is therefore plausible that Charles was of mixed ancestry.

¹⁸¹ There are many contracts in the Voyageur database for men with this surname, engaged for Great Lakes destinations in the mid-1700s. In particular, there is a Pierre Thibault engaged in 1753 to winter for three years at a “poste de l’Ouest”. It is not known if these are relatives of the man listed here.

LaBombarde,¹⁸² Martin Faille, Baptiste Vesinat jr.,¹⁸³ George Budge, Germain Toin, Louis Groux,¹⁸⁴ André LaBrèche, Pierre Girard, Pierre Pepin and François Chorette¹⁸⁵. Savoyard, Thibault, Lefevre, Larente, Major, Budge, Toin, Groux, and LaBrèche were engaged at Sault Ste. Marie. Pacquette, LaBombarde, Faille, Jean Vesinette, Baptiste Vesinat jr., Pepin, and Chorette were engaged at Point Meuron. Pierre Girard was originally engaged for Lac la Pluie, but was exchanged for Joseph Larente. Lefevre was engaged for Point Meuron but ended up travelling with Jean-Baptiste Lemoine when Lemoine left the post. Faille and Jean Vesinette were supposed to travel with the westbound brigade to Red River, but missed their departure and were engaged to work at Point Meuron. Pepin was supposed to travel east to Montréal with that brigade, but changed places with another man to stay at Meuron. “Young Savoyard”, perhaps a son of Pierre, also ran errands in the vicinity of the post until the family left for Red River in August 1819. Many of the Sault Ste. Marie men were noted as having been recruited by Mr. Ermatinger, a trader at the Sault, and owed him money, as if they had been advanced some goods by him.¹⁸⁶

The items on account for each of these men also offer some insights into life at the post. Pierre Thibault bought many items, including a shawl and women’s shoes, indicating that he was buying for a partner. This impression is confirmed in Baptiste Major’s account, which notes that

¹⁸² It is likely that this man is a relative of Joseph LaBombarde, from a fur-trade family, recruited at Sault Ste. Marie, who was hired for Michipicoten in 1818. An Antoine LaBombarde is included in the Voyageur contracts database, although that man signed a three-year contract with the North West Company in Montréal in 1819 for destinations including Mackinac, Fort William and Portage de la Montagne. This does not seem to align with the Antoine LaBombarde who was recruited at Point Meuron in 1818 and went to Drummond Island in 1820.

¹⁸³ A contract for a Jean-Baptiste Vezina dated 1765, with Montréal merchant Louis Baby, destination “poste que lui sera indiqué” (post to be indicated to him), is in the Voyageur database. This Baptiste Vesinat jr. seems too young to be Jean-Baptiste’s son, and his father was also employed at Point Meuron. It is however possible that Jean-Baptiste was Baptiste jr.’s grandfather, which would suggest that both Baptiste sr. and jr. were of mixed ancestry. In the HBC employee accounts for the year 1828 - 1829, Jean Baptiste Vezina, employed in the Lake Superior District, is listed as of unknown age, a native of Hudson's Bay, with an undetermined number of years of service (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

¹⁸⁴ A Louis Groux from the parish of Saint-Laurent was engaged by North West Company partners in 1795 for “dans le nord”. Contracts for men of this surname from Saint-Laurent for Great Lakes destinations commencing in 1730 can be located in the Voyageur database.

¹⁸⁵ There are many men with the surname Chorette, Charette, or variations in the Voyageur database engaged in the 1700s for Great Lakes destinations, although there are none with the given name François. It is not known if this man is the same man, or related to, the Charette at the North West Company post at Long Lake in 1815 – 1817.

¹⁸⁶ HBCA, B.231/d/8, B.231/d/9; “Young Savoyard” is mentioned in the post journal for 1819 – 1820 at fol. 1 (24 June 1819).

he paid “Thibault’s wife” 6 livres out of his salary. Germain Toin paid 6 livres for “Soap to Thibault’s wife”, indicating that perhaps Thibault’s wife was doing washing for the men. Martin Faille paid “Mrs Budge” 6 livres, and Pierre Pepin made two such payments to her. George Budge made payments to a “Free Man”, “old DeJaune”, “Lagaoie”, and “Young Savoyard” for unspecified goods or services. Savoyard, Thibault, Pacquette, Baptiste Vesinat, Budge, Girard, and Giasson all purchased calico, a coloured printed cotton fabric usually used for women’s dresses and shirts; often in conjunction with buttons and thread (Giasson also purchased a shawl). Other popular sartorial purchases were white or blue flannel, blue stroud (a heavy woollen fabric often made into capes or coats, or used as a blanket), brown “Holland” fabric or trousers made of the same, fustian (a heavy cotton fabric with a nap like corduroy or velveteen, used for working men’s jackets or trousers), ribbon, red woollen caps, silk or cotton handkerchiefs, and the occasional red feather. George Budge purchased “furniture calico”, as if his wife was covering an upholstered chair or padded bench. Rum was the most popular purchase overall; clerks such as Budge were also allowed to purchase Madeira or spirits.¹⁸⁷

The 1819 – 1820 post journal for Point Meuron shows that it, like Michipicoten, was busy with arrivals and departures during the navigation season. North West Company brigades, settlers going to Red River, HBC brigades, light canoes carrying senior officers and dispatches, and the occasional independent trader passed east and west up the Kaministiquia River. Chorette, with the assistance of Savoyard, built several canoes of varying sizes for both the Company and groups of settlers.¹⁸⁸ An entry in the post journal confirms that Chorette’s wife was living at the post.¹⁸⁹ George Budge’s wife created a sensation by her “elopement”; Budge found her in August and then promptly defected to the North West Company at Fort William, his contract having almost expired.¹⁹⁰ “Mr. Nolin” with his family arrived from Sault Ste. Marie with several families headed for Red River; Savoyard and his family and Thibault went with this settlers’ brigade.¹⁹¹ Giasson hired Adolphe Nolin and a man named Meneclier, “with a large family”,

¹⁸⁷ HBCA, B.231/d/8, B.231/d/9.

¹⁸⁸ See for example HBCA, B.231/a/5, fols. 1 – 4.

¹⁸⁹ HBCA, B.231, 23 October 1819, fol. 12d.

¹⁹⁰ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 10 August 1819, fol. 5.

¹⁹¹ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 11 – 13 August 1819, fols. 5 – 5d.

who had come to Point Meuron from Sault Ste. Marie.¹⁹² LaBombarde, Vesinette, Pacquette, and men named Legacée or Legacé and Coiteux were also employed at the post.¹⁹³ A brigade of canoes arrived from Red River in early September guided by a Cadotte, whose steersman was promptly engaged to guide another party of settlers back to the colony.¹⁹⁴ Vesinat and his son both worked for the HBC at tasks such as collecting canoe bark and fishing.¹⁹⁵ The journal referred to a “Free man” named Reaume, a “worn out servant” of the North West Company.¹⁹⁶ Giasson left the “women + children to take care of the Fort” at the end of November so that all the men could assist in hauling up the HBC’s boat for the winter.¹⁹⁷ Fur trading was not a large part of the post’s activities, but Meneclier, “young Vesinat”, and Legacé took a “small assortment” to “discover Indians” in mid-December and almost immediately had success.¹⁹⁸ In describing another trading excursion in mid-January, Giasson noted that Meneclier “speaks the Indian [language] well” and “young Vesinat is a half breed”.¹⁹⁹ These trading expeditions usually led to conflict with NWC men, who attempted to seize the furs collected and threatened both the Indian people and the HBC employees. In early March, Giasson hired Vesinat’s father on a steady wage, mostly to keep him out of the hands of the NWC, although Vesinat Sr.’s wife and child were being held at Fort William in an attempt to coerce him to engage there.²⁰⁰

By the end of the trading year, Giasson had been given clear instructions that Point Meuron was no longer to be a trading place at all. He pleaded with his superiors to ensure that men at Point Meuron be engaged for no fewer than three years, so that they could become “acquainted with the manner of raising canoe + Bark, Fishing, etc., all of which now has to be paid very high....[otherwise] it may not be in our power to procure canoe Bark as we have no intercourse

¹⁹² HBCA, B.231/a/5, 25 August - 10 September 1819, fols. 8 – 10. There is a contract for a Louis Meneclier, engaged by a predecessor company to the NWC in 1788 for Detroit, Michilimackinac, and “Nord”. Giasson refers to Meneclier as “Mr”, an honorific used only for clerks and above, and to his value as an employee, and this together with the references to his “large family” may indicate that he had been in the country for an extended period of time (see HBCA, B.231/a/5, 20 November 1819, fols. 14d – 15).

¹⁹³ HBCA, B.231/a/5, fol. 10; 23d.

¹⁹⁴ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 5 September 1819, fol. 9.

¹⁹⁵ See for example HBCA, B.231/a/5, 24 June 1819, fol. 1; 12 September 1819, fol. 10.

¹⁹⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 18 November 1819, fol. 14d; see also 25 December 1819, fols. 19 – 19d.

¹⁹⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 29 November 1819, fol. 16.

¹⁹⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 17 – 18 December 1819, fol. 17d.

¹⁹⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/5, fols. 20d – 22.

²⁰⁰ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 6 March 1820, fol. 24d – 25. This passage mentions that Vesinat’s wife’s father was a resident of Fort William.

with the Indians and Vesinat is the sole dependence we have at present for that article”.²⁰¹ At least five hands employed at the post left the service by the end of May 1820: Groux, LaBombarde, and Legacé, who all headed to Drummond Island, Adolphe Nolin, who waited for his brother’s canoe to take him to Red River, and Chorette who went with “Mr Nolin’s canoe” from Red River to Sault Ste. Marie at the beginning of May, intending to continue on to Montréal.²⁰² Meneclier had left for Sault Ste. Marie in March 1820, with an express canoe headed from Lac la Pluie east, to improve his chances of finding passage on a canoe to Red River.²⁰³ Michael McDonell of Red River was dispatched by the HBC to take over the post, which it considered “ill managed”, from Giasson for the 1820 – 21 season.²⁰⁴

When McDonell arrived at Point Meuron on 20 September, he found the population of the post as follows:

...the people at the house, besides Mr. Geasson, his wife and a little boy belonging to a man who went from here with the express to Montreal are J. B. Vesinat and family, consisting of two women and three children. This man has been engaged for one year by Mr. Geasson as a fisherman, procurer of Bark, and sugar maker, for which he is to have 2400 L [livres] and a complete Equipment [and provisions]...²⁰⁵

After some discussion, Giasson was allowed to stay until a canoe could take him to Red River, where he desired to settle.

McDonell described several buildings at Point Meuron: large and small houses, a storehouse, a “canoe house”, blacksmith shop, and some other accoutrements such as a bastion (watchtower) and a platform for drying corn. There were 14 acres cleared and prepared for cultivation, with six more cleared only, and a potato field. McDonell thought the site would make a good farm. However,

As for Trade this house has, I may say, none the N. W. have the whole (which I am informed consists of about 20 packs of good furs, annually) to themselves, nor have I at present the least prospect of getting any of it, for in the 1st place there are no men, in the 2nd there are neither goods nor provisions to supply the Indians with as they are accustomed to

²⁰¹ HBCA, B.231/a/5, fols. 30d – 31d.

²⁰² HBCA, B.231/a/5, fols. 30, 33.

²⁰³ HBCA, B.231/a/5, 18 March 1820, fols. 25d, 26. Meneclier did not return to Point Meuron. It is unclear whether he took his family with him to Sault Ste. Marie or Red River.

²⁰⁴ HBCA, B.231/a/6, letter of William Williams to Michael McDonell, 23 July 1820, fol. 1.

²⁰⁵ HBCA, B.231/a/6, fols. 3, 3d.

have at Fort William, and in the third the few Indians who were in any way attached to the place while there was any thing in store, have now abandoned it...or been gained over by the threats, presents, and promises of the N. W. Co....²⁰⁶

McDonell had been informed that the NWC had six “gentlemen” (officers) at Fort William: McTavish, Tate, Scott, Captain McCargo (the master of the schooner), and “two young clerks whose names I am unacquainted with”, plus 30 “men”. The HBC post was under constant surveillance to prevent Indians from visiting and HBC employees from going out to meet them.²⁰⁷

On 21 September, McDonell set “the women” to harvesting the potatoes. Vesinat put out a few small nets, but the post did not have any large nets or twine to fish on a larger scale. When Vesinat ventured to a fishing site at rapids two miles upriver where some NWC people were fishing, he was chased by the NWC men and his wife and family taken prisoner, on the pretext that the family owed the NWC a substantial debt. McDonell boldly and successfully insisted on their return, but confided to his journal “I [was not] in the least sorry that the present affair had ended as it did” for the NWC party was “at least as strong as ours, if he had persisted I am inclined to believe that there would have been some broken heads on each side”.²⁰⁸ Luckily for McDonell, on his return to the post he found three men that Ermatinger had engaged at Sault Ste. Marie to serve at Point Meuron: André La Brèche, Louis Groulx, and André Legacé. As relieved as he was to see them, he observed that La Brèche

I know to be a very good man but the two latter are old men about sixty years of age each but may be good enough for this post as there is not much to be done at it. They have been engaged...for 956 livres with an Equipment each, and to be free at the Sault. 20th June next on asking them why Mr. Ermatinger did not engage them for a longer period at least one year complete, they told me it was impossible to get men at the Sault to engage on any other conditions that they had engaged according to the custom of the South, which all the voyageurs of that quarter strictly adhere to...²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/6, fols. 3d – 4.

²⁰⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/6, fols. 4 – 4d. This “Tate” is probably actually “Taitt”, part of the interlinked McLoughlin/M[a]cKay/McCargo/Taitt families described by Jean Morrison in “Fur Trade Families in the Lake Superior-Rainy Lake Region”, 93 – 104.

²⁰⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 26 September 1820, fols. 5 – 6.

²⁰⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 26 September 1820, fol. 6.

In light of this, McDonell suggested engaging men from Hudson's Bay or Montréal instead. On asking how much Ermatinger was charging for the "equipment" of the men, they replied that prices at the Sault were over two or three times what was obtainable at Mackinac or Drummond Island. "The fourth man who arrived in the boat", continued McDonell, "is a son to old Vesinat, who took his passage in her from the Sault".²¹⁰

Having been foiled in his attempt to fish upstream in the Kaministiquia River, McDonell sent Giasson and his wife, "Old Vesinat" and his family, Vesinat's son, Legacé and Groulx to Rabbit and Tunnde Islands in Lake Superior to fish there. The fishing party was further augmented by some crew members of a canoe that "Nolin" had sent from Red River to collect some items he had left at Point Meuron. These men went to the fishery on hearing that the post had no food to provide for their return journey.²¹¹ McTavish of the NWC sent McDonell a peremptory letter demanding that the HBC pay the debts of "Old Vesinat" and "the Eagle's wife", freed from the NWC at the fishing place upriver. McDonell opined,

I felt rather at a loss...my becoming accountable for the debt might be disapproved of and by not doing so Mr McTavish would have a pretext for detaining the man, which if he did would certainly distress us very much; as the success of our fishery depended entirely on the exertion of this very man a circumstance which Mr McTavish was but too well aware of and which I am certain was his motive for taking him more than that of recovering a debt. Being however unwilling to answer for the debt etc at the same time of opinion that the more pitiful we appeared to be the more Mr McTavish and people would exert themselves to distress us, I have therefore sent back word to McTavish that he may do with Vesinat as he thinks proper for that I can do very well without his services as I have more provisions in store than are sufficient for myself and people for upwards of twelve months...We got only two small fish from the nets.²¹²

McDonell's bravado apparently paid off, as the NWC released Old Vesinat from his debt on Vesinat's promise to engage with them the following spring.

McDonell then received instructions from his superior at Lac la Pluie to prepare materials for canoe building. "Neither of the men engaged for the post understands anything about canoe building", wrote McDonell, and then sent word to Vesinat's son at the fishery that "he might

²¹⁰ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 26 September 1820, fols. 6, 6d.

²¹¹ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 27, 29 September 1820, 16 October, fols. 7, 8, 11d.

²¹² HBCA, B.231/a/6, 28 September 1820 - , fols. 7 - 8d.

consider himself as engaged as canoe builder for this post”.²¹³ On 4 October, the “Eagle’s wife”, whom McDonell had freed from the NWC at the inland fishing site, deserted back to Fort William. McDonell commented, “her absence is a loss. While here she made herself very useful in fishing + working at the potatoes etc.”.²¹⁴ On the 10th of October, Giasson left with Jacques and Regis Larente, who were travelling to Red River from Montréal with four canoes and men to trade on their own account.²¹⁵ The post was so short-staffed that McDonell himself spent several days in the potato fields with La Brèche trying to get in the crop before it became too frost-damaged to eat.²¹⁶

The fishing party came back to the post on 28 October with only 10 barrels of fish, three of which were to go to “Old Vesinat” under the terms of his employment agreement. The next day, “not wishing to keep Vesinat and family around the house”, McDonell gave them and Nolin’s two men three months provisions and sent them off to Lake Superior to fish and fend for themselves. “Young Vesinat” was to stay, “procure cedar & build canoes...but as he is but a beginner at the business, is to forfeit all in case of the canoes not being found fit for service”. Young Vesinat and Legacé set off to find the appropriate building materials, which could be several days’ journey away.²¹⁷ On 14 December, McDonell suffered a further blow to his plans when “Young Vesinat” deserted to the NWC. “His desertion puts it entirely out of my power to have any canoes, etc. ready on the arrival of the Brigade”, wrote McDonell.²¹⁸

Also in December, McDonell obtained some interesting intelligence from an elderly woman and a little girl “from Fort William” who had been gathering gum for canoes around the Point Meuron post. The woman told McDonell that Fort William employed thirty to forty men, some of whom “look solely after the Indians”, while others attended “the farm yard and cattle”, still others cut firewood, and “carpenters, Blacksmiths, Coopers and Canoe makers” all worked at

²¹³ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 29 September 1820, fol. 8d.

²¹⁴ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 4 October 1820, fol. 10.

²¹⁵ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 7 – 10 October 1820, fols. 10d, 11.

²¹⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 6 – 13 October 1820, fols. 10 – 11d.

²¹⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 28 – 29 October, 1 November 1820, fols. 13 -14.

²¹⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 14 December 1820, fol. 15d.

their occupations. Ten men were currently squaring logs for a church to be built outside the Fort the following spring.²¹⁹

In early January 1821, Old Vesinat returned to the post to ask for some assistance, as Nolin's men had deserted to the NWC. McDonell reluctantly supplied him with rum, tobacco and salt in order to keep him from deserting as well.²²⁰ A few days later, McDonell attempted to get Legacé and Groulx to take letters to Lac la Pluie, but both men claimed not to know the route. McDonell pointed out that they had been hired as guides, to which Legacé responded that he knew only the old Grand Portage route, and had done that only in the summer. McDonell then attempted to send Legacé and Groulx to "the fishing place" to earn their keep. Old Vesinat promised that he would be able to support them there, but in early February the two men returned with the news that Old Vesinat had deserted to Fort William and that the NWC men were taking away all the equipment and provisions with which he had been provided.²²¹ McDonell and the remaining men (La Brèche, Legacé, and Groulx) spent the rest of the winter very quietly, with little to do. In May, they planted their garden. Early in the morning of 30 May, they heard three reports from a gun from Fort William, and shortly afterwards a messenger from the Fort arrived inviting McDonell to hear "news interesting to us all" about "a coalition of Interests between the rival companies". The NWC partners informed McDonell that the two companies' brigades were travelling together from Red River towards Fort William and that there was no need for McDonell to keep any of his employees around the post.²²² With that, the journal, and the hapless operations of the HBC at Point Meuron, ended. The newly amalgamated Company abandoned the Point Meuron location and moved into the much better-equipped Fort William.

The HBC, NWC and Mixed-Ancestry Populations to 1821

Point Meuron, like Michipicoten, was not primarily a trading post and so did not need its employees to establish relationships with or communicate with Indian customers. However, country skills and local knowledge were still critical to the post's success. The post drew on a

²¹⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 8 December 1820, fol. 15.

²²⁰ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 3 January 1821, fol. 16d.

²²¹ HBCA, B.231/a/6, 8 January – 7 February 1821, fols. 17 – 18.

²²² HBCA, B.231/a/6, 30 May 1821, fols. 19d – 20d.

pool of fur-trade labour centred on Sault Ste. Marie, Drummond Island, Mackinac and Fort William that had been developing for over 100 years by 1817. Many of these people were of mixed ancestry and/or had married into local Aboriginal populations. They formed a distinctive social and occupational enclave whose family ties were spreading south and west into the Missouri River watershed and the Columbia, and north and west to Red River and beyond to the Athabasca-Mackenzie waterways. Men like Chorette and “Old Vesinat” were critical to the HBC’s operations. Together with their families, they were skilled canoe-builders, fishermen, harvesters of bark suitable for canoes, and maple-sugar makers.

Most of these men, unfortunately for the HBC, worked for the North West Company, obliging the HBC to pay (by its standards) exorbitant compensation for their short-term services. Legacé and Groux had travelled the old Grand Portage-Rainy Lake route, implying they had been working for the NWC or other Montréal traders in 1802 at the latest. LaBrèche, Groux and Legacé told McDonnell that no one at Sault Ste. Marie would engage for longer than August to the following June, “according to the custom of the South, which all the voyageurs of that quarter strictly adhere to”, meaning the old customs around the Great Lakes (north and south) and into the Missouri.²²³ Since at least 1716 and probably earlier, hundreds of inland fur trade men and some of their families had met at places such as Mackinac every summer to bring in their furs, socialize, rest and re-engage for the next winter season, and the Hudson’s Bay Company was not going to change that.

Point Meuron, Michipicoten and Long Lake were three quite different fur trade sites. Long Lake was trade-oriented. The men there were often sent on expeditions to find and trade with Indian people, and in the Long Lake region they held their own against aggressive competition. Michipicoten was a transportation, provisioning (fishing) and logistics location for both the NWC and the HBC, although the NWC collected a few furs from along the Lake Superior coastline. The inland outposts of Michipicoten were the fur-trading centres in the region. Point Meuron and Fort William were both primarily transportation and logistical centres, although the NWC traded a modest quantity of furs there. In terms of personnel, the three HBC posts were

²²³ The “South” can be distinguished from the “Nord”, which after about 1790 could mean the area from Lake Winnipeg to the Athabasca-Mackenzie river system.

quite different in character. Long Lake relied on a few mixed-ancestry employees from Hudson's Bay Company families to deal with local Indian populations, pairing them up with Scottish employees to teach them some country skills. The mixed-ancestry employees had also picked up some tradesman's skills from their Scottish relatives and companions at the posts. To some extent, this repeats the pattern of Nipigon House and other inland posts twenty years earlier, where a few mixed-ancestry "Hudson's Bay" employees contributed unique skills and knowledge to the primarily Scottish labour force. Michipicoten had a preponderance of relatively green hands from Scotland, perhaps well-versed in fishing and trades but unfamiliar with the area and with the local Aboriginal population. Here, the post master hired men from Sault Ste. Marie to acquire the country skills and connections he needed. Point Meuron hired few or no men from the HBC's Scottish labour pool, instead engaging men from the fur trade labour pool in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie or Fort William.

There were therefore two pools of mixed-ancestry employees from which the HBC drew: the "Hudson's Bay" children of its own employees born within its Charter territory, and the Great Lakes fur trade networks. Each had its own identity. The "Hudson's Bay" men were aware of their value to the Company and were identified by senior HBC managers as a separate type by at least 1804. They were carefully deployed by the HBC among inland posts to fill the need for interpreters, guides, persons to trade with the Indians, canoe-builders, steersmen, and harvesters of fish and game. The Great Lakes fur trade men drew on long-held traditions in their community, adhered to their own terms of service for wages and contracts, and preserved a body of knowledge of European and country skills and local geographies and lore.²²⁴ Intermarriage also strengthened ties between the old Great Lakes fur trade families.

The difficulty for historians studying the pre-1821 time period in the Nipigon/Lakehead region is that, essentially, the best records (the HBC documents) describe a small segment of the population that was not typical. The North West Company and other Montréal-exporting fur companies had many more employees in the region than the HBC ever did, beginning at a much earlier time period. Their employees, former employees, and their families made up the vast

²²⁴ Hudson's Bay Company men also alleged that "Canadians" were more difficult to manage and less amenable to the hierarchy and discipline of the English company (Giraud, *Métis of the Canadian West*, 184).

majority of people immersed in a distinctive local fur trade way of life in the Upper Great Lakes. The incomplete records strongly suggest, but cannot confirm, continuity of family, cultural and occupational connections that by 1821 spanned many decades, generations and thousands of miles. The precise origins of many Métis families, and the economy and culture that fostered them, are therefore in many cases hidden from view. However, successive generations of newcomers and progenitors of new families in the Nipigon/Lakehead region entered this pre-existing economic, social, cultural and family context, made it their own, and accepted new members in their turn from the eighteenth century onwards. The following section describes some aspects of this cultural context, in which Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and new elements combined in distinctive ways.

Fur Trade Culture to 1821

French Jesuit priest François-Xavier de Charlevoix, on a fact-finding visit to New France in 1720 – 1721, described the portion of the French-Canadian population engaged in the fur trade, in the context of the agricultural settlement in New France, in terms remarkably similar to those used by observers of the Métis around Red River over 100 years later:

une partie de la jeunesse est continuellement en course, et quoiqu'elle n'y commette plus, au moins si ouvertement, les désordres qui ont si fort décrié cette profession, elle ne laisse pas d'y prendre une habitude de libertinage, dont elle ne se défait jamais parfaitement; elle y perd au moins le goût de travail, elle y épuise ses forces, elle y devient incapable de la moindre contrainte, et quand elle n'est plus propre aux fatigues de ces voyages, ce qui arrive bientôt, parce que ces fatigues sont excessives, elle demeure sans aucune ressource, et n'est plus propre à rien. De là vient que les Arts ont été longtemps négligés, que quantité de bonnes terres sont encore incultes, et que le pays ne s'est point peuplé.²²⁵

²²⁵ François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et Description de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, France: 1744), cited in Léon Pouliot, "François-Xavier de Charlevoix, S. J.", (Sudbury, Ontario: La Société Historique du Nouvel-Ontario, Documents Historiques no. 33, 1957), 10. For later assessments of the Métis around Red River, see Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress and Present State, with some account of the Native Races and its General History to the Present Day* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856; reprinted by M. G. Hurtig Ltd., Edmonton, 1972), 122 -127, 243, 252, who characterized the Métis as "restless...like wandering Arabs", criticized their "idle" ways when in the settlement, described the restrictive effect on the agricultural economy of Red River of undeveloped property and a lack of agricultural labour, and also described the Métis as "cordially detest[ing] all the laws and restraints of civilized life, believing all men were born to be free...they are marvellously tenacious of their own original habits. They cherish freedom as they cherish life"; the Oblate priest Mestre who described his Métis parishioners at St-Norbert as absent hunters with a "triste habitude qui favorise leur paresse naturelle", especially "les paresseux par excellence, qui mènent une vie toute nomade" (Mestre to H. H., 11 June 1861, SHSB, FCASB, Série Taché, pages T-53463 - T-53464); and Archbishop Taché who wrote of Red River that "The greatest social crime of our French Half-breeds is that they are hunters... their life of adventure is very prejudicial to our

{ A part of the youth is continually on the move, and although they do not engage, at least overtly, in the disorderly conduct that had so strongly discredited their profession [of trading with the Indians], they take up libertine habits which they can never entirely give up; they lose at least the taste for work, they exhaust their strength, they become incapable of the least constraint, and when they are worn out from the fatigues of their voyages, which happens quite early, because their fatigues are excessive, they settle without any resources, they have nothing for themselves. From this comes that the Arts have been long neglected, and much good land is still uncultivated, and the country is hardly settled. }

At the time de Charlevoix was writing, the official French posts had re-opened and hundreds of official and unofficial traders and voyagers were travelling into the interior. In the relatively small population pool of New France, such a drain of young active men had an obvious effect on the sedentary communities along the St. Lawrence, as de Charlevoix observed. Some parishes and families in particular favoured the fur trade over several generations, as the Voyageur contracts database and some family genealogies show, and recruiters at a later period tried to locate men from particular regions or families that had already proven themselves.²²⁶ This increased the impact of fur trade employment in local areas, and also contributed to the creation of a distinctive culture and body of customs and histories that could be transmitted in families. Thomas Hutchins, an HBC trader at Fort Albany, had the opportunity to learn about the “Canadian” trade from a “Canadian” employed by the HBC during the winter of 1780 – 1781. He opined,

The people of Canada whose principal commerce arises from the inland trade, have studied everything for its convenience and by long experience have arrived at great perfection in conducting it, having tradesmen on the spot for every branch, some packing the bales properly for the canoes, others making baskets, cases, rundlets etc. in which the nicest attention is paid to the stowage, and weight. The Canadian peasants are brought up to the service from their infancy so that a trader may engage any number of men ready trained and experienced to his hand. These are all great advantages which your Honours [HBC management] have not. When a servant comes first into this service as a labourer, he is

population” (A. Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America* (translation by D. R. Cameron) (Montréal: John Lovell, 1870), 106).

²²⁶ See Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*, 32 – 33.

awkward and clumsy as it is possible to conceive, and by the time he [is] rendered useful for inland, he goes home...²²⁷

HBC men, judging from the post journals, were asked to do a variety of tasks. The same man might fish, construct buildings, perform general labour, travel to trade with Indians, and work in boat transport within the span of a few months. Despite the HBC's reputation as a stay-at-home fur company, many employees spent most of their time away from the inland posts in a radius of one to three days' travel away, or further if they were sent to live with an Indian group to collect their furs and ease food pressures at the post. The work structure of the NWC's employees is not as clearly described in the surviving documents, but it appears that some employees would specialize in travelling and trading with Indians, others would practice skilled trades, some would work as canoemen and general labourers, *et cetera*. As is evident from the post journals, the pressure on the HBC to find people, often mixed-ancestry people, to train its Scottish employees for inland work was intense. The North West Company benefited from lower turnover and the passing on of skills and traditions from one generation to the next, in a semi-permanent specialized labour pool of people bred to the work and the culture.

The active, adventurous, physically demanding life of the *voyageur* or small-scale trader, away from the strictures of small-town or rural agrarian life in New France, created an attitude commented on by many observers in addition to de Charlevoix. Daniel Harmon, in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, characterized "the Canadian Voyagers" as bearing great hardship with gaiety, but improvident for the future; observing that "those who have been for any considerable time in this savage country, lay aside a greater part of the regulations of civilized and christian people, and behave little better than savages". He quoted some of his employees, when reprovved for playing cards on the Sabbath, as replying that "there is no Sabbath in this country, and they added, no God or devil".²²⁸ An elderly *voyageur* interviewed by Alexander Ross on Lake Winnipeg told Ross, "there is no life so happy as a voyageur's life; none so independent; no place where a man enjoys so much variety and freedom as in Indian country".²²⁹ On the other side, Duncan Cameron in 1804 had observed that Indian women living with non-

²²⁷ HBCA, B.3/a/79, fol. 4, quoted in Lytwyn, *Fur Trade of the Little North*, 40 – 41.

²²⁸ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 34, 235 - 236.

²²⁹ Quoted in Podruchny, *Voyageur World*, 301.

Indian fur trade men did not always follow some of the customs and taboos of their families. The meeting of Indian and non-Indian cultures occurred in a space where both parties relinquished some of their traditions to create a new way of living adapted to their surroundings.

However, this did not mean abandoning tradition and custom altogether. The writings of Umfreville and John Macdonell indicate that travel routes, including ones around Lake Superior, was described, named, and coloured with traditions and stories passed on by fur trade workers from one cohort to the next, by the latter half of the eighteenth century. Some of these were derived from Indian sources, and many were contributed by the travellers themselves, resulting in a unique body of knowledge and customs. Literate travellers among the brigades recorded such traditions as the “baptism” of newcomers with cedar boughs or a dunk in the river when crossing a height of land, making offerings or prayers at dangerous sites or places of commencement, pulling off hats and making the sign of the cross when leaving one stream for another, and of course the ceremonial “dram” at the completion of some long portages or sections of a journey.²³⁰ Other travel-related customs included singing, the division of travel and portage into “poses” (from the French “pause”, or rest) or “pipes” (the distance either between pipes or the length of time that it took to smoke a pipe), the manner of carrying packages across a portage using a tump-line across the head or the *voyageur*’s woven belt, and stopping to shave, wash and put on clean clothes before arriving at a post.²³¹ Although many of these customs were associated with the North West Company and its long canoe brigade travel routes, Hudson’s Bay Company travellers also adopted or adhered to some of them as well. As historian Carolyn Podruchny states, these rituals and customs tended to forge a sense of identity and belonging among the participants.

Celebrations and “drams” were not limited to travel events. Christmas and New Year’s Day were celebrated at every post, with, at minimum, an issue of rum and a day off from regular work. Some posts also celebrated St. Andrew’s day (the patron saint of Scotland). As Harmon observed, few posts recognized Sundays as a religious day or a day of rest. Other occasions for a

²³⁰ Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, 69, 81, 99 – 100; Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 2, 9 – 10; HBCA, B.231/1/6, 26 September 1820, fol. 6d; Podruchny, *Voyageur World*, 52 – 65.

²³¹ Macdonell, “The Diary of John Macdonell”, 92, 96; Johnston, “An Account of Lake Superior”, images 48 – 49; HBCA, B.231/a/6, 26 September 1820, fol. 6d; Podruchny, *Voyageur World*, 86 -102, 125 – 127.

“dram” included the return of the fishing parties from an extended sojourn away from the post (a North West Company tradition), the finishing of construction and raising of a flagpole at a post, or re-engagement for another term.²³²

Distinctive clothing was another marker of fur-trade culture. In 1761, Alexander Henry the Elder had disguised himself as one of his “Canadian” canoemen as he passed by La Cloche on his way to Mackinac.

...I resolved to attempt...putting on the dress, usually worn by such of the Canadians as pursue the trade into which I had entered, and assimilating myself, as much as I was able, to their appearance and manners. To this end, I laid aside my English clothes, and covered myself only with a cloth, passed about the middle; a shirt, hanging loose; a molton, or blanket coat; and a large, red, milled worsted cap. The next thing was to smear my face and hands, with dirt and grease; and, this done, I took the place of one of my men, and, when Indians approached, use the paddle, with as much skill as I possessed. I had the satisfaction to find, that my disguise enabled me to pass several canoes, without attracting the smallest notice.²³³

This can be compared with Jonathan Carver’s description, from Detroit in 1766:

...it is not uncommon to see a Frenchman with Indian shoes and stockings, without breeches, wearing a strip of woollen cloth to cover what decency requires him to conceal. Yet at the same time he wears a fine ruffled shirt, a laced waistcoat with a fine handkerchief on his head.²³⁴

Popular dress items purchased by HBC employees at Point Meuron in 1818 included white or blue flannel (for shirts), blue stroud (a heavy woollen fabric often made into capes or coats, or used as a blanket), red woollen caps, silk or cotton handkerchiefs, and the occasional red feather.

²³² HBCA, B.149/a/5, fols. 10 – 10d (Christmas and New Year’s, 1796 – 1797); Diary of Archibald McLeod, reprinted in Gates, ed., *Five Fur Traders*, 135 (St. Andrew’s Day, 1800; construction and flagstaff); Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 39, 57, 58, 73 (Christmas and New Year’s, 1801, 1802); HBCA, B.117/a/1, fol. 13d, 14d (Christmas and New Year’s, 1815 – 1816); B.231/a/5, fols. 19 – 19d (Christmas and New Year’s, 1819 – 1820).

²³³ Alexander Henry [the Elder], *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, between the years 1760 and 1770*, (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 34 – 35. Scholars have varying theories on the purpose of the “dirt and grease” on the hands and face: whether it was meant to turn the skin darker to mimic the complexion of someone with mixed ancestry, or someone who had been exposed to a great deal of sunlight, or whether it copied the custom of the “Canadians” in using grease as a protection against insects, and the dirt that would collect after several days of hard work.

²³⁴ Quoted in Peterson, “Great Lakes Métis”, 53.

Critical to the development of mixed-ancestry populations, of course, were the customs concerning country marriage and partnerships with Aboriginal women. Harmon described such a marriage that took place in 1800 near Lake Winnipeg, on the travel route out of Grand Portage:

This evening, Mons. Mayotte took a woman of this country for a wife...All the ceremonies attending such an event, are the following. When a person is desirous of taking one of the daughters of the Natives, as a companion, he makes a present to the parents of the damsel, of such articles as he supposes will be most acceptable...Should the parents accept the articles offered, the girl remains at the fort with her suitor, and is clothed in the Canadian fashion...²³⁵

Harmon, at Fort Alexandria in 1800, was offered the daughter of a Cree chief, and set out some of the reasons for undertaking such a marriage:

[The Chief] pressed me...to allow her to remain with me...and added ‘I am fond of you, and my wish is to have my daughter with the white people; for she will be treated better by them, than by her own relations.’ In fact, he almost persuaded me to keep her; for I was sure that while I had the daughter, I should not only have the father’s furs, but those of all his band...²³⁶

Conversely, the Aboriginal family might hope to receive additional trade goods and assistance from an in-law in the fur trade. Aboriginal women could also contribute skills and labour such as fishing, cooking, snaring small game, making and maintaining clothing, making maple sugar, and pulling potatoes, to materially improve the living conditions of men in country marriages and at the post generally (as evidenced by the work done by the women at Point Meuron). When it came time for him to accept a wife in 1805, Harmon also noted the other benefits of a country marriage:

...it is customary for all gentlemen who remain, for any length of time, in this part of the world, to have a female companion, with whom they can pass their time more socially and agreeably, than to live a lonely life...²³⁷

Harmon went on to speculate that when he left the country, he would “place her under the protection of some honest man”, as was also the custom of the country. However, by 1819, as he was preparing to leave the fur trade and return to his “native land”, he had changed his mind:

I design...to take my family with me...that they may be educated in a civilized and christian manner. The mother of my children will accompany me; and, if she shall be satisfied to

²³⁵ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 23 – 24.

²³⁶ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 69 – 70.

²³⁷ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 118.

remain in that part of the world, I design to make her regularly my wife by a formal marriage...as my conduct in this respect is different from that which has generally been pursued by the gentlemen of the North West Company, it will be proper to state some of the reasons which have governed my decision...

Having lived with this woman as my wife...during life, and having children by her, I consider that I am under a moral obligation not to dissolve the connexion, if she is willing to continue it. The union which has been formed between us, in the providence of God, has not only been cemented by a long and mutual performance of kind offices, but, also, by a more sacred consideration...I consider it to be my duty to take her to a christian land, where she may enjoy Divine ordinances, grow in grace, and ripen for glory. We have wept together over the early departure of several children, and especially, over the death of a beloved son. We have children still living, who are equally dear to us both. How could I spend my days in the civilized world, and leave my beloved children in the wilderness? The thought has in it the bitterness of death. How could I tear them from a mother's love, and leave her to mourn over their absence, to the day of her death? Possessing only the common feelings of humanity, how could I think of her, in such circumstances, without anguish?²³⁸

Fur trade men of the NWC, facing these questions, answered them in a variety of ways. Some more affluent men sent some or all of their children to their home countries to be educated. Some of these children then rejoined the fur trade as spouses or clerks. Some left their country families behind, perhaps with another fur trade employee, supported with a small stipend, or simply to fend for themselves.²³⁹ Many could not leave their partners and children and the way of life with which they had become familiar, and settled at Red River, outside the palisades of Fort William, at Sault Ste. Marie, at Mackinac, Drummond Island or at some good fishing spot after they could no longer physically manage the punishing travel and labour of fur trade work. In 1820, the editor of Harmon's published journals informed his public that

In the numerous establishments of the North West Company, there are from twelve to fifteen hundred women and children, who are wholly, or in part, of Indian extraction. Women have, from time to time, been taken from among the Natives, to reside in the forts, by the men in the service of the Company; and families have been reared, which have generally been left in the country, when these men have retired to the civilized parts of the world. These women and children, with a humanity which deserves commendation, are not turned over to the savages; but they are fed, if not clothed, by the Company. They have become so numerous, as to be a burden to the concern; and a rule has been established, that no person, in the service of the Company, shall hereafter take a woman from among the

²³⁸ Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, 230 – 231.

²³⁹ Some descriptions of the varying fates of traceable fur-trade families can be found in Morrison, "Fur Trade Families in the Lake Superior-Rainy Lake Region", 93 – 104; Elizabeth Arthur, "Angelique and Her Children", 117 – 123, both in Morrison, in Morrison, ed., *Lake Superior to Rainy Lake*.

Natives to reside with him, as a sufficient number, of a mixed blood, can be found, who are already connected with the Company. There are, also, in the N. W. country, many superannuated Canadians, who have spent the flower of their days in the service of the Company, who have families that they are unwilling to leave; and having nothing to attract them to the civilized world, they continue under the protection of the Company, and are supplied by them, with the necessaries of life.²⁴⁰

Hudson's Bay Company employees were generally required either to leave the country or go to Red River once their contracts had expired, but otherwise had the same choices to make. Their "half breed or Creole" sons and daughters often followed the fur trade life as well, supplying the HBC with the blend of European and country skills that the Company so desperately needed in establishing an inland business. By 1821, both NWC and HBC employees were part of a distinctive fur trade culture, one in which generations of mixed-ancestry children had been raised, combining elements of Aboriginal, European, local and occupational customs, beliefs and traditions.

Section II: From the Merger to the Treaty: 1821 - 1850

After the Merger: Restructuring the Fur Trade and Associated Populations, 1821 - 1826

As described in the extracts from post records for Fort William and Michipicoten, one immediate effect of the merger of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 was the release of many employees from fur trade company employment. The newly-restructured HBC did not show particular loyalty to its veterans, indeed in the Lake Superior District the Company appears to have taken the opportunity to retain valuable country-skilled North West Company men with roots in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence fur trade and reduce the number of inexperienced Scottish men.

At Fort William, the contingent of 30 "men", two clerks and six "gentlemen" in full-time employment with the NWC plus the three men and one officer from the HBC had been streamlined to fourteen labourers and tradesmen plus one or two officers and clerks by the

²⁴⁰ Preface, Daniel Haskel, 2 August 1820, in Harmon, *Voyages and Travels*, xvi –xvii.

trading season of 1825 - 1826.²⁴¹ Chief Trader John Haldane (a former North West Company officer) described the buildings of the Fort William complex in September of 1825 as being "still in good order", although some employees' accommodations had had to be rebuilt over the season.²⁴² Major Joseph Delafield, head of the United States boundary survey expedition, had a rather more critical view of Fort William in the summer of 1823, when he characterized the post as "become very insignificant & fast going to ruin".²⁴³ Delafield had supper with the Andrew Stewart, departing Chief Trader for the HBC, in the great dining NWC hall; six or eight people in a room for 300, with "empty ware houses and useless offices" surrounding the building.²⁴⁴ The "Indian" fur hunters of Lake Superior had also drifted away from Fort William. Haldane wrote in 1824 that "during the time of the NWCo" many Indian people who hunted around Lake Nipigon "were wont to resort to Fort William in Summer, for the sake of seeing our Montreal Gentlemen, and receiving some presents from them --This is now discontinued". The Indians who had joined the throngs of North West Company employees and partners in the great summer Rendez-vous, according to Haldane, had gone off to Nipigon, Fond du Lac (Wisconsin) and "a small portion to St. Marys".²⁴⁵ However, in the winter, game shortages still drew many hunters and their families to Fort William to be fed by the Company on potatoes, salt fish and "Indian corn" (the last commodity had to be imported from Sault Ste. Marie).²⁴⁶

Lake Nipigon post and its outpost Sturgeon Lake had 12 labourers and three clerks in 1825 - 26.²⁴⁷ The nearest available estimate of pre-merger North West Company employees around Lake Nipigon is Henry's 1805 list of 73 men who wintered in the region and 12 "summer men". Pic and its two outposts Long Lake and Black River were assigned three clerks and twelve

²⁴¹ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 3d - 5. This includes Fort William's outposts Whitefish Lake and Pays Plat.

²⁴² HBCA, B.231/e/3, 1d. Haldane had a "country wife" named Josette Latour, who remained in the Lake Superior region after he retired to Scotland in 1827. She was reported to be living near Sault Ste. Marie as late as the 1850s (Arthur, "Angelique and her Children", 117).

²⁴³ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 401.

²⁴⁴ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 401. American geologist William Keating and the party under Major Stephen Long, passing through Fort William shortly after Delafield, had a similar experience: "In the large mess-room, where we were handsomely and kindly entertained by the superintendant, Roderick Mackenzie, Esq. much mirth and hilarity formerly prevailed, but from the immense size and deserted appearance of this elegant apartment it had acquired a gloomy character" (William Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnipeek, Lake of the Woods* {Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1824}, Vol. II, 171).

²⁴⁵ HBCA, B.231/e/1, 1, 2, 2d.

²⁴⁶ HBCA, B.231/e/1, 1d; B.231/e/3, 1d; B231/e/6, 1.

²⁴⁷ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 2, 5.

labourers in 1825 - 26;²⁴⁸ compared to Henry's 1805 list of sixteen NWC men at Pic, and staffing at Long Lake of nine HBC men and ten NWC men 1817 - 1818.

Michipicoten was closed briefly after the merger, but had reopened by Outfit 1824 - 25 in its former capacity as the staging point between the Lake Superior District posts, Moose Factory, and Sault Ste. Marie. Only three labourers, one "carpenter and boatbuilder", one "guide and canoe builder" and three clerks were assigned to Michipicoten and its outpost Batchewana in 1825 - 26; compared to the six to twelve HBC labourers and twelve NWC men working there in 1820.²⁴⁹ However, at the opening of navigation every year, Michipicoten still bustled with activity. The other posts in the District were either closed or left with skeleton staffs in the summer season, as all hands joined the boat and canoe brigades shipping furs out to Moose, and provisions and European goods in through Sault Ste. Marie or Moose Factory/Brunswick House.²⁵⁰

A list of the "Men and their Characters" for Outfit 1825 - 26 in the Lake Superior District was compiled by Haldane in his annual report. The most highly-ranked employee below the clerk-officer class was Amable McKay, the "Guide and Canoe Master" stationed at Michipicoten.²⁵¹ He was described by Haldane as "a good Guide and industrious Man, goes away next year" (this did not occur). In the next rank, that of "Bowsman", were seven men, including John Taylor, "a Smart half breed".²⁵² Eleven men were listed as "Steersmen", including Robert Dudley (at Long Lake pre-merger), who had been killed in an accident at Brunswick House, William Cromartie,²⁵³ Pierre Gurdon or Guidon, ("a good Steersman"),²⁵⁴ Jean Baptiste Mallette,²⁵⁵ and

²⁴⁸ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 2d, 5.

²⁴⁹ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 5.

²⁵⁰ See for example HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to 6 August 1827; George Keith to Mr. Gladman, 11 August 1827; George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 23 October 1827; B.129/b/3, George Keith to John Swanston, 6 March 1830, 28 - 28d. Gladman, in charge of New Brunswick House, was of mixed ancestry (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

²⁵¹ Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 43 years old with 27 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

²⁵² This may be the John Taylor who was an apprentice from "Hudson's Bay" at Long Lake in 1815 - 1816.

²⁵³ Possibly the William Cromartie, apprentice from "Hudson's Bay", who had been at Long Lake in 1817 - 1818. This man was identified in HBC accounts as a native of Albany in Hudson's Bay (and therefore of mixed ancestry), 28 years of age with 17 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). Drowned in June 1831, described by George Keith as an "able and experienced voyageur" (HBCA, B.129/e/8, 2).

²⁵⁴ Probably "Guidon", as Gurdon does not appear elsewhere in HBC records. This man was identified as a native of "Canada" in HBC accounts, 42 years of age with 23 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). He was

Jean Baptiste Lavalley,²⁵⁶ another "smart halfbreed". Thirty-four men were identified as "Middlemen" (the most common class of labourer), including Louis Bouchard ("a good Worker"),²⁵⁷ Joseph Dubois ("a good fisherman"), Jacques Fainant ("a good winter traveller"), Joseph Fontaine ("an active middleman"),²⁵⁸ Jean-Baptiste Morrisson ("an industrious Man", due to retire the following year),²⁵⁹ Paul La Garde ("a smart halfbreed") and Louis Ross ("a good halfbreed"). Ethnic ascriptions in the list are not always accurate; for example Robert Dudley,

described as a "Mechanic" or skilled tradesman, and was called a "Boat Builder" in the HBC Lake Superior District accounts of 1840 (HBCA, B.129/d/3,3d). The Nipigon post journals record Guidon's arrivals from Fort William either by canoe or on foot (HBCA, B.149/a/12), entry for 3 June 1829, 1d; B.149/a/14, entry for 10 February 1831). The name "Canada" as applied to the parish of origin could mean either that the parish was unknown, or that the person came from an area not yet organized into parishes, i. e. Lakes Huron and Superior, including the Sault Ste. Marie area.

²⁵⁵ Identified as a native of Canada in HBC accounts, 67 years old in 1830 with 28 years of service. In 1829, Mallette was posted to the Lake Huron District. It seems likely that he was from the Upper Great Lakes and had had a long career in the fur trade prior to joining the HBC.

²⁵⁶ Identified as a native of Ste. Anne's parish in Canada in HBC accounts, 33 years old with 16 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). Drowned on 29 December 1830, described by George Keith as an "able and experienced voyageur" (HBCA, B.129/e/8, 2)

²⁵⁷ Identified as a native of Canada in HBC accounts, of unknown age and with 6 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/8/11). A marriage contract in HBC records indicates that Bouchard was from Maskinongé, and married Charlotte Fainiant from Fort William (likely a relative of Jacques) in 1828 (Elizabeth Arthur, ed., *Thunder Bay District 1821 - 1892: A Collection of Documents*; quoted in Joan Holmes & Associates, "Historical Profile of the Lake Superior Study Area's Mixed European-Indian Ancestry Community", report prepared for the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Canada, September 2007, 22. It appears that Bouchard married again, as the 1881 Census enumerated him (at age 80) as married to a woman named Mary about fifteen years his junior, with children born in the mid-to-late-1850s. Mary, according to Indian Affairs official J. A. Macrae, was "a sister of Chief Manitoshainse who subscribed the Robinson [Superior] Treaty" (LAC, RG10, Vol. 6896, file 492/28-5, pt. 2, "Report on Robinson Treaty Annuities Port Arthur Agency, J. A. Macrae, 9 February 1898; 1881 Canada Census, Algoma District no. 182, subdistrict Township of Nipigon BB).

²⁵⁸ Identified as a native of Canada in HBC accounts, 23 years old with 13 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). The extremely young ages of entry into HBC service of some of these individuals emphasizes the family or hereditary character of fur-trade employment in the favoured labour pool for the Lake Superior District. Fontaine could have been recruited in Sault Ste. Marie with an older relative to serve as an apprentice. A Joseph Fontaine was recruited as a steersman by Captain Delafield (with Ermatinger's assistance) in Sault Ste. Marie in 1823 (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 381).

²⁵⁹ This is Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau, who was responsible for caring for the livestock at Fort William. He in fact stayed on there as an employee for many more years. An Antoine Morrisseau, "freeman", and his son (a young man) also stayed in the vicinity of Fort William and Lake Nipigon in the 1820s (HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entries for 16 July, 15 October, 17 October 1828, 3d, 11). A man by the name of Antoine Morrisseau, a native of "Hudson's Bay", was engaged by the HBC at Albany in 1829 (B.135/g/11). In 1830, Jean-Baptiste was identified in HBC accounts as a native of Canada, 43 years old with 27 years of service (B.135/g/11). In the 1830s, Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau was sometime called "old Morrisseau" by HBC officers, perhaps to distinguish him from his children (HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 7 May 1833, 41d). Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau died at Fort William of a "malignant disease" blamed on the swampy character of the site in late 1834 or early 1835. He was described by Keith as "faithful, tho' rather superannuated" (HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to George Simpson, 15 February 1835, 28d).

Cromartie, and the clerk-interpreters John Vincent and John Robertson,²⁶⁰ identified in other sources as of mixed ancestry, were not called "half breeds" by Haldane. The clerk-interpreter Jacob Truthwaite²⁶¹ may also have been the native-born son of a Hudson's Bay man but was not labelled as such.

Almost all the names on this list in the classes below clerk are French-Canadian in origin, illustrating the almost complete dependence in the Lake Superior District on the traditional multigenerational fur trade labour pools from the St. Lawrence River Valley and the Great Lakes. As discussed in the previous sections on the history of this population prior to the merger of the HBC and NWC, many of these men were of mixed ancestry and/or had families with Aboriginal women. Men from this tradition were strongly preferred by Hudson's Bay Company managers around Lake Superior. In May of 1831, George Keith (a former North West Company partner and Chief Trader in the Mackenzie River District, now the HBC Chief Trader for the Lake Superior District), wrote to Governor George Simpson noting that he was sending one of two Orkney recruits from the previous summer back to Moose Factory, explaining

I do not much approve of an augmentation of Orkneymen to a District where there is so much travelling on foot and particularly on the Water in small canoes, for which latter service they are extremely awkward for many years after their introduction -- Besides in the event of Opposition -- I need not say what Boobies they would prove to be for dealing with Indians and during such contests frequent important emergencies occur when a Clerk or Interpreter cannot be afforded.²⁶²

Keith refused the assistance of Orkneymen even in the face of continued reductions in employees in his District. In 1828, he observed in his annual report that that his "establishment" was "much reduced" since 1825, down to 40 men, including outpost masters, interpreters, labourers and two guides.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Identified as John Robertson (a), a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 48 years old with 34 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). It is likely that this John Robertson was the same man described by Andrew Stewart at Michipicoten in 1818 as "a half breed...brought up in our service...deserted...from New Brunswick many Years ago" (HBCA, B.129/e/1, 5d).

²⁶¹ Truthwaite and Antoine Collin were included on a short list of "Freemen +c" with accounts in the HBC Moose (Southern) Department in 1828 - 1829 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

²⁶² HBCA, B.129/b/4, George Keith to George Simpson, 10 May 1831, 31.

²⁶³ HBCA, B.129/e/5, 2.

Post masters across the Lake Superior District made up the deficiencies in their staffing, especially at the critical summer transport times, with the "freemen" in their vicinity and from Sault Ste. Marie. In June of 1827, Keith authorized Angus Bethune,²⁶⁴ post master at Sault Ste. Marie, to hire men there and send them to Michipicoten for the transport season.²⁶⁵ The Michipicoten post journal for 1827 - 1828 names three "freemen" who assisted with many tasks around the post (Antoine Pombrillant,²⁶⁶ J. B. Mallette, and Louis Morrisseau), in addition to unnamed freemen in the area.²⁶⁷ In October of 1827, he wrote to Donald McIntosh at Pic, formerly posted at the HBC's Fort William,²⁶⁸ assenting to McIntosh's advice regarding the "superior facility of procuring Indians or free-men at Fort William to assist in bringing the Michipicoten Batteau from thence next spring", and remarking that he would ask Roderick McKenzie²⁶⁹ at Fort William to engage two "Indians or freemen" to accompany the freight boats

²⁶⁴ Bethune was the son of the Rev. John Bethune, founder of St. Gabriel's Presbyterian Church in Montréal, a favourite house of worship for fur trade employees and their families; and Veronique Wadden, the daughter of an independent fur trader murdered by Peter Pond on Lake Athabasca in 1782. Bethune's wife Louisa was the daughter of the Hon. Roderick McKenzie, a NWC partner at the turn of the century (not to be confused with the younger men Roderick McKenzie Sr. in HBC personnel records), Roderick McKenzie, jr. (Sr.'s son) and Roderick McKenzie (a) and (b)). She was born to McKenzie and his "country wife" in 1793 at Fort Chipewyan. Bethune had been a senior officer for the NWC in its trading missions to China and was a NWC partner before the merger. These families provide an example of the hereditary character of fur-trade employment and the tendency for fur-trade families to intermarry, within both the officer and working classes. Louisa died in 1833 and is buried in a cemetery near the old Hudson's Bay Company post at Michipicoten. Angus' and Louisa's great-grandson was the Dr. Norman Bethune who organized mobile medical services for the Maoist Chinese Liberation Army in the 1930s. (Morrison, "Fur Trade Families", 99 -100).

²⁶⁵ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 10 June 1827, 2.

²⁶⁶ Antoine Pombrillant had been a labourer of "middleman" rank with the HBC in the Lake Superior District in 1825 - 1826, and was described by Haldane as "a good serviceable man". An older man, Joseph Pombrillant, also was in the service in the same year (HBCA, B.231/e/3, 4d). Antoine Pombrillant was described in an entry in the Michipicoten Post Journal of 14 August 1827 as "discharged from the service this year". He drowned while taking in a fishing net with employee Charles Robidoux in the Michipicoten fall fishery of 1828 (HBCA, B.129/b/2, George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 14 March 1829, 37. He had a wife and may have had children, but it is not clear what happened to them after he died (Arthur J. Ray and Kenichi Matsui, "Fur Trade and Métis Settlements in the Lake Superior Region, 1820 - 1850", report prepared for the Métis Nation of Ontario, 30 June 2011, 45). A man named Antoine Ponbrillant had been employed by the North West Company at Lac des Milles Lacs in 1805 ("List of the men &co at the Mille Lacs", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company"), and Joseph Ponbrillant had been at Pic in 1805 ("List of the men &co at the Pic Department", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company").

²⁶⁷ Ray and Matsui, "Lake Superior Region", Appendix 4 (based on HBCA, B.129/a/12).

²⁶⁸ McIntosh had been an officer at the North West Company post of Michipicoten in 1818 (Stuart, "Indians and the Lake Superior Trade", 89).

²⁶⁹ This Roderick McKenzie is known in HBC records as Roderick McKenzie Sr. (to distinguish him from his son of the same name) or Roderick McKenzie (a). His wife was Angelique, an "Indian" from the Lake Nipigon area. He was a clerk at the NWC trading post on Lake Nipigon from the 1790s to the merger, and then moved to become Chief Trader at Fort William for the HBC. He and Angelique had twelve children. The four surviving girls all married men in the fur trade (including Adam McBeath, a mixed-ancestry man who became a clerk at the Nipigon

in a canoe. In addition, Keith noted that his district had been asked to build eight boats, and this would require "four or five additional hands...of necessity...Indians or free men", and requested that McIntosh hire two suitable individuals from his vicinity. In conclusion, he reported that "your free man A. La Garde arrived here with the Puckaswa's [Indian group]. He brought four skins in Bears and Rats...He and his family were destitute".²⁷⁰ A few days later, he authorized Alexander McTavish at the Nipigon post to hire "free men or Indians" to transport his goods to and from Pic post in the spring, as "it is evident your complement of men will be short for the outcoming".²⁷¹ When Louis Ross (the "good halfbreed" of 1825) deserted from Fort William in late 1827, Keith consoled Roderick McKenzie with the wisdom that "these half-breeds are really a fickle and unprincipled race, and it happens unfortunately that, generally when well disposed they can render essential service and do nearly as much mischief when otherwise inclined". He suggested that McKenzie engage Vezina instead (without specifying the father or the son), the mainstay of the Fort William and Port Meuron posts from the time before the merger.²⁷²

Fort William, 1823 - 1836

The Fort William post journals following the merger reveal many names familiar from the pre-merger days. In the fall of 1823, Antoine and Michel Collin (with Louis Ross) established fisheries to feed the fort.²⁷³ In the spring of 1824, Antoine Collin continued making canoes as he had done before 1821, while his son Michel and Vezina fished.²⁷⁴ They were joined at the fisheries by Langomois, a "freeman" hired by the month as a fisherman; and employee Masta.²⁷⁵

HBC post, and a Scotsman named Roderick McKenzie), and the seven surviving sons all became HBC employees. Angelique and Roderick retired to Red River in 1845, after a stint at Isle à la Crosse (Arthur, "Angelique and Her Children", 117 - 119).

²⁷⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 23 October 1827, 23 - 24.

²⁷¹ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Alexander McTavish, 23 October 1827.

²⁷² HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 17 January 1828, 31d; also George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 27 February 1828, 35. This observation may seem somewhat impolite given McKenzie's household full of fur-trade "half-breeds", although after attempting to settle his sons with uneven success, McKenzie himself remarked to George Simpson in 1841 that "none of these unfortunate half-breeds will ever give satisfaction in any other country than their own, and even in their own very seldom" (letter quoted in Arthur, "Angelique and her Children", 120). Keith also had a wife and children with him at the post.

²⁷³ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 2, 4, and 11 November 1823, 2 - 2d.

²⁷⁴ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 14 May, 29 May, 29 June, 14 July 1824; 15d, 19, 19d, 20d.

²⁷⁵ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 4 May, 29 June, 3 July 1824; 14d, 19, 19d. A Pierre Masta had been employed by the North West Company at Kaministiquia in 1805 ("List of the men &co at Kaministiquia",

Employee Fanniant undertook multiple tasks, including "making a Road in the Woods" to bring in cordwood, visiting Indian people in their camps, carrying mail, and shooting ducks and geese.²⁷⁶ The employees' and freemen's families also played an important part in keeping the Fort going. In November of 1823, "the Women of the Fort", including Mrs. Haldane, wife of the Chief Trader, went off to hunt rabbits; on 9 December clerk Mr. Grant and employee Roleau went to look for interpreter Peter McFarlane, who had left the post a few days earlier in search of the "Rabbit Snarers". Grant and Roleau brought back Mrs. Haldane "with the Rabbits she had caught".²⁷⁷ In late March of 1824, "Several of the freemen and their families and some of the Women of the Fort" were preparing to go to the sugar bush, where they stayed until mid-May.²⁷⁸ In July, the "women" were sent to collect wattap (roots) to sew the canoes Antoine Collin was making.²⁷⁹ "Young Dubois", probably the son of Joseph Dubois, fisherman, arrived in a canoe from Michipicoten with "LaGarde sr." and other men, and was sent back in a fishing canoe to Nipigon with a bull calf, a cock and two hens.²⁸⁰ The HBC's proprietary attitude towards the "freemen" was illustrated by Haldane's reaction to rumours that the crew of the British Boundary Expedition's ship *Recovery*, camped near the Fort for the winter, were trading "Furs +c, from the freemen resident at this place", especially Vezina. According to the post journal, Haldane called upon Lt. B[ayfield] this morning, and stated the circumstance to him. Mr. Haldane informed him, at the same time, that although the freemen were not in the Company's permanent Employ; they derived the whole of their Support from the Company, and that in every Estimate made for the Supply of the Indians, the necessaries required by these people were always included - in consequence of which they were to be considered, as on the same footing with the Indians; and any Clandestine Trade carried on with them, as an infringement of the Company's rights...

in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company"). An entry in the post journal for 24 February 1824 recorded that Masta was exempted from working because of the illness of his wife (9d).

²⁷⁶ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 19 November, 17 December 1823, 23 January, 1 - 2 April, 3 May 1824, 2d, 4d, 7, 12, 14d. This may be Jacque[s] Fanniant or variants, who appears frequently in the journals in the 1820s. A Jean-Baptiste Fanniant was employed by the North West Company at Kaministiquia in 1805 ("List of the men & co at Kaministiquia", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company"), and fellow-employee Louis Bouchard married Charlotte Fanniant in 1828 (see *supra*).

²⁷⁷ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 24 November, 9 December, 17 December 1823, 3, 4, 4d.

²⁷⁸ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 29 March, 9 May 1824, 11d, 15.

²⁷⁹ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 6 July 1824, 19d. The men employed by Delafield as guides and canoemen hired two "squaws" at Fort William to stitch the North canoe they were to use to travel to Lac la Pluie, "which they do very neatly", according to Delafield. Delafield noted that "there are always some poor squaws about the fort for such purposes, who are compensated by a little provision" (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 401).

²⁸⁰ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 20 July 1824, 21.

Lieut. Bayfield replied that he...perfectly agreed in this necessity of putting a Stop to such proceedings: -- He had therefore determined to issue Public Orders to his men to that effect...²⁸¹

Accounts from the posts during this period show expenditures and rations issued to families and "freemen". At Fort William during Outfit 1827 - 1828, Roderick McKenzie Sr., reported that the barley grown around the Fort was ground and mixed with Indian corn, to be "served out as provisions for Indians and freemen". His own family (one woman and seven children) and that of employee Baptiste Deschamps (one woman and four children)²⁸² were maintained at the expense of the Fort, as well as those of Michel Collin (one woman and five children), Antoine Collin (one woman and one child), Jean-Baptiste Vezina (one woman and three children), all identified as "freemen". Another freeman, Jean Baptiste Langomois, "upwards of 80 years of age", was also provided for, as well as Madame Brisebois, "upwards of 70 years of age",²⁸³ Madame La Gacé (100 years of age),²⁸⁴ and a "few" others, "all maintained and clothed by the Company". The value of expenditures in provisions for the officers, "strangers", "officers

²⁸¹ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 1 December 1823; also 12 December 1823, 3, 4.

²⁸² Identified as a native of Soulange in Canada in HBC accounts, 42 years of age with 4 years of service in 1830 (B.135/8/11). Evidently Deschamps had been in the country for much longer; probably as an employee of the North West Company. Deschamps died at Fort William of a "malignant disease" blamed on the swampy character of the site in late 1834 or early 1835. He was described by Keith as "faithful, tho' rather superannuated", and "left a young family" (HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to George Simpson, 15 February 1835, 28d).

²⁸³ An Augustin Brisebois was employed at the Fort during this period (B231/e/6, 1d). He is identified in HBCA accounts as being of 61 years of age and a native of "Hudson's Bay", with 25 years' service in 1830) (HBCA, B.135/g/11). While Augustin was still an employee of the fort, a man named "old Brisebois", with a grown son, was a freeman occasionally employed by and trading with the Fort (HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entries for 17 October, 14 November 1828, 11, 13; HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entries for 5 January, 19 January, 21 January 1830, 18, 19, 19d). An Augustin Brisebois had been employed by the North West Company as a cooper in the Lower Red River Department in 1805, but it is not known if this was the same man ("List of the men & co at the Lower Red River", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company"). Captain Delafield, with Ermatinger's assistance, engaged a "Brisebois" at Sault Ste. Marie as a guide or foreman in 1823, and called him "old Brisebois". He was impressed by Brisebois' skill as an "experienced guide" between the Sault and Lake of the Woods by the "old" Grand Portage route, with which he was familiar, but which he had not traversed for 20 years (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 381, 383, 412, 416, 455, 457). Brisebois also told Delafield about the route to Moose Factory via the Nipigon River, saying that he had been nine years "in that region" (*ibid.*, 396).

²⁸⁴ Madame LaGacé died on 14 July 1828 at Fort William (HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 14 July 1828, 3). A Legacé worked for the Hudson's Bay Company at Port Meuron in 1819 - 1820, returning to Drummond Island at the end of the outfit, and an André Legacé had been hired at Sault Ste. Marie to work at Port Meuron for the 1820 - 1821 outfit. Madame LaGacé could have been a spouse of an NWC employee of an earlier generation, or even possibly a mother-in-law to one of the Port Meuron Legacés.

families", servants, "Servants families", Indians, and "Superannuated Women +c" were all included in McKenzie's report.²⁸⁵

In Outfit 1827 - 1828, the post journal describes Vezina, Michel Robidoux, Dominique, Daviault and Deschamps working on canoes with "old Collin" in June 1827. The families of Michel Collin, Vezina, the "Veuve [widow] Giboche", and an Indian named Petit Vieux collected canoe bark at locations including Birch Lake, Black Bay and Sturgeon Bay.²⁸⁶ In midsummer, two freemen named [Alexis] Tremblay and [Antoine] Morrisseau assisted Michel Collin and Vezina with mowing hay, and then went to Michipicoten to get thread for fishing nets.²⁸⁷ Langemois and Samuel McKenzie, one of Roderick's sons, weeded the potato fields, with old Collin, Vezina and "Indian" men and women.²⁸⁸ In late July, "Rhiel", apparently a freeman, came in to Fort William with "two Indians", and about a week later the three left for Nipigon.²⁸⁹ In August, Fanniant's mother and other older women left to pick berries.²⁹⁰ In late August 1827, as Joseph Fontaine, Deschamps and Louis Bouchard put up the stockade of the fort, an "Indian" named L Picante went off to join his son-in-law Joseph Perdrix Blanche at the Pic.²⁹¹ In mid-September, Benjamin McKenzie (another of Roderick's sons) went off to take command of the Lac la Flèche outpost for the winter, with Jean-Baptiste St-Cire and Joseph Fontaine. Robidoux and Daviault accompanied them to assist with the 24-mile portage, wryly named "His Lordship's Portage", while Deschamps and Bouchard assisted the elder Collin in making canoes and Michel Collin went to Rabbit Island to "arrange his fall fishing".²⁹² Alexis Tremblay and Antoine Morrisseau, freemen, along with several "Indians", received "debt" from the HBC to undertake their winter hunt, which in the case of Tremblay and Morrisseau was to be at Point au Père, where they were also to fish. On 21 September 1827, Collin, Bouchard, Vezina, and Bouché "started for their respective fisheries", while Brisebois, Langemois and Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau hauled barley

²⁸⁵ HBCA, B.231/e/5, 1d - 3.

²⁸⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries in June and July 1827, 1d - 4.

²⁸⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries in July and August 1827, 5d - 6d.

²⁸⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 27 June 1827, 3.

²⁸⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 30 July and 9 August 1827, 5d - 6. A man named Hipolite Rhiel had been employed in the Fond du Lac Department of the North West Company in 1805 ("List of the men &co at the Fond Du Lac Department", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company").

²⁹⁰ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 2 August 1827, 5d.

²⁹¹ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 28 August 1827, 6d - 7.

²⁹² HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 11 September 1827, 7d - 8.

into the barn. Langemois also got seven trout in his two nets at Isle au Moulton on that day.²⁹³ "Bouché" is Joseph Boucher, a native of "Hudson's Bay" aged 22 in 1830 with three years of service. He was also referred to in the journal as a "freeman" assisting in various tasks, trapping close to the fort with Vezina, the Collins and a "Nipigon Indian", and then being engaged by McKenzie at the end of November 1827 with an undertaking that he was to be "free" again at Fort William in a year.²⁹⁴ During the winter, Michel Collin, Fontaine, Fanniant, Daviault, Bouché, Deschamps, Robidoux and Benjamin McKenzie took turns going to collect furs from "Indians" at Pays Plat, Lac la Flèche, Point au Père ("freemen and Indians"), Grand Portage, and other unspecified places.²⁹⁵ On 14 April, Roderick McKenzie Sr. sent off some sledges of potatoes to Indians and freemen "starving" at Point au Père.²⁹⁶ During the last two weeks of April, Fanniant, Vezina, and the Collins were making maple sugar close to the fort.²⁹⁷ As the ice disappeared from the river and the Lake, the cycle of post activities began again with Daviault, Antoine Collin, St-Cire, Robidoux, and Deschamps making canoes, assisted by "the women" who sewed the seams of the canoes; transportation activities, and fort occupants young and old preparing for spring planting. Deschamps was accorded the honour of painting the Governor's north canoes, in which Governor Simpson and his party left Fort William for Red River at midnight on 20 May 1828.²⁹⁸

The post journals for 1828 - 1829 and 1829 - 1830 feature much the same cast of characters and activities.²⁹⁹ Ten men were employed full-time with the Company in 1828 - 1829.³⁰⁰ Jacques Fanniant became a freeman and undertook trips as far as Moose Factory for the Company.³⁰¹ A new freeman, a "half breed Canadian" named Louis Rivet came into the Fort William area from

²⁹³ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 21 September 1827, 8d.

²⁹⁴ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 20 October, 8 - 30 November 1827, 10 - 12.

²⁹⁵ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 22 January through 8 April 1828, 15 - 19d.

²⁹⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 7 April through 14 April 1828, 19d - 20.

²⁹⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 15 April through 27 April 1828, 20 - 21.

²⁹⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 29 April through 31 May 1828, 21 - 23d.

²⁹⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/8 (1828 - 1829), and B.231/a/9 (1829 - 1830).

³⁰⁰ HBCA, B.231/e/6, 1d.

³⁰¹ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 5 April, 7 April, and 10 May 1824, 12, 15d; B.129/b/3, George Keith to Alexander Christie, 21 July 1829, 10; HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entries for 14 November, 24 December 1829, 14d, 17; B.129/b/9, George Keith to Thomas McMurray and Donald McIntosh, 9 June 1833, 4d.

Lac la Pluie.³⁰² In 1834, nine men (Joseph Bouchard, Hyacinthe Davilleau, Baptiste Deschamps, Joseph Fontaine, Coang Mizail, Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau, James Robertson, William Robertson, and Louis Rivet) were employed at Fort William, and Michel Collin was allowed to order goods from Moose Factory at the old North West Company prices.³⁰³ In 1835 - 1836, Antoine, Michel, and Joseph Collin (Michel's son), Tremblay, and the Widow Guibosh's two sons were freemen getting regular work at the Fort, and Louis Rivet joined them in fishing and trapping. Vezina, Joseph Boucher, Daviault/Davilleault and Joseph Fontaine were employees, although Fontaine and his family left for Sault Ste. Marie at the end of the outfit. The Chief Trader at the American Fur Company post at Grand Portage was a Cotté, with his son, undoubtedly a descendant of the Cotté who traded around Lake Nipigon in the 1770s and 1780s. Jack Sayer and his family arrived from Lake Huron to join Cotté and the AFC, but when their fishery failed at nearby Sturgeon Bay, the HBC sent provisions.³⁰⁴

Fort William after the merger may have seemed to some to be a shadow of its former self: by 1829, the NWC farm had reverted to swampland,³⁰⁵ and in 1834 George Keith reported to Governor Simpson that "the dwelling houses and Stores at Fort William...are fallen into total decay-- insomuch as it will be absolutely necessary to set about removing them next summer".³⁰⁶ However, it was still a busy place with opportunities for freemen to support their families with regular or occasional wage labour, as well as productive fisheries and easily-accessible trapping areas. In the depths of winter, when country food failed, forty or fifty "Indians" camped near the fort to receive provisions,³⁰⁷ and in the summer the population of "Indians", freemen, employees

³⁰² See HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entry for 17 January 1830, 19; E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entries for 7 and 8 September 1835. Rivet was re-engaged intermittently in the 1830s; as a steersman at premium wages (B.129/b/9, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 August 1833, 14). Keith advised Donald McIntosh at Fort William in 1834 that "you cannot select a better man for counteracting [opposition] as Rivet" (B.129/b/10, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 12 August 1834, 6), and Angus Bethune recommended him to McIntosh for 1836 - 1837 (B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 31 January 1836, 13d). An Antoine Rivet requested that the HBC pay an amount owed to him to his mother at Sault Ste. Marie in 1833; it is not known if this man was related to Louis (HBCA, B.129/b/9, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 7 August 1833, 11).

³⁰³ Thunder Bay Museum and Archives, "Statement of Servants Accounts belonging to Fort William Post, Outfit 1834".

³⁰⁴ HBCA, E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entries for 24 September 1836; 13, 14, 21 and 28 February 1837.

³⁰⁵ HBCA, B.231/e/6, 1d.

³⁰⁶ HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 September 1834, 11.

³⁰⁷ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 1d; B.231/e/6, 1. Large game such as deer and moose were extirpated in the area north of Lake Superior for over 100 years during this period. Both Indian people and freemen found it difficult to live for

and families could total close to 80.³⁰⁸ The Oblate missionary G.-A. Belcourt was favourably impressed by Fort William when he visited it in May of 1831:

Le *Fort William* est bien bâti; comme le *Fort du Pic*, il est entourré d'une palissade, ainsi que ses riches dépendances, au nombre des quelles on remarque une assez vaste batisse en pierre. Ce Fort est défendu par cinq Bastions dont 4 places en avant, aux quatre coins de la fortification, et le cinquième au-dessus de la principale porte...³⁰⁹

Belcourt observed the activity that took place at Fort William when the men and baggage of their party was transferred from the large *canots du maître* to the smaller *canots du nord* for inland travel:

Pendant toute la journée, tout le monde fut occupé; les uns se fesoient des avirons, les autres préparoient des sièges; d'un côté l'on fesoit des perches canot, de l'autre on assouplissoit les lignes qui devoient servir dans les rapides...³¹⁰

Although traffic through Fort William was not as heavy as it had been during the peak times of the North West Company, passengers and small freight loads were still being moved in canoes across Lake Superior, and the work of transshipping goods, equipping the *voyageurs*, and preparing these canoes continued to occupy the people there.

Nipigon, Pic, Long Lake and Michipicoten, 1823 - 1836

Lake Nipigon post, located on the west shore of Lake Nipigon across from Jackfish Island, was a smaller post with steady fisheries nearby; in fact so steady that it was difficult to persuade the local Indian population to leave the lakeshore to hunt.³¹¹ The Chief Trader at Nipigon, Alexander McTavish, reported in 1828 that "the men" working in the Nipigon District were "Canadians, and differ in [illegible] from the rest of their countrymen, a distinguishing trait in all is that they are hardy and active". The officers' wives and children (two wives and three children in all) were "maintained on fish and potatoes during the winter at the companys expense", but

long periods away from a fishery, and therefore the HBC fed and clothed hunters to a greater extent than in other parts of the North West.

³⁰⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 20 July 1828, 4.

³⁰⁹ G.-A. Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", entry for 26 May 1831, reprinted in *Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface*, Vol. IV, 1913 (Montréal: Arbour & Dupont), 33 - 34.

³¹⁰ G.-A. Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", entre for 25 May 1831, 33.

³¹¹ HBCA, B.149/e/2, 2.

although "several of the men are married [and] have children...all are supported by their husbands, who by nets catch a sufficiency of fish, and each having a small garden provide a tolerable supply of potatoes for the winter".³¹² In exchange, the HBC had to allow the men time to fish for their families.³¹³ Employees at Nipigon with families mentioned in the post journal at this time included Pierre Camerere,³¹⁴ Joubinville,³¹⁵ and Dubois,³¹⁶ and in addition employee Antoine Dutremble is known to have married Roderick McKenzie Sr.'s daughter and fathered children with her.³¹⁷ A small amount of money was spent at Nipigon on provisions for freemen.³¹⁸ "Freemen" mentioned in the Nipigon post journal between 1829 and 1831 included (Paul) La Garde, "a half breed", with his family;³¹⁹ and Antoine Morrisseau and his sons. These people were described in the journals as fishing for themselves near the post and at locations such as "English Bay", "the straits", and the "old fort"; and hunting for rabbits and furs to trade with the Company. They also assisted the HBC by weeding the gardens, fishing, carrying letters, and guiding HBC employees to Long Lake and Fort William.³²⁰ Possibly because of this less generous treatment of families and freemen around the Fort, La Garde in particular was described by Chief Trader John McIntosh's son (who kept the post journal at Nipigon for 1830 - 1831) as "a half breed who lives with the Indians", and was recorded as travelling with local Indian people.³²¹

³¹² HBCA, B.149/e/1, 3; see also B.149/e/2, 2.

³¹³ HBCA, B.149/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entry for 23 February 1830, 20d.

³¹⁴ Identified as a native of "Masha" in Canada in HBC accounts, 50 years old, with 21 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³¹⁵ Identified as a native of Maskinongé in Canada in HBC records, 32 years old with 6 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³¹⁶ HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entries for 15 October, 7 November 1829, 11, 12d; B.149/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entry for 2 November 1830, B.149/a/14, 7d.

³¹⁷ Identified as a native of Canada in HBC accounts, 27 years old with 9 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11); See Arthur, "Angelique and her Children", 119.

³¹⁸ HBCA, B.149/e/2, 2d, see also HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, 8 February, 6 May 1830, 18d, 26d.

³¹⁹ Included on the list of employees for the Lake Superior District in 1825 - 1826 (HBCA, B.231/e/3, 4). A Jean-Baptiste LaGarde and a Joseph LaGarde had been employed by the North West Company in the Fond du Lac District in 1805 ("List of the men &co at the Fond du Lac Department", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company").

³²⁰ HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entries for 15 June, 2 July, 5 July, 10 October, 28 October, 2 November, 7 November, 8 November, 8 December, 11 - 12 December 1829, 13 January, 28 January, 1 February, 7 February, 9 February, 18 February, 24 February, 20 March, 6 April, 8 April, 7 May, 22 May; HBCA, B.149/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entries for 16 October, 25 October, 28 October, 16 November, 5 December, 14 December 1830, 9 February 1831; HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 23 October 1827, 23 - 24.

³²¹ HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entry for 14 December 1830, 8d; also HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entries for 10 August, 10 October 1829, 7 May, 22 May 1830, 6d, 11, 26d, 28; HBCA, B.149/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entry for 5 December 1830, 9d.

Information from Pic and its outpost Long Lake is less complete. Delafield described Pic in 1823 as "situate at the mouth of river of same name...a good looking house...with outhouses for stores, &c., within the pickets, that also look substantial".³²² In September 1827, Donald McIntosh noted that "no less than five freemen besides Fyant & his brother" were in the vicinity of Long Lake, "voyaging, fishing and working about the establishment".³²³ However, in February 1828, McIntosh reported to George Simpson from Pic that "there is not a Freeman, Canadian, or Half Breed at this place now".³²⁴ In June 1828, McIntosh recorded that three women and seven children, the families of Pic Post employees, were maintained by the HBC at Pic, as well as "an Indian family, i. e., an helpless widow and four children".³²⁵ For outfit 1832 - 1833, Pic Post, under the direction of Louis Denis La Ronde, consisted of eight employees, five women, thirteen children, and a "freeman" named Morrisseau and his wife.

"Women of the Establishment" received the same rations from the Company as the men at Long Lake and Pic, namely six pounds of fish and a gallon of potatoes each per day at Pic in 1832 - 1833. At Long Lake, potatoes were not grown, and more fish were frozen instead of salted. Thomas McMurray, the Chief Trader at Pic, thought that a garden could be started at Long Lake to grow "Potatoes and many other useful vegetables, was the Honourable Company to allow some Superannuated Servant, to remain at that place for the Summer, to attend to the Field and Garden".³²⁶ At Pic and Long Lake, employees' families also received hulled corn, rough corn, "tallow" (fat) and rabbits, and officers' families were issued flour, pork, and maple sugar as well. Altogether, in 1832 - 1833, Pic and Long Lake fed one commissioned officer, one clerk, twelve "Servants", eight women, eighteen children aged three to twelve, and "an old Freeman and his

³²² Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 383, also 394.

³²³ HBCA, B.162/a/1, Donald McIntosh to George Keith, 21 September 1827, quoted in Holmes, "Lake Superior", 19. "Fyant" or "Fyan" and his brother were described by McIntosh as "two Indians...why have been brought up from their infancy at the Fort. Consequently they are better voyagers than hunters" (HBCA, B.162/a/1, Donald McIntosh to George Keith, 3 November 1827, quoted in Holmes, "Lake Superior", 20. Long Lake was located at the entrance(north end) of the Lake. Thomas McMurray described Long Lake in 1833 as being on the White River, which appears not to be today's White River but the Aguasabon River (HBCA, B.162/e/3, 1). The fur trade history of this area is reflected in the names of Lac d'Hyvernand (Winterers Lake), at the western edge of Pic District, and McKay's Lake. Both of these names were in common use in 1833.

³²⁴ HBCA, B.162/a/1, Donald McIntosh to George Simpson, 10 February 1828, quoted in Holmes, "Lake Superior", 20.

³²⁵ HBCA, B.162/e/1, quoted in Holmes, "Lake Superior", 21.

³²⁶ HBCA, B.162/e/3, 2.

Wife, who was maintained during 6 months", totalling 42 people.³²⁷ In 1833 - 1834, one commissioned officer, one clerk, eleven servants, nine women, nineteen children aged two to twelve, and "two families from Lake Nipigon, who Passed the Summer of 1833" at Pic, were rationed by the HBC.³²⁸

At Michipicoten for the year 1827 - 1828 (the administrative centre of the Lake Superior District, relocated from Fort William), George Keith reported expenditures of seventeen pounds of tallow, eight bushels of hulled corn, four bushels of rough corn, thirty bushels of potatoes, and 701 pounds of salt fish for "Freemen in want". Labourers' families received rations of flour, beef, and pork in addition to twenty pounds of tallow, eight bushels of hulled corn, eighty-two bushels of potatoes, and 1,664 bushels of salt fish.³²⁹ A few years later, in 1830, Keith clarified that "most families however are maintained at the expense of their Protectors or Guardians".³³⁰

Families in the Lake Superior District, 1825 - 1835

In 1830, George Keith listed sixteen employees' families across the district in his annual report, including his own, that of Roderick McKenzie Sr., John Swanston (who had married Keith's daughter) and Donald and John McIntosh (father and son). Pierre Camerere, Thomas Cadrant,³³¹ Hyacinthe Davilleau,³³² Baptiste Deschamps, Joseph Dubois (b),³³³ Antoine Dutremble, Joseph Fontaine, Joseph La Perdrix Blanche,³³⁴ Jean-Amable McKay, Jean-Baptiste LaVallé, John Robertson (a) and John Swanston³³⁵ made up the others, totalling 16 women and 38 children.³³⁶

³²⁷ HBCA, B.162/e/3, 2d.

³²⁸ HBCA, B.162/e/4, 2 - 2d.

³²⁹ HBCA, B.129/e/5, 2d.

³³⁰ HBCA, B.129/e/7.

³³¹ Identified as a native of "Masha" in Canada in HBC accounts, 36 years old with 21 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³² Identified as a native of St. Ours in Canada in HBC accounts, 24 years old with 6 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³³ Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 24 years old with 5 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³⁴ Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 31 years of age with 13 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³⁵ Identified as a native of England in HBC accounts, 37 years old with 11 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³⁶ HBCA, B.129/e/7, 5. Of these names, the Michipicoten post journal for 1827 - 1828 refers to Jean-Amable McKay, Jean-Baptiste LaVallé, John Robertson (a), as well as William Schillen, as employees of the post. Most

In his report for 1833 - 34, Keith updated the list of families in the Lake Superior District. Twenty-six employees had families, with 56 children between them. Additions to the list included Thomas McMurray, Chief Trader; Louis Denis LaRonde, post master;³³⁷ Joseph Boucher,³³⁸ Toussaint Boucher,³³⁹ Olivier Desautels,³⁴⁰ Jacque Fagneant, Joseph Jobinville, Joachim Laferté,³⁴¹ Coang Mizael, François Rivet, John Robertson (b),³⁴² James Robertson (b),³⁴³ William Schillen,³⁴⁴ and Jean-Baptiste Vezina (who was now an HBC employee).

employees were not named in the journal (as summarized in Ray and Matsui, "Lake Superior Region", Appendix 4 (based on HBCA, B.129/a/12).

³³⁷ Identified as a native of Ste. Anne's parish in Canada in HBC accounts, 27 years old with 12 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). De la Ronde had engaged with the North West Company in 1818, and was posted to "Lac des Isles" north and west of Lake Nipigon. The De la Rondes had ancestors in minor French nobility, including Louis Denys de la Ronde (1675 - 1741), seigneur and commander of the French post of Chagouamigon (near present-day Ashland, Wisconsin). This de la Ronde was one of the first Europeans to investigate the development of copper mines on Lake Superior. A Denys de la Ronde held a permit to trade with the Indians at "La Prairie des François" in 1781, and a "Chevallier Laronde" held a permit for Michilimackinac. Louis Denis de Laronde, Louis LaRonde's father, was a trader on Lake Nipissing in the late eighteenth century; Louis LaRonde's mother was Louis Denis' second wife, a Louise King of Montréal. Louis married the daughter of an Indian called "The Pelican" around Osnaburgh House in 1827. Louis' uncle Charles was also a fur trader and married Madeline Pewadjiwonokwe from Lake Simcoe. A half-brother, Toussaint Laronde, one of ten children from Louis LaRonde's father's first marriage to a Nipissing Indian woman, was an interpreter for the North West Company in the Fond du Lac Department in 1805 ("List of the men & co at the Fond du Lac Department", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company"). See Elizabeth Arthur, "The de Larondes of Lake Nipigon", in Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, *Paper and Records*, Vol. IX 1981, 31 - 48; Thunder Bay Museum and Archives, miscellaneous genealogical material related to the De la Ronde family.

³³⁸ Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 22 years old with 3 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³³⁹ Boucher was described by Keith as "a half breed" formerly with the American Fur Company, possibly from Sault Ste. Marie or Mackinac, who proved to be so useful as a temporary worker at Fort William that Donald McIntosh hired him there in 1831 (HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to George Simpson, 10 May 1831, 32). A man by this name, associated with the Métis Drummond Islanders who migrated to Penetanguishene in 1828, was famous for having built an "iron canoe" at Penetanguishene, probably in the 1840s A. C. Osborne, "The Migration of *Voyageurs* from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828", in Ontario Historical Society *Papers and Records*, Vol. III (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1901), 133, 139.

³⁴⁰ Identified as a native of Masha in Canada in HBC accounts, 22 years old with 3 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³⁴¹ Identified as a native of Canada in HBCA accounts, 24 years old with 3 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³⁴² Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBCA accounts, 22 years old with 3 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³⁴³ Identified as a native of Hudson's Bay in HBC accounts, 17 years old with one year of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11).

³⁴⁴ Identified as a native of Canada in HBC accounts, 30 years old with 9 years of service in 1830 (HBCA, B.135/g/11). An 1825 three-year contract with the Hudson's Bay Company and William "Schiller", tinsmith and blacksmith, is recorded in the Voyageur database, and it seems likely that this is the same man. His home parish was stated as Boucherville, and his destination was to be Fort William, Sault Ste. Marie or Michilimackinac. A Ferdinand "Scheller", also a tinsmith, was engaged by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1818 for "Hudson Bay

Roderick McKenzie Sr. had transferred out to Ile à la Crosse, although his daughter and son-in-law Dutremble remained. Jean-Baptiste LaVallé and John Robertson (a) were also no longer on the list.

Although the HBC supported employees' families to a varying extent, the Company emphasized that its men were expected to be responsible for them. In August of 1828, Keith wrote to Roderick McKenzie Sr. at Fort William, in the context of instructions to not allow men to request too much in the way of goods on account, that

I understand some of your Men propose forming matrimonial connexions at Fort William -- No one should be permitted to do so without binding himself to take the Woman 'for better or for worse' -- I transmit a form which may be useful on such occasions [not appended in the correspondence book].³⁴⁵

A marriage contract for Louis Bouchard and Charlotte Fainiant at Fort William from 1828 stipulates that ten per cent of Bouchard's wages were to be held by the HBC for the benefit of his family "in case of his accidental death".³⁴⁶ In 1833, Angus Bethune refused a request from Baptiste Deschamps for additional rations for his family, while acceding to a similar request from Bouchard.³⁴⁷ He observed that seven labourers in the Lake Superior District had given their notice to retire the following year, and proposed that "owing to the burthensome increase of families I would beg to suggest that a Batch of four or five be provided annually for a few years in order to allow such Servants gradually to retire".³⁴⁸ Officers' families were allowed to accompany their men on summer transport trips, but labourers' families were not, because of limited space in the boats and the expense of feeding them while at gathering places such as Michipicoten.³⁴⁹ While family connections in the trading area had traditionally been regarded as conferring an advantage on the traders, occasionally, as in any family, relationships broke down. Donald McIntosh's mixed-ancestry son John, post master at Batchewana in 1832 - 1833, had

territory", home parish Montréal. Lord Selkirk engaged a Michel "Schneller" in Montréal to go to Red River in 1817 to establish himself as a farmer, and to take up arms to defend the Colony if necessary.

³⁴⁵ HBCA, B.129/b/2, George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 10 August 1828, 13.

³⁴⁶ Holmes, "Lake Superior", 22.

³⁴⁷ HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 7 May 1833, 41.

³⁴⁸ HBCA, B.129/b/9, Angus Bethune to George Simpson, 22 August 1833, 13d. Although some reductions were made in 1833 - 1834, there is no indication that employees with particularly large families were targeted, or that a large number of new recruits took their places.

³⁴⁹ HBCA, B.129/b/6, Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray and Donald McIntosh, 31 January 1833, 28d; Angus Bethune to Denis La Ronde, 15 April 1833, 40; B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray, 4 June 1835, 2.

been there "too long, and has too many Relations, who are not fond of him, and with whom he is at variance", in the opinion of Angus Bethune.³⁵⁰ John agreed to go to the Northern Department for outfit 1833 - 1834, but "owing to his wife's recent rather difficult couche [childbirth]", his family stayed in the Lake Superior District. "I promised they would get a passage to Red River next spring in the Montréal canoes", George Keith wrote to George Simpson.³⁵¹ In other instances the Company was less willing to incur the expense of moving families. In 1825, clerk Thomas Alder at Michipicoten at first accepted and then declined an appointment as post master of Long Lake, and then found himself without a place. John Haldane wrote in his District report that during the summer at Michipicoten "Mr. A was not...a satisfied man and his expressions tending rather to create dissatisfaction amongst the Companys Servants". Alder's term of service was up in 1826, and he was faced with the imminent need to move his family. He wrote to Haldane that

return to England would put me to very great expense, but I have friends at New York, and would very much wish to go there, but despair of finding a home for my family whom I am determined not to abandon. You were so good as to promise me a Bill which will defray my expenses, and enable me to take one child with me, and I have petitioned to the Honble Committee for permission to have the others, at some future period sent up this way, and will come myself and fetch them as soon as I am enabled to provide a home for them. If you would afford me a passage or assistance as far as the Sault it would be an additional act of kindness.

The Company, however, was not willing to assist Alder to move his family to the United States, and he ended up going back to Moose Factory for the winter of 1825 - 1826, from whence the only point of exit would be to England. It is not known where Alder's family ended up.³⁵²

Fur Trade People and Work, 1825 - 1841

The population of HBC employees in the Lake Superior District in the 1820s and 1830s was overwhelmingly tied to St. Lawrence, Great Lakes and "Hudson's Bay" fur-trade families. Of the family heads with wives and children enumerated during these period, about half can be traced to origins in "Canada" (no parish, probably the Great Lakes) or "Hudson's Bay", and

³⁵⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/8, Angus Bethune to George Simpson, 16 February 1833, 2d.

³⁵¹ HBCA, B.129/b/9, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 August 1833, 13.

³⁵² HBCA, B.231/e/3, 5 - 5d.

therefore can be identified as being of mixed ancestry. These included some clerks and post masters, as well as working men of all ranks from labourer ("middleman") to steersman or guide. For the employees born in Québec, family fur-trade connections or mixed ancestry cannot be ruled out and in fact could be quite likely, given the long history of the preferred labour pool for the Lake Superior District. Because of this common history and experience, employees were less occupationally separated at Lake Superior posts than they had been in the days when Hudson's Bay or Great Lakes employees had had to be paired with Orkneymen to keep them safe and teach them country skills. Employees at all posts spent a great deal of time fishing year-round. In the summertime, transportation absorbed almost all the attention of working men and officers alike. A few men were left at each of the major posts to continue fishing, look after livestock and gardens, collect hay, and maintain the establishments. Cutting and hauling firewood was a steady winter activity. The relatively small permanent labour force in the Lake Superior District was augmented by the work of women and children associated with the forts, "Indians", and "freemen" and their families. Freeman specialists like Collin and Vezina (father and son), assisted by experienced employees such as Deschamps at Fort William, built canoes of various sizes in the spring. Many freemen fished for the posts,³⁵³ and assisted employees in carrying mail and supplies.³⁵⁴ Freeman provided a reliable overflow labour force for peak demand times such as at haymaking and on transports.³⁵⁵ Women and children, with or without their men, collected the materials for canoes, weeded and harvested the gardens, snared rabbits, and made maple sugar, in addition to their unremarked work of food and clothing preparation and other household tasks.³⁵⁶

After the merger, fewer employees were required to travel out to collect furs from hunting groups. However, this was not a completely lost art, as the HBC still had to cope with competition on the eastern and western edges of the Lake Superior District from independent

³⁵³ At Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/a/12, entries for 11 September, 17 September, 26 November 1827, 16 January 1828, 9d, 10, 15, 18d.

³⁵⁴ Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/a/12, entries for 2 May, 18 May, 19 May 1828, 24 - 25d.

³⁵⁵ HBCA, B.129/e/5 (proximity to Sault Ste. Marie "enables to Company to perform the Transport by means of an Establishment which under the circumstances would be far from being adequate to the task"), George Keith, 1d; HBCA, B.129/a/12, Michipicoten post journal, entries for 19 May, 17 July 1828, 25d, 4d. Collecting and cutting firewood at Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/a/12, entries for 8 November, 12 November, 26 November, 27 November, 8 December 1827, 14 - 16. Cutting and carting hay at Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/a/12, entry for 28 July 1827, 5.

³⁵⁶ Rabbit-snaring: Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/a/12, entry for 7 December 1827, 16; Maple sugar: Michipicoten: HBCA, B.129/1/12, entry for 30 March 1827, 22.

traders working through Sault Ste. Marie and Grand Portage. Although the American Fur Company signed an agreement with the HBC not to trade with people who had been given advances by the HBC, their establishment at Grand Portage still provided a challenge to Fort William. In 1829, Keith asked Angus Bethune at Sault Ste. Marie to attempt to find a good interpreter and "courier deruine" (a runner to meet the Indians) for Fort William: "look out about St. Mary's and...discover an active, sober Half Breed".³⁵⁷ Fort William employees were sent to the vicinity of Grand Portage, Point au Père (McKellar Point), the outpost of Lac la Flèche (Arrow Lake) and Pays Plat to collect furs from HBC customers. From Sault Ste. Marie, "petty traders" such as François Alarie,³⁵⁸ and larger traders from Penetanguishene or Newmarket supplied out of the Sault,³⁵⁹ threatened to infringe on the trade at Batchewana and Pic.

By the mid-1830s, Sault Ste. Marie's economy and labour market was sufficiently active and independent of the HBC that wages for day labourers and skilled tradesmen were considered "very high" and the Company made considerable efforts to supply short-term labour from other sources.³⁶⁰ The HBC purchased many supplies and provisions from Sault traders, and conversely had begun to develop a good business selling goods such as salt fish to the population there.³⁶¹ However, the centres of competition from an earlier era, such as Mackinac and Drummond Island, had faded away. In 1823, veteran Wisconsin trader John Lawe had visited

³⁵⁷ HBCA, B.129/b/2, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 15 February 1829, 31d; also George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 14 March 1829, 37.

³⁵⁸ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 15 July 1827, 7d; B.129/a/12, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 15 July 1827, 4d. Alarie, "a Canadian free hunter", was later equipped by the HBC as one of their customers (HBCA, B.129/b/4, George Keith to Thomas Taylor, 10). Men named François Alarie had been employed by the North West Company at Lac des Mille Lacs and at "the Pic Department" in 1805 ("List of the men &co at the Mille Lacs", and "List of the men &co at the Pic Department", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company").

³⁵⁹ HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to Alexander Christie, 21 July 1829, 10. Keith obtained information shortly afterward that Borland and Ross, the Newmarket traders, had engaged "the Cadottes and Landrie (formerly employed in this District by the NWCo to be their local Traders or Agents" (HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 9 August 1829, 13d. An American fur trader, W. Halliday, engaged seven "half breeds and Indians" to manage his canoe while he scouted trapping and trading locations on the north shore of Lake Superior in 1834 (HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to Thomas McMurray, 6 June 1834, 2).

³⁶⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to William Nourse, 3 February 1836, 17d - 18; Angus Bethune to George Keith, 20 February 1836, 20.

³⁶¹ HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to William Nourse, 3 February 1836, 17. See also HBCA, B.129/b/8, Angus Bethune to George Simpson, 16 February 1833, 3d - 4; HBCA, B.129/e/5 (Report on Lake Superior District, 1828), 1. In October 1840, Thomas McMurray, in charge at Pic, brought 20 barrels of salt trout to Michipicoten, allowing Keith to save most of his 26 barrels of whitefish for sale to "the American market" (HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 11 October 1840).

the American Fur Company installation on Mackinac Island and came away disappointed and nostalgic. It was as quiet as "any Sunday", he wrote to a friend, opining that "the old times is no more that pleasant reign is over & never to return any more. I am afraid and [uncertain] in this country".³⁶² The British removed their garrison from Drummond Island (to which the garrison had been moved from Mackinac in 1815 as part of the treaty ending the war of 1812) in 1828, after the Island had been determined to lie within American territory. An estimated seventy-five families of Métis *voyageurs* who had been living around the garrison, including members of the Solomon, LeGarde, Boucher, LaBatte, Langlade, Lavallee, Lagacé, Perrault, Boyer, Cadotte, and Fontaine families, followed the troops to Penetanguishene and settled there. Some members of these families also settled around Sault Ste. Marie.³⁶³ Keith greeted the news of the relocation with pleasure, noting it would "naturally impede the migrations or wandering habits of our Indians thither".³⁶⁴

Another way that the HBC attempted to cope with its chronic structural labour shortages, in addition to drawing on freemen and families, was to reconfigure work and train a new local labour force for certain tasks. In 1827, at Governor George Simpson's direction, the Lake Superior District began a transition to large "keeled" boats instead of canoes for transport. Although skill was required to manage these larger boats, they were more like Scottish or English craft and therefore perhaps less dependent on the work of fur-trade men trained in North America. Keith anticipated that changing the traditional work of much of the labour force would create disruption, writing to Simpson in June of 1827 that "in this Quarter it is greatly to be feared that if our Servants are much disgusted at first effect, desertion will be the consequence and the business will be thrown into confusion".³⁶⁵ In the summer of 1828, both boats and canoes were used. Keith observed that the boats were "not altogether agreeable to our mens

³⁶² Letter of John Lawe, 5 September 1823, quoted in Peterson, "Prelude to Red River", 42.

³⁶³ Osborne, "The Migration of *Voyageurs* from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828", 123 - 166.

³⁶⁴ HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 14 March 1829, 37. Keith had identified the difficulty of preventing Indian customers from going on to Drummond Island if they were allowed to go as far as Sault Ste. Marie, as both sites had more competition and more goods to lure them than the HBC posts along Lake Superior. The Indian hunters "will learn no good at those dissipated and licentious stations", Keith wrote in June of 1827 (HBCA, B.129/b/1, 4; also HBCA, B.129/b/2, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 28 June 1828, 4d; HBCA, B.129/a/12, entries for 6 June, 21 August 1827, 17d). The purpose of the post at Batchewana was to turn Lake Superior Indian customers back towards Michipicoten or Pic, rather than to compete with the Sault or Drummond Island (HBCA, B.129/b/2, George Keith to Peter McKenzie, 19 September 1828, 16d - 17; also HBCA, B.129/e/5, 2).

³⁶⁵ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to George Simpson, 30 June 1827, 4d.

customs of travelling", but that most of them behaved well, except for Labatte from Sault Ste. Marie who refused to clear a landing spot for one of the boats when asked.³⁶⁶ He was pleasantly surprised to report that the goods from Lake Superior had never been received in such good condition before at the Long Portage near Brunswick House.³⁶⁷ By 1829, Keith was completely won over to the "boat system", writing to Donald McIntosh at Pic that it had "succeeded to the utmost of our wishes". Five boats, manned by six men each, carried all of the Lake Superior District's furs and goods up to the Long Portage.³⁶⁸ Canoes were still built, however, especially at Fort William where the master Antoine Collin constructed fishing and travelling craft both for Lake Superior and for the journeys west to Lac la Pluie.³⁶⁹ In 1832, Angus Bethune, filling in for Keith as the head of the Lake Superior District and faced with a large number of retirements, asked for "six Canadian voyageurs, able-bodied young men", to be "ordered up from Montreal next Spring for this District", with five "European Servants from Moose. I request that particular attention be paid in sending the Canadian voyageurs...for without them we shall be put to a nonplus".³⁷⁰ From 1832 onward, however, there are increasing references to hiring "Indians" to work on the transports, collect bark, carry freight and messages between posts, and fish.³⁷¹ By September 1834, Keith was characterizing the personnel of the District as "rather ample" at thirty, noting that four servants had been "permitted to retire, somewhat against their

³⁶⁶ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 2 August 1828, 9d; George Keith to Angus Bethune, 5 August 1828, 10d.

³⁶⁷ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 10 August 1828, 11.

³⁶⁸ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 9 August 1829, 14.

³⁶⁹ HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to Roderick McKenzie, 7 March 1830, 28; George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 19 May 1830, 33; HBCA, B.129/b/4, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 10 March 1831, 25d; HBCA, B.129/b/9, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 18 March 1834, 30. With Antoine Collin periodically threatening to retire to Red River, Bethune commissioned two "small flat-bottomed boats...intended to supersede fishing Canoes" from the post at Pic, noting that they were in common use at Mackinac for "fishing and voyaging" and stating that "I approve very much of the plan of doing away with Canoes where it can be done" (HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray, 24 October 1835, 11).

³⁷⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to J. G. McTavish, 31 August 1832, 5 - 5d. These men, hired on long-term contracts, would have been much less expensive than the short-term men from Sault Ste. Marie.

³⁷¹ HBCA, B.129/b/9, George Keith to Thomas McMurray and Donald McIntosh, 9 June 1833, 4d; HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 7 May 1833, 41d; George Keith to Thomas McMurray and Donald McIntosh, 9 June 1833, 4d; HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 September 1834, 10d; George Keith to Thomas McMurray and Donald McIntosh, 21 April 1835; HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray, 4 June 1835, 2; A. Bethune to James Anderson, 24 October 1835, 10d; A. Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 31 January 1836, 14; Angus Bethune to George Keith, 20 February 1836, 19d; Angus Bethune to William Nourse, 1 March 1836 20d; Angus Bethune to John Robertson, 1 March 1836, 21; Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray, 23 March 1836, 24d.

inclination".³⁷² This experiment may not have been a complete success, however,³⁷³ for by 1837 there were forty-three full-time "servants" employed in the Lake Superior District, plus three commissioned officers (J. Dougald Cameron,³⁷⁴ Donald McIntosh, and Thomas McMurray), five clerks and post masters (William Clouston, Louis Denis La Ronde, John Robertston (a), John Swanston, and Thomas Taylor), and six individuals paid part wages. Among the "servants" were Louis Bouchard, Joseph Boucher, Pierre Camarere ("cow feeder"), Hyacinthe Davilleau, Joseph Dubois, Jacques Fagneant, Joseph Fontaine, Joseph Jobinville, Joseph La Perdrix Blanche, Barthelmie La Poitrie (blacksmith, an employee since the 1820s),³⁷⁵ Jean-Amable McKay, John McPherson (interpreter), Olivier Mandeville, Joseph Morrisseau, and Jean Baptiste Vezina ("Mid & fisherman"). Coang Mizael and Louis Rivet were paid part-time wages as a middleman and steersman respectively, although they were both noted as "retired", as was William Schillen. Joachim La Ferté was included on a list of "Goers and Comers", or people employed on the transports from Montréal to the Great Lakes.³⁷⁶

By 1840 - 1841, the number of servants had increased to 48, with five clerks/post masters (Louis Denis La Ronde, A. McKenzie Hay, John Robertson (a), Thomas Taylor (a) [Batchewana] and John Swanston [Fort William]) and two officers (Thomas McMurray [Pic] and George Keith [Michipicoten]). Joachim La Ferté and William Schillen were both back on the employees' list,

³⁷² HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 September 1834, 10d.

³⁷³ "Indian voyageurs" were in continued use for the busy transport season, however, as Keith noted at the end of the transport season of 1840 that this group was "handsomely rewarded but this is necessary as they would not serve on less favorable terms and we cannot do without them" (HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 8 August 1840).

³⁷⁴ Perhaps a relative of the J. Dougald Cameron who was a clerk for the North West Company in the Nipigon Department in 1799, under the direction of his relative Duncan Cameron. This J. Dougald Cameron had been the Chief Trader at Rainy Lake (Lac la Pluie) in 1825 - 1826 (Donna Cona, "Historical Profile of the Lake of the Woods Area Mixed European-Indian...Community", 36. An "Indian" named "Cameron's Brother in Law" came in to Fort William in October 1823 (HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 29 October 1823, 1d - 2); and an "Indian" trading at Michipicoten in 1840 named Carteaux was described as "brother-in-law" to Baptist Minister James Cameron, son of J. Dougald, "who is a native of the south side of the lake which he has abandoned having sold his inheritance to the United States government" (HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 3 August 1840; see also Donna Cona, "Historical Profile of the Lake of the Woods Area's Mixed European-Indian...Ancestry Community", 45). This may be a reference to the Treaty of Washington, 1836, between the United States and Ottawa and Ojibwa peoples, which covered part of present-day Michigan including the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac. Provision in this Treaty was made for land and cash payments to "half-breeds".

³⁷⁵ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 4d. La Poitrie was listed in HBC accounts as a native of La Baucé in Canada, aged 48 in 1830, with an undetermined number of years of service (HBCA, B.135/g/11). A man by this name was employed by the North West Company in 1805 at Lake Nipigon ("List of the men &co at the Lake Nipigon, Lake of the Islands and its Dependencies", in Roderick Mackenzie, "Some Account of the North West Company").

³⁷⁶ HBCA, B.129/d/2.

and Joseph Fontaine and Jean-Amable McKay received small payments on the retired list. Other men on the servants' list included Louis Bouchard, Joseph Boucher, Toussaint Boucher, Joseph Collin, William Driver (a "Cooper"), Joseph Dubois (b) ("Guide +c"), Pierre Guidon ("Boat Builder"), Joseph Joubinville ("Herdsman"), Joseph La Perdrix Blanche, Barthelmie La Poitrie, Olivier Mandeville, François Mizzobie or Missobie,³⁷⁷ Joseph Morrisseau, brothers William and James Robertson (b),³⁷⁸ Thomas Lamphier (the skipper of the HBC sloop) and Thomas Taylor (b) (a "Sloop").³⁷⁹ The post journal for Michipicoten for this year refers to Jean-Amable McKay building a fishing canoe and preparing boats for the spring transport.³⁸⁰ Joseph Bouché or Boucher came to the post to work on the transport, Perdrix Blanche and Joachim LaFerté passed through from Pic, and Jean-Baptiste Vezina from Fort William.³⁸¹ Regular employees mentioned in the Michipicoten post journal included William Schillen, tinsmith, who also fished for the post and trapped on his own account; Casimir Gariepy, a young Northern Department servant who assisted with a variety of tasks such as wood chopping and fishing; François Mizzobie, who assisted with fishing, travelled with letters to Pic and Sault Ste. Marie, and worked at Batchewana; William Robertson, who assisted with transport, trapped on his own account, and performed general labour around the post; and Toussaint Boucher, who fished both with nets and with a spear under the ice,³⁸² collected furs from Indians, and made trips with mail to Pic and Sault Ste. Marie.³⁸³ The account book for Nipigon post in 1842 - 1843 included entries for employees Olivier Mandeville, Joseph Rabbit, Joseph Dubois (b), Baptiste Kehotassin, Barthlmie La Poitrie, Louis Bouchard (whose long account included children's clothes and beads), Joseph Collin, James Anderson (b) (who also purchased beads), Pierre Badayac (more beads), and Jean Baptiste Vadnais.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁷ Described by Keith as travelling with "another Bois Brulé" (Métis) in carrying a packet of letters from Sault Ste. Marie (HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 15 February 1841).

³⁷⁸ If James Robertson (b) was William's brother, he died of an unknown disease at Batchewana during Outfit 1840 - 1841 (HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 27 February 1841).

³⁷⁹ HBCA, B.129/d/3.

³⁸⁰ HBCA, B.129/a/22, entries for 9 - 20 June 1840.

³⁸¹ HBCA, B.129/a/22, entries for 15 June through 19 July 1840; 11 February 1841.

³⁸² Captain Joseph Delafield reported in 1822 that the "Indians" at Sault Ste. Marie took trout and pike with a spear, as well as capturing whitefish in the rapids with a scoop net. "Whites" caught whitefish with gill nets and seines, and trout and pike with a hook and line (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 319).

³⁸³ HBCA, B.129/a/22. *passim*. Not all employees at Michipicoten post are named in the journal.

³⁸⁴ HBCA, B.149/d/2.

"Half-breed Indians", 1823 - 1849

As well as the nucleus of relatively well-documented individuals, raised in the fur-trade tradition and gathered with their wives and children around the HBC posts, there was another cadre of mixed-ancestry persons north of Lake Superior who were more or less integrated into "Indian" groups.

The La Garde family usually traded at Michipicoten and was headed by Amable La Garde, who occasionally picked up work carrying mail between posts but was effectively a full-time hunter. It is possible that Amable La Garde was the "Frenchman" Delafield encountered near White River on the shore of Lake Superior in September of 1823, living in a "wigwam" and offering Delafield whitefish. Delafield described this man as "a discharged company's servant, who had established himself here, which is not many miles from the Post of Michipicoten".³⁸⁵ La Garde came in to Michipicoten with his family and the "Pukaswas" Indian group, who hunted in the area between Pic and Michipicoten, in October 1827, trading a few skins but "destitute".³⁸⁶ In February 1831, George Keith at Michipicoten sent Amable La Garde with an employee with mail to John Swanston at Pic post, asking that La Garde be sent back immediately "owing...to La Garde's large family, which will require to be maintained at the Company's expense during his absence". Keith assured Swanston that it would be acceptable to break one of the Company's usual rules and allow La Garde to travel alone, "as he will fall in with his friends the Pukaswas about the Otter's Head".³⁸⁷ In June of 1840, Keith recorded in the Michipicoten post journal that "Amable La Garde & family, the vilest in the Dist., with Tabenoscum, arrived from the Otter's Head yesterday". After settling with them for their furs, La Garde, Keyickonge and their families headed for the Agaywam River.³⁸⁸ In October of 1840, La Garde and his family showed up at the post again with a modest catch of furs.³⁸⁹ The family did not appear again at

³⁸⁵ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 456.

³⁸⁶ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Donald McIntosh, 23 October 1827, 23 - 24.

³⁸⁷ HBCA, B.129/b/4, George Keith to John Swanston, 10 February 1831, 21. In 1849, Alexander Vidal and T. G. Anderson recorded that the "Michipicoten, Pucksawsebe and St. Maries" bands claimed hunting territory in common from Lake Superior northwest of Michipicoten, inland to the height of land, southeast to a point of land on the St. Mary's River south of Sault Ste. Marie (AO, F1027-1-2, T. G. Anderson and A. Vidal, "Report to His Excellency the Governor General in Council", 5 December 1849, Appendix B).

³⁸⁸ HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 8 June 1840.

³⁸⁹ HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 5 October 1840.

Michipicoten until the end of March, when La Garde's son arrived with Tabinoscum with a small collection of furs, and then returned to "the interior" to continue their hunt.³⁹⁰

Paul La Garde, described by Haldane as a "smart halfbreed" in 1825, was a "free half Breed" living around the Nipigon post by 1829. He fished with Indian people named Doccaninees, Capian, and Petit Jour at a variety of locations around Lake Nipigon, and he, his stepson and stepdaughter brought rabbits and a small number of furs to trade at the post. Occasionally, like Amable La Garde, he was hired to carry letters, but not infrequently the family was "starving" and was supplied with potatoes by the HBC. In 1830, clerk John McIntosh described Paul La Garde as "a half breed who lives with the Indians".³⁹¹

Louis Ross, Haldane's "good halfbreed" of 1825, deserted from Fort William in late 1827 and made intermittent appearances at Fort William some years later. As Ross was suspected of deserting to the "Americans" at Grand Portage, he may have avoided the HBC posts. However, in December 1835, he came in with a group of "Indians" including Bonnet Carrier, Fidele, Measapy, and Cesar, possibly to share in the New Year's celebration at the post.³⁹² In October 1836, he was recorded as having taken "his necessities" for the winter, and gone off to hunt around Point au Père.³⁹³ This location was frequented by "freemen" and "Indians" for hunting and fishing.

These "half breeds" were slipping out of the orbit of the HBC posts and wage labour, although they were still identified by their European names. Other HBC customers were identified almost exclusively with the "Indians", but occasional references in the documents confirmed their mixed ancestry. In 1830, George Keith described the most productive hunter trading at Fort William as "the most eminent living character at present" in the Lake Superior District, "a Half Breed Hunter called The Spaniard (Ojibibway -- Espagnolle -- a name no doubt adopted from the Canadian French), who I am informed is a very brave, well informed comparatively and

³⁹⁰ HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 30 March 1841.

³⁹¹ HBCA, B.129/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entry for 16 November 1830; other references in HBCA. B.129/a/12 and B.129/a/14, *passim*.

³⁹² HBCA, E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entry for 31 December 1835.

³⁹³ HBCA, E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entry for 10 October 1836.

sagacious character".³⁹⁴ Roderick McKenzie Sr. described "The Spaniard" as "the principal Indian of this place [Fort William]" in the post journal of August 1828.³⁹⁵ The HBC at Fort William treated The Spaniard as a preferred customer, bringing provisions and goods to his camp, feeding him and his group as they camped around the Fort, and offering him extra gifts of rum and goods. As well as rewarding him for his skill and dedication as a fur hunter, the Fort William traders were also aware that The Spaniard's group hunted on American territory and the HBC needed to compete for his loyalty.³⁹⁶ He was never referred to as a "freeman" by HBC writers, and did not perform any paid work for the HBC.

Another individual usually included in "Indian" groups and not identified as a "freeman" in the 1820s and 1830s was Solomon, described occasionally as a "half Breed" or "half Breed Indian" in the Fort William post journals.³⁹⁷ He was given "debt" and rum in the same way as other Indians, included in a list of "Indians" of the post, performed no wage labour, and brought in furs to trade. Solomon's mother, son and "Solomon's brother" were also recorded intermittently in the Fort William post journals.³⁹⁸ It is difficult not to conclude that this person was a relative of the trader Ezekial Solomon who had frequented Lake Nipigon in the 1770s, and his son who had returned to trade there in the 1790s, but the relationship is not described in the documents. Solomon was recorded as visiting Fort William as late as December 1849.³⁹⁹

In the Lake Superior District report for the year 1830 - 1831, George Keith responded to a question from Governor Simpson by reporting that "there are seven Metif Hunters in this District".⁴⁰⁰ It is not clear if he was referring to people such as The Spaniard and Solomon, the La Gardes, the Collins (who would occasionally bring in small furs to trade), or whether there were other "Metif" in the District he included in this category.

³⁹⁴ HBCA, B.129/b/4, 16.

³⁹⁵ HBCA, B.129/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 14 July 1828, 3.

³⁹⁶ See for example HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entries for 14 July, 5 August, 5 October 1828, 3, 5d, 10; 12 January 1829, 17; HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entries for 25 January 1829, 19d; B.129/e/7, 4. See also descriptions of "The Spaniard" quoted in Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and the Fur Trade", 38 - 39.

³⁹⁷ HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entries for 1 February and 19 March 1829, 20, 23d.

³⁹⁸ HBCA, B.231/e/6, 1; HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 27 June 1824, 19; B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 17 June, 2 August 1827, 2 - 2d, 5d; B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 11 December 1828, 14d; E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entries for 4 January, 16 January 1836.

³⁹⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/20, Fort William post journal, entry for 11 December 1849.

⁴⁰⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/4, 5.

Fur Trade Culture, 1821 - 1850

In the 1820s through the 1840s, fur-trade employees and "freemen" associated with posts north of Lake Superior continued to have their own distinctive customs and traditions, as well as the common understandings and skills passed down to them from the previous generations described in the first part of this report. Joseph Delafield, in 1823, hired a crew of "Canadian" canoemen in Sault Ste. Marie, including "Old Brisebois", his guide; Joseph Fontaine, and men named Le Pine, LeBerg, Joseph Socier,⁴⁰¹ and Jervais.⁴⁰² During the four-month trip from the Sault to Lake of the Woods and back, he watched his crew with some curiosity. After trading with an Indian for a large trout near Michipicoten,

The five Canadians devour the whole of the 30 lb. trout except two or three & afterwards cook their corn. They are, with few exceptions, prodigious gluttons, eating like Indians, and never satisfied with anything, at the same time the most careless & probably the most happy people. They will work the whole day without eating, and eat and sing the whole night without sleeping; are the best of canoe-men & the worst to be managed without severity of any people I have had to deal with.⁴⁰³

Brisebois and his companions repeated the custom of many decades past in telling Delafield the names of landmarks and the Indian and voyageur stories behind them.⁴⁰⁴ The men pointed out to Delafield that the gum for a Lake Superior canoe was of a different consistency than that for a river canoe, and entertained him by calling birds and animals to the craft, with a hunter's skill.⁴⁰⁵ A few miles west of Otter's Head, Delafield met more "Canadians":

⁴⁰¹ May have been engaged at Mackinac. See Delafield, *Unfortified Boundary*, 379. The Voyageur database includes several men by the name of "Saucier" or "Socier" who were engaged between 1783 and 1822 with destinations for Grand Portage, Pic River, Sault Ste. Marie or Mackinac. A Joseph Saucier engaged at Québec in 1822 as a day-labourer, with a destination of "dans les limites et les dépendances de tout le Haut-Canada" by a Drummond Island merchant, may not be the same man, unless he either deserted or was released from his two-year contract.

⁴⁰² Le Pine, LeBerg, and Jervais were only named at the end of the narrative when Delafield paid them off at Sault Ste. Marie (Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 460). One of them may have been a crew member from David Thompson's expedition picked up inland past the Grand Portage (*ibid.*, 415). There are many men with the surnames "Lepine", "Jervais", or "Gervais" and variants in the Voyageur database engaged for Great Lakes destinations in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but it is not possible to link them directly to Delafield's engagés with the information available to date.

⁴⁰³ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 391; see also 401.

⁴⁰⁴ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 383, 384, 393, 396, 398, 399, 408, 409, 413, 420 - 421, 442, 447, 459.

⁴⁰⁵ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 395, 397.

Encamp at sunset in company with the canoe that had been frequently near us. It proved to be a party of free-men discharged by the Company and returning to their homes at the Red River of Lake Winnipeg. A Mr. D'ease, an individual trader, was returning with them to his home. They were a hardy looking crew, and the witches of Macbeth were never made a more outré group over their cauldron than these fellows did over theirs. Mr. D'ease takes tea with me, and seems much to enjoy it.

Engagees of the Hudson's Bay Co. when their term of service is expired are called free-men. During the engagements they are slaves in a sense that none but Canadians could endure. In short, the more I see of the Canadian French, their mode of life, and connection with the Indians, the more I feel assured that without this very race of men, the fur trade of the North could not be carried on. They are more hardy than the Indians, are far more capable in the canoe, and in Winter will soon break down the Indian if travelling on snow shoes or with trains. Trains are little sleighs...drawn on the ice by men or dogs...I picked up one this day on an island...that had no doubt been abandoned by some hardy traveller in the Winter...⁴⁰⁶

This party was probably made up of employees discharged and recalled to Montréal after the merger of the North West Company and the HBC. "Mr. D'ease" is John Warren Dease, an American who had been the North West Company's Chief Trader at Fort Alexander before the merger, and was on his way to his new posting at Fort Nez Percés, at the junction of the Snake and Columbia Rivers. He had also been previously posted to the NWC's Rainy Lake post, and had married Mary Cadotte of Sault Ste. Marie.⁴⁰⁷

At Fort William, Delafield found it difficult to keep his crew at work preparing their North canoe for the trip inland to Lac la Pluie, as "the Canadians...always consider a stop at a fort as a holiday and signal for a frolic". He witnessed the pride of HBC Chief Trader Stewart's voyageur crew as they departed with Stewart for Hudson's Bay:

...a salute is fired on his departure, of three guns. The first gun was the signal for the chaunt of the Canadians, and straining their pipes and their nerves to the utmost he soon passed my camp...⁴⁰⁸

The showy departure was tinged with sadness, however, as Delafield witnessed the separation of a family:

⁴⁰⁶ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 394.

⁴⁰⁷ Biography of John Warren Dease on Geni.com, accessed July 2013.

⁴⁰⁸ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 402.

Mr. Stewart left with much reluctance. He married a native & has a very large family, mostly girls. His wife being in low health, and it being impossible to take her and the children along, he leaves six children and a wife behind him, most probably never to meet each other again. I heard nothing said of their manner of parting, but from appearances about his quarters, two or three days previous, I can readily imagine that the same feelings were awakened, that (when expressed with the freedom and violence that these half-breeds are apt to shew) it is as cruel to understand as to witness. Two or three of his boys accompanied him. It is the diminished importance of the post that induces the change...⁴⁰⁹

Readers will be relieved to learn that Stewart's family did eventually depart Fort William in 1824 to rejoin him.⁴¹⁰

Inland on the Grand Portage, the "Canadians" demonstrated the traditional way of carrying "pieces" with a tump line across the forehead.⁴¹¹ At the end of a portage near the height of land, Delafield noted that "it is usual to prepare the canoe for the descent of rapids" on the other side. He was impatient with the delay, but did not interfere with his crew, "satisfied...that they were exercising their best judgement, and well knowing that everything goes wrong when they are not permitted to be lords of the canoe & the portages...it would have been fatal to all peace or comfort for a few days at least to have counteracted their plans for their darling canoe".⁴¹² On spotting campfire smoke on an inland lake, his crew "commence[d] their chant", which drew out "a band of Indians...in all 20. In the group we discover a red cap of the voyageur...he proves to be one of Mr. [David] Thompson's men...taken sick....and...left behind".⁴¹³ He was added to the crew. On the La Croix River (on the "New Road", in contradistinction to the "Old Road" from Grand Portage), Delafield watched in awe as the crews of ten canoes headed for Fort William with furs competed with each other, racing expertly across the portages.⁴¹⁴ On Lake of the Woods, Delafield's party encountered "a brigade of four canoes", travelling like true voyageurs:

They approach in fine style, abreast of each other, the crews all singing and paddling in their best manner. They proved to be part of a larger brigade from the Athabasca Country, bringing down packs, and discharged clerks with their families, and broken-down and

⁴⁰⁹ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 402.

⁴¹⁰ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 10 May 1824, 15d.

⁴¹¹ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 405.

⁴¹² Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 409. Delafield did admit that the canoe was much improved by the refitting done by the crew.

⁴¹³ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 415.

⁴¹⁴ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 418.

super-annuated voyageurs, and freemen, all to seek their fortunes in some new mode of life, when set free in Montreal...⁴¹⁵

These Athabasca crews shared the same travelling style and customs as the Lake Superior crew engaged by Delafield, emphasizing the universality of fur-trade culture. Shortly afterwards, Delafield asked Brisebois about two islands connected by a flat alluvial portage, and found out nothing:

...the information of my guide who has travelled the country for thirty years being no more than he who travels it but once. The canoe track is their home & it is their pride to know every crook & turn in it; to be attempt the least deviation is precisely like the driving of swine...⁴¹⁶

After meeting another four canoes bringing furs and "discharged clerks with wives & children (half-breeds) in goodly number" from Athabasca, Delafield recorded the excitement with which his crew greeted a crew which had travelled from Lake Superior the previous year, carrying another member of the American survey team:

Mr. Ferguson's camp unexpectedly is in sight close by. The surprise caused the whoop of the canoe men, and the chant instantly brought the whole party to the shore. Their joy at seeing some one from the land of their friends and their home was not perhaps exceeded by mine in meeting with friends...⁴¹⁷

Although the voyageurs shared customs in places as far distant as the Athabasca-Mackenzie and Sault Ste. Marie, the crews felt a special affinity to others "from the land of their friends and their home", Lake Superior and the Sault. On the trip back to Fort William, *via* the "New Road" near the Dog River, Delafield witnessed another example of the pride his crew took in their work. Meeting yet another brigade of outbound Athabasca men, women and children, his crew seemed anxious to get ahead of them on the portage.

My canoe I noticed, was brought down the mountain on the naked shoulders of my men, each being stripped to his waist. It was launched by them in silent procession in front of their baggage heap in the gaze of some 70 North men, and laden in good style, in short time...handing over...the last piece for my canoe, I embarked in full chorus once more on the Dog River, more commonly called the Kamanistiquia...It was soon disclosed that my

⁴¹⁵ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 427.

⁴¹⁶ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 427.

⁴¹⁷ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 428. Ferguson had travelled from Fort William *via* the "New Road" in 1822 and had been surveying the south and west shores of Lake of the Woods.

crew were actuated by pride in the show of industry and skill displayed on the Portage du Chien, in presence of this large party...⁴¹⁸

Delafield later found out that this Athabasca brigade had run out of food and his crew might have feared that their provisions might be given away, but the extra show put on in departing by the "southerners" was surely meant to impress the large group of the famed Athabasca northmen. Upon arriving once again at Fort William in the third week of August, Delafield watched yet more canoes "filled with freemen from the interior (just discharged), with their women and children" depart eastbound. He recorded that

The large establishment of Fort William is now deserted by all except the clerks in command, a few artificers and a few half-breeds (women), who have become dependents on the establishment, their husbands having left them & their children, when ordered to a different post, as heir-looms to the company. They receive from the company a scanty allowance of provisions, and, if the wives or children of clerks, a regular tax is imposed by the company and deducted from their wages for their maintenance.⁴¹⁹

Stewart's wife and children would have been among these "heir-looms" for the winter of 1823 - 1824, together perhaps with the elderly women LaGacé and Brisebois. Delafield did not comment on the presence of "freeman" families such as the Collins, possibly because they lived in houses just outside the fort, or they were away harvesting other resources when he was there. He left Fort William to return to the eastern United States on 28 August.

Geologist William Keating wrote a narrative of an exploring and surveying expedition undertaken by the U. S. Government in 1823 to the source of the St. Peter's River, Lake Winnipeg and Lake of the Woods, which traversed much of the same route as Delafield. This expedition hired a crew at Red River and Pembina to take them back to Sault Ste. Marie. Keating's observations of his crew and their lore, eating habits, means of handling the canoe, songs and portages were very similar to Delafield's. Having spent time at Red River, he had been told about the conflicts between the "Bois Brûlés" and the settlers in Selkirk's colony, and

⁴¹⁸ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 445 - 446.

⁴¹⁹ Delafield, *The Unfortified Boundary*, 449 - 450. The number of "half-breed" women and children being taken out of the country back to Québec reinforces the impression that men recruited in Montréal or in Canada for the fur trade could have been of mixed ancestry even if their home parish was recorded as being in the St. Lawrence River valley. Haldane at Michipicoten observed in 1825 that bark for canoe bottoms was scarce as so much was used to patch the canoes "for the number of passengers who came out in swarms from the North" (HBCA, B.231/e/3, 2).

his guide Desmarais had been a witness to some of the events. He therefore distinguished between the "Bois Brûlés" and "Canadians" in his crew, commenting that the "Bois Brûlés" were "far superior to the Canadians" in the handling of the canoes.⁴²⁰ Keating wrote that "on reaching the termination of our voyage in canoes [at Fort William], we could not help feeling some interest in the fate of our Engagés, for although their irregular habits, and their wild pursuits, render them at times disagreeable companions, yet their independant disposition, their endurance of all hardships and fatigues with the greatest equanimity, and their light and buoyant spirits, excited our astonishment, and won our admiration".⁴²¹

The Oblate missionary G.-A. Belcourt travelled with Bishop Provencher from the Lake of Two Mountains in Québec to Red River in May and June of 1831, in a canoe brigade manned by Canadians and four or five Iroquois voyageurs. The canoes and the voyageurs were supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company; the canoe in which the Oblates rode was a large *canot de Maître* manned by sixteen voyageurs.⁴²² In his journal, Belcourt named only two men: the guide Joseph Morin, and a *bout* (steersman), François Oçan. Oçan was from Sorel; three men were hired at Fort Coulonge on the Ottawa River, and the origins of the others were not described by Belcourt, although it seems likely they were recruited from the Montréal area.⁴²³

Belcourt did not provide as much detail about the voyageurs as Delafield and Keating did in their journals, but some elements he recorded are familiar, and demonstrate the continuity of aspects of fur-trade culture. The arrival of the canoe at the Lake of Two Mountains mission was announced by the sound of the voyageurs' singing.⁴²⁴ The brigade followed the old North West Company canoe route up the Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers, across Lake Nipissing, down the French River, along the north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior to Fort William, and then continued westward (not by Grand Portage, a route Belcourt said was no longer followed) to Lac la Croix, Rainy Lake, and the Winnipeg River. Along the way, Belcourt recorded the name of each portage and, frequently, the stories behind the names, as told to him by the voyageurs.

⁴²⁰ Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition*, 67 - 68, 76, 78 - 79, see also 89 - 90, 96, 99 - 100, 117, 131 - 132, .

⁴²¹ Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition*, 143.

⁴²² Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", 8; entry for 23 May 1831, 29..

⁴²³ Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", entry for 3 May 1831, 15; entry for 28 May 1831, 38.

⁴²⁴ Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", 7.

The route was also dotted with crosses and markers commemorating past generations of voyageurs, whose adventures and disasters were woven into a landscape of lore preserved and retold by the men.⁴²⁵ Before arriving at Fort William, the men landed the canoes “pour faire *toilette*”, or wash up and put themselves in order.⁴²⁶ Belcourt also described the *rouler*, the choreography of the rolling of the paddles into the boat when the men stopped for regular breaks to smoke a pipe (“une pipée”).⁴²⁷

Some other aspects of fur trade culture described by Delafield and Keating were more intangible in nature. Although Delafield acquiesced to the judgement of his voyageurs, his diary reveals that he sometimes found the situation socially difficult. Culturally, as the commander of a ship, he undoubtedly was uncomfortable to be seen to be relinquishing control to his hired hands, and characterized them as hard to “manage”. Keating made a similar observation in 1823 about his guide Baptiste Desmarais from Red River: “When they carry passengers, the guides are sometimes apt to assume too much authority and consequence. The responsibility which attaches to their station, in case of the loss or detention of the canoes under their guidance, requires that they should direct the march, and fix upon the proper places and times to encamp; this gives them an opportunity of displaying their brief authority in a manner that is oftentimes unpleasant to those not accustomed to it, but in this respect we had but little cause to complain of Desmarais, for we found him obliging and respectful in his demeanor to the party”.⁴²⁸ In 1833, George Keith reported to George Simpson that a crew under the command of trader Berens and guide Versailles had complained about having to make an extra side trip to pick up a clerk at Mackinac and then carry extra passengers and livestock to Red River (Versailles being the spokesman for the crew). “To reason or urge such obstreperous Characters was useless”, he wrote to Simpson, so he admonished Versailles and then took off some of the livestock, saving

⁴²⁵ Belcourt, “Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge”, see for example entries for 1 May 1831, 13; 3 May 1831, 14; 6 May 1831, 17; 8 May 1831, 18; 16 May 1831, 25.

⁴²⁶ Belcourt, “Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge”, entry for 25 May 1831, 32. The men also took time to “faire...[une] petite toilette” on Lake Winnipeg prior to meeting the canoe that would take the Bishop and Belcourt to Red River, as Belcourt surmised, “je suppose, puis ensuite ils entonnèrent une chanson et arrivèrent avec honneur” (entry for 16 June 1831, 55).

⁴²⁷ Belcourt, “Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge”, entry for 16 June 1831, 55 (footnote).

⁴²⁸ William Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition*, 78.

face on both sides.⁴²⁹ These passages are also reminiscent of the conflicts between HBC master James Tate and his mixed-ancestry steersman Jacob Daniel about who should be in command *en route* to Long Lake in 1816. Delafield called the engagés "slaves" to the HBC, but within specified contexts central to fur-trade custom and culture such as travelling, they claimed the authority of knowledge, skill, tradition and identity over Euro-American concepts of employment and command relationships.

It was little wonder that George Keith was reluctant to tamper with this culture and these traditions in shifting transportation from canoes to boats, fearing that his employees, most of whom were from the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence fur-trade community, would be "much disgusted" and desert.⁴³⁰ He encountered some resistance from the men, who found the boats "not altogether agreeable to [their] customs of travelling", but there was little outright rebellion, except for Labatte from Sault Ste. Marie who refused to clear a landing spot for one of the boats when asked.⁴³¹ In fact, shifting work environments did not reduce the demand for employees raised in fur-trade culture. In 1832, Angus Bethune, filling in for Keith as the head of the Lake Superior District and faced with a large number of retirements, asked his superiors that "particular attention be paid in sending the Canadian voyageurs" that he had requested be hired in Montréal, "for without them we shall be put to a nonplus".⁴³² Bethune's and Keith's assumption was that "Canadians" would have the country skills and experience to be of immediate usefulness north of Lake Superior; in other words that the HBC would not simply be hiring urban labourers or farmers' sons, but young men raised in families (quite possibly with a mixed-ancestry component) where these skills were taught as second nature. In addition, the HBC could draw on compatible mixed-ancestry "freeman" families living around the posts and the multi-generational "Hudson's Bay" and Great Lakes fur trade families established north of Lake Superior. These people had created a distinctive community and culture that had much in

⁴²⁹ HBCA, B.129/b/9, George Keith to George Simpson, 22 August 1833.

⁴³⁰ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to George Simpson, 30 June 1827, 4d.

⁴³¹ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to Angus Bethune, 2 August 1828, 9d; George Keith to Angus Bethune, 5 August 1828, 10d.

⁴³² HBCA, B.129/b/7, Angus Bethune to J. G. McTavish, 31 August 1832, 5 - 5d. These men, hired on long-term contracts, would have been much less expensive than the short-term men from Sault Ste. Marie. The Voyageur database contains HBC contracts only up to 1832.

common with "voyageur" culture from the Athabasca-Mackenzie to Montréal, but also had its own localized identity.

Other customs regarding work, holidays and celebrations were carried on at the Lake Superior posts after the merger. Christmas and especially New Year's days were the biggest holidays on the calendar. At Fort William in 1823, Christmas was a day off work, and each man received two pounds of beef, a pound of flour and "a little Butter" the day before to prepare a special meal. The New Year's celebrations went on for two days, and "according to custom" all the men were treated "with Drams +c" in the morning, as well as receiving another two pounds of beef, a pound of flour, half a pint of barley, butter, and "a pint of rum". The "Indians" were also treated to "a little Rum".⁴³³ Men below the officer class at the posts would not have had flour, butter or beef in their rations at any other time of the year. By 1827, the holidays extended over several days, although on Christmas Day, "according to the rule of this day, no liquor was sold to any of the men". The freemen were also included in the rations of beef and barley and the "dram". Indian people arrived at the post especially for the New Year's celebrations. On 31 December 1827, Roderick McKenzie Sr. wrote: "Great preparations for tomorrow. I gave the Servants, Freemen and Indians their New Year's regale viz 134 lb flour, 338 lb fresh beef, 26 lb Butter & 12 lb Grease". On New Year's Day 1828, the Chief Trader hosted his usual reception:

As usual this day, the men and Indians paid me a visit early in the morning. They were treated with cakes and drams, and every civilities that are customary, on such a day. Our expenditure in liquor was considerable 10 1/2 Galls Whiskey & one Gallon French brandy -- We have no less than 72 Souls to support which requires 104 lb Salt fish and 36 Galls potatoes pr day.

The men were still drunk on 3 January, but were back at work on 4 January.⁴³⁴ Similar celebrations took place at Fort William in 1828 - 1829 (including a dance on 3 January) and 1829 - 1830.⁴³⁵ In 1835, the Fort had changed Chief Traders, as Roderick McKenzie and his family had left for Isle à la Crosse, but John McIntosh (also a veteran of the NWC) continued the traditions. On 31 December, he "served out a new year's Regale to all hands. The men were

⁴³³ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 24, 25 and 31 December 1823; 1 and 2 January 1824, 5 - 6.

⁴³⁴ HBCA, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entries for 25, 26, 29 and 31 December 1827; 1 - 4 January 1828, 13 - 13d.

⁴³⁵ HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entries for 25 and 31 December 1828; 1 - 3 1829, 15d - 16; B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entries for 25 and 31 December 1829; 1 - 3 January 1830, 17 - 17d.

allowed the day to prepare things for to Morrow". On New Year's Day 1836, he hosted his party:

This morning the people of the Establishment came to pay their Bourgeois the usual visit on this day agreeable to the custom of the country -- and they were treated as usual on that occasion -- which is, as much Brandy & Wine as they chose to drink & Cakes, +c. We also gave the Indians a regale and liquor as much as they reasonably could drink.

However, on 2 January, he was "pleased to see that the men diverted themselves very agreeably both today + yesterday, not one of them was the least intoxicated". Similar "agreeable" celebrations including the Indians and freemen took place in 1836 - 1837.⁴³⁶

Celebrations at the smaller posts were similar. At Nipigon in 1829 - 1830, Christmas was marked with "a glass of brandy" for "the people", and New Year's Day saw Chief Trader Donald McIntosh presiding over the reception:

The people came as customary and payed us the compliments of the day, on which occasion we treated them with as much French Brandy and Rum as they chose to drink, with Cakes and Butter; after they went out of the room we gave them the usual regale of flour, Pork, Grease, &c.⁴³⁷

At Michipicoten in 1827, Chief Trader George Keith issued a regale of flour, fat and fresh beef to six employees and their families, three freemen and two "Indians". He hosted a reception on Christmas Day, and allowed his men to buy additional rum:

This forenoon, according to the custom, the servants were invited to the Mess House and when collected were treated each with two drams of Brandy and a few small biscuit, during which a little desultory conversation was carried on and they soon after retired and began to purchase a little rum to pass the evening.

The next day, "the men were very sick...and begged to be excused from work today". "Being perfectly satisfied with their conduct hitherto, I deemed it advisable to indulge them and the day was spent with much hilarity", wrote Keith. However, aptly for the day we now call Boxing Day, "as usual when the company's composed mostly of Canadian voyageurs", the day did not go by "without producing a fight in which our tinsmith got the forefinger of his right hand cut

⁴³⁶ HBCA, E.116/3, Fort William post journal, entries for 25 and 31 December 1835; 1 - 2 1836; 24, 25, 31 December 1836; 1 - 2 January 1837.

⁴³⁷ HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entries for 25 and 31 December 1829; 1 January 1830, 15d - 16; see also B.149/a/14, Nipigon post journal, entries for 25 and 31 December 1830; 1 January 1831, 11.

and bruised". In fact, the tinsmith (probably William Schillen) was off his regular work for months. On New Year's Eve, a special regale of flour, "prime" pork, fresh beef and fat was distributed to the employees. On New Year's Day, Keith hosted another reception:

About broad day light this morning the men of the establishment accompanied by two Canadian freemen, collected in front of the Mess House and giving the customary salute of a few gun shots, were invited to step in and during the visit were treated with three drams of Brandy with a few cakes. This being over they retired in good humour, carrying with them some rum and tobacco which were prepared yesterday. Next came the Ladies and children, who after the usual salutation, were treated with wine, besides brandy diluted with water, to suit different tastes to which a liberal allowance of cakes were added and the morning was spent in this manner much to the satisfaction of our visitors, who retired with many expressions of gratification. The Indians on the ground lastly made their debut and were treated much in the same style as their precursors for which on retiring they made their bows and were gratified with some rum and tobacco to carry to their tent which is pitched a little distance from the House in order to prevent intercourse between them and our men as much as possible. During the afternoon, whilst splitting a billet of wood with an axe, [Jean-Amable] McKay cut his foot slightly. On learning this accident I attempted to prevail on him to desist drinking...⁴³⁸

In December of 1830, Keith instructed Thomas Taylor, the new post master at Batchewana, that

the perquisite generally allowed in this District for New Year's Day -- is two days Rations or so, of Pork and Flour, half a pound of Plug Tobacco and a pint of Rum each -- When Indians happen to be at the House, if not in too great a number it is also customary to indulge them gratuitously with a little Flour and Tallow and a moderate allowance of Rum and Tobacco -- on such occasions care should be taken to allow as little intercourse as possible between them and the Servants -- Last Year, in consequence of the number collected here and the disorderly habits of some; added to the circumstance of having the Year before suffered much anxiety and trouble to preserve due order amongst the Servants and them I postponed the New Year's feast to the 2nd of March when all the Indians were out a hunting...⁴³⁹

Control and discipline amongst the "servants", especially control of alcohol, was a preoccupation among HBC officers, and distinguished fur trade employees from "Indians" and other non-"Indians" in the Lake Superior District. When Lieutenant Bayfield of the British navy and boundary survey party camped with his crew of the schooner "Recovery" at Fort William over the winter of 1823 - 24, Chief Trader John Haldane found them disruptive guests. Not only were they caught trading furs with the "freemen" around the fort, but "the Men of the party were a general pest to us at Fort William, their idle dissolute habits interfering with the regular ones of

⁴³⁸ HBCA, B.129/a/12, Michipicoten post journal, entries for 24 December 1827 to 2 January 1828.

⁴³⁹ HBCA, B.129/b/4, George Keith to Thomas Taylor, 20 December 1830, 18.

our establishment, owing to the liquor served out to the former" (daily rations of rum were customary in the British Navy).⁴⁴⁰ "Indians" were given presents of rum when they brought in furs, but the freemen and employees around the forts were only given gifts of alcohol on special occasions such as Christmas or New Year's and special events such as the launching of a large boat or the return of a brigade.⁴⁴¹ Indeed it may be a mark of the extent to which some "half-breed Indians" such as The Spaniard and Solomon were considered to be integrated in to "Indian" society that they were treated with alcohol as part of the trading rituals usual in this area.⁴⁴² In 1830, Keith instructed John Clouston, post master at Batchewana, to keep the post's supply of rum under his personal care, reserving it for "Indians" for either trade or gifts, excepting "of course" "a dram" allowable to servants or Indians "when arriving from a Voyage or from Inland".⁴⁴³ In 1831, the Oblate missionary G.-A. Belcourt observed that the voyageurs transporting him and Bishop Provencher were given a glass of rum ('le filet') from a barrel ('l'almand') by the guide in charge of the brigade, every morning and evening.⁴⁴⁴ "Freemen" like La Garde and Collin were included in the distribution of liquor around the forts on special occasions, and were allowed to trade country produce for rum, but do not seem to have been given gifts of liquor to secure their loyalty.⁴⁴⁵ Rarely, freemen appear to have received rum as a special gift for unusual service, as in the case of Collin the canoe-maker at Fort William, who was given a gallon of rum in July 1829 by order of Governor Simpson for building the canoes in which Simpson and his party travelled to Canada.⁴⁴⁶ The HBC may have wished to keep

⁴⁴⁰ HBCA, B.231/e/3, 2; also for example E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 8 May 1824, 15 (freeman Langomois got liquor from the "Government men" on the survey and refused to go to fish, for which he had been engaged).

⁴⁴¹ HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entry for 18 October 1823, 1 (regale to all on the launching of the schooner "Recovery", built by HBC employees and freemen); B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 1 November 1827, 10d (All Saints Day, "gave the men a dram"); entry for 6 April 1828 (Easter, "gave all hands a dram"), 19d; B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 30 August 1828, 7 ("all the men drinking after their journey, and had a ball in the afternoon"); 1 November 1828 (All Saints Day, "gave the men a dram"), 12.

⁴⁴² See for example HBCA, E.116/2, Fort William post journal, entries for 6 - 7 June 1823 (arrival of The Spaniard with his son in law, "received his usual Clothing + a Big Keg of Mixt Rum", "drinking all day with the few Indians at the fort"); B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 17 June 1827, 2d (Solomon and Pikicanahang arrived, were given liquor); 24 August 1827, 6d (Ackawsinsis and Solomon equipped and went off to drink); B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, entry for 5 August 1828, 5 - 5d (The Spaniard, "chief, or principal Indian of this place", arrives with his Band; is given two gallons of liquor as a present).

⁴⁴³ HBCA, B.129/b/3, George Keith to John Clouston, 3 March 1830, 25d - 26.

⁴⁴⁴ G.-A. Belcourt, "Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière Rouge", entry for 23 May 1831, 29.

⁴⁴⁵ See for example HBCA, B.149/a/12, Nipigon post journal, entries for 24 February and 20 March 1830 (La Garde and stepson bartering rabbits for rum).

⁴⁴⁶ HBCA, B.231/a/9, Fort William post journal, entry for 18 July 1829, 5.

"freemen" living in proximity to the fort and working regularly with its employees under similar rules and discipline, to assist in preserving the "regular" order of the post community.

At the beginning of 1836, the HBC's customs relating to alcohol were altered by an Act of the Province of Upper Canada forbidding the sale or giving of "ardent spirits" to "Indians". Bethune, the Lake Superior District Chief Trader in 1835 - 1836, instructed all his fellow Chief Traders to conform with this legislation, and began to recall some of the kegs of liquor previously allocated to the posts.⁴⁴⁷ Keith, back at Michipicoten as Lake Superior District Chief Trader in 1840, also restricted the distribution of liquor to employees, but he did not wholly discard the customs surrounding the "dram", and allowed employees who trapped on their own account to buy rum with the proceeds. He described Christmas Day 1840 as follows:

Christmas Day -- a day of cessation from ordinary duty and too often heretofore devoted to dissipation, this year however as the servants at the other Posts are not gratified with any Spiritous Liquors either in a gratuitous manner or on their respective accounts I deemed it unfair to treat the servants of this Post with their usual allowance of Spiritous Liquors and therefore when they came to bid me as usual a happy Christmas -- there were complimented with some Cakes and a few glasses of Brandy -- and it was announced to them at the same time that as the servants at the other Posts obtained no Liquor, excepting perhaps a few Glasses from the Gentlemens private stock, it would be unfair to treat them otherwise. Hence I have resolved to issue no spiritous Liquor excepting on Engagement time to any of them who might be disposed to rehire -- This arrangement was not very palatable to one or two particularly of our tipplers but very little was expressed against it -- yesterday they were gratified with an ample Ration for today of some flour Pork and fresh Beef viz. about 4 lb Flour 1/2 lb Pork & 4 lb Beef p man. The Indians also receive a small Regale of the above luxuries.⁴⁴⁸

On New Year's Eve, Keith issued a "Regale" for New Year's Day for employees "as well as the many Indians on the spot", being three Indian males and their families plus two women. The employees received 30 pounds of flour, six pounds of "mess pork", six pounds of butter, 25 pounds of fresh beef, and five gallons of potatoes, while the "Indians" received 29 pounds of flour, five pounds of pork, two pounds of fat, and twelve quarts of hulled corn. After quoting a melancholy New Year's poem written by Roderick McKenzie, Keith wrote of the New Year's celebrations at Michipicoten:

⁴⁴⁷ See for example HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to Thomas McMurray, 31 January 1836, 14; Angus Bethune to James Anderson, 31 January 1836, 15; Angus Bethune to George Keith, 20 February 1836, 19d - 20.

⁴⁴⁸ HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 25 December 1840, 15 - 15d.

After breakfast all the Servants assembled and paid us a visit, expressing their respects and best wishes for a happy new year. They were complimented with a few Glasses of Brandy (private or personal "allowance") and some Cakes and after discoursing some ten or fifteen minutes they departed in tolerable humour altho' rather disappointed in not being gratified with some Rum either as a gratuity or on account. They -- or rather one of them on rehiring for another term was indulged with a phiol d Engagement, and another man obtained three pints rum in part payment for a Silver Fox so that they being only five in number (the 6th is a teetotaller) were pretty well off. In the course of the day all the Indians in the vicinity paid us a visit and some -- those deserving at least -- complimented with a Glass of Port Wine (Spiritous Liquors being prohibited by an Act of the Upper Canadian Legislature) and some Cakes with a little Tobacco -- all which appeared to be thankfully received. Altogether owing to the limited issue of Liquor the day was spent very pleasantly.⁴⁴⁹

Keith was probably relieved to have a holiday free of the "boxing matches" that had been common in previous years.⁴⁵⁰ These fights were usually attributed by the Chief Traders simply to the effects of drink, although on New Year's Day 1838 there was a suggestion by Donald McIntosh that employees of British descent, not hired from the Great Lakes fur-trade labour pool, squared off against "Half Breeds" at Fort William:

...there was some Squabbling between Christian the Cooper and Michel Collin the Freeman &c a few Blows exchanged which was near having been the cause of a general Fray between the Half Breeds and Sailors.⁴⁵¹

The distribution of liquor had been used prior to 1836 to distinguish between employees (of mixed ancestry or not, stratified in officer and working classes) and freemen, and "Indians" who were customers of the posts. After 1836, employees and freemen were allowed access to "spiritous" (or what today we would call "hard") liquor, while "Indians" were restricted to a few glasses of wine served in the officers' quarters according to custom on holidays.

⁴⁴⁹ HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entry for 1 January 1841, 16 - 16d. William Robertson caught two silver foxes in his own traps prior to New Year's Day in 1840, and William Schillen caught one (B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journals, entries for 22 November, 30 November, and 1 December 1840). Silver foxes were rare -- Keith commented on 1 December that he had never seen three such animals trapped at a single post in one season -- and very valuable; one skin could be worth one-third to one-half of the value of an average winter's hunt for a trapper.

⁴⁵⁰ See HBCA, B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, 30 August 1828, 7; B.231/a/8, Fort William post journal, 1 January 1829, 16;

⁴⁵¹ HBCA,, B.231/a/7, Fort William post journal, entry for 1 January 1838, quoted in Donna Cona, "Historical Profile of the Lake of the Woods Area's Mixed European-Indian...Ancestry Community", 41. The "Sailors" were hired for the HBC Lake Superior schooner, recently completed, for which British sailing skills rather than fur-trade country boat or canoe skills were required.

At Michipicoten in 1840, the men working on the transport boats from Fort Wililam, Lake Nipigon and Pic were given a "regale" of "spiritous liquor" when they arrived. Celebrations, unloading and loading of boats for the Long Portage, and other preparations continued from 23 June to 4 July. On 6 August, the boats returned from Long Portage, providing an occasion for another party. Keith wrote in his journal that he "gave the men and the Indians a small treat regale consisting per head of 1 1/2 lb flour, 1 lb pork, 1 lb sugar & 1 pint rum. The Indians got no rum but 1 lb maple sugar in lieu". After a day of "indulging", plus paying off the "Indian voyagers" and renewing engagements with some men, the boats began to move off with their winter outfits to Sault Ste. Marie, Fort William, Pic (and Nipigon, although this is not stated) from 8 August to 14 August.⁴⁵²

The account book for persons employed by the HBC in the Lake Superior District for the year 1848 - 1849 confirms that freemen and employees alike were also allowed to purchase "rum" at specified times, such as the completion of a transport voyage. Twenty-seven out of forty men in the "servant" class listed as having accounts with the HBC during this year bought unusual provisions such as bread, sugar, meat or rum at Michipicoten during the period June 22 - 27 or around August 2, 1848, a circumstance explicable by the assembling of crews to transport goods to Moose Factory via the Long Portage, and the return of those crews to Michipicoten. While some of these goods could have been used later in the year, many were perishable and clearly designed for fuelling a special social time. Twenty of these accounts belonged to men who charged little or nothing at any other time of the year.⁴⁵³ A few of these accounts (those of William Clark and William Cromarty) were not linked to HBC contracts for 1848 - 1849, and so may belong to freemen hired locally for the busy transport season. Intriguingly, a few men with accounts with June and August purchases (David Nitahwassin, François Skandagainse, Henri Ackibe, Baptiste Keotahsine, François Mizzobie) have surnames that could be associated with the Ojibwe or Saulteaux population around Lake Superior, but as HBC employees they were allowed to purchase rum at these special times. This analysis of the accounts demonstrates the

⁴⁵² HBCA, B.129/a/22, Michipicoten post journal, entries for 23 June to 14 August 1840.

⁴⁵³ Unlike the Christmas celebrations of today, the accounts show that men were actually less likely to make purchases in December than at other times of the year, probably because they knew they could count on the free distributions of extra food and delicacies at the posts.

persistence and popularity of fur-trade traditions despite their evolution over time to fit into new work environments.⁴⁵⁴

The application of Upper Canada liquor legislation to the area north of Lake Superior in 1836 was only one sign of further changes to come. In March of 1835, Keith wrote to William Nourse at Sault Ste. Marie approving Nourse's refusal to allow the Upper Canada Colonizing and Civilizing Mission there to order goods directly from Moose Factory. While the HBC was still the *de facto* European government of the country north of Superior -- in the same letter, Keith also praised Nourse for his "expulsion of the disorderly smuggling Individuals who had taken up a Stand at Goulais Bay" -- the Government of Canada, as well as the churches, had the north shore of Lake Huron in their sights. Keith approved of the approach of European settlement:

I am happy to observe that the enterprising Government of Upper Canada are planning measures for the extension of the Settlement of Lake Huron -- This amelioration will soon afterwards reach St. Marys -- the British side of which Settlement is certainly much in need of the organisation of an efficient Magistracy...⁴⁵⁵

However, the Upper Canadian government did not yet have the capacity to govern the Sault and Superior. In early January of 1835, Nourse had written to Keith asking for advice regarding interesting new developments at the Sault, to which Keith replied:

You seem to desire my opinion of a recent proceeding on your part at S. St Marys. In reply I have not the least hesitation to express my entire approbation of your attending the recently called meeting, at the Episcopal Mission Establishment, of the principal inhabitants of Sault St Marys, in order to promulgate and expose the nature and extent of the Commission granted by his Excellency Sir John Colborne, to Shinguakonce -- authorising him to warn off all Intruders on the Indian lands and to make seizures of what they were illegally intending to appropriate to their use +c +c A commission which is much and evidently intended as it is eminently calculated to promote British Sentiments, and interests, by contributing to secure a continuation of the prosperity and tranquillity of the Country -- Hence independent of our duty as loyal Subjects, many motives combine to induce the Hon^{ble} Company Officers, to countenance and even support a legal and temperate exercise of such a Commission. However in acting upon these principles, it is proper to observe, that particular care should be taken not to engage so warmly in such concerns as to afford much ground to excite in the minds of the Canadian or halfbreed population at Sault St Marys, any general unfriendly feeling towards the Hon^{ble} Companys Servants or Interests.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Accounts in HBCA, B.129/d/4 and HBCA, B.129/d/5.

⁴⁵⁵ HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to William Nourse, 18 March 1835, 32d - 33.

⁴⁵⁶ HBCA, B.129/b/10, George Keith to William Nourse, 2 February 1835, 24.

Keith did not see harm in recognizing "Indian" authority over lands near the Sault, but he cautioned Nourse that too much overt support for the "Indians" could incite a backlash among the "Canadian or halfbreed population" of Sault Ste. Marie, who evidently also believed that they had an interest in the region.⁴⁵⁷ This dynamic was to manifest itself again over the subsequent fifteen years in developments leading up to the signing of the Robinson Treaties of 1850.

As Protestant missionaries moved into the Sault, Catholic missionaries established themselves near Fort William. In 1848, the Jesuit priests Father Choné and Father Fremiot began ministering to the Aboriginal people and residents of the Fort. One immediate effect of his presence was the introduction of some new holidays at the Fort, such as 6 January (Epiphany), and the holding of formal church services.⁴⁵⁸ Since the merger of 1821, post masters had generally observed Sundays as a day of rest for the employees, although no religious services were held and the arrival of Indian trading partners or the necessity to fish, work in gardens or repair houses would trump the holiday. Men variously identified as "Freemen", "Indians" (by the HBC post journalist); "Métis", "Canadiens", or "Sauvages" (by the mission journalist) assisted the Jesuits in building their house and place of worship from the summer of 1849 to February 1850.⁴⁵⁹ Midnight mass on 24 December 1849 drew "presque tous les Sauvages et tous les engagés du fort", but afternoon prayers on Christmas Day were cancelled so that "les Sauvages puissent rendre visite au Bourgeois selon l'usage. Nous [the priests] les accompagnons. Là on donne à chacun un filet de *whisky* [accompagné] d'une égale quantité d'eau".⁴⁶⁰ On New Year's Eve, John McKenzie, the Chief Trader or "Bourgeois" at Fort William sent the priests some meat for their New Year's dinner. On New Year's Day, "les Sauvages" came to visit the priests one by one in their small room. The priests gave them nothing. Only one family from the fort came to the mass, and afternoon prayers were said earlier so that "les

⁴⁵⁷ Shinguakonce (Augustin Barthe or Lavoine) and another "principal chief" of the Sault Ste. Marie region, Nebanogoching (Joseph Sayer) were in fact of mixed ancestry, but identified themselves, and were always identified by observers as "Indians". For some of Shinguakonce's history, as told to ethnographer Georg Kohl by Ojibwe people at Garden River shortly after his death, see Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Wanderings Round Lake Superior* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860), 373 - 379.

⁴⁵⁸ HBCA, B.231/a/20, Fort William post journal, entry for 6 January 1849.

⁴⁵⁹ HBCA, B.231/a/20, Fort William post journal, entry for 9 August 1849; Fort William mission journal, entries from 31 July 1849 to 14 February 1850, reprinted in Alain Nabarra, ed., *La Mission jésuite de Fort William: Journal de la Résidence, (1848 - 1852)* (Alain Nabarra, 2009), 29 - 49. The men are not named in these journals.

⁴⁶⁰ Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entry for 25 December 1849, 43.

Sauvages" could visit the Fort as usual. The priests recorded that McKenzie gave visitors something to drink, "plus que de coutume, les engagés 4 petits verres, et les Sauvages trois, dont deux seulement d'eau-de-vie [brandy]". Against the priests' advice, some of the young people went back to the fort in the evening, "et prennent part à un petit bal donné aux engagés, lequel se prolonge jusqu'à 2 heures du matin".⁴⁶¹ While the freemen, employees and "Indians" at Fort William expressed interest in what the priests had to offer, evidently the customs and traditions of generations were not to be superseded overnight.

The priests also began planning for a new spatial arrangement around the Fort, with an increased emphasis on small-scale agriculture. On 9 September 1849, after mass, Father Choné asked the "Sauvages" where they would pray in the winter, and proposed an immediate start to a wooden church to replace the bark structure used as a chapel during the summer. The priests proposed a new village, where "les Sauvages bâtiront d'un côté de l'église future; le long de la rivière, les Métis et les Blancs de l'autre. Ce qui est approuvé tout d'une voix".⁴⁶² By December 1849, the new chapel and the new priests' house were completed, at least in part by unnamed "Métis".⁴⁶³

However, the change with the greatest long-term ramifications north of Superior in the 1840s was related to resource development. The opening of copper mines on the north shore of Lake Superior heralded a new age of non-Aboriginal interest in the region. The Aboriginal response to this mining development prompted the Government of Canada to negotiate for a Treaty covering the north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior in 1850, introducing among other elements Treaty paylists, Indian Reserves, and legal differentiation to the population of the area. In the next section, after a brief review of the events leading up to the signing of the Treaty, the construction and evolution of the Robinson Treaty paylists will be used as another tool to identify and describe the components and affinities of this population.

Section III: The Robinson Treaties, 1850

⁴⁶¹ Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entry for 1 January 1850, 45.

⁴⁶² Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entry for 9 September 1849, 34.

⁴⁶³ Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entries for December 1849, 42 - 43. "Métis", including Michel Collin and his son, also built houses for some of the Ojibwe; see for example Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entry for 16 February 1852, 111.

Preparations for Treaty, 1845 - 1850

The presence of copper on both the north and south shores of Lake Superior was known to Europeans through Aboriginal reports from the time of the first French explorers and fur-traders. Alexander Henry the Elder had acquired the rights to Michipicoten post in 1761 more for the copper deposits nearby than for its value as a fur post. However, the distance of Lake Superior from markets and the lack of suitable transportation for metals and ores had limited extraction of the resource to the occasional lump of native copper produced as a curiosity. Geologist William Keating commented in 1824 on a sample of copper from Keeweenaw Point on the south shore of Lake Superior, originally brought in by “an Indian”, that

the question which appears to us of far greater importance is not where the copper lies, but what shall we do with it if it should be found. We are very doubtful whether any other advantage would result from it, at least for a century to come, than the mere addition in books of science of a new locality of this metal. It does not appear to us, that in the present state of that section of our country, and with the unpromising prospects which it now offers, these mines could be worked for a great length of time...⁴⁶⁴

By the mid-1840s, some of these obstacles were beginning to erode. The Hudson’s Bay Company was operating a large schooner in Lake Superior, and steamships were plying the north and south shores of Lake Huron. The population of Upper Canada or Canada West (present-day Ontario, south of the height of land with Hudson and James Bay) increased from about 158,000 in 1825 to over 950,000 by 1851, and agricultural settlement was becoming established on the Bruce Peninsula and southern Georgian Bay. On the American side of the Great Lakes, settlement and resource development were pushing rapidly westward. By 1845, several copper mines were operating on the south side of Lake Superior. Licences for exploration on the British side of Lake Superior were first issued in the fall of 1845, at about the same time that the government of the Province of Canada was planning for the first government surveys of Sault Ste. Marie.

T. G. Anderson, the Indian Superintendent at Manitowaning on Manitoulin Island, had emphasized to the Province of Canada Executive Council in 1845 that “these poor Canadians and half-breed settlers... [at Sault Ste. Marie] located themselves without other authority than a

⁴⁶⁴ Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition*, 197.

permission from the Natives”, and had been promised by commanding officers at Drummond Island and St. Joseph’s Island that “when the Government should extinguish the Indian title, they would have a pre-emption right and their claim be confirmed by the Government”.⁴⁶⁵ Alexander Vidal, the government surveyor dispatched to Sault Ste. Marie in 1846, compiled a “List of Settlers’ names, on the North Bank of the St. Mary’s River” to accompany his survey plan, including houses and properties occupied by J. B. Soulière, Guidon, Pierre Mastat, Michel Bonneau, Augustus La Roche, Pierre Belleau, Michel Bouillé, J. B. Chauter, William Perrault, Alexis Biron, Brassard, Michel Labatte, Louis Miron, Joseph Lefond, François Larose, Xavier Biron, Etienne Jolineau, Charles Cadotte, Joshua Trott, Marguerite Lafontaine, Madame Perrault, John Bell, Henry Sayer, Joseph Sayer, Ambrose Surette, J. B. Lesage, Xavier Perrault, J. B. Crachier, Joseph Boissoneau, Lisk, J. B. Denommé, and John Driver. These people or their families had been in “possession” of these properties for from two to over thirty years. The Roman Catholic burial ground at the Sault was reported by Vidal to have been used as such for at least fifty years.⁴⁶⁶

When Vidal arrived at Sault Ste. Marie in the spring of 1846 to undertake these surveys, he was met by the chiefs Shinguakonce and Nebenagoching, who protested against both the surveys and the mining exploration taking place without consulting them. Shinguakonce had been a signatory to the American treaty of 1820 for lands around Sault Ste. Marie, and was familiar with the precedent of treaties and purchases in Upper Canada. Vidal promised that he would convey their concerns to the Government, and the chiefs allowed him to proceed. It appears that the Government of the Province of Canada at this time considered “the Indians about Sault Ste. Marie” as “not...having any claim to the lands which they occupy, having emigrated from the United States”.⁴⁶⁷ By the spring of 1847, however, mineral exploration parties were being driven away by “Indians” from locations near Garden River.

⁴⁶⁵ LAC, RG10, Vol. 151, Statement by T. G. Anderson, 87758 – 87760, quoted in Morrison, “Robinson Treaties”, section 3.7.5.2.

⁴⁶⁶ AO, RG1, A-VI-19, Vol. 6.

⁴⁶⁷ AO, RG1, A-I-6, Alexander Vidal to D. B. Papineau, 27 April 1846, quoted in James Morrison, “The Robinson Treaties of 1850: A Case Study”, report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (version dated 31 March 1993), section 3.9.1.

Members of the Great Lakes fur trade Métis community had participated in the activity related to mining in various ways. B. H. Lemoine, quite possibly a relative of the J. B. Lemoine who had been dropped off at the Sault to trade by the North West Company in 1793 and/or the J. B. Lemoine who had been in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's Port Meuron fort in 1817, acquired a mining location in May of 1847 that included part of the "Indian" settlement at Garden River.⁴⁶⁸ George Johnson, a former American Indian Agent and "half breed" from the Sault, acted as an interpreter at a general council of the Ojibwe with T. G. Anderson and others to discuss "Indian claims" in August of 1848.⁴⁶⁹ James Cameron, son of NWC trader J. Dugald Cameron, and a Métis who had been a beneficiary of the American treaty of 1836, attended Ojibwe council meetings at Garden River and reported to the Government of Upper Canada on the issues of mining and Aboriginal claims.⁴⁷⁰ Louis or Lewis Cadotte, of the family of one of the first fur-trade settlers at the Sault, interpreted at the Ojibwe councils for Allan MacDonell, a mining entrepreneur and advocate for the Ojibwe.⁴⁷¹

After further petitions, meetings, and confrontations over mining, in August of 1849 the Province of Canada appointed Vidal and Anderson as Commissioners "to visit the Indians on the north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior, for the purpose of investigating their claims to the territory bordering on those lakes, and obtaining information on various points relative to their proposal to surrender their lands to the Crown, with a view to the final action of the Government on the subject".⁴⁷² In the fall of 1849, Vidal and Anderson travelled to Lakes Huron and Superior to prepare the way for formal Treaty negotiations.

Anderson, in his diary, noted that the Sault Ste. Marie trader Charles Ermatinger jr. made a claim "to lands on Lake Superior, but this cannot be as his Mother and her relations were originally from Lac la Pluie and his Grand Father or Uncle...are or were American Indians". Ermatinger's family had been established at Sault Ste. Marie for over forty years and doubtless considered the

⁴⁶⁸ Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", section 3.9.7, 3.9.11.1, 3.10.2.

⁴⁶⁹ Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", sections 3.7.4.1, 3.9.8.2.

⁴⁷⁰ Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", sections 3.10.5 through 3.10.5.4.

⁴⁷¹ Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", section 3.10.5.1.

⁴⁷² LAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "E", p. 315, Executive Council Minute, 4 August 1849, quoted in Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", section 3.10.4. This paragraph and the preceding paragraph of my report is largely based on Morrison's report, sections 3.1.1 through 3.10.4.

area their home. Anderson observed what he characterized as the "great excitement...and...unbounded expectations of almost all classes to participate in the benefit of the Treaty Money" at the Sault.⁴⁷³ Meetings at Sault Ste. Marie with Shinguakonce and other Aboriginal people broke down over Vidal and Anderson's unwillingness to deal with Allan MacDonell as a spokesman, and their lack of a mandate to make a concrete offer for a Treaty. MacDonell reported afterwards that

Mr Vidal, in my hearing, addressing himself to a most intelligent and respectable half-breed by the name of Catosh [?], said...the Indians shall not receive any thing for their lands; and this language was used subsequently on other occasions, by the Commissioners, who likewise stated that the half-breeds should not receive anything. To this the Chiefs replied: -- "These people are the children of our sisters, and of our daughters; they are born upon this land, and have equal rights with us; they shall share with us."⁴⁷⁴

To make the round trip to Fort William, Vidal and Anderson engaged a canoe and crew of eight at the Sault, including François Mezai (Guide), Louis Piquette (Steersman), Peter Bell, Pierre Crocheir, Louis Corbiere, Paw-Kauke, Waw-be-ma-ma, and Waw-saung-gais, middlemen.⁴⁷⁵ Although neither Vidal nor Anderson, in their diaries, described their meeting at Fort William in detail, Father Frémot reported to his superiors that

the half-breeds were passed by in silence, for they have not the right to speak at such gatherings. Is this wise? Do some people fear that they, better informed than the Indians themselves, might be in a better position to defend their rights?⁴⁷⁶

Peter Bell, described by the priests as "un jeune Métis du Sault", assisted with interpreting at Fort William, although Anderson was fluent in Ojibwe and was the primary interpreter.⁴⁷⁷ At Michipicoten, Vidal and Anderson enjoyed the hospitality of Chief Trader John Swanston, while their canoe crew "gave a ball to their half breed brethern and enjoyed themselves first rate".⁴⁷⁸ While *en route* around Lake Superior, Vidal and Anderson visited a few of the copper mines and

⁴⁷³ AO, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, "Diary of Thomas Gummertsall Anderson" (typescript transcript), entry for 12 September 1849, 6. Another copy of this document is also held in the Baldwin Room at the Central Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

⁴⁷⁴ Toronto *British Colonist*, 18 December 1849, letter from Allan MacDonell, 11 December 1849.

⁴⁷⁵ AO, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, "Diary of Thomas Gummertsall Anderson", entry for 13 October 1849, 24.

⁴⁷⁶ Father Frémot, 18 October 1849, reprinted in Elizabeth Arthur, ed., *Thunder Bay District 1821 - 1892: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society/University of Toronto Press, 1973), 14.

⁴⁷⁷ Nabarra, *La Mission jésuite de Fort William*, entry for 26 September 1849, 37.

⁴⁷⁸ AO, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, "Diary of Thomas Gummertsall Anderson", entry for 9 October 1849, 22

observed boats laden with copper ore and other supplies for the mines.⁴⁷⁹ In November, after they had completed their pre-Treaty trip, Anderson heard the news that MacDonell "had raised a force of 100 men armed, then, stolen several boats to convey his party to the Point aux Mines [Mica Bay] and to take possession of it and Michipicoten Island". Shinguakonce had "leased" Michipicoten Island and a location at Point aux Mines to MacDonell, so the intent of the attack was to evict other Government licensees. The "Indian war" quickly came to an end with the dispatch of soldiers from Canada West and the arrest of Shinguakonce, Allan MacDonnell, Pabinacochin [Nebenagoching] and "two other half breeds" (Pierrot Lesage and Charlot Boyer).⁴⁸⁰ The men arrested were brought to Toronto and eventually released.

Although Vidal and Anderson appeared to reject claims put forward by the Métis, to the point of not allowing them to speak at meetings with the Ojibwe, in their final report they raised the issue of including them in any Treaty with Aboriginal peoples of the Great Lakes:

Another subject which may involve a difficulty is that of determining how far Half breeds are to be regarded as having a claim to share in the remuneration awarded to the Indians -- and (as they can scarcely be altogether excluded without injustice to some) where and how the distinction should be made between them -- many of them are so closely connected with some of the bands, and being generally better informed, exercise such an influence over them, that it may be found scarcely possible to make a separation, especially as a great number have been already so far recognized as Indians, as to have presents issued to them by the Government at the annual distribution at Manitowawning.⁴⁸¹

The ceremonial present distributions at Manitowaning on Manitoulin Island were originally intended to recognize and celebrate the British Crown's military alliances with Aboriginal peoples. "Canadians" and Métis voyageurs from the Great Lakes had participated in conflicts on the side of the British, particularly in 1812 when some corps were composed almost entirely of these men.

⁴⁷⁹ There are also several references in the Fort William post journal for 1849 - 1850 to mining and the movement of goods and people; see for example HBCA, B.231/a/20, entries for 21 February, 3 June, 7 June, 22 August, 15 - 23 September 1850.

⁴⁸⁰ AO, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, "Diary of Thomas Gummertsall Anderson", entries for 16 November - 10 December 1849, 37 - 41; Morrison, "Robinson Treaties", sections 5. 1 through 5.2.4.

⁴⁸¹ LAC, RG10, Vol. 266, p. 162135, report of A. Vidal and T. G. Anderson to His Excellency the Governor General in Council, 5 December 1849.

John Swanston at Michipicoten wrote to HBC Governor George Simpson prior to the negotiation of the Treaties in August of 1850 that

I shall use my best endeavours in trying to secure something for Chastellain [at Rainy River, but originally from Fort William], but at present I am not certain whether the Government will acknowledge the rights and claims of the halfbreeds, to a share of the payments to be made for the land about to be ceded by the Indians of Lake Superior, but should hope they would, as many of them have much juster claims than the Indians, they having been born and brought up on these lands, which is not the case with many of the Indians, particularly the Sault Chiefs Shinguakonse and Nehbainecoching, whose lands are situated on American Territory.⁴⁸²

In the 1890s, Métis elders at Sault Ste. Marie recalled that Shinguakonce had met with the "Half-breeds of Sault Ste. Marie" in 1848 or 1849 and offered them a share of the upcoming Treaty proceeds if they would "side with them in the Point of Mines affere". The response of the Sault Métis was lukewarm; some men did accept Shinguakonce's offer, but others replied that "they were already Indians enough without binding themselves to be under an Indian Chief".⁴⁸³

Hudson's Bay Company officers north of Superior assisted the Government with the Treaty process by providing information and logistical support to Vidal, Anderson and the Treaty Commissioner J. B. Robinson. In June of 1850, the HBC forwarded a "Census L. Nipigon", probably compiled by the post master James Anderson. This census included two unmarried men with the surname La Garde, Joseph (also known by an Ojibwe name, illegible in the document) and one possibly named St. Paul (also known as Tuquay), part of the Loon clan. One unmarried "Half Breed" woman was also listed (although unnamed). In addition, seventeen "Company Servants, Indians and Half Breeds", comprising three men, four women, one unmarried man and nine children were enumerated in the census.⁴⁸⁴ Swanston at Michipicoten and John McKenzie at Fort William also apparently forwarded censuses of their trading areas, although these have not been located.⁴⁸⁵ Treaty Commissioner Robinson, in his report on the Treaty negotiations of early September 1850, commented on the "very correct census, particularly of Lake Superior" that he had in hand while at the Treaty meetings. He estimated

⁴⁸² HBCA, D.5/28, John Swanston to George Simpson, 21 August 1850, fol. 465.

⁴⁸³ AO, F1027-1-2, (Irving Papers), file 27/32/09, John Driver to E. B. Borron, 4 March, 1893; statement of Alexis Biron, 27 May 1893; statement of Joshua Biron, 27 May 1893.

⁴⁸⁴ LAC, RG10, Vol. 9501, "Census L. Nipigon", June 1850.

⁴⁸⁵ HBCA, D.5/28, W. B. Robinson to G. Simpson, 23 September 1850, fols. 659 - 660.

the number of "half breeds" on Lake Superior was eighty-four, not including "some sixty half-breeds" at the Sault, who were spoken for by Shinguakonce and Nebenagoching.⁴⁸⁶ Robinson's total estimate of the "Indians" on Lake Superior, which he used in the negotiations to limit the total amount of money to be paid each year in annuities, included these eighty-four "half breeds".⁴⁸⁷

The Robinson Treaty and the Métis, 1850 - 1856

The Treaty negotiations for both the Robinson-Superior and Robinson-Huron Treaties took place at Sault Ste. Marie. Although Robinson was steadfast in his statements to Shinguakonce and Nebenagoching that he had "no power to give...free grants of land" to the "half breeds" at the Sault, he offered the Chiefs who would sign the Treaty a way of allowing them to share Treaty benefits with the Métis:

As the half-breeds at Sault Ste. Marie and other places may seek to be recognized by the Government in future payments, it may be well that I should state here the answer that I gave to their demands on the present occasion. I told them I came to treat with the chiefs who were present, that the money would be paid to them -- and their receipt was sufficient for me -- that when in their possession they might give as much or as little to that class of claimants as they pleased. To this no one, not even their advisers, could object, and I heard no more on the subject...⁴⁸⁸

In addition, although he had stated that he could not give free grants of land, Robinson "confirmed certain old residents in the free & full possession of their lands on which they now reside".⁴⁸⁹ John Bell, a Métis who had agreed to support Shinguakonce prior to the Treaty,

⁴⁸⁶ LAC, RG10, Vol. 191, no. 5451, W. B. Robinson to R. Bruce, 24 September 1850; also reprinted in Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories including the Negotiations on which they were based* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, 1880; reprinted by Fifth House Publishers, Saskatoon, 1991), 18 - 19.

⁴⁸⁷ LAC, RG10, Vol. 191, no. 5451, W. B. Robinson to R. Bruce, 24 September 1850; also reprinted in Morris, *Treaties*, 19; also text of the Robinson-Superior Treaty, 7 September 1850, reprinted in Morris, *Treaties*, 303 - 304.

⁴⁸⁸ LAC, RG10, Vol. 191, no. 5451, W. B. Robinson to R. Bruce, 24 September 1850; also reprinted in Morris, *Treaties*, 20.

⁴⁸⁹ AO, J. B. Robinson papers, "Transcript of Diary", W. B. Robinson, entry for 9 September 1850, as quoted in Holmes, "Lake Superior", 41. This confirmation or promise does not appear in Robinson's official report to Bruce of 24 September 1850.

signed the Treaty. George Johnson, the American Métis who had interpreted at earlier meetings, and Louis Cadotte acted as interpreters at the Treaty negotiations and signed as witnesses.⁴⁹⁰

Shortly after the Treaty was signed, Governor Simpson of the HBC offered to Robinson and the Canadian Government that the HBC would pay the Robinson-Superior Treaty annuities in money at Michipicoten and Fort William without any extra charge, knowing that this practice would save the Government substantial expenses, reduce the distraction and travelling time for the annuity recipients, and of course that the HBC was likely to pick up most of the money in trade.⁴⁹¹ Robinson recommended this course of action to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, noting that the lists Robinson had left at the Crown Land Office would likely be suitable to use as a basis for annuity payments.⁴⁹² These lists have not been located.

The first Robinson-Superior payment lists available are for the year 1852, and also include the years 1850 and 1851. These lists provide a convenient point of comparison with earlier HBC records and supply information on the persistence and composition of Métis families north of Superior. It is possible that not all Métis families or individuals present in the region are identifiable on the paylists, for a variety of reasons including not attending Treaty payments, reluctance to participate in the Treaty, or accepting payments under an Ojibwe name. The following table lists family heads either identified in the Treaty payroll of 1852 as "half breed" or identified from other sources as being of mixed ancestry, and data about the family from earlier HBC records, if available:

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
Akibie, Henry	FW HB 3	HBC employee in LS Dist since at least 1840, labourer (middleman), FW 1847, bowsman/labourer/courier/canoe maker in 1848; recruited in "Indian Country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records, FW post journal
Auger	FW 1	"Retired Servant No. Deptmt" 1848 -	Mich accts, Jesuit

⁴⁹⁰ Robinson-Superior Treaty, 7 September 1850; and Robinson-Huron Treaty, 9 September 1850; reprinted in Morris, *Treaties*, 302-309.

⁴⁹¹ LAC, RG10, Vol. 187, G. Simpson to W. B. Robinson, 15 October 1850, pp. 169390 - 169391; also HBCA, D.5/28, W. B. Robinson to G. Simpson, 23 September 1850, fols. 659 - 660.

⁴⁹² LAC, RG10, Vol. 187, W. B. Robinson to R. Bruce, 19 April 1851, pp. 169386 - 169389.

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
		1849, "Métis" J. B. Auger at FW injured in woods Nov. 1850.	mission journal
Auger (widow)	FW 3	See Auger	Mich accts, Jesuit mission journal
Begg, Charles	Mich HB 4	(FW?) 1847 - 1848, acting postmaster 1848 - 49. Home parish Orkney I	Mich accts, HBC employment records
Boucher, Joseph	FW HB 9	Bouchers at NWC Fond du Lac and FW from at least 1805; Joseph Boucher, freeman, age 19, native of Hudson's Bay, engaged at FW in Nov. 1827; still working at FW in 1849 - 1850	NWC lists 1805, Franchère, HBC employment records, FW post journals, Mich accts
Boucher, Toussaint	Mich HB 3	"half breed" with AFC (SSM? Mackinac?) hired by HBC in 1831 at FW. At Mich from at least 1840; fisherman, courier and labourer. Surname on NWC LS lists from 1805; also at Drummond Island	Mich corresp book 1831, Mich post journals and accts
Chastellain, Narcisse	Mich HB 1	Nicolas Chastellaine/Chatelain (father) born 1790s near Grand Portage	Dona Cona report
Collin, Joseph	Mich HB 6	Grandfather Antoine on NWC list at Grand Portage in 1799, Antoine and son Michel freemen at FW from at least 1823, Joseph first mentioned as freeman at Ft. Wm. in 1835, HBC employee by 1840. Surname in GL fur trade from 1750s. Jean-Baptiste Collin also a freeman at FW summer 1849.	Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and Fur Trade", Swan, "Collin Family", FW post journals, Mich accts, post journals, corresp books
Collin, Michel, Sr.	FW HB 8	See Joseph Collin. Michel Collin (sr.? jr.?) employed as "acting post master" and interpreter by HBC in 1848 - 1849. Sent to trade at Lac D'Orignal, in charge at FW summer 1849, also does woodwork and makes canoes	Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and Fur Trade", Swan, "Collin Family", FW post journals, Mich accts, post journals, corresp books
Collin, Michel, Jr.	FW HB 3	See Joseph Collin and Michel Collin Sr.	Lytwyn, "Anishinabeg and Fur Trade", Swan, "Collin Family", FW post journals, Mich accts, post journals, corresp books

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
Corbeur, William	FW HB 3	Not located in sources reviewed to date. William Corbeau HBC employee (labourer) recruited in "Indian country"	n/a, HBC employment records (1850)
Delaronde, Louis Denis	Mich HB 5	NWC clerk NW of Nip 1818, HBC at Osnaburgh and Lac Seul, FW and outposts 1830, post master at Long Lake c. 1832 - 1851, post master Nipigon 1851 - 1868. Family in fur trade since at least 1700s, father a trader on L Nipissing	Arthur, "The Delarondes"; Mich DRs, Mich acct books, Mich corresp books
Deschamps, Joseph	FW HB 2	Baptiste Deschamps (father) HBC employee at FW from at least 1827; likely with NWC pre-merger, as canoe-builder, courier, labourer. Michel a freeman at FW 1849 - 1850, doing misc. labour at fort with brother Michel	FW post journals, HBC employment records, Mich corresp books and DRs
Deschamps, Michel	FW HB 3	See Joseph Deschamps	FW post journals, HBC employment records, Mich corresp books and DRs
Deschamps, Pierre	Mich HB 3	See Joseph Deschamps. Pierre HBC employee (labourer) at (Long Lake, Pic?) 1847, FW 1849 - 1850	FW post journals, HBC employment records, Mich corresp books, accts and DRs
Dubois, Joseph	Mich HB 6	Joseph Dubois (father) HBC employee (fisherman, labourer) at Nipigon from at least 1824; Joseph Dubois (b) (son) native of Hudson's Bay, HBC employee (Guide) at Nipigon from at least 1840	FW post journal, Nipigon post journals and accts, HBC employment records, Mich accts
Dumoulon, Isidore	FW HB 4	HBC employee (Pic?) 1847, at FW 1849 - 1850	Mich accts, FW post journal
Faigneant, Jean Baptiste	FW HB 8	Jacques Fainiant HBC employee LS 1825 to at least 1837, Charlotte Fainiant m. Louis Bouchard at Ft. Wm 1828. Jean Baptiste not located in sources reviewed to date	Mich accts, FW post journals, FW accts
Finlayson, John	FW HB 4	HBC apprentice LS 1840, FW 1847, cooper 1848, at FW as cooper 1849 - 1850, also collected furs from Inds, misc. woodwork, canoe-making, fishing. Recruited in "Indian country"	Mich accts, FW post journal, HBC employment records

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
Heron, Edward	Mich HB 5	Boatbuilder, Mich 1848. Recruited in "Indian Country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records
Keotasine, Jean-Baptiste	Mich HB 4	Labourer (Nipigon?) 1847	Mich accts
Lagarde, Joseph Sr.	Pic 3	Joseph LaGarde on NWC list at Fond du Lac, 1805; LaGarde at NWC Long Lake post 1817, LaGardes at Drummond Island pre-1828, LaGardes freemen around Mich from at least 1824	NWC list 1805; Long Lake post journals, Mich post journals and corresp books
Lagarde, Sansong, and Brother	Mich 3	See Joseph Lagarde Sr. [paid under "'Half Breeds'" after 1852]	NWC list 1805; Long Lake post journals, Mich post journals and corresp books
Lambert, Michel	FW HB 3	HBC employee (labourer) LS Dist 1840, FW 1847, "herdsman" 1848, FW 1849 - 1850. Recruited in Canada. Described by priest in 1851 as "un Blanc" who acted in the Ojibwe Chief's absence at a church service	Mich accts, FW post journal, HBC employment records, FW mission journal
Lamphier, Thomas	Mich HB 1	Skipper HBC sloop, Mich 1840. Home parish England	Mich accts, HBC employment records
Louis, Charles	FW HB 8	HBC employee LS 1840, retired and freed on LS by Simpson (acct at Mich) 1847, employed as bowsman 1848 - 1849, "sugary" near FW ID'd as his 1849 (freeman)	Mich accts, FW post journal
McDonald, James; daughter [Jane]	Mich HB 1	Not located in HBC records reviewed to date	n/a+
Mizzobee, François	Mich HB 6	HBC employee at Mich/Batchewana by 1840, fisherman, courier, bowsman. Recruited in "Indian country"	Mich post journal, Mich accts, HBC employment records
Moriseau, Joseph	Mich HB 4	Louis Morrisseau freeman at Mich 1827, Antoine Morrisseau freeman at FW 1827, at Nip 1829; J-B Morrisseau employed at FW from at least 1827, [?] Morrisseau freeman at Pic 1832, Joseph Morrisseau HBC employee by 1837 (bowsman), recruited in "Indian country"	Mich post journals, Mich accts, FW post journals, Pic post journals, HBC employment records
Nitawassin, David	Mich HB 1	HBC employee (labourer) by 1847 (FW?), recruited in Canada	Mich accts, HBC employment records

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
Perdrix Blanche, David	Mich HB 1	Father Joseph a native of Hudson's Bay and married into the (Pic?) Ojibwe; HBC labourer, courier at Pic from at least 1827, steersman from at least 1837	HBC employment records, FW post journal, Mich accts
Plante, Pierre	Mich HB 3	Not located in HBC records reviewed to date. May be "Plante" building house at FW (freeman?) in Dec 1850	n/a (FW post journal)
Robertson, Alexr.	Mich HB 1	Dead following 1852 payments. John Robertson "half-breed" brought up in HBC service (Brunswick House?), NWC employee at Mich 1817, HBC clerk-interpreter 1825; John Robertson (a) with family at Mich 1827, James and William Robertson employed at FW 1834, John and James Robertson (b) natives of Hudson's Bay & HBC employees 1833, James Robertson (b) d. Batchewana 1840. William Robertson HBC labourer, bowsman and trapping on own acct Mich 1840. Alex Robertson employed by HBC by 1847 (FW?), labourer and interpreter recruited in "Indian country"	Mich post journals, Mich accts, Mich DRs, FW accts, HBC employment records
Robertson, William	Mich HB 8	See Alex. Robertson	Mich post journals, Mich accts, Mich DRs, FW accts
Saunders, James	Mich HB 3	"Southern Dept. Winterer" in 1840, otherwise not located in HBC records reviewed to date. In 1850 HBC records charged to Moose Factory as "Guide &c", recruited in "Indian country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)
Schillen, William	Mich HB 6	Tinsmith/blacksmith hired by HBC in 1821, home parish Boucherville, employed at Mich. Son William (b) apprenticed on HBC sloop 1850	HBC employment records, Mich post journals, Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)
Skandegance, François	Mich HB 2	HBC employee (Mich?) by 1847, labourer, at FW 1849 - 1850. Recruited in "Indian Country"	Mich accts, FW post journal, HBC employment records (1850)
Soulière, Antoine	Mich	HBC employee (Pic?) by 1847,	Mich accts, HBC

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
	HB 4	labourer, recruited in "Indian Country"	employment records (1850)
Swanson, Francis	Mich HB 2	Not in HBC records reviewed to date. [son of John Swanston?]. William Swanson (b) "Southern Dept Winterer", 1840	n/a (Mich accts)
Swanston, John	Mich HB 6	Native of England, joined HBC age 26 in 1819, m. dau. of Geo. Keith Mich CT, family by 1830, served at Mich, FW, Pic; CT LS Dist at Mich by 1849	HBC employment records, Mich DRs, Mich corresp books, Mich accts, Anderson diary 1849, Arthur, "Delarondes"
Taylor, James	Mich HB 1	John Taylor native of Hudson's Bay, employed at Long Lake 1815, HBC LS employee "half breed" 1825; Thomas Taylor (a) post master at Batchewana 1830 to at least 1841; Thomas Taylor (b) sloop LS 1840. James Taylor HBC apprentice carpenter recruited in "Indian country"	Long Lake post journals, Mich DR, Mich corresp books, Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)
Tundiss, Joseph	Mich HB 2	Joseph Teindass HBC LS employee (labourer) 1848, recruited in "Indian country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)
Turner, Philip	Mich HB 1	HBC LS employee 1847, supernumerary labourer 1848, boatbuilder 1850, recruited in "Indian country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)
Vezina, François	FW HB 3	Baptiste Vesinat or Visina jr. employed at Point Meuron 1818, Baptiste Vesinat Sr. freeman at FW/Point Meuron, hired by HBC 1820; Vezina father and son freemen at FW working for the post for at least 1820s, Jean-Baptiste Vezina HBC employee LS 1833, labourer and fisherman 1837. François hired in "Indian country" as bowsman FW 1849, freeman at FW in the summer of 1849.	Mich accts, FW post journals, HBC employment records, Mich corresp books
Vezina, Jean-Baptiste	FW HB 3	See François Vezina. Jean-Baptiste not on HBC employment rolls reviewed to date after 1837, not mentioned in FW post journal 1849 -	Mich accts, FW post journals, HBC employment records, Mich corresp books

Name	1852 paylist	Biographical data	Sources
		1850.	
Watakoya, John	Mich HB 2	HBC LS employee 1847, John Wahtehkiyaie HBC labourer 1848, recruited in "Indian country"	Mich accts, HBC employment records (1850)

Abbreviations:

AFC = American Fur Company

CT = Chief Trader

DR = District Report

FW = Fort William

GL = Great Lakes

HB = listed in the "Half Breed" section of the paylists

LS = Lake Superior

Mich = Michipicoten

Nip = Nipigon

number = number paid. Numbers struck through are as they were shown in the 1850 - 1852 paylist; however these people were paid in subsequent years. The significance of the strikethrough is not known.

The following family heads were added to Robinson-Superior paylists between 1853 and 1856:

Name	Paylist	Biographical data	Sources
Bouchard, Louis	Mich 1 1853	"At New Brunswick" (House). HBC employee in LS from at least 1825. M. Charlotte Fainniant 1828, remarried "Mary", sister of Ojibwe chief. At FW 1827, Nipigon 1843. Recruited in "Indian country". Note "Bouchard 1 Family" (7 people) paid at Nip 1855	Mich accts, Nip accts, Holmes LS report, Macrae report, HBC employment records (1850)
Chastellain, Nicolas	Mich 1 1853	"Lac la Pluie", b. Grand Portage late 1700s (HBC employee)	Dona Cona report
Collin, Jean-Baptiste	Mich 4 1856	Freeman at FW, 1849. See Joseph Collin Sr. in table above. Hired as "fisherman" by HBC 1850 in "Indian country"	FW post journal
Lagarde, Jacques	Nip 4 1855	Paul La Garde "halfbreed" HBC employee LS 1825, freeman at Nip by 1829; see also Joseph LaGarde Sr. in table above	Nip post journals, Mich DR
Solomon	FW 5 1855	"Half breed Indian" trading at FW from 1820s. May be descendant of	Lytwyn, "Fur Trade", Long, "Voyages", Nip

Name	Paylist	Biographical data	Sources
		Ezekial Solomon, trader at Lake Nipigon in 1770s, E. Solomon's son also at Lake Nipigon in 1790s	post journals, FW post journals

The total number of people paid as listed in the tables above was 188 under fifty-one heads. The actual number paid would vary from year to year. Not all paylists had a separate "half breed" section. Not all family heads under the "half breed" sections were themselves of mixed ancestry; for example Charles Begg, John Swanston, Louis Denis Delaronde, Thomas Lamphier, and (probably) William Schillen. It is not known if they were paid, or whether the numbers after their names include only their wives and/or children.

The connection of the families and individuals listed above to the historic fur trade north of Lake Superior is evident. HBC employment records for 1850 list fifty-two officers and men (including five retirees) assigned to the Lake Superior District. Of those, thirty-one were paid Robinson-Superior annuities as *per* the lists above. The remainder of the heads on the annuity paylists above have a clear connection to earlier generations of fur-trade employees around Lakes Superior and Nipigon, for example "Solomon", the Collins, the Vezinas, the LaGardes, the Deschamps, Perdrix Blanche, and Morrisseau. The HBC employees in 1850 were also in some cases members of these families. A few, such as Auger and Plante, may have been recently-arrived retirees from other fur trade districts. Others had lived and raised families in the Lake Superior District for twenty years or more, and may have had much longer connections through earlier generations in the Great Lakes fur trade, such as Bouchard, Boucher, Delaronde and Robertson.

Who was absent from the paylists? The twenty-one officers and men in the HBC Lake Superior District accounts who were not included were mostly from Scotland or the Orkney Islands, and may not have been in the country long enough to establish families. Only two men on the HBC accounts in 1850 whose home or recruitment parish was listed as "Canada" were not on the Treaty paylists for 1850 - 1856: Pierre Badayac dit LaPlante, who may in fact be the Pierre

Plante on the payroll,⁴⁹³ and Xavier Leclair. Only one person recruited or with a home parish in "Indian country" in the Lake Superior District, James Loutit, an apprentice labourer, was not on the Robinson Treaty payroll, and it is possible that he was below the age of majority. It is evident that among fur trade employees, there was no reluctance or stigma attached to taking Indian Treaty annuities. Swanston's own views about the entitlement of "half breeds" to share in the Treaty, and his accepting money for his own family, doubtless played a role in this view.

All the "freemen" families named most often in the HBC post journals in the period 1821 - 1850 (Collin, Vezina, LaGarde, Solomon, Morrisseau) were represented on the Robinson-Superior Treaty paylists. Some prominent families may have retired in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie (which was included in the Robinson-Huron Treaty), such as that of Jean-Amable McKay (who bought property at the Sault in 1827, although he also considered retiring to Red River).⁴⁹⁴ Two men named Amable McKay signed a petition in 1850 asking not to be disturbed in the possession of their properties at Sault Ste. Marie. This petition, written following the failure of the Treaty process to secure land grants to the "half-breeds", was signed by fifty-five individuals who "with the exception of some five or six, are all of mixed Indian Blood and have been born upon the Soil...most of them having inherited their possessions from their mothers, and the residue having purchased from half breeds or Indians". Another signatory to this petition was Pierre Mastat (family around Kaministiquia/Fort William from c. 1800 to the 1820s).⁴⁹⁵ A "Memorial" of Shinguakonce and three other Robinson Treaty chiefs, also presented to the Governor General in 1850, requested that Pierre Masteaux, Alexander McKay, William Perrault, Xavier Perrault, Jean Baptiste Soulier, and other Sault Ste. Marie "Half Breeds" be granted one hundred acres "now in Occupation or possession" by them at the Sault.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹³ This may also be the Pierre Badayac who was an HBC employee at Nipigon 1842 - 1843.

⁴⁹⁴ HBCA, B.129/b/1, George Keith to George Simpson, 30 June 1827, 5.

⁴⁹⁵ LAC, RG1, L3, Vol. 182B, Petitions "E", Bundle 6, no. 21, petition of C. O. Ermatinger and others, transmitted with letter of J. B. Robinson, 21 October 1850. This petition was also signed by an A. William McKay, likely from a different family, possibly a descendant of the Edward McKay who traded either for or against the HBC at Batchewana in the 1820s and 1830s, and F. Xavier Perrault, possibly a descendant of Jean-Baptiste Perrault at Lake Nipigon and Michipicoten from the 1780s. The Cadotte, Nolin, Sayer, Biron, and Boissoneau families were also well-represented on this petition.

⁴⁹⁶ LAC, RG1, L3, Vol. 182B, Petitions "E", Bundle 6, folio 21h - 21m, "Memorial" of Joseph Na-bun-a-go-ging, Shinguakonce, and others to the Governor General of Canada.

At Sault Ste. Marie, fewer Métis initially signed on to the Treaty, possibly in the hope that they could retain their existing properties "without binding themselves to be under an Indian Chief". Over time, many of these Métis did accept Treaty payments and other benefits as part of the Batchewana or Garden River Indian Bands, especially after a land surrender at Garden River in 1859. However, further west on Lake Superior, Métis were not under immediate pressure from outsiders to protect their garden plots, and as most of them were affiliated with the Hudson's Bay Company, perhaps did not believe that accepting Treaty annuities would threaten their autonomy and put them under the authority of the Chiefs. It was unlikely, after all, that John Swanston could be made to answer to Tootoomine, the Chief at Michipicoten. This may also explain why at some locations such as Fort William and Michipicoten, "Half Breeds" were listed separately, although HBC employees at other locations would also have been expected to submit to the Company's authority and live within the fur trade culture, rather than that of their Ojibwe neighbours and relatives.

Other pre-1850 families not on the Treaty paylists, like that of Roderick McKenzie, were transferred out of the Lake Superior District prior to 1850, although in McKenzie's case a daughter married to an employee remained behind. Female family members are obscured in the records, possibly understating the extent to which family connections persisted in the area. In other instances, families may have left the region when their work contracts ended. In 1836, Angus Bethune commented in a letter to George Simpson that several men were talking of retiring when their terms were up and settling at St. Joseph's Island on the American side of the border southeast of Sault Ste. Marie.⁴⁹⁷ In the same year, Hyacinthe Davilleau, Pierre Camerere, and Joseph Fontaine, all heads of families, went down to Montréal with the canoe brigade from York Factory, although Fontaine reappeared as a retiree in the Lake Superior District in 1840 and Hyacinthe "Daveau" Sr. was later identified as a family head at Sault Ste. Marie *circa* 1850.⁴⁹⁸ The economic base of this population, dependent on physically vigorous fur-trade employment and with few other options for making a living on Lake Superior, induced turnover of about five to ten percent per year in HBC employees.

⁴⁹⁷ HBCA, B.129/b/11, Angus Bethune to George Simpson, 26 March 1836, 23d.

⁴⁹⁸ HBCA, B.129/b/10, Angus Bethune to Donald McIntosh, 31 January 1836, 13 - 13d; AO, F-1027 -1-2 (Irving Papers), file 27/32/08, list from Joseph Wilson, 6 November 1891; file 27/32/09, "Information of Paywatchinini", "List of names given by Paywatchinini...those for whom Chief Shinguacoose wanted the free grants", both dated 2 June 1893; John Driver to E. B. Borron, 9 June 1893.

Fur Trade Culture on Lake Superior in the 1850s

The Métis Treaty adherents, their non-Aboriginal colleagues at the HBC, and other "Canadians" or "half breeds" around Lake Superior were part of the persisting and distinctive fur trade culture observed with interest by non-Aboriginal outsiders, and separated from the Ojibwe culture of their trading partners. This culture, which was a majority Métis culture by 1850, had roots in the Great Lakes at least 150 years old by the time of the Treaty. Successive generations of *voyageurs*, *coureurs du bois*, *engagés*, traders and "Hudson's Bay" men had taught skills, stories, geographies, names and country knowledge to newcomers.

German ethnographer Georg Kohl visited Lake Superior in the summer of 1855 and joined the succession of Europeans travelling the region with "Canadian", "half-breed" or "Voyageur" experts. Most of his observations on the local Ojibwe culture came from conversations with or interpretations made by people identified by these terms. Travelling by steamer to La Pointe on the south-west shore of Lake Superior, he witnessed the annual Treaty payments with their assistance:

Besides the Indians, several hundred half-breeds had come in, many Indian traders, American travellers, and French voyageurs. They had come from a very widely-spread country, and were all much-travelled and intelligent men, from whom I could obtain explanations as to what I saw among the Indians. As I had also attracted to my side an excellent and experienced Canadian Frenchman, I succeeded in discovering all sorts of novelties, and understanding many strange matters...⁴⁹⁹

Kohl observed the landing of "an Indian family" from Wisconsin in their canoe. The father of the family was Antoine Gendron, "a French Canadian, but had lived from his youth among the Indians, was a pagan...plus sauvage que les autres, et grand magicien, but much respected among the people up the country".⁵⁰⁰ Gendron later showed Kohl some of his medicines. Gendron called himself " Français sauvage", a term Kohl stated was commonly used, along with "savage Englishman", by people like Gendron.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ J. Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Wanderings around Lake Superior* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860), 3. The treaty under which payments were being made was concluded in 1842.

⁵⁰⁰ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 34 - 35.

⁵⁰¹ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 36.

Elders of the Ojibwe tribes made statements to the officers paying Treaty annuities regarding changes in families, and "whether a man is a half-breed, in what degree he is related to the tribe, and how far he has a claim to share in the tribute".⁵⁰² In this respect, payments in the Robinson Treaties (especially in the Robinson-Huron Treaty area) appear to have followed American practice, where Ojibwe leaders included "half breeds" in the payments if they so chose. Kohl made some observations about the traders he met at the payments:

Among the men collected here, and with whom I principally associate, I have already alluded to the Indian traders. They form one of the most important classes among the persons who live on an intimate footing with the Indians. They are far more highly educated than the trappers and Voyageurs, and even form a better judgement of the Indian character than the missionaries do...

Many of these traders have carried on the fur trade for generations, and thus acquired great influence over several tribes...⁵⁰³

On the American side of the Great Lakes, the smaller traders with deep roots in the fur trade persisted well into the nineteenth century, while the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly position in British territory tended to mute this tradition. However, Louis Denis Delaronde was descended from a family of these traders, and John Swanston anchored his family in an earlier era by marrying the mixed-ancestry daughter of his superior, former North West Company trader George Keith.

Kohl observed the pride that the Ojibwe and the "half-breeds" took in their genealogies. At La Pointe, he met

a half-breed, who spoke a little French, and possessed considerable knowledge of the language and customs of the Indians...he belonged, in his mode of life, more to the red than the white race.

He lived entirely like a forester, and had erected his lodge about two miles from our fort...His wife, an Indian woman, belonged to the totem of the Cranes, and his mother had come from the same clan...

⁵⁰² Kohl, *Wanderings*, 113.

⁵⁰³ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 129 - 130.

When we came to the arms of Cranes (la marque des Grues), my friend spoke of this family as follows: 'La marque des Grues est la plus noble et la plus grande marque parmi les Ojibibeways'...⁵⁰⁴

The Cranes extended as far east as Sault Ste. Marie. Kohl had just spoken to a member of the Loon clan, who had convinced him that the Loon totem was "the eldest and noblest in the land".⁵⁰⁵ A possible link to British territory could be the Loon clan, to which the LaGardes belonged, identified in the Ojibwe population around Nipigon post by the HBC immediately prior to the Robinson Treaty. Kohl commented of the "Canadians" he met on Lake Superior, taking as an example a "Canadian" living in present-day Wisconsin:

He was a remarkably merry and humorous fellow, of course descended from an old noble family of Normandy, and the son of a French officer; for the poorest Canadian here will boast of such progenitors. The Canadian half-breeds often swagger with two genealogies - - a European, commencing with a 'lieutenant du roi', and an Indian, from some celebrated chief. I met one half-breed, a man tolerably well off, who had engraved both his French coat of arms and his Indian totem (an otter) on his seal-ring...⁵⁰⁶

In a similar vein, the attempts of the Delarondes to claim their lost inheritance from aristocratic French forbears, and the occasional references to Delaronde family members by honorifics such as "Count", are well-documented in a collection of papers held at the Thunder Bay Archives.⁵⁰⁷ Although Kohl and others recorded many distinctive customs and external traits of the population, as an ethnographer, Kohl was one of the few residents or visitors to Lake Superior to comment on elements of ethnic self-identity among "half breeds" or "Canadians" in the nineteenth century.

Kohl took a steamer to Eagle River, a small trading hamlet on the Keeweenaw Peninsula, from which he hoped to journey across the peninsula to the mission station at L'Anse at the bottom of Keeweenaw Bay. He hired "Canadian Voyageur" Du Roy from his "bark lodge" near Eagle River, where Roy had come to fish. Leaving behind his wife and "half-breed" children, Roy agreed to take them. Kohl commented on the mode of carrying baggage overland by a strap

⁵⁰⁴ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 148 - 149.

⁵⁰⁵ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 148.

⁵⁰⁶ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 299.

⁵⁰⁷ Thunder Bay Museum and Archives, miscellaneous papers related to genealogy and claims of the Delaronde family.

around the head, as had Macdonell and Johnson fifty or sixty years earlier, and on the culture and traditions of the "voyageurs", including those on British territories:

The weights these Voyageurs can carry are surprising; one hundred and fifty pounds is the ordinary and almost legal weight packed on every Voyageur in these lands, and is the rule throughout the Hudson's Bay territory....the question is who can carry the most, for the stronger porter receives the highest praise. The Voyageurs elevate a strong, powerful porter to the proportions of a hero... 'Ha, monsieur,' Du Roy said to me, 'I knew Jean Pierre Roquille. That was a Voyageur! He was strong, leste, de bonne constitution! and a porter of the first calibre...Il était le plus fameux Voyageur entre le Lac Supérieur et la Baie de Hudson.'⁵⁰⁸

Kohl and Roy hired a canoe from an British trapper near a lake. Roy told him more stories of great travelling feats on Lake Superior as they proceeded, one involving his "cousin, a well-known Voyageur" named Dubois. He also called loons from the canoe, as Delafield had witnessed his voyageurs do thirty-two years before.⁵⁰⁹

Throughout his time on Lake Superior, Kohl recorded the Ojibwe and French names of many objects, tasks and geographical landmarks as pointed out to him by his "voyageur" informants, including the "poses" or resting places on travelled routes. He observed that "the Canadian Voyageurs, traders, and 'coureurs des bois' are as delighted with [Ojibwe] stories as the Indians themselves".⁵¹⁰ At L'Anse, a "half-breed" sang several Ojibwe songs for him.⁵¹¹ However, Kohl was also interested in the distinctive "Voyageur" music and the role it played in their lives:

I...never allowed a song of this nature to escape me when I had a chance, and copied many of them in their entire length. I discovered, however, that these are not productions that can be easily collected and given out again...when seized, [they] prove to be a lump of jelly, and dissolve in the hand.

I grant that the old French Voyageurs brought many a pretty song from France into these remote countries, and you may hear on the Upper Mississippi, and in the bays and wild rivers of Lake Superior, even at the present day, an old chanson sung two hundred years ago in Normandy, but now forgotten there. But I am not speaking here of that class of songs...I here allude especially to the songs composed on the spot which are characteristic of the land and its inhabitants, as the people paint in them their daily adventures themselves, and the surrounding nature; and, among these poetic productions, there is

⁵⁰⁸ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 168- 170.

⁵⁰⁹ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 176 - 186.

⁵¹⁰ Kohl, *Wanderings* 86 - 87.

⁵¹¹ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 249.

much that makes no great figure in a book, although it produces its good effect in actual life.

The Voyageurs accompany and embroider with song nearly everything they do -- their fishery, their heavy tugging at the oar, their social meetings at the camp fire; and many a jest, many a comic incident, many a moving strain, which, if regarded closely, will not endure criticism, *there* serves to dispel ennui...

Generally, they designate their own most peculiar songs as 'chansons de Voyageur', and exclude from them songs they have derived from France and elsewhere.

As the Voyageurs from here to the Rocky Mountains, to Hudson's Bay, and to the Arctic Sea, rarely travel otherwise than in canoes, the great majority of their songs are calculated for the paddling work which they are specially intended to accompany and enliven. Hence they are classified according to the nature of the work, and are divided into 'chansons à l'aviron,' 'chansons à la rame,' 'chansons de canot à lège,' and so on. But, as is natural enough, the difference is less in the character of the song than in the time and tact of the melody.

'L'aviron,' or paddle, is a smaller and shorter instrument than the 'rame', or oar, and is used differently...

The most celebrated canot à lège among my Voyageurs on Lake Superior is the 'canot du gouverneur.' This is Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay territories, who lives at La Chine, near Montreal, and makes annually a rapid voyage of inspection to Lake Superior and through a portion of the territories. The people on the southern or American shore of the lake told me marvellous stories of this canot à lège voyage of the governor, which almost seemed to me like a poem. 'The great gentleman', they said, 'is always in a terrible hurry. His canoe is very large and long and remarkably pretty, and of light build. He has always a corps of twenty or twenty-four paddlers with him. These are very powerful, hardy, and experienced Voyageurs: 'Des hommes choisis! les plus beaux chanteurs du monde!' They sing the merriest songs, and work à l'aviron actively the whole day...The men paddle eighteen or twenty hours a day. On reaching the camping-ground, they wrap themselves in their blankets and sleep four or five hours. Young men, however, who try it for the first time, are so excited that they can neither sleep nor eat. And yet, at sunrise, the signal for starting is given. All the transport operations are performed with the greatest order and energy. If they come, for instance, among the cataracts to a rock, where the navigation ceases, or to what is termed a portage, the governor's canoe is quickly pulled into its proper haven. At the word of command the paddles are unshipped. Each man knows the packages he has to carry, and away each trots with it over the portage. Ten other drag the canoe from the water, swing it in the air and on their shoulders, and away they trot with it. In ten minutes all is ready again, and, singing and paddling, the governor and the crew again dash through the waves...⁵¹²

⁵¹² Kohl, *Wanderings*, 253 - 257. A description by Simpson of his usual mode of travelling can be found in his *Narrative of a Journey Round the World in 1841 and 1842* (London: Henry Colbourne, 1847), Vol. I, 20 - 25. In this

This account of the pinnacle of the voyageurs' mobile world repeats many details of other journeys recorded by travellers extending back into the eighteenth century. Kohl emphasized that this particular event and its customs shared characteristics with a larger voyageur culture "from the Rocky Mountains, to Hudson's Bay, and to the Arctic Sea", but was also rooted distinctively in Lake Superior on both the north and south shores. The men chosen to transport the Governor were not only considered the strongest and most skilled travellers, but the best singers, showing the interrelation of all these elements of voyageur culture. Kohl corroborated this impression by his observation that the songs lost their effect and meaning when separated from the context and the work that had inspired them. The description provided to Kohl by his voyageur contacts on Lake Superior also provides insight into the prestige accruing to individuals such as Antoine Collin, who made the Governor's canoes, and Baptiste Deschamps, who painted them.⁵¹³

Kohl continued his analysis of voyageur music in an attempt to gain an insight into the self-perception of the "Canadians", "Voyageurs", and "half-breeds" that he met on Lake Superior.

The Voyageurs have, however, another sort of songs, in which I discovered a deeper poetical feeling. These are what are termed the 'complaintes.'

These 'complaintes,' in themselves, are not thoroughly Canadian, they are a species of popular and elegiac romances, well known in French literature. Still it is characteristic enough for land and people, that of all the numerous varieties of French songs, these 'complaintes' should have found a local habitation and a name in Canada and on Lake Superior.

instance, his crew was composed of "Canadians" and Iroquois assembled at Lachine. For other journeys men were hired at Red River, with reinforcements and pilots taken on at Fort William and Sault Ste. Marie as necessary.

⁵¹³ The traditions of the Governor's canoe, and the transports moving officers and men great distances between districts, were recorded by Chief Trader James Watt at Michipicoten in 1858: "At 6 ½ PM Governor Simpson + [Chief Factor] Hopkins arrived in 2 Canoes manned by Goers + Comers + some Winterers on their way to the Northern Dept. ...at 4 AM Gov. Simpson + party left -- at 9 ½ A. M. 2 Canoes manned by Goers + Comers, + some Winterers, with 2 App^{ce} Clerks...arrived on their way to the Northern Department. They remained about an hour or so, + went on their way rejoicing, at least it would appear so, for they left with a song 'a 'petite Cordonere'. There are 27 Winterers (mostly Canadians + regular Suburb fellows they seem to be)...gone past this Place this Spring for the North" (AO, F471-2-0, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858 (n. p.), entries for 18 and 19 May. The reference to "Suburb fellows" is to the suburbs of Montréal, the traditional source of "Canadian" fur trade employees and voyageurs.

I heard them speak of their 'complaintes' everywhere, and I am bound to believe that at least one-half of their songs consists of elegies. Indeed, it may be fairly asserted that their entire music and poetry have an under-current of elegy.

Nothing, I say, is more natural than this. They regarded themselves as exiles -- indeed, as doubly banished, first from France, and then again from Lower Canada. Their life is a very hard one, the natives that surround them rough and wild...

Their mode of life exposes them to countless dangers and wants, and though they all say that they will soon return to Lower Canada, their real home, very few of them carry this into effect. And there are whole families of Voyageurs here on Lake Superior, who, from father to son, have sung of the 'return to Canada', but who have all perished here.

'Où restez-vous?' I once asked a Voyageur, who had taken a seat near us in a Canadian fishing-hut. In Canadian French this means so much as, 'Where do you live? -- where is your home?' 'Où je reste?' je ne peux pas te le dire. Je suis Voyageur -- je suis Chicot, monsieur. Je reste partout. Mon grand-père était Voyageur: il est mort en voyage. Mon père était Voyageur: il est mort en voyage. Je mourrai aussi en voyage, et un autre Chicot prendra ma place. Such is our course of life.' I must remark here, in explanation, that my Canadian had some Indian blood in his veins, either on the father or the mother's side, and hence, jestingly, called himself 'Chicot.' That is the name given in Canada to the half-burnt stumps, and has become a nickname for the half-breeds. They also call themselves, at times, 'Bois brûlés,' or 'Bois grillés,' in reference to the shades of colour that bronze the face of a mixed breed. [Note by Kohl: In addition to half-breeds, there are also quarter-breeds, quadrons, called in Canada 'quarts.']

Frequently, too, pure-blooded French Voyageurs, if they live entirely among the Indians, and intermarry with them, are counted among the Chicots. How much these French Voyageurs identify themselves with the Indians against the Anglo-Saxons, I had often opportunity of seeing. When they spoke of the irruption of the Americans into the country round Lake Superior, they used nearly the same language as the Indians. A pure French Canadian, with whom I spoke about the old Canadian songs, thus expressed himself on one occasion to me: 'Depuis que les blancs sont entrés dans le pays, nous n'usons plus de ces chansons-là. Formerly,' he added, 'when the white men were not so numerous here, we Voyageurs were always entre nous. Then there was a pleasure in singing, we knew that everybody was acquainted with any song begun, and would join in. But now, if a party of Voyageurs meet, there are often so many Britons, and Scotch, and Irish, and Yankees among them, that when one begins singing there is often nobody who knows how to join in. Hence we prefer remaining quiet. C'est bien triste à cette heure.'⁵¹⁴

A song Kohl described at length as an example of a *complainte*, with which "nearly every Voyageur" Kohl spoke to on Lake Superior was at least partially familiar, told the story of a

⁵¹⁴ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 259 - 261.

"Canadian" named Cayeux, a fur-trader working on the Ottawa River, in pre-Conquest times.⁵¹⁵ Kohl also collected a *complainte* from a "half breed" living on the Keeweenaw Peninsula, and commented on the man's constant singing while canoeing alone to borrow maple sugar for the fish soup he had prepared for his guests. While the songs were highly social in nature, they could also be sung alone to the appropriate work.⁵¹⁶

In the passage quoted above, Kohl emphasized that among fur-trade veterans, the admixture of Indian blood was less important than identity and familiarity with fur-trade culture. It was possible to become a part of this culture by marrying into it and/or engaging fully in the life, including the Aboriginal, European and distinctive original elements. This may explain why, especially among older Great Lakes/St. Lawrence fur trade families and their employers, there is often inconsistency in the sources in the use of the terms "Canadian", "half-breed", and "Métis". Part of this identity was a sense of not fully belonging to other cultures, such as the Ojibwe, European, or Lower Canadian, while recognizing and celebrating their connections to these cultures. When confronted with increasing numbers of outsiders not integrated into fur trade knowledge and traditions, members of the old fur trade culture looked back nostalgically to a time when "Voyageurs were always entre nous". Being of mixed ancestry was an important part of identity for the "Chicots", who proudly claimed their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestries, and could provide a kind of guarantee of integration into fur-trade culture. However, some fluidity in labelling was possible, conflating categories of "pure-blooded" and "half-breed" into larger patterns of ways of life, traditions, and identity. In a time when theories of race and nation were becoming increasingly popular in European cultures, this flexibility in itself may be a distinctive marker of the majority mixed-ancestry fur trade culture on Lake Superior in the mid-nineteenth century.

Kohl's last stop on his Lake Superior trip was the "Ojibbeway village" called Rivière au Désert or Garden River. He commented on the differing perceptions inherent in the French and English names of this place; the "French Canadians, accusing themselves, as it were of being desolators

⁵¹⁵ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 261 - 265.

⁵¹⁶ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 299 - 302. Kohl observed that the Ojibwe and "European traders who have lived with the Indians" used sugar instead of salt to season food (*Wanderings*, 319). This would explain the importance of spring sugar collecting for the Ojibwe and Métis, as well as the purchases and gifts of sugar at holiday or social times.

of nature" by producing "a desert of half-carbonised tree-stumps and skeletons" in the course of converting wooded land to cultivation. These "half-carbonised tree-stumps and skeletons" had previously been identified by Kohl with the term "Chicot" for Métis or "half-breed". To the English, however, this patch of cultivation was a "garden", with all of the pleasing associations assigned to that word. Kohl and the Catholic missionary with whom he travelled stayed not at the village but on Sugar Island with "a family of hospitable Canadians", who had "cleared the forest around to a considerable extent", and "had made gardens round their most cleanly and neat dwellings".⁵¹⁷ At Garden River,

I made the acquaintance of a half-breed in the village, who kindly invited me into his house. These men, who have two sorts of blood in their veins, have also generally two names, Indian and French. My good friend's French name was La Fleur, his Indian one Bimashiwin [a sailor]...⁵¹⁸

La Fleur was a specialist at carving "Indian pipes", while his wife embroidered birch bark with porcupine quills. His wife's mother, who lived nearby, was originally from "far west on the Upper Mississippi, but had followed her son-in-law to this part of the world", indicating perhaps that La Fleur had been a trader or fur trade employee in that region and had retired to Garden River. Here a more sedentary life was possible, as both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal customers provided a steady market for the La Fleur family's crafts, and they and their small gardens could flourish, protected by the encroachment of newcomers from outside the fur trade culture. While the Métis were welcomed onto the Garden River Indian Reserve, in 1899 Indian Affairs inspector J. A. Macrae observed that "the line of demarcation between the Indians who commenced to settle at Garden River, where their Reserve was, and the half-breeds was and is still perfectly clear to the Indians' minds".⁵¹⁹

After the Treaty, 1856 - 1859

In 1858, Commissioners Richard Pennefather (Superintendent General of Indian Affairs for the Province of Canada), Froome Talfourd and Thomas Worthington submitted a report to the

⁵¹⁷ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 303 - 313.

⁵¹⁸ Kohl, *Wanderings*, 314.

⁵¹⁹ J. A. Macrae, "Report on Garden River and Batchewana Bands", 30 January 1899, copy from DIAND Genealogical Research Unit.

Governor General on “the best means of securing the future progress and civilization of the Indian Tribes in Canada” and “the best means of so managing the Indian Property as to secure its full benefit to the Indians, without impeding the settlement of the country”.⁵²⁰ This Report included brief descriptions of the populations legally recognized as “Indians” in the Province (present-day southern Ontario and Québec). Among the “Scattered Bands on the Northern Shores of Lakes Huron and Superior” described in the Report, the Band of Nebenagoching at Batchewana was noted as having 182 members, of which “9 families of 31 persons are half breeds, claiming entrance to the band on the mother’s side, and in four cases both man and wife are of mixed descent”. In the other Band sharing the Batchewana Reserve, at least eight out of the 55 members were “half breeds”. The Lake Superior Treaty Reserves were listed as Fort William, Gros Cap (near Michipicoten) and Lake Nipigon. The Gros Cap (Tootoomenai) Band, according to the Report,

now consists of 41 families containing 169 individuals; of these 11 families 52 persons are of mixed descent, and 2 families have no further claim to share in the Annuity than their father, a Canadian, having married an Indian woman of the Band. Six families seem *to be Whites*, and to be borne on the Rolls by mistake.

The Report did not comment on mixed-ancestry or “White” persons on the Treaty paylists at Fort William, Long Lake, or Nipigon, and noted one “white man...claims a share of the annuity for his family, through his wife” at Pic.⁵²¹

Although Pennefather and his co-authors did not name the “half breeds”, “Canadians” and “white men” they identified on the Michipicoten and Pic paylists, the 1856 list of people paid at Michipicoten (the surviving payroll closest in date prior to Pennefather’s report) included Narcisse Chastellain (paid for one person), Joseph Legarde Sr. (paid for three people), and “Louison”(paid for two people) among the Ojibwe names. In a summary of payments made in 1856, however, £45.18/ was noted as having been paid to “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten, while £42.18/6 was paid to “Michipicoten Indians”. This implies that 108 “Half Breeds” and 101 “Indians” were paid at Michipicoten in 1856.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Appendix to the Sixteenth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, 1858, no. 21, “Report of the Special Commissioners appointed on the 8th of September 1856, to Investigate Indian Affairs in Canada” (“Pennefather Report”), Commission of Governor General E. W. Head, 5 September 1856.

⁵²¹ Pennefather Report (n. p.), “Scattered Bands on the Northern Shores of Lakes Huron and Superior”.

⁵²² HBCA, B.129/d/7 (Michipicoten Account Books [Robinson Superior Treaty Paylists], 1851 - 1857).

Two hundred and fifty-six people were enumerated on the Fort William payroll for 1856, including “Solomon” (five persons), “Augers Family” (one person), Joseph Boucher (seven persons), Michel Collin Sr. (six persons), William Carteau (six persons), Michel Deschamps (four persons), Jean-Baptiste Faignant (seven persons), Michel Landry (two persons), Charles Louis (seven persons), Jean-Baptiste Vezina (three persons), François Vezina (three persons), John Finlayson (three persons), and Michel Collin Jr. (four persons). For Long Lake, Jean-Baptiste Moran and Joseph Legarde Sr. were paid for a total of six persons out of fifty-nine on the list. A Jean-Baptiste Moran was also paid for three people on the Pic payroll, on the same day as a payment was made to one person of the same name on the Long Lake payroll. None of these people on the paylists other than Michipicoten were identified as “Half Breeds”.⁵²³

Post journals survive for Michipicoten for the calendar years 1858 and 1859. For the first eighteen months, the journal was kept by Chief Trader J. S. Watt (home parish Stromness, Scotland), and from July to December 1859 it was kept by Chief Trader or Factor George Barnston (home parish unknown). Watt in particular provided a great deal of detailed information and colourful descriptions of life at the post in his journal. From these journals, it is apparent that some “Indian” recipients of annuities came to Michipicoten at various times to receive their payments, trade furs, and pick up provisions, rather than gathering together in one large group for payments on one or two days. The majority of recipients, however, were probably paid in early August, adding to the festivities associated with the return of the Brigade shipping out the yearly fur returns, the renewal of employees’ contracts, distribution of orders and advances, and preparations to send employees and Indian hunters inland for the winter.⁵²⁴ Despite the level of detail offered in the journals, payments of annuities to the “half breed”

⁵²³ HBCA, B.129/d/7 (Michipicoten Account Books [Robinson Superior Treaty Paylists], 1851 - 1857).

⁵²⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), (n. p.), entries for 24 February 1858 (William Robertson, “who resides about Batchewana”, came in to collect his annuity for 1857. This man was paid for eight “half breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852); 21 June 1858 (boat arrived from Long Lake with the Chief and some of his followers to collect 1857 annuity); 23 July 1858 (five Indians arrive from Pic to receive their annuities); 31 July 1858 (some Pic Indians paid); 2 and 3 August 1858 (“most of those at Pic + this Place entitled to annuity for 1858 are now paid + a nasty job is therefore over”), also 4 and 5 August 1858; 12 August 1858 (“Inland Indians”); AC, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859) (n. p.), entries for 12 January 1859 (Alex. Robertston [William’s son] arrives from Batchewana to collect his father and family’s annuity for 1858); 19 July 1859 (three canoes arrive with Long Lake Chief and Indians for their treaty money); 28 July 1859 (“several Indians from the Pic” arrive for their Treaty money); 5 August 1859 (“a few Inland Indians” arrived for winter outfit and Treaty money).

Company employees or other families in the neighbourhood were not specifically described by Watt or Barnston.

Apart from the additional administration involved in making Treaty payments, the Michipicoten journals show that life at the post changed very little in the decade after the Treaty. In 1858, the post still employed William Schellin sr. ("Schellin (a)", or "Old Schellin") as a tinsmith and blacksmith; about once a week he also did the baking for the establishment and directed the fishing in the absence of other experienced employees.⁵²⁵ His son, William "Schellin (b)", was employed as a labourer at Michipicoten. Schellin sr.'s wife, and children Jane, John, Sophia and one unnamed daughter, were also mentioned in the post journal.⁵²⁶ "Half Breed" employees Cromarty,⁵²⁷ Sansong Lagarde or Laguarde,⁵²⁸ Antoine Soulière,⁵²⁹ and Boucher,⁵³⁰ with their

⁵²⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), *passim*; entries for 24 through 29 September 1858 (directing the fishing).

⁵²⁶ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 13 February (Mrs. and Miss Schellin and Indian Pahuahung catch a fox which had escaped from a trap); 5 June (Mrs. Schellin and three daughters going to Sault Ste. Marie on the schooner), 28 and 31 August ("one of old Schellin's daughters ('Jane') is badly burned in Dubois' house and later dies) (William Schellin "b" or jr., see the journal *passim*); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 21 March (Mrs. Schellin, son John, daughter Sophia going to sugar bush to put up their lodge). William Schillen (sr.) was paid for six "Half Breeds" at Michipicoten in 1852 (see section in this report on the early Robinson Treaty paylists).

⁵²⁷ Included in group of "Half Breed servants" by Chief Trader Watt, for example in AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 11 January, "Some of the halfbreed servants were fortunate in their hunting operations today, Boucher having caught a Beaver + a Fisher, + Cromarty a Beaver". Cromarty and Soulière were the principal boat-builders at Michipicoten in 1858 and 1859, as well as performing many other tasks. Cromarty's wife Mary was mentioned several times, for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 6 March (injured man "under the professional care of Mrs Cromarty who is...poulticing with juniper bark and [illegible]"); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 26 March and 8 May (Cromarty given permission to assist his wife to get to the sugar camp, "Mary Cromarty + her party" returning from the sugar camp).

⁵²⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entry for 31 January ("As usual our Halfbreed Servts went off a-hunting...Laguarde...shot a Mink at the point above the Fort"); see also entry for 3 March, in which Laguarde's travelling style is contrasted with that of the "Indians" whom he visited to collect their furs); 12 June ("Mrs Sansong Laguarde was safely delivered of a female child"). Sansong and his brother were paid for 3 "Half Breeds" at Michipicoten in 1852. "Old Laguarde" (Joseph Sr.), described by Watt as an "Indian", came to Michipicoten to spend the summer among his relatives in 1858 (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entry for 13 July). He was transferred to Pic for outfit 1858 - 1859 (AO, F471-2-0-85, Michipicoten Post Journal 1859, entries for 7 and 9 February, Sansong Laguarde arrives with mail from Pic and returns).

⁵²⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 27 March ("Cromarty + Soulière had liberty today to go out with their Wives to the Sugar-making operations"); 16 August ("Mrs Antoine Soulière delivered of a male child"). Soulière was usually included in the "Half Breed" hunting excursions, see for example entries for 18 and 20 February (Soulière catches a silver fox in one of his traps, goes hunting with Cromarty and get a fisher). Antoine Soulière was paid for four "Half Breeds" on the Michipicoten payroll of 1852.

⁵³⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 11 January, 30 March ("Boucher has liberty today + to morrow to assist his Wife in establishing herself at Sugar making"); 26 April (Boucher's wife and

families, worked at the post, alongside Europeans J. S. Watt, Murdo McDonald,⁵³¹ Christopher Robertson or Robinson,⁵³² Larsen,⁵³³ Jorgen Evansen,⁵³⁴ Neils Haakinson (posted to Pic but invalid at Michipicoten for most of the winter),⁵³⁵ Ole Halsteenson,⁵³⁶ Norman McKay,⁵³⁷ schooner Captain Lamphier, and clerk Mr. Bélanger (ethnic origin not known). Lamphier and Watt also had families around the post that were mentioned in the journal.⁵³⁸ Evansen, Larsen, Halsteenson, and Haakinson can be confirmed as being without families (as one of them cooked for the others),⁵³⁹ and the family status of McDonald, Robertson/Robinson, McKay and Belanger is unclear. The workforce of the post was rounded out with some “homeguard” Indians (Ojibwe) who regularly performed labouring and travelling tasks, and fished to supply the kitchens (Kiwitakejick, Cass, Pahuahung, Endigoose, and unnamed “Indian” women and

Cromarty’s wife washing out floors of bedrooms in Officers’ House); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 5 April (Boucher’s stepson Stephen bringing home feed for animals). Boucher was noted as a “steady man”, “attentive at his work”, and a teetotaler (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entries for 25 June and 9 July; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 1 January). Toussaint Boucher was paid for three “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852.

⁵³¹ Retired *via* Sault Ste. Marie in June of 1858. Watt called him “an excellent man + one who will not easily be replaced” (AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 5 June). As he retired through the Sault, it is possible that he was Canadian. He went duck hunting once with Evansen, Cromarty, Soulière, Laguarde and William Schellin jr. when the men were given a holiday to do so (entry for 19 April).

⁵³² Praxis considers this man a “half breed” (Praxis Research Associates, “Historic Métis Communities in Ontario: Wawa and Environs”, report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 15 June 1999, 69 - 70), but he went “home” to Europe *via* Moose Factory in August of 1858 (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 16 August and 23 August..

⁵³³ Described by Watt as “a Swede” (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entry for 11 August).

⁵³⁴ Retired *via* Sault Ste. Marie, by special permission (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 16 August.

⁵³⁵ (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 4 March and 28 June. Haakinson was sent back to Moose Factory with the Brigade that departed on 28 June.

⁵³⁶ After spending the outfit year 1857 - 1858 at Michipicoten as a servant to the officers, Halsteenson was transferred to Long Lake to be a clerk or “writer” for Joseph Morrisseau (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entries for 12 August and 4 September). He was transferred to the Lake Huron District for outfit 1858 - 1859 ((AO, F471-2-0-85, Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 11 October.

⁵³⁷ Went “home” *via* Moose Factory in August of 1858 (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entries for 16 August and 23 August)..

⁵³⁸ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 5 June (Mrs. Lamphier going to Sault Ste. Marie on the schooner); 13 August (Mrs. Watt safely delivered of male child); 30 October (Steamer “Rescue” Captain Dick is son-in-law to Lamphier); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859) (n. p.), entries for 18 March (employee making shoes for Watt’s family);. Lamphier (home parish in England) was paid for one “Half Breed” at Michipicoten on the 1852 payroll.

⁵³⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 17 February (McKay cooking for the “young men”), 17 May (Haakinson cooking for Evansen, Larsen and himself). Halsteenson was the servant and cook for the officers at the post (Belanger and Watt, and later Ironside).

children).⁵⁴⁰ These “engaged Indians” did not work for the Company full-time, and were primarily fur-hunters like the other Ojibwe who traded at the post. However, they provided valuable services in assisting the “half breed” Company employees in tasks that required local knowledge (such as repairing and manning canoes, travelling with mail or to meet hunters, or fishing) and in supplementing the work force at times when many men were away on the schooner, on brigades to Brunswick House or Moose Factory, or fall fishing. Even the Ojibwe Wesleyan minister Ashquabe, who lived in a “parsonage” at Gros Cap “mission” an hour or two’s walk from the post, paid his bills by embarking on weeks-long fur hunting trips and trading the furs to the Company, as the other Ojibwe did.⁵⁴¹

Conversely, the “half breed” employees worked six days a week at such tasks as hauling and chopping cordwood, building boats, sawing boards for house and boat construction, travelling with mail or to meet Ojibwe hunters, bringing in hay, putting up or repairing buildings, and loading and unloading boats. For most of these men, hunting was a welcome diversion on holidays, and at Michipicoten they were allowed to trade furs for credit on their accounts and feed their families with the game they harvested.⁵⁴² Indeed, although rations of fish and potatoes, garden produce (when available) and some ground corn, and in times of scarcity or

⁵⁴⁰ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 1 January (reference to “Indians who are called homeguards”); 28 February (Schellin “b” and Pahuahung sent to find a hunter and bring back furs); 3 May (“engaged Indians” Cass and Pahuahung helping to clean the yard); 13 and 14 May (Pahuahung harrowing the potato field); 19 May (Kiwitakejick, his wife, and Teindun’s mother assisting “all hands” at planting potatoes); 21 May (Kiwitakejick assisting Cromarty and Laguarde to prepare canoe for Moose Factory); 24 May (“as many Indn Women as we could muster” helping to plant potatoes); 20 August (“Indian Women + Girls” assisting hands at drying hay); 23 August (Pahuahung a bowsman, Endigoose midman, Schellin “b” in charge of Moose Factory canoe); 9 September (two “engaged Indians” go to assist Boucher and Cromarty at the Michipicoten fall fishery); 14 September (Pennety, “one of the Indn Widows at the Post”) fishing for the post); 1 October (“two or three Indn Women + a few Boys + Girls” assisting hands at potato harvest); 6, 7, 8 and 26 November (Schellin “b” and Endigoose go in three-fathom canoe to Sault Ste. Marie and return, Endigoose returns to his “camp” at Dog River).

⁵⁴¹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 3 January (Ashquabe conducts service in “Indian” attended by “Indians + some of the people of the place”, prevented by weather from returning with his wife to his “Parsonage” at Gros Cap); 13 February (Bélanger and Watt visit “Parsonage” at Gros Cap, find some of Ashquabe’s pupils, but he is absent hunting rabbits); 16 February (Ashquabe and “the Indn ‘Cass’” leave on a marten trapping trip that is expected to last a couple of weeks); 13 March (Ashquabe brings in 12 marten skins to make a payment on his account); 30 March (Ashquabe brings in 13 marten skins and a fisher skin); 11 October (Ashquabe comes to post to get his advances, he and his family embarking on a hunting trip of 5 to 6 weeks).

⁵⁴² AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 22 March (a Tuesday). This entry clarifies that even on Company time, furs were credited to the mens’ accounts (in this case, Boucher), although the food hunting might have been done for the Company kitchens. See also AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 13 March, in which Boucher’s two fisher skins were credited to pay for snowshoes he had “destroyed”.

holidays, European provisions of pork and flour (called by the men “vivre Français”),⁵⁴³ were served out to the men and their families as part of their employment, families were also expected to help to provide for themselves.⁵⁴⁴ “The Mens Wives + Ind Womens nets” were set out as well as the “Co’s nets” to feed the post community.⁵⁴⁵ These women dried and smoked their own stocks of herring for times when the Company nets did not produce enough for a full ration.⁵⁴⁶ Boucher (or “Old Boucher”, as Watt often called him) spent the most time of any of the employees at hunting and fishing. In the winter, he snared rabbits and shot partridges, for a modest but no doubt welcome variation on the post’s staple diet of salt fish and potatoes (in January 1858, Boucher brought in about 20 to 25 rabbits and a few partridges a week).⁵⁴⁷ He set lines in the Bay in front of the post and caught a few trout per week, and worked at making and repairing large fishing nets when he was not out at his snares. As the ice retreated in the spring, he set nets as well as lines to supplement the salt fish with fresh. When it was possible to set and haul the post’s seine net (which required a boat and at least three or four men), he led crews of Company employees or hired Ojibwe to the river or fishing sites such as Gros Cap. In September, he departed with two engaged Indians and Cromarty for the fall fishery at Michipicoten Island, which provided most of the salt fish for the post.⁵⁴⁸ Occasionally, he interpreted for Watt when groups of Ojibwe came in to trade, and pitched in with tasks such as chopping cordwood, unloading boats and working in the potato fields,⁵⁴⁹ but his primary job was to keep the men and their families supplied with their ration of fish. Michipicoten was a refuge

⁵⁴³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 3 July (men from Pic coming to collect food for rations, as they were not catching fish, people at Pic eating “Gamine [cured pork] + Grease”).

⁵⁴⁴ Rations were usually served out once a week at Michipicoten. When local produce was plentiful enough for the families to harvest sufficient food for themselves, rations to families were stopped. See AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 16 October (fish and potatoes served out to the men for the week, for the first time in the winter of 1858 - 1859, Lamphier resuming his role as “steward and commissary” after a summer on the schooner).

⁵⁴⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 19 August; also 7 February (Sunday).

⁵⁴⁶ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 15 July.

⁵⁴⁷ Only once or twice a year did deer come within range of the post, causing great excitement among the Company employees and the local Ojibwe. In December of 1858, an Indian trading at the post was “kind enough to bring us a piece of Deer’s meat”, “a present to the Bourgeois”, “it being a treat here”, in Watt’s words (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entry for 16 December; see also entry for 19 January).

⁵⁴⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), *passim*.

⁵⁴⁹ For example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 8 June (interpreting); 14 May, 9 July (working in fields), 11 August (cutting hay); 10 May (moving cargo unloaded from schooner); 12 July (assisting Schellin sr. at iron work); 2 and 11 December (cutting cordwood). Boucher also apparently had some skills as a healer, see AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 30 June (injured Indian returns from Brigade, Watt “had him bled by Boucher”); 20 November (Boucher and Watt work together to stop the bleeding after Leask cut himself with an axe; Leask was also nursed by Mrs. Boucher, see entry for 29 November).

for Company and Ojibwe families who could not be fed at other posts in times of scarcity or illness, making Boucher's work even more critical to the regional economy.⁵⁵⁰ Boucher, Cromarty, Laguarde and Soulière were also sometimes called upon to use other traditional "country" skills for the post, such as preparing canoes or making snowshoe frames.⁵⁵¹

On Sundays in the fall and winter months, however, Boucher and his "half Breed" companions almost always went hunting for themselves. Boucher, Cromarty, Laguarde, Soulière, John Schellin, and in 1859, William Schellin jr. and Alex. La Ronde⁵⁵² were all recorded as being part of the group of "Half Breed Servants" who hunted on Sundays. They set traps and hunted with guns furbearing animals such as beaver, fisher, mink, lynx, fox, otter and marten (perhaps

⁵⁵⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 10 and 17 March (Teindun's [engaged man] mother and family sent to Michipicoten from the outpost of Ogayon because of a shortage of food); 27 March (engaged "Indian" Cass bringing in his sick wife to Michipicoten); 4 December (Endigoose came to Michipicoten with Kiwitakejick's widow and family, "who are to stop about this place all winter").

⁵⁵¹ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 14 and 16 April (Laguarde making paddles); 21 May (Cromarty, Laguarde and "the Indn Kiwitakejick" preparing the canoe for departure with Moose Factory packet); 3 September (Boucher gumming canoes for fall fishing); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859, entry for 8 December (Soulière and Cromarty making snowshoe frames). Although boats were used to move large quantities of goods between posts, canoes were still in wide use as passenger conveyances, fishing and for small loads.

⁵⁵² Son of Louis Denis De La Ronde, post master at Lake Nipigon, and an unnamed daughter of an Ojibwe man trading at Osnaburgh called "The Pelican". Louis Denis Delaronde was paid for five "Half Breeds" at Michipicoten in 1852, which may not have included his sons. Alex. La Ronde, according to J. A. Macrae, who wrote a report on these families for the Department of Indian Affairs in 1898, married "an Indian woman of Lake Nipigon", as did his younger brother Charles or Charley. Alex.'s older brother Henry, who had won a scholarship to the Red River Academy in present-day Winnipeg, became the post master at Nipigon in 1871, just as Charles left HBC employment, possibly to join independent traders working out of Sault Ste. Marie. Charles later returned to work for the HBC at Nipigon, was post master at Red Rock from 1869 - 1871, and was on the Red Rock Indian Band payroll, with Alex., in 1898. Alex.'s sister Louisa married Pierre Deschamps, who in 1858 was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort William and was in charge of boats bringing the fur returns to Michipicoten. Alex.'s sister Marianne, according to Macrae, "married a white man named Watt from Albany". It is not known if this is James Stewart Watt, who had been posted at Fort Albany before coming to Michipicoten in 1857. "Mrs. Watt" gave birth to a daughter at Michipicoten in August of 1858. Watt spent most of his career either in Quebec or at posts in the Ottawa Valley, and retired to an unknown destination in 1870. Marianne or Mary Anne and her sister Catherine were on the Red Rock Indian Band paylists in 1898, and lived near Red Rock. It is possible that if James Watt returned to Scotland or died, Marianne returned to Lake Superior to be with her family. A sister of Alex.'s, who may be the youngest sister Angelique (or one of the other three sisters) assisted Henry at Nipigon and was the woman, in Arthur's opinion, who was sketched in 1867 and later painted by William Armstrong ("Miss Le Ronde, Hudson Bay Post, Lake Nipigon", LAC, Acc. no. 1989-492-5, MIKAN no. 2833402, copy negative C-010505). See Arthur, "The de Larondes of Lake Nipigon", 42 - 44; Thunder Bay Museum and Archives, will of Louis Denis de Laronde, in miscellaneous genealogical material related to the Delaronde family; J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 21 - 16. Copy from DIAND Genealogical Research Unit.

catching a few per month), which were sold to the Company and credited to their accounts.⁵⁵³ The clerk at Michipicoten, Mr. Bélanger, also enjoyed hunting and set a few traps. When he caught a red fox in one his traps, however, after making a “great...noise...about it the whole day”, in an act of “extraordinary generosity”, he made a “present” of the fox to John Schellin.⁵⁵⁴ None of the European employees were ever noted as joining the “Half Breeds” on these Sunday hunting excursions. Chief Trader J. S. Watt, who read the order of Divine Service at the post on Sundays, observed in February 1858 that “most of the Half Castes off hunting, at any rate, if any remained at home not one attended Prayers -- I may here notice that old Schellin is a regular attendant at Prayers on Sundays -- so is Captn Lamphier + his Wife, + the Europeans are also attentive”.⁵⁵⁵ Many Sundays, however, Watt noted that the audience for the Divine Service was “very thin”.⁵⁵⁶

The “Half Breed” Company employees and the local Ojibwe also enjoyed the spring rituals of maple sugar making and waterfowl hunting. On a Saturday in late March, Cromarty, Soulière

⁵⁵³ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 10 January (“Some of the halfbreed servants were fortunate in their hunting operations today, Boucher having caught a Beaver + a Fisher, + Cromarty a Beaver”); 31 January (“As usual our Halfbreed Servts went off a-hunting...Laguarde...shot a Mink at the point above the Fort”); 21 February (Cromarty got a few partridges); 21 November (Cromarty and Boucher off hunting, brought a few partridges); 28 November (Boucher came home with a lynx and a mink, Soulière checking baits he left for foxes, Cromarty hunting also); 5 December (Cromarty hunted three skins, John Schellin got a cross fox, Boucher got nothing); 12 December (“The HfBreeds off hunting”); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 6 February (“HfBreed servants”, including Cromarty, off hunting and fishing); 20 February (Soulière, Cromarty, Boucher off hunting); 6 November (Schellin “b” and Alex. LaRonde go hunting). All these days are Sundays. The “Half Breed” employees also hunted on days they were given as extra holidays, and after hours (see for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 18 February (Thursday, Soulière caught a silver fox in one of his traps, the same one as previously caught by Bélanger?); 20 February (Saturday, Cromarty and Soulière get a holiday for completing a lake boat, and go hunting; Soulière gets a fisher skin).

⁵⁵⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 9 March (gift of the fox to Johnny Schellin); 15 and 16 April (Bélanger and Laguarde spend part of the day hunting waterfowl and partridges).

⁵⁵⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 14 March. See also entry for 2 May (audience for Divine Service “thin, all the Ladies + their families having gone to pass the day at the Lake, + the Heads of the families {except Schellin (a) who attends Divine Service regularly on Sunday} are all absent, some in the Schooner + other off hunting”).

⁵⁵⁶ AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 7 March. Watt, as a Scotsman, would have been reading either an Anglican or a Presbyterian service in English. When the Roman Catholic missionary priest Father Kohler visited Michipicoten in June of 1858, he requested that the Roman Catholic employees be allowed to attend Mass. It is not known how many people attended (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entry for 3 June). When the Rev. Ashquabe offered a holiday service at the post in the “Indian language”, the “Indians and some of the people of the place attended”, although “Whites + Halfbreeds” attended Watt’s English service (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entry for 3 January). When a “camp meeting” with Ashquabe and visiting Wesleyan missionaries Hurlburt and Salt was held at Gros Cap in 1859, many people from the post attended (AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 30 June and 3 July).

and William Schellin jr. were given a holiday to go with their wives (in Schellin's case, his mother) to help set up the sugar camps a short distance away.⁵⁵⁷ A few days later, Watt gave Boucher an extra day off to help Boucher's wife set up her camp.⁵⁵⁸ The next weekend, which was Easter, most of the men (including Mr. Bélanger) spent the weekend with the families at the sugar bush.⁵⁵⁹ By April, the first flocks of waterfowl flying north were sighted, and duck and goose hunting vied with the sugar bush as distractions for the men. On 18 April (a Sunday), Watt wrote that "The Half Breeds (Servants) all off at the Sugar bush, + our clerk Mr Belanger not to be behind in the breaking of the Lord's day persuaded Laguarde to go off duck shooting".⁵⁶⁰ The next day, Laguarde and William Schellin jr. went duck hunting for the post.⁵⁶¹ On the 20th of April, Cromarty, Soulière, Laguarde, and William Schellin jr. were allowed the customary holiday to "hunt ducks for themselves", joined, very unusually, by McDonald, Halsteensen, and Evensen (Robertson was also allowed the day off but "stayed at home making shoes").⁵⁶² By the 25th of April, some of the "Mens Wives" had begun returning from the sugar camps, but Boucher was allowed a day off to hunt ducks for himself and Cromarty and Laguarde went off on a longer trip to hunt for the post.⁵⁶³ Boucher and Bélanger brought in a selection of ducks over the next few days, some of which were served out to "the young [unmarried] men + old ones + their families".⁵⁶⁴ In early May, the post's neighbours at Gros Cap, the Ojibwe Wesleyan minister Mr. Ashquabe and his wife, brought over a few grey geese and ducks, and Boucher, hunting for himself on a Sunday, shot "a fine grey goose which the old man kindly presented to the Bourgeois" (Watt).⁵⁶⁵

The extra holidays for sugaring and duck hunting, granted particularly to the "Half Breed" employees who continued these practices, were augmented over the work year by other

⁵⁵⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 27 March.

⁵⁵⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 30 March.

⁵⁵⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 3 and 4 April (Holy Saturday and Easter, most men off "at the Sugarbush", "Mr Belanger off (like the other sweetmouths) to eat sugar at the sugar camps", "in the evening Mr Belanger + the men arrived from the sugar making Establishments").

⁵⁶⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 18 April.

⁵⁶¹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 19 April.

⁵⁶² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 20 April.

⁵⁶³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 25, 27 and 30 April.

⁵⁶⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 28, 29 and 30 April.

⁵⁶⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 1 May (Mr. Ashquabe arrives with a present of "a very fine fat grey goose" and another "to be kept for Gov Simpson", shot at the mouth of the river); and 9 May (Boucher presenting Watt with "a fine grey goose")

customary holidays and celebration times. Men were given a day off to rest after completing a journey to deliver mail or goods to another post.⁵⁶⁶ The early summer gathering prior to the departure of the boats carrying fur returns to Brunswick House and thence to Moose Factory, the celebration of renewal of contracts, and especially the late summer social events between the arrival of the boats with winter outfits from Brunswick House and the departure of hands and outfits to Lake Superior posts were continued with enthusiasm at Michipicoten in 1858 and 1859.⁵⁶⁷ The departure and return of the fall fishing party was also marked with a dance (or “Grand Ball”, in the somewhat sardonic description of George Barnston, Watt’s successor at Michipicoten).⁵⁶⁸

However, the biggest holiday of the year was still the Christmas and New Year’s period, when all the men were entitled to five days’ holiday and gifts of food and liquor, as well as permission to buy more on their accounts. The first of January 1858 was marked by a “Dance in the Kitchen” that went on most of the night. Despite the amount of drinking, the day “was spent in perfect harmony”, according to Watt.⁵⁶⁹ The next day, Watt and Belanger joined “the Women of the Establishment” in sliding down the hill behind the “Old Fish House” at the post, while the “Men + Inds” kept up the “festivities”.⁵⁷⁰ January 3 was a Sunday, marked by a service in the “Indian language” celebrated by Ashquabe in one of the “Mens’ Houses...to the Indians + some of the people of the place”. Watt read a service in English in the Dining Room “to the Whites + Halfbreeds”. “Notwithstanding all our Services”, Watt wrote that “some of the Women had a second spree this afternoon + I understand kept it well up until a late hour”.⁵⁷¹ By January 4, the men were back to work, although the following week Watt gave them another day off to make up the full five days’ holiday to which they were entitled. This holiday was marked by Watt keeping Robertson “home” the day before, “to make a foot ball to give all hands the chance of a game tomorrow”. The “Young men” gave a “great ball” in the evening, followed by the holiday

⁵⁶⁶ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 21, 22 and 27 March (Schellin (b) “who was entitled to a days rest on his arrival from the Pic...preferred to await for the days rest until his Mother went to the Sugarbush”).

⁵⁶⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 24 May (Indians present receive their share of “the usual regale of flour + Pork at close of trade”); 21 and 24 through 28 June; 5 through 13 August; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 25 through 29 June, 1 through 4 August.

⁵⁶⁸ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 7 September and 27 through 29 October.

⁵⁶⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 1 January.

⁵⁷⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 2 January.

⁵⁷¹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 3 January.

the next day.⁵⁷² Christmas in 1858 was marked by two days' holiday, cleaning and extra baking, a visit from the Chief Tootoomenai and his family and Ashqabe and his family, a quart of whiskey for each of the men, and "spreeing and quarreling", resulting in two fairly serious fights.⁵⁷³ After a few days' work, 31 December 1858 was spent partly at work and partly in preparations for "tomorrow's grand doings". Watt observed that "We have a number of Indians about us now + the Regale usually given has [run?] off with a deal of provisions", although he did not give whiskey to the "Indians".⁵⁷⁴ Unfortunately, New Year's 1859 was marked by a number of brawls, mostly among the Norwegians and Swedes who were fairly recent arrivals to the posts and the Indians Endigoose and Pahuahung, while the "HalfBreeds" stayed out of the way. Watt attempted to get control of the proceedings by stopping the issue or purchase of liquor.⁵⁷⁵ When Alex Robertson (William's son) came in from Batchewana two weeks later to collect the 1858 Treaty annuity for his family, the men put on a "ball" to enjoy Robertson's skills as a fiddler. The expenses for this "ball": tea, flour and sugar, as no liquor was allowed -- were paid by Teindun and an engaged Indian from the Ogayon post (near Batchewana).⁵⁷⁶ At Christmas 1859, Lamphier served out the mens' weekly rations plus a "Christmas regale" on December 24. A football game was played on Boxing Day, and a "Grand Ball" was held in the evening, as well as on the evening of 27 December.⁵⁷⁷

Holidays were usually marked by the distribution of liquor, and distinctions were preserved between the "Indians" trading at the post and Company employees. As referred to above, "Indians" were not allowed to have whiskey, although gifts of brandy and wine were acceptable at holiday times.⁵⁷⁸ There were no references in the post journals to distribution of liquor to Indians as part of trade rituals at Michipicoten in 1858 and 1859. Employees were occasionally rewarded with liquor for work of exceptional quality or difficulty, such as Laguarde and William Schellin jr., who were given a bottle of whiskey for pitsawing 154 feet of boards in a single day

⁵⁷² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 4, 12 and 13 January.

⁵⁷³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 22 through 26 December.

⁵⁷⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 31 December.

⁵⁷⁵ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 1 through 5 January.

⁵⁷⁶ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 12 and 13 January.

⁵⁷⁷ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 24 through 27 December.

⁵⁷⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 1 January and 31 December.

(“very good work + extraordinary for Inlanders”, in Watt’s words);⁵⁷⁹ and William Schellin sr., who got a pint of whiskey on completing the annual task of making charcoal for the forge, a demanding job that required Schellin to watch the fires night and day for as long as two weeks.⁵⁸⁰ Interestingly, the Reverend Mr. Ashquabe, hosting Watt and Robertson at his house at Gros Cap after the Company men had brought him some fish and potatoes, offered a pipe of tobacco and “a cup of Adam’s Ale [water] in which the reverend kindly added about a thimble full of brandy”.⁵⁸¹

The sailors on the schooner, who for most of the year worked at labouring jobs around the post, received allowances of liquor when they were working on the schooner (between about May and October).⁵⁸² In 1858, these men included Soulière, Norman McKay, Christopher Robinson/Robertson, Forbes Jamieson (brought in from Moose Factory, deserted almost immediately), and three or four men engaged at Sault Ste. Marie (including two Americans) at “fabulous prices” (\$1.25 to \$1.50 per day).⁵⁸³ Five men were sent from Moose Factory in late September 1858 to fill the ranks of sloopers/labourers (Leask, Davidson, Samuelson, Jensen and Olsen), although three men from the Sault were also hired for the season in 1859.⁵⁸⁴ The allowances of liquor to these men may have been a continuation of Royal Navy traditions, despite the fact that the schooner was owned and commanded by the Hudson’s Bay Company and its personnel. Similarly to when Captain Bayfield’s ship moored off Fort William in 1823 - 1824, the arrivals of the schooner, with its different rules about liquor, created disruptions at Michipicoten, when some particularly susceptible employees went down to share the whiskey given to the crew.⁵⁸⁵ Liquor created disorder, made men unfit to do their jobs, caused accidents and injuries, and opened the way to conflict. On the other hand, it was managed by the HBC as a

⁵⁷⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 28 January.

⁵⁸⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 21 October, 10 November; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 27 October and 5 November.

⁵⁸¹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 13 March.

⁵⁸² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 20 September.

⁵⁸³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 23 June (Soulière); 20 and 23 June, 26 July (Jamieson); 16 August (McDonald and McKay); 25 July, 20 September, and 11 October (Sault Ste. Marie men).

⁵⁸⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 29 September, 1 October; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 10 May and 25 October. The Ojibwe Endigoose was also a member of the schooner crew for 1859.

⁵⁸⁵ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 21 May, 20 September; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 14 June, 11 July, 24 August, 30 September.

scarce and prized reward for hard work and good behaviour, and was an important part of the holiday celebrations that enlivened the constant drudgery of post life. HBC officers in charge had to use their judgement and experience with the men to distinguish between a harmless (if noisy) drunken party and behaviour that could endanger the men or the trade, and withholding access to liquor was a key management tool, especially at holiday times.

At the festivities at the end of June 1858 prior to the departure of the Brigade for Brunswick House, Watt monitored the situation from day to day. He pulled Soulière off the schooner crew when Soulière made “a terrible noise before all hands today + [insulted] me before all hands” regarding the provisions aboard, reassigning him to the hard and significantly less-well-lubricated work with the Brigade to Brunswick House.⁵⁸⁶ The following day, he observed, “men doing little or no work...all the work done now, will not pay for the whiskey the voyagers drink”.⁵⁸⁷ The next day, however, he remarked that the “men keeping tolerably steady considering all things v^t that they are all generally speaking idle + have opportunity to get drunk if they liked for their allowance p. diem is about 5 drams a day not to speak of extra tots + Bottles full on renewing Engagements...Schellin never was so sober at this jovial season”.⁵⁸⁸ After a few more days of drinking and dances, the Brigade departed, and Watt was sufficiently pleased that he wrote, “I must say the Inland Men have behaved very well + in order to give them encouragement to perform their arduous journey poor devils, I have promised them, if they behave well, to give them a great ball on their return”.⁵⁸⁹ The crew for the Brigade included almost all the men at Michipicoten (except for William Schellin sr. and Boucher, both older men), Joseph Dubois, the Lake Superior District Guide who during the winter was in charge of the outpost at Ogayon;⁵⁹⁰ Pierre Deschamps from Fort William;⁵⁹¹ Joseph Morisseau (in charge

⁵⁸⁶ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 23 and 25 June.

⁵⁸⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 24 June.

⁵⁸⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 25 June.

⁵⁸⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 26 through 28 June.

⁵⁹⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 29 June and 13 September. Dubois was also employed as a mason. In mid-May, two Swedish employees partially built a chimney for the new Mens' House at Michipicoten, but the plastering of the chimney, which “must be built by one or other of the H'fBreeds -- I believe Dubois is the HfBreed mason here” (Watt, in AO, F471-2-0-85, Michipicoten Post Journal 1859, entry for 13 May), had to be left until Dubois' arrival from Ogayon and Batchewana in early June (entries for 2 June and 7 June). Dubois also repaired the chimney in the house he was sharing with the Lamphiers (AO, F471-2-0-85, Michipicoten Post Journal 1859, entry for 20 June). Dubois had a family, including a son, which he brought with him to Michipicoten in 1858 and 1859 (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entries for 26 April and 27 May;

at Long Lake during the winter);⁵⁹² and Baptiste Collin from Nipigon,⁵⁹³ as well as other “Inlanders” and a number of Ojibwe from Nipigon, Pic and Michipicoten. The Brigade was under the charge of Charles Begg, who was the post master at Pic.⁵⁹⁴

However, when the Brigade returned on 5 August (just after most of the Pic and Michipicoten Indians had been paid Treaty money and outfitted for the winter trapping season), trouble broke out almost immediately. Watt stopped the “grog” after a fight between Pierre Deschamps and Chief Tootoomenai, the principal Ojibwe chief trading at Michipicoten and an important customer of the Company. The men held a “Ball” with no liquor, and after the “Inland Indians” began to move off to their winter hunting grounds and the “Indian” brigade men had been paid off, Watt advanced the Michipicoten Company employees their supplies ordered from Moose Factory and “restored grog, but threatened to stop it again if any more disturbances”. The next day, the “Grand Ball” was held, supplied with the men’s liquor, bread, and “Puddings + Cakes” baked for the occasion by Schellin sr. After a few more days of drinking and “frolicking” among the “Voyageurs” and “Inland Men”, work gradually resumed, and on 13 August everyone was back to their regular duties.⁵⁹⁵ By mid-September, all the summer guests: Edward Heron, an Ojibwe and English-speaking clerk in charge at Batchewana,⁵⁹⁶ and his engaged man André Wahtahkayais; Joseph Dubois and an “Indian Lad” for Ogayon;⁵⁹⁷ Joseph Morisseau, in charge

AO, F471-2-0-85 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1859, entry for 2 June}). Thomas Dubois and a nephew were also recorded as visiting Michipicoten post (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entry for 24 March). Joseph Dubois was paid for six “Halfbreeds” at Michipicoten in 1852.

⁵⁹¹ Pierre Deschamps was in charge of a canoe bringing Portage men, furs and isinglass from Fort William in June 1858 (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entry for 22 June). He was in charge of the boat bringing Nipigon fur returns in 1859 (AO, F471-2-0-85 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1859}, entry for 25 June. He was paid for three “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852.

⁵⁹² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 20 and 30 June, AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 18 June and 30 June. See also HBCA, online finding aid, Long Lake “Key people”, and Pays Plat “Key people”. Joseph Morisseau was paid for four “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852.

⁵⁹³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 20 June.

⁵⁹⁴ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 28 and 30 June, 1 through 4 July.

⁵⁹⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 5 through 13 August.

⁵⁹⁶ Heron was noted as interpreting for and otherwise assisting Watt in trading with the Ojibwe and paying Treaty annuities (see AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entries for 29 May, 4 June, 31 July, 2 August, 5 August). He had been hired by the HBC in “Indian Country” as a boatbuilder for Michipicoten, and continued to build boats during the summers (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entries for 29 June, 19 July). He was paid for five “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852.

⁵⁹⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 13 September.

at Long Lake, with Ole Halsteenson as his “writer”;⁵⁹⁸ Charles Begg, in charge at Pic, taking with him his family, with Sansong Laguarde and Tenidiss as his workers;⁵⁹⁹ the DeLaRonde family, moving from Fort William to Nipigon),⁶⁰⁰ Nicol McIntyre, his son John McIntyre and their families,⁶⁰¹ the schooner crew, the fall canoe brigade carrying mail and passengers to Moose Factory (William Schellin jr. in charge, two Ojibwe engaged men in the crew, and Andrew Spence {formerly at Pic}, Christopher Robertson and Norman McKay as passengers),⁶⁰² and the fall fishing crew (Boucher, Cromarty, and two “engaged Indians”: Matchikwis and Teindun)⁶⁰³ had left the post. There were so few able-bodied workers available that Schellin sr. (not entirely sober), Larsen, the young clerk George Arthur Ironside (taking the place of Bélanger, who had been put in charge at Lac Seul),⁶⁰⁴ Chief Trader Watt, “Miss Schellin”, and “some remaining Boys still here” went out to haul the seine to catch fish for their supper.⁶⁰⁵

⁵⁹⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 12 August and 5 September.

⁵⁹⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 12 August; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 7 and 9 February. The man “Tenidiss” should be distinguished from “Teindun”, who appears to be an “engaged Indian” working at Ogayon and Michipicoten (AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 14 and 26 February,, 9 and 22 June, 9 September). “Tenidiss” was described by Watt in February of 1858 as both a “Co’s servt” at Pic and “a freeman” (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entries for 3 and 5 February). Tenidiss is probably the Joseph Tundiss who was paid for two “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852. Charles Begg (home parish Orkney Islands) was paid for four “Half Breeds” at Michipicoten in 1852. His son Duncan worked at labouring jobs at Michipicoten after “Mrs Begg + three of her sons” came to stay at Michipicoten for the summer of 1859 (AO, F471-2-0-85 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1859}, entries for 4 June, 10 August, 26 October. He worked at Moose Factory as an apprentice blacksmith from 1860 - 1865, and then was an interpreter/postmaster at White Dog Post in the Lac la Pluie District between 1876 and 1886 (HBCA, biographical sheets).

⁶⁰⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 15 August. The DeLaRonde family intended to come to Michipicoten in 1858 but instead met the northbound Nipigon boat as they were travelling from Fort William.

⁶⁰¹ Nicol McIntyre (home parish Scotland) was engaged “with his family” as the farmer for Fort William in 1849 and retired in 1858. John McIntyre, Nicol’s son (home parish Glenorchy, Scotland) was the “clerk in charge” at Fort William between 1855 and 1873, and arrived with his parents and two of his daughters at Michipicoten on 5 June, on their way to Sault Ste. Marie on the HBC schooner (AO, F471-2-0-84 {Michipicoten Post Journal 1858}, entry for 5 June).

⁶⁰² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 23 August.

⁶⁰³ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 9 September.

⁶⁰⁴ To be distinguished from a Mr. G. Ironside, who arrived in a canoe from Moose Factory on 20 June 1858 in his way to Sault Ste. Marie on retirement from the service on account of ill health” (AO, F471-2-0-84, Michipicoten Post Journal 1858, entry for 20 June). See also AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 22 May (Bélanger departs in Moose Factory canoe to take charge of Lac Seul); 22 June (arrival of George Arthur Ironside, a “young gentleman” and Company employee, on the schooner from Sault Ste. Marie).

⁶⁰⁵ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 13 September.

The post at Michipicoten recognized and encouraged the family life of the employees by allowing each family to build its own house on the post grounds, rather than obliging the men to live in large communal buildings. The unmarried men (all Europeans) had a “Mens House” and a cook to prepare meals.⁶⁰⁶ The officers and their families occupied a separate house and had an employee assigned to them as a general servant and cook.⁶⁰⁷ Employees with families were served out rations and were expected to cook and otherwise manage for themselves in their separate accommodations. Employees occasionally got extra days off to work on their houses.⁶⁰⁸ Summer residents sometimes kept a house at Michipicoten, or shared accommodations with resident families. The District Guide Dubois, posted to Ogayon in the winter, had a house in Michipicoten that may have been damaged by fire in the summer of 1858, unfortunately taking the life of young Jane Schillen, whose dress was ignited by a fire in the fireplace.⁶⁰⁹ Dubois shared a house with the Lamphiers for the first part of the summer of 1859,⁶¹⁰ and in August he moved into a new house he and his family were to share with the Soulière family during the summers.⁶¹¹ William Schillen jr., unmarried, continued to live with his parents and siblings in a house of their own.⁶¹² Boucher,⁶¹³ John Finlayson⁶¹⁴ (post master at outposts of Fort William during the winters, sent to Long Lake in 1859), Cromarty, Alex. La Ronde (in 1859), the “engaged Indian” Pahnahus,⁶¹⁵ and Edward Heron (clerk in charge at Batchewana during the

⁶⁰⁶ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 1 March (McKay keeping cattle and cooking mens’ dinner); 7 April (McKay washing mens’ house); 17 May (Haakinson cooking for Evansen, Larsen and himself); 31 October (Olsen kicked in door of Mens’ House); 19 November (Jansen cooking “young mens’ dinner”);

⁶⁰⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 4 January (Halsteenson “general servt and cook); 18 January (Evansen making window frames for officers’ house); 16 February (Evansen putting up windows on Officers’ house); 1 March (Halsteenson servt and “House Cook”); 26 April (“Boucher’s Wife + Cromarty’s Wife washing out floors of Bedrooms upstairs in Officers’ House”).

⁶⁰⁸ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 28 November and 2 December.

⁶⁰⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 26 and 31 August.

⁶¹⁰ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 20 June.

⁶¹¹ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 9 and 24 August.

⁶¹² AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entry for 6 December; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 28 November.

⁶¹³ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 22 June (Boucher put up a tent, as his house was in poor condition).

⁶¹⁴ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 15 July. Son of Nicol Finlayson and a “native woman”, John was born at Marten Falls on the Albany River in 1823, and hired by the HBC at age sixteen as an apprentice cooper when his father was Chief Trader at Michipicoten in 1839 (HBCA Biographical Sheets for Nicol Finlayson and John Finlayson, 1999). John Finlayson was paid for four “Half Breeds” at Fort William in 1852.

⁶¹⁵ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 2 December (Cromarty, Soulière, Pahnahus and Alex. LaRonde given the day off to caulk their houses for the winter).

winters)⁶¹⁶ all had houses at the post that were mentioned in the journals during 1858 and 1859. Except for Pahnahus, all of these men were either of mixed ancestry or were the heads of “Half Breed” families (Schillen sr. and Captain Lamphier, who had married a “Half Breed” woman). The only “Half Breed” employee at Michipicoten during 1858 and 1859 whose house was not mentioned in the journals was Sansong Laguarde, with his wife and children, and this may be an incidental oversight in the journals, which were not intended to record an inventory of all the structures at the post. Residential arrangements at Michipicoten therefore suggest important distinctions between “Half Breeds”, who lived in their own European-style houses with family members on post grounds; European workers, who lived as single men in a communal house; the Ojibwe, who generally lived in more temporary accommodations or camps (not described as “houses”) around the post; and the officers and clerks (some of whom may have been “Half Breeds” or heads of “Half Breed” families), who lived in a house with a servant.

The Michipicoten post journals of 1858 and 1859 rarely mention “Half Breeds” living in the local area who were not employed by the Company, or part of Company employees’ families. Watt recorded the arrival of “Old Laguarde”, (probably Sansong Laguarde’s father) at Michipicoten from Long Lake to live among his “Michipicoten relatives” for the summer of 1858. Watt described “Old Laguarde” as an “Indian”.⁶¹⁷ In June of 1859, Watt referred to the boat bringing furs from Nipigon to Michipicoten as being in the charge of Pierre Deschamps, crewed by three other Company employees and five “engaged hfBreeds + Indians”, implying that the “engaged” men were not employed by the Company year-round.⁶¹⁸ The Robertson family living in the vicinity of Batchewana were recorded as visiting Michipicoten to collect their Treaty annuities, and Alex. Robertson (son of the patriarch William) was noted as a fiddler.⁶¹⁹ However, the hunters who brought furs into the post were invariably described as “Indians”, bearing Ojibwe names.

“Half Breed” men from Sault Ste. Marie were mentioned in the journals. These men were reported as carrying mail, and/or possible competition for the HBC in fur-trading. A former HBC

⁶¹⁶ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entry for 28 August.

⁶¹⁷ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entry for 13 July.

⁶¹⁸ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 25 June.

⁶¹⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entry for 24 February; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entries for 12 and 13 January.

employee named Clarke owned a sloop and fished around Pays Plat in 1857 and 1858, and Michel Rastoule, carrying letters from Pic in the summer of 1858, went there to see if Clarke would hire him.⁶²⁰ Watt, however, was suspicious that Clarke was doing more than just fishing, noting in the winter of 1858 that Clarke had arrived at Michipicoten from Sault Ste. Marie in a small boat with “a Scotchman from Toronto” and a “Sault HfBreed” carrying mail for Red River. Clarke was going on to visit his sloop at Pays Plat, which he had left in charge of another former HBC man, Captain Leask, and then possibly to continue on to Pic or Fort William. In Watt’s view, Clarke “for years has had a hankering” to get into the fur trade, especially around Pays Plat.⁶²¹ A few months later, letters from De la Ronde at Nipigon and Morrisseau at Long Lake confirmed that “Clark + his party of opponents” were trading furs at Pays Plat.⁶²² By the end of March 1859, Clarke was reported as “giving our People of Nipigon Long Lake + Pic enough to do” in trying to prevent their Indian hunters from trading at Pays Plat.⁶²³ In early May of 1859, the Ojibwe Endigoose, employed by the Company to carry mail from Fort William and Pic, arrived at Michipicoten with “Sault H’fBreed ‘Alex McKay’” who had been wintering with Clarke at Pays Plat and was returning to Sault Ste. Marie. McKay told Watt that Clarke had only collected about \$300 worth of fur and 30 barrels of fish, and that he and Clarke had had a falling out (Watt was skeptical).⁶²⁴ The Hudson’s Bay Company established an outpost of Pic at Pays Plat in the fall of 1859, under the charge of Joseph Morrisseau, to deter this competition.⁶²⁵

Near Batchewana, a number of “Traders” or “Fur Hunters”, probably from the Sault, competed to buy furs from the Ojibwe. Peter Bell was named in particular as coming in to trade, although in clerk Edward Heron’s view, “he did very little” in the way of business.⁶²⁶

This activity made the Company wary of “Half Breed” travellers from Sault Ste. Marie, and it tried as much as possible to discourage contact or traffic between the “Half Breed” population of

⁶²⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entries for 3 July and 22 July.

⁶²¹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entry for 24 November.

⁶²² AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 1 February. Another letter received at Michipicoten on the same day referred to competing traders in the vicinity of Fort William.

⁶²³ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 30 March.

⁶²⁴ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 9 May.

⁶²⁵ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 4 August; also HBCA online finding aids, post history and list of “key people”, Pays Plat.

⁶²⁶ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entries for 24 February, 28 February; AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 19 February.

the Sault and the Ojibwe north of Lake Superior. This was made apparent when, as recorded in an entry for 30 October 1858, Watt recorded that “great was our surprise to see a steamer in this outlandish corner or spot of God’s creation”, not just passing by but moored near the river mouth. The steamer, it turned out, was under the command of Captain Dick, a former HBC employee who had worked for Clarke, and was also the son-in-law of Captain Lamphier. On board was Mr. Gibbard, in his capacity as a mail contractor for a new monthly service from Montréal *via* Sault Ste. Marie to Red River, with stops on the north shore of Lake Superior at Michipicoten, Pic, Long Lake, Nipigon, and Fort William.⁶²⁷ Although Watt received instructions from Governor Simpson to assist in the establishment of this service, he was reluctant to commit his employees for times of the year when travel was difficult, or when employees were fully occupied on Company business. Nonetheless, he worked out an advantageous bargain with Gibbard, and noted that the Company would save on its own mail requirements, and “prevent HfBreeds (from the Sault whom I presume Mr. Gibbard would have employed...) from coming amongst our Long Lake + Nipigon Indians”.⁶²⁸

When the first mail delivery from Sault Ste. Marie came to Michipicoten by boat in December, carried by “a Canadian ‘Bourasseaux’ + a HfBreed ‘Denomy’”, Watt noted that he “must furnish [Bourasseaux] a Guide to take him home by Land”.⁶²⁹ William Schellin jr. and Cromarty carried the mail on to Pic, and Teindun took the two Sault men back home *via* Batchewana.⁶³⁰ In January, two “Hfbreeds”, John Mastaux and James Saunders, arrived from Sault Ste. Marie with the mail. Neither had been on the winter “road” to Michipicoten before, but they navigated with a compass. “The Indian Pahuahung” was sent off to Fort William with the mailbag and the two Sault men were sent back.⁶³¹ In February, Sansong Laguarde took the Red River mail from Fort William to Michipicoten, and Mastaux and Saunders brought the mail from the Sault to Michipicoten, where it was turned over to Teindun and Laguarde.⁶³² In March, Baptiste Boyer

⁶²⁷ Gibbard was to visit Michipicoten again in June of 1859 in the role of fishery overseer, to “make arrangements with [Chief Trader] Mr. Barnston for certain leases of fisheries required by the Company at or near various stations along the Lake Superior” (AO, F471-2-0-85 [Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859], entry for 18 June).

⁶²⁸ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entry for 30 October.

⁶²⁹ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entry for 17 December.

⁶³⁰ AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1858), entries for 19 and 20 December.

⁶³¹ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entries for 19, 20 and 21 January.

⁶³² AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entries for 7, 8 and 9 February.

and Mastaux brought the mail overland from the Sault to Michipicoten.⁶³³ After this date, the mail could be put on the HBC schooner for transportation to Fort William. It appears from the post journals that Sault Ste. Marie “Half Breeds” did not visit Michipicoten, and that they would not have been welcome there. The Chief Traders at Michipicoten did not express concerns about the rare non-Aboriginal travellers (tourists, missionaries, mining company representatives, fishermen) that passed through the area, evidently not considering them the likely or capable traders with the Ojibwe that the “Half Breeds” might have been.⁶³⁴

The Michipicoten post journals for 1858 and 1859 offer a clear picture of the “Half Breed” fur trade community as distinct from both Europeans and “Indians”. Occupationally and residentially, “Half Breed” families were different from both Europeans and “Indians” involved in the fur trade, living with family members in European-style log houses and supporting themselves with a unique combination of European-style wage labour and rations, “country” skills, and harvesting of game, fish and other resources. “Half Breed” families preserved long-established local practices such as sugar-making and duck hunting, and were granted their own special holidays to continue them. The customs of the fur trade work-related holidays were also continued at Michipicoten in the 1850s, with special food, drink, social events, and dances. The inclusion of these people on “Indian” Treaty paylists appears to have made little or no difference to their ways of life, family and social networks, relationships with the Ojibwe, and identification by outsiders.

Section IV: Persistence of Fur Trade Families on Lakes Superior and Nipigon, 1876 - 1901

Infrastructure Changes in the Lake Superior District, 1863 - 1921

Major changes came to the Lake Superior District in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s. Between 1872 and 1879, Fort William still operated four outposts, at Shebandowan, Maligne, Bois Blanc, and

⁶³³ AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal, 1859), entry for 21 March.

⁶³⁴ See for example AO, F471-2-0-84 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1858), entries for 20 May (Rev. Père Kohler); 10 July (Rev. J. Hurlburt); 28 July (two tourists, “English gentlemen”); 31 July (Rev. G. Blaker); AO, F471-2-0-85 (Michipicoten Post Journal 1859), entries for 30 June (Rev. J. Hurlburt and Rev. A. Salt); 23 July (tourists); 4 August (fisherman from United States); 14 August (Père DuRanquet); 20 September (Mr. Fletcher, “looking after the Mines up the Lake”).

Sand Lake, as well as the main post on the Kaministiquia River. However, the commencement of construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Fort William in 1875 resulted in the closing of the Fort William post and all its outposts in 1879, as the CPR freight yards expanded into the HBC's property. An administrative office remained, but all the buildings except for a stone powder magazine were demolished. A new saleshop was not opened in the town of Fort William until 1891.⁶³⁵

Dramatic changes also came to Michipicoten. In 1863, the HBC abandoned the historic Michipicoten-Moose Factory transportation route in favour of the cheaper route through the Great Lakes to Montréal. Michipicoten was no longer the central depot and distribution centre for Lake Superior and inland posts, supplying only itself and its outposts at Agawa and Batchewana. Fur returns from west of Michipicoten were still gathered there for shipment to Montréal via Sault Ste. Marie. When the CPR came to Michipicoten in 1872 (connected only to the east, as gaps remained in the westward line until 1885), the post became a local trade centre only. It was closed in 1896, reopened briefly from 1898 to 1904 to supply miners and prospectors in the Wawa area, and then was permanently closed in 1904.⁶³⁶

Nipigon post, on the other hand, enjoyed a brief increase in importance in the 1880s, as Michipicoten declined. The post had been moved ten miles south of its original location (sometimes called Wabinosh House) in 1850. Nipigon House was a district headquarters from 1881 to 1892, during which time it operated outposts at Wayabimica, Poplar Lodge, Asoiniway, and Cross Lake. In 1900, Nipigon post was renamed Nipigon House, to avoid confusion with the post at Red Rock, which had been named Nipigon after the stop on the CPR line near the mouth of the Nipigon River. In 1954, Nipigon House was renamed Gull Bay.⁶³⁷

Red Rock also briefly benefited from Michipicoten's decline. In 1871, Red Rock became a district headquarters. The Chief Trader, believing that Red Rock would become the Lake Superior main terminal for the CPR, embarked on an ambitious building programme. In 1875,

⁶³⁵ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Fort William.

⁶³⁶ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Michipicoten.

⁶³⁷ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Nipigon House. The adjacent Indian Reserve of Gull Bay was surveyed in 1886.

however, the CPR chose Fort William as its Lake Superior terminus. In 1899, the HBC built a retail saleshop across from the Nipigon CPR station, and renamed the operations at Red Rock “Nipigon” after the CPR stop. In 1902, the fur trade post at Red Rock burned down, and the trade was abandoned. However, Red Rock operated a number of outposts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Flat Rock (c. 1888), Pays Plat (1881? - 1895), Poplar Lodge (c. 1891), Grand Bay (1922 - 1923) and Sand Point (1922 - 1930) (now the site of Lake Nipigon Provincial Park).⁶³⁸

Long Lake post continued operations throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1921, the post was moved to be closer to the Canadian National Railway line.⁶³⁹

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway along the north shore of Lake Superior gave rise to new towns. Rossport, adjacent to the old fur trade post, gathering site, and fishing station of Pays Plat (sometimes known as McKay’s Harbour, after the trader there), was a section divisional headquarters for the CPR during construction and afterwards. The Pays Plat HBC trading post closed during the outfit year 1899 - 1900.⁶⁴⁰ Schreiber, named after the railway engineer Collingwood Schreiber, also came into being during the construction period. Pic post was closed during outfit year 1887 - 1888 and its business moved to Montizambert on the CPR line.⁶⁴¹

Investigations into Robinson-Superior Treaty paylists, 1879 - 1899

The Hudson's Bay Company continued to pay annuities to Robinson-Superior Treaty beneficiaries until 1875. When the Department of Indian Affairs took over payments in 1876, no changes were made immediately. A separate section in the Michipicoten paylist for "half breeds" included 68 persons, compared to 200 "Ojibways". Separate listings for "half breeds" at other locations had been discontinued. Indian Agent Amos Wright at Prince Arthur's Landing

⁶³⁸ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Red Rock.

⁶³⁹ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Long Lake.

⁶⁴⁰ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Pays Plat.

⁶⁴¹ HBCA, online finding aids, post history for Pic.

(Thunder Bay) was mystified by some of the people he was paying, and wrote in 1879 to Indian Department headquarters for clarification:

...in paying Indians under the Robinson Treaty, I have found in several instances, half breeds, whose fathers were White men, who, had married Indian women; the Children of whom were included in the old Pay list; they consider themselves Indians, and live and associate with them; they are generally poor, and, in some instances, are Widows with their Children.

Being of the opinion, that, the statute makes no provision for such payments, I have refused to pay these their annuities, but, as this has caused some dissatisfaction with the parties interested, I have thought it well to write to the Department, and, ask for instructions in the matter.⁶⁴²

The "statute" to which Wright was referring was the 1876 *Indian Act*, which narrowed the definition of "Indian" under the Act. Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, replied to Wright confirming Wright's understanding of the 1876 legislation, but indicating that the unique procedures of the Robinson Treaties were to remain intact:

The Dept. does not intend...to interfere with the persons of that class...referred to by you who have heretofore been participating in the Robinson Treaty moneys and whose names are now on the Pay List. But no new names of persons who are not Indian within the meaning of the Act must be added...⁶⁴³

The "half breeds" on Robinson Treaty paylists often rose to leadership positions within the *Indian Act* Bands. Joseph Boucher, Joseph Deschamps, Stephen Fayan (Fainniant or Faignant), Michel Collin and Jean Baptiste Collin were described as "chief men" in the Fort William Band by 1871.⁶⁴⁴ Antoine Morrisseau was the "Chief" of the "Indians and half-breeds of the Pic River" when they petitioned the Governor General for a Reserve in 1880. John Anenyo signed this petition as the "HB Chief", along with John Finlayson, members of the Desmoulins family, and members of the Sabourin family.⁶⁴⁵ In 1887, Sanson Lagarde was chief of the Michipicoten Band, and signed a petition to the Department with Antoine Dubois and Joseph S. Lagarde.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴² LAC, RG10, Vol. 2090, file 14455, Amos Wright to J. S. Dennis, 16 July 1879.

⁶⁴³ LAC, RG10, Vol. 2090, file 14455, L. Vankoughnet to Amos Wright, 1 August 1879.

⁶⁴⁴ LAC, RG10, Vol. 2115, file 21900, statement of Jean Baptiste Penassie, n. d.

⁶⁴⁵ LAC, RG10, Vol. 2137, file 27806, Petition of Antoine Morrisseau and others to the Governor General, 23 June 1880.

⁶⁴⁶ LAC, RG10, Vol. 2368, file 74201, Petition of Sanson Lagarde and others to L. Vankoughnet, 23 January 1887.

Pierre Deschamps was the Chief of the Nipigon Band by 1892.⁶⁴⁷ However, Ontario challenged the entitlement of many "half breeds" to be paid under the Robinson Treaties, in the course of legal action to determine responsibility for annuity payments. E. B. Borron, an Ontario Stipendiary Magistrate at Sault Ste. Marie, in a report dated 31 December 1891, advised Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat that "Canadians" married to "Indian women" with "half breed" children had been, at the time of the Treaty, "found not only at Sault Ste Marie but in the vicinity of all the Hon. Hudson Bay Company's posts in the ceded territory...most numerous at the principal posts such as Fort William and [Michipicoten]". Borron argued that these "old French Canadian Voyageurs and their half-breed families" around the time of the Treaty were fundamentally different than the Ojibwe, even if some of them had married into the tribe:

They lived in log houses and when not employed by the Hon. Hudson Bay Company or others -- as voyageurs, boatmen, couriers or labourers would eke out a subsistence by hunting and fishing or in various other ways. In early spring they and their families made considerable quantities of maple-sugar. During the summer small patches of potatoes and corn were cultivated, and hay cut and made on the marshes, for their cattle (if they had any) in winter. In "the fall" when white-fish and trout sought the shallow water to spawn -- they would go to well known points on Lakes Huron and Superior and if provided with a sufficient number of nets would generally catch and salt down an ample supply of fish for use during the winter. In the winter season -- cutting and hauling cord-wood for their own use or for sale, and catching rabbits were the principal occupations -- when as already said not employed by the Hudson Bay Company or others.

Some of these Canadians or their sons -- might also during the winter set out a few traps for foxes or other fur-bearing animals in the neighborhood of their dwellings. But few if any such Canadians or their half-breed children had any regular hunting grounds -- as the Indians always had. Nor were they like the Indians dependent on Game and Fur-bearing animal [sic] for their subsistence...⁶⁴⁸

The activities enumerated by Borron are familiar from the HBC records. An aspect that Borron did not capture was the range within this population of dependence on wage labour, and the shared means of subsistence of all residents in the territory. Some families, like the LaGardes or the Solomons, performed little wage labour and travelled almost all the time with the Ojibwe, who also could not support themselves entirely on game in this region. In Lake Superior, there were few employment opportunities apart from the HBC, unlike the situation at Sault Ste. Marie. The HBC employees or steady part-time workers (such as the Collins at Fort William) were

⁶⁴⁷ LAC, RG10, Vol. 2645, file 130522.

⁶⁴⁸ AO, F-1027-1-2 (Irving Papers), item 27/32/08, E. B. Borron to O. Mowat, 31 December 1891.

supporting themselves by harvesting country produce and keeping gardens in the way that Borron described, but for the storehouses of the Company, which would be redistributed to them as rations. In 1892, Borron estimated that of the 2,075 people receiving Robinson Superior annuities, 418 were "half breeds" under his definition (claiming Indian ancestry through the maternal line); comprising 147 at Fort William, 72 at Red Rock,⁶⁴⁹ 6 at Pays Plat, 61 at Pic, 32 at Long Lake, and 100 at Michipicoten. He could not obtain information on twelve people on the Nipigon payroll.⁶⁵⁰

In 1897, the Department of Indian Affairs assigned its Inspector of Indian Agencies and Reserves in Ontario, J. A. Macrae, to investigate entitlements to Robinson Treaty annuities. He wrote a report containing recommendations and historical information on families in the Michipicoten Band dated 21 September 1897, which unfortunately has not been located. On 9 February 1898, he completed a report on the Port Arthur (Thunder Bay) Agency, including the Fort William, Red Rock, Nipigon, Long Lake, Pays Plat, and Pic Bands. As part of this report, he compiled a memorandum including some historical and genealogical information supplied to him through interviews with the local Indian agents and some Indian Band members, as well as a review of the paylists. This information reveals some of the relationships between families on the Band paylists, particularly the connections through the female line that can otherwise be difficult to discern. Macrae also made an attempt to assess whether some people on the paylists were integrated into the Indian community and way of life. These concepts were undefined, but were used by the Department of Indian Affairs to determine eligibility for Treaty benefits. For example, Macrae considered the case of no. 40 on the Fort William Band payroll, "Widow McKay", as follows:

Mrs. McKay is the relict of a man known as both William and James McKay. The greater part of his children who now receive annuity separately, depend for their title to do so upon their father.

It is alleged that the elder McKay was a half breed from Sault Ste. Marie, but enquiry at that place has failed to show that he was ever known there. However, wherever he came from he never appears to have entered any Indian society or community as an acknowledged Indian, or to have resided in such society on unsundered or reserved

⁶⁴⁹ Red Rock was a post established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1859, at the mouth of the Nipigon River on Lake Superior.

⁶⁵⁰ AO, F-1027-1-2 (Irving Papers), item 27/32/08(2), E. B. Borron to O. Mowat, 11 October 1892.

lands. It is said that after his second marriage (in 1867) he lived for some time in a house, on the Fort William Reserve, which belonged to his brother-in-law, Dubokaning, but it is evident that he was at that time not regarded as an Indian for he was not paid annuity...

Before 1870 McKay was in the Hudson Bay Company's service at Red Rock, what employ he left in 1870 to join General Wolsely in the Red River expedition. Before he took service at Red Rock it is said that he had no fixed place of abode 'but moved about for the Hudson Bay Company for trading'.

On 21st september 1864 McKay married Sarah Peau de Chat, daughter of the Fort William chief of that name. She died and on 22nd July 1867 he married a sister of Dubokaning of Fort William Band, the present Widow McKay...

McKay would appear to have got on to the list under his wife's name. But I do not think he was an acknowledged Indian even though paid, nor do I think that he ever adopted the Indian mode of life or attached himself to their society, or took up residence amongst them in a way that would have constituted him an Indian under the law of 1859.

By James McKay his wife had offspring who survive, Moses, Alex, and Nancy (Mrs. Banan) all of whom are now paid separately...Then about 10 years ago, she married a half-breed named Collin, a non-treaty man, by whom she had one child, still living and improperly paid annuity...⁶⁵¹

The Lodid or Loutit family also failed Macrae's indeterminate test of integration into the "Indian" community at Fort William:

Moses is the son of a Scotch half-breed...a permanent employee of the Hudson Bay Company...Lodid Sr. married a daughter of J. B. Crow, a sister of late Chief William Crow...

It appears that when Londid Sr. married an Indian woman he took her from the society of her own people and that though he subsequently lived among her people at the Fort William Mission he was not an acknowledged member of their community...he never claimed or if he claimed was refused, acknowledgement of a right to receive annuity...⁶⁵²

The Bouchards at Red Rock were recommended for removal from the paylists on the same grounds:

The Bouchard family...

Their father was a Frenchman named Louis Bouchard, their mother an Indian -- sister of Chief Manitoshainse who subscribed the Robinson Treaty.

⁶⁵¹ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 3 - 5. Copy from DIAND Genealogical Research Unit.

⁶⁵² J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 9.

The evidence, shows that Louis Bouchard was a permanent employee of the Hudsons Bay Company, a woodcutter, cattle tender, and outside labourer, and that from 1859 to 1872 he was employed at Nepigon House and lived at that post. It is quite clear that he did not become an Indian when by marriage residence and acknowledgement he might have done so; and that, at least until after 1872 he did not enter into any communal relationship with the Indians, even if he then did. From the fact that he was never an annuitant may be gathered...that he was never an acknowledged Indian...

François Bouchard....second son of Louis Bouchard...was born about 1841 at Nepigon House and died in 1882. In 1851 he married an Indian woman of Lake Nepigon...but he appear to have taken her to, and remained at, Nepigon House in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company as a labourer until probably 1881, at which date he adopted to some extent the Indian mode of life. It is said he was looked upon as an Indian of the Nepigon Band, by the members thereof and [as] such was paid by the Government, but it does not appear that he ever resided upon the reserve of the Nepigon Indians at Gull Bay, or lived amongst them...or joined any Indian Society or community...

Joseph Bouchard...another son of Louis Bouchards...always and until seven or eight years ago, resided at the Hudson's Bay Company's post known as Nepigon House...he was an occasional employee of the Hudson Bay Company and that when not engaged with that firm worked for surveyors, tourists etc: that he married Angelique Laronde sister of Henry Laronde and daughter of Count Louis de Laronde in 1883...

Louis Bouchard...Born about 1837 at Nepigon House...eldest son of Louis Bouchard Sr. ...Until he was about sixteen years of age he lived with his father at...Nepigon House. Then he was sent to Moose Factory...entered the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, and remained about James Bay until about 1872...

Louisa Bouchard...daughter of Louis Bouchard...married a Sault Ste. Marie halfbreed named David Maville [Mainville]...

Jimmy Bouchard...born about 1856 at...Nepigon House...fifth son of Louis Bouchard Sr. ...always lived with his father up to 1872 at Nepigon House and did not reside with the Indians but rather adhered to white society...

Nicholas Bouchard...Born about 1843 at Nepigon House...another son of Louis Bouchard Sr. ...married a halfbreed woman named Soulier from Michipicoten...where her family received annuity as halfbreeds in 1852...Nicholas himself states 'In my boyhood I lived at Nepigon House...and when I came of age I was employed by the Hudson Bay Company at that place as a day labourer...until seven years ago'...⁶⁵³

⁶⁵³ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 15 - 20.

Macrae also disqualified Michel, Antoine, Moise, Ambrose and Gilbert Bouchard, who had married into the local Ojibwe population.⁶⁵⁴

Similarly, he recommended that the members of the de la Ronde or Laronde family be removed from the paylists, as Louis Denis (the patriarch) "was not in any sense an acknowledged Indian or a member of any of the Indian societies by which he was surrounded, nor followed the Indian mode of life, nor resided amongst the Indians otherwise than as a trader, and that when he married he took his wife from her family and tribe, not in any way entering into tribal relationship with her people, that his children all had his status". Macrae deduced that de la Ronde's daughters had been paid annuity in the 1850s, but he had not claimed for his sons, on the theory that "those who enter into union with Algonquin Indian women, or are of mixed descent [sic]...are commonly governed by an idea that daughters may without derogation and with propriety take their mothers status whilst the male progeny may derogate by doing so". His sons Alex and Charley, and his daughters Mary Anne and Catherine, were on the Red Rock paylists in 1898 and lived nearby. Alex and Charley both married Ojibwe women from the Lake Nipigon Band, and Mary Anne married "a white man named Watt from [Fort] Albany".⁶⁵⁵ Another daughter, Louise, married Pierrish Deschamps, son of Baptiste Deschamps "continuously employed" by the HBC at Fort William, and "a Saskatchewan Cree" woman. Pierrish, Chief of the Red Rock Band in 1898, lived at Fort William until his marriage in 1850, had lived subsequently at Pic, Michipicoten and Batchewana, and then twenty years at Nipigon House. According to Macrae, "during all the periods enumerated he worked for the Hudson's Bay Company as interpreter and guide". Therefore, Macrae concluded that the Deschamps family did not have "any inherited right to annuity or...ever acquired any right".⁶⁵⁶

Jean-Baptiste Morrisseau of the Red Rock Band, son of Pierre Morrisseau and nephew of Antoine Morrisseau of the Pic Band, was also recommended for removal from the paylists by Macrae because although Pierre married an Ojibwe woman of the Nipigon Band, "he was a servant of the Hudson Bay Company...serving first at Long Lake House with his father, and then at Nipigon House and Pays Plat. So far as I have been able to learn he was not...attached to any

⁶⁵⁴ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 20 - 21, 26 - 27.

⁶⁵⁵ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 21 - 24.

⁶⁵⁶ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 24 - 26.

Indian society, nor did he follow the Indian mode of life, nor reside amongst the Indians".⁶⁵⁷ Joe Morrisseau, son of Antoine Morrisseau and paid with the Pic Band, married to a daughter of François Bouchard, was also deemed ineligible for annuity by Macrae.⁶⁵⁸

Macrae's investigations also revealed ties with historic Métis populations in American territory, for example Michel St. Germain, "born about 1851...an American Indian from either Sugar or Drummond Island, whence he came about 25 years ago".⁶⁵⁹ This St. Germain was likely a descendant of the Venant St. Germain who owned Michipicoten post in the late 1770s and early 1780s in partnership with Jean Baptist Nolin, was a guide to Edward Umfreville in 1784, and was in the vicinity of Batchewana in 1800. Frank Paro or Perreault, according to Macrae, was a "French halfbreed who it is said came from Sault Ste. Marie", but Macrae's queries there turned up only a Frank Perault "who has always lived at Partridge Point, married to a Cadrant...the Fort William man is not of his family. On Sugar Island, U. S. A., there is a Perault who had several sons".⁶⁶⁰ Further investigation would be required to determine which of these was the F. Xavier Perrault who failed in his attempt to secure his property at Sault Ste. Marie in 1850.

The genealogical links between Lake Superior communities were also brought out by Macrae's research:

Jos. Parent [Fort William]...his Widow has married Moise Bouchard...Red Rock Band...she is a United States Indian...⁶⁶¹

Alexander Scott [Fort William] is a son of a halfbreed named Francis Scott...Francis...was a son of a United States soldier...by a Sault Ste. Marie halfbreed woman named Arcange Soulier...⁶⁶²

P. Banan [Fort William] is a son of Andrew Banan...P. Banan's wife was Mary Ann Desmoulins, sister of Chief Desmoulins of the Pic...⁶⁶³

Joe Lesarge...son of a halfbreed from Sault Ste. Marie named 'Botique' Lesarge who came to Pays Plats about 1860 in the employ of a trader named Clark and married a Pays Plats

⁶⁵⁷ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 27 - 28.

⁶⁵⁸ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 31 - 32.

⁶⁵⁹ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 6.

⁶⁶⁰ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 8.

⁶⁶¹ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 10.

⁶⁶² J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 10 - 11.

⁶⁶³ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 12.

woman...Lesarge, himself, says that he was born at the Pays Plats about 25 years ago and that his father was a half-breed who is now at the Sault that his mother was a full Indian and that both belonged to the Pic Band...⁶⁶⁴

Even the Chief of the Fort William Band, Joseph Singleton, did not escape Macrae's investigation. His father, Richard Singleton, an Englishman, was a lighthouse-keeper at Isle Royale in the United States, who married Wa-ba-ban-oke of the "Fort William Indians" in 1849. Joseph built a house on the Fort William Reserve on 1881 and married into a network of old Métis families: "Joseph...was married...to Mrs. Francis Solomon nee Philomene Collin, daughter of Michel Collin Jr.". Macrae however deemed Philomene Collin/Solomon/Singleton entitled to annuity, "by her former marriage to a recognized Indian [Solomon]...and by descent".⁶⁶⁵

In total, Macrae recommended that 182 persons be removed from the paylists of the Fort William, Red Rock, Nipigon, Pays Plat, Long Lake and Pic Bands, mostly for reasons of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry. In some cases, men had been added to the paylists after marrying women entitled to annuity, which was not allowed under the *Indian Act*. Other families on the paylists failed Macrae's tests of "Indianness" based on their way of life and their apparent integration into Ojibwe communities. Although Macrae's assessments seem to be inconsistent and contradictory (for example, characterizing payment of annuities both as evidence of recognition (or not) as "Indian", and as errors to be corrected), his approach reflected a sense that the original core of Métis families taken into the Robinson-Superior Treaty in the 1850s, preponderantly Hudson's Bay Company employees and their families, were different from the Ojibwe, and that some distinction remained despite changes in economic relationships and extensive intermarriage with the Ojibwe. The historical evidence shows that most of the "half breeds" on the Treaty paylists in the 1850s were indeed quite distinct culturally and economically from the Ojibwe, although they shared the same resources for subsistence, were in some cases linked into local kinship networks, and had acquired language skills and other Ojibwe cultural knowledge. The genealogical and historical material collected by Macrae, as well as the assumptions underlying his analysis, are more significant than his specific

⁶⁶⁴ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 28 - 29.

⁶⁶⁵ J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached, 6 - 7.

recommendations for revising the paylists, many of which were either never carried into effect or were later overturned.

The Dominion Census of 1901

A preliminary review of the 1901 Dominion manuscript census reveals the continuing presence of many of the Métis families identified from earlier periods on Lake Superior. Unfortunately, as in most of the other available sources, intermarriage, persistence and family relationships through the female line are obscured in the record. However, a unique aspect of the 1901 census is its emphasis on identifying the "half-breed" population and the components of Métis ancestry such as Ojibwe, French, or Scottish. It is not clear from the records whether these identifications were supplied by the respondents (self-ascription), the local census enumerator or manuscript editors in Ottawa (other-ascription), or some flexible combination of the two. Although census enumerators made sometimes heroic efforts to track down the population in their census districts, under-enumeration of mobile populations such as Aboriginal hunters, harvesters and fishers is a chronic issue with census returns, as are inaccuracies in transcriptions of names and estimates of ages. In some cases, Indian Agents submitted returns based on their paylists without attempting to capture actual occupancy in their district. However, despite all these shortcomings, the census provides a unique record of individuals at a moment in time (ideally, one day, but usually one to three weeks, especially in large rural census districts).

One immediately striking aspect of the 1901 census is the number of individuals, especially from families identified earlier in this report, classified as "half breeds". Although many of the persons so classified were members of "Indian Bands", fifty years and two to three generations after the Treaty, they were still marked as separate from the Ojibwe. Further analysis of the available descriptive material, paylists and census records will be necessary to determine the principles on which this distinction may have been made.

Two hundred and twenty-six persons in the "Fort William Band" census were classified as "half breeds", predominantly Ojibwe French breeds. These included families of Benans, Belanger, Boucher, Busha (a variant of Boucher), Collin, Cyrette, Debokaning, Deschamps, Fyans, Gordon, Laudet (probably a variant of Loutit), Legarde, McKay, Scott, Singleton and others.

Some of these names, such as Boucher, Collin, and Deschamps, had been associated with the Fort for generations. Other, newer families such as that of Andrew Benan (Bannon), born about 1866, son of an Irishman and a Fort William Ojibwe woman, married to a McKay daughter and with a son married to a Desmoulins from Pic; Ed Gordon, a "half breed" from Bayfield, Wisconsin, who married Louise Busha and had a daughter who married a Cyrette; and Joseph Singleton, who married into the Collins; had established kinship ties with older Métis families. Debokaning was identified as an "Indian" by Macrae and was a brother-in-law to McKay from Sault Ste. Marie. Others of these families, such as Loutit and Scott, married women who were likely Ojibwe. A Bélanger was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company at Michipicoten in 1858, and Fyans, "Indians", were freemen around Long Lake in 1827.

Half the census records from Michipicoten Harbour are illegible, but 24 persons from the McDonald and Devereaux families were enumerated as "half breeds" on the surviving four pages (50 persons to a page). Michipicoten River and Wawa census records classify a further 24 persons as "half breeds", including members of the LaGarde, Dubois and Schelling families. It appears that the Indian Band census records have not survived for this census subdivision, which may have removed as many as 100 "half breeds" from the enumeration (based on a tally of persons on Michipicoten/Gros Cap paylists from the 1890s from families with fur trade surnames).

In the Red Rock Band, 125 persons were classified as "half breeds", including members of the Boucher, Cameron, Deschamps, Laronde, Legarde and Wilson families. In the Nipigon Band, ten persons were classified as "half breeds", including Morrisseaus and Bouchers. In the Pic Band, seventeen members of the Desmoulin family, two members of the Finlayson family, nine members of the Morrisseau family, and three others made up a total of 31 "half breeds". The Long Lake Band had twenty-one persons classified as "half breeds", mostly members of the Wynne and Finlayson families.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁶ Information on census data is drawn from a tabulation provided by the Métis Nation of Ontario. Genealogical information is from J. A. Macrae, report on the Port Arthur Agency, 9 February 1898, "Memorandum" attached.

In most of the "Indian Band" enumerations, some families with Ojibwe names are classified as "half breeds" (for example Ashek or Kakek at Red Rock, Debokaning at Fort William, and Majatakibinis at Fort William). As Kohl observed at Garden River in 1855, many Métis people had both Ojibwe and European names, and may have been more likely to use their Ojibwe names in the context of an Ojibwe community. Further genealogical research may be required to identify the mixed-ancestry roots of these and other families using Ojibwe names who may not have been termed "half breeds" in the census. It also appears that the number of persons classified as "half breeds" outside the Indian Bands was relatively small. It may be that residence among the Ojibwe increased the likelihood that a person would identify or be identified as "half breed", while other members of the same families outside the Indian Band communities chose not to disclose this identity to outsiders. This phenomenon has been observed in other parts of Canada, especially in the years following the Riel Rebellion of 1885.

The identifications of Macrae and the 1901 census-takers do not coincide in several instances. Individuals considered to be "Indians" by Macrae were identified as "half breeds" by the enumerators, and the reverse also appears to be true. These classifications were made under different criteria and for different purposes. For Macrae, eligibility for Treaty annuity, integration into the Ojibwe community (as imprecise a measurement as this may have been) and conformity with *Indian Act* stipulations were important elements in his assessments. Census enumerators were instructed to classify all children in a family under the ethnicity of a (usually male) family head, and in some cases wives and female family heads may also have been classified with their father's ethnicity. Neither method may be a precise expression of the identities in play in these populations, although the apparent need to distinguish Ojibwe, "half breed" and European individuals is suggestive of real differences on the ground.

It is apparent that Métis families lived in a deeply-rooted culturally distinct society at the time of the Robinson Treaties of 1850 and retained their distinctiveness (despite being legally classified with the Ojibwe) at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Continuity of Métis family lines and intermarriage between these lines from Sault Ste. Marie to Fort William is also apparent (despite poor documentation of relationships through the female line), although new

mixed-ancestry families were introduced into the population between 1850 and 1900 and intermarriage with the Ojibwe continued.

Section V: The Twentieth Century

Lake Nipigon Fisheries, 1884 - 1973

In 1884, the Ontario Government assumed control over the fisheries of Lake Nipigon and the Nipigon River. Fishing with nets in Lake Nipigon was prohibited.⁶⁶⁷ The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through Red Rock in 1885 opened up easier access to Lake Nipigon for tourists, especially sports fishermen. By 1889 Lake Nipigon and the Nipigon River were destination points for wealthy anglers, boasting, in the words of a federal Department of Marine and Fisheries official, “the finest Speckled Trout fishing on the continent of America”.⁶⁶⁸

Although, in 1894, representatives of commercial fishing interests downplayed the importance of the sports and subsistence fisheries on the Lake in attempting to persuade governments to open the area to commercial fishing,⁶⁶⁹ the Fort William Indian Agent protested that

Lake Nepigon is perhaps the most noted Lake in the world for the largest brook or speckled trout and in America for Lake trout and white fish in the most numerous quantities and quality, it is the great breeding ground that furnishes Nepigon River with the noted Large Brook trout...which attracts the numerous tourists from America and some parts of Europe every summer, gives employment to my Indians with their canoes at the highest wages...and as a rule are of the most wealthy class, also there are 500 treaty Indians of the Nepigon Band dependent on this Lake for their support...and about 200 more non treaty Indians depending on the same...[it] would be only a matter of short time, when the Government would have to support them...⁶⁷⁰

In 1898, a decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council confirmed that the licensing of fisheries in Ontario was within the jurisdiction of the provincial government. In 1911, the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission recommended that Lake Nipigon remain closed to commercial fishing. By that time, “a light steam railway” and a steamboat service connected

⁶⁶⁷ LAC, RG23, Vol. 199, file 951, Regulation under the *Ontario Fisheries Act*, 15 May 1888; S. P. Bauset, “Memorandum for the Minister”, 16 October 1889.

⁶⁶⁸ LAC, RG23, Vol. 199, file 951, S. P. Bauset, “Memorandum for the Minister”, 16 October 1889.

⁶⁶⁹ LAC, RG23, Vol. 199, file 951, Thomas Marks to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 31 March 1894.

⁶⁷⁰ LAC, RG23, Vol. 199, file 951, J. P. Donnelly to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 18 April 1894.

South Bay on Lake Superior with Nipigon Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was constructing its line north of Lake Nipigon with a spur line to Ombabika Bay. A rail line to be constructed by the Canadian Northern Railway was planned for Lake Nipigon's eastern shore.⁶⁷¹

It is unclear from documentary sources when commercial fishing licences were first allocated in Lake Nipigon. Some sources from Métis communities on Lake Nipigon believe that commercial fishing started around 1917, as part of the war effort in World War I, and this may be corroborated by the fact that data on individual licencees were recorded in Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources files beginning in that year.⁶⁷² By this time, construction of the Canadian Northern Railway line connecting Nipigon town on the CPR to Longlac on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway line was complete. By 1921, the newly-formed Canadian National Railway (incorporating the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific railways into a new government-owned company) had built "Nipigon Lodge" at Orient Bay, advertising "guides and outfitters...available, and sport of the rarest may be promised any fisherman who cares to visit these most famous of angling waters...Orient Bay...has now become a famous rendezvous for sportsmen".⁶⁷³ Macdiarmid, Beardmore, and Jellicoe were also stops on the former Canadian Northern line.⁶⁷⁴ The Canadian Pacific Railway operated a "bungalow camp" for sports fishermen and tourists on Lake Helen across the Nipigon River from its station at Nipigon.⁶⁷⁵

A list of "Lake Nipigon Licenses", compiled by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in 1973 from records dating back to 1925, notes commercial fishing licence holders in 1925 as

⁶⁷¹ Ontario: "Final Report of the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission, 1909 - 1911" (King's Printer: 1912), 69 - 71.

⁶⁷² AO, RG1-296, file "Lake Nipigon - 1973", M. J. Brubacher to G. O. Koistinen, 17 May 1973. The information in this file begins in 1925.

⁶⁷³ Canadian National-Grand Trunk Railways, *Canada Pacific to Atlantic: "The National Way"* (Canadian National Railways, 1921), 90.

⁶⁷⁴ CNR, "The National Way", 91. The modern town of Geraldton, off the Canadian Northern line, was formerly known as Oklend or Little Longlac. It was renamed Geraldton in 1933, after two men who financed gold mines in the area after the discovery of gold at Kenogamisis Lake in 1931 (<http://www.ruralroutes.com/5939.html>, accessed March 2015).

⁶⁷⁵ T. Morris Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country* (New York and London: The Century Co., 1924), 57 - 64, also map between pages 112 and 113. Fishing on the Nipigon was a luxury experience, with guides catering to the guests comfort and enjoyment in cooking meals, carrying baggage, making and striking camp, managing the canoes, *et cetera*. See also "E. E. M.", *Days on the Nipigon* (New York: Foster & Reynolds Company, 1917), 98 - 100.

James Muldrage and Percy Sully, A. F. Licknor, A. Bruley and A. Sutherland, Andrew Sutherland, John Bowman, Frank Bowman, F. W. Bowman, Allan McLeod, C. H. Douglas, Douglas Craigie, Joahn McIvor, Nipigon Fisheries Ltd., and Alex McKay. Other licence holders between 1925 and 1935 included J. Alex McDonald, John Bowman, Angus McLeod, J. H. Beamish, Alex McKay and Ralph Nestor, F. S. Williams, Chas. Wigiwas and L. Goodchild, K. Wigiwas and L. Goodchild, Ambrose Mowab/Michel King/A. Wigwam, Ambrose Wamasa/Sam Michel/J. Paile/J. Thompson, P. Shunia/A. Innes/Geo. Innes, John Shabwageezie, Joe Bouchard/P. Michel/A. Michel, Robert Hardy, Ellis Hardy, P. Esqugon, Emil Netemegesis, Philip and Frank Netemegesis, John Shabwegeezie and John Kowtash, Wawia Martin, P. Morrisseau, Moses and Luke Anakanagisis, Joe Ashqugon and John Anaskanagesis, B. Morrison and T. Bouchard, Pete Shunia, P. Michel, L. Goodchild, Fred Gejick and John Kamtiash jr., Frances Mamia, J. Thompson, Tom Bouchard, Fred Netemegesis, Gull Bay Indian Band, Chas. Eskala and Sam Pictorella, Grand Bay Indian Band, and F. T. James Co. Ltd.⁶⁷⁶

Although little documentation about the Lake Nipigon commercial fishery survives in Canadian archives, some wealthy sports fishermen who visited Lake Nipigon and the Nipigon River wrote of their experiences there, contributing to an increasingly popular subgenre of travel literature on the subject of hunting and fishing tourist adventures. Thomas Longstreth visited Lake Nipigon on a summer sports fishing trip in the early 1920s, and took several opportunities to travel with local people around the Lake, even travelling with a Department of Indian Affairs party to witness Treaty payments at Long Lake. His first guide, a young man he met at the CPR bungalow camp near Nipigon station, was Dan Moriceau (Morrisseau). Longstreth described Morrisseau at first meeting as an “Indian”, but then later modified his description of him to “a perfect illustration of the best sort of half breed”, combining “Indian” and “French” personality traits.⁶⁷⁷ Morrisseau, at the time he met Longstreth, was living with his mother in a “log house by the shore” near the bungalow camp. Dan spoke fluent English, but his mother did not.⁶⁷⁸ Dan told Longstreth Naniboujou stories, but when asked to explain the drawings on the Pictured Rocks on the Nipigon River, he claimed not to know what they meant, a result, in Longstreth’s

⁶⁷⁶ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon - 1973”, W. Pearson, “Lake Nipigon Licenses”, 24 September 1973, attached to M. J. Brubacher to District Manager, Nipigon, 25 September 1973.

⁶⁷⁷ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 60 - 61, 73.

⁶⁷⁸ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 64 - 65.

analysis, of “racial splitting up”. Dan did offer the information that “the old ones always drop a pinch of tobacco in the water as they go by, for the devil”.⁶⁷⁹

Longstreth, at the Treaty payments at Long Lake, noted that the games that took place after the payments included “old men carrying monstrous loads with the tump-line”,⁶⁸⁰ reminiscent of the competitions among the *voyageurs* of a hundred years before.

Back at Orient Bay, Longstreth accepted an invitation from Angus Alexander MacDonald to travel on the tug *Ogama* on a trip northwards on the Lake and then undertake a canoe trip up the Onaman River. The *Ogama* was piloted by John Mickelson, guided by two “Indians”.⁶⁸¹ As the tug made its way through the Shakespeare group of islands, Longstreth befriended “one of the Indians, a half breed” named Jerry. Jerry, it turned out, was a cousin to Dan Morrisseau.⁶⁸² Jerry spoke fluent English, unlike his “Indian” companion on the boat, who was from Fort Good Hope in the Northwest Territories. Jerry told Longstreth several more Naniboujou stories.⁶⁸³ The party continued their journey up the Onaman River by canoe, where Longstreth observed that

Jerry always ran on the portages. This was because he had once worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company, where the rule seemed to be, “no run, no eat.” “Suppose”, he said, “we had the night camp on this side a portage. Breakfast would be cooked on the other. Each man would pick up his two-hundred-pound sack and run with it to the breakfast place, and the last few men would get no breakfast.”⁶⁸⁴

Up a tributary of the Onaman River, the group located a gold prospector working without a licence, whom “the Indians” had reported to MacDonald.⁶⁸⁵ On the return trip, Longstreth and MacDonald travelled down the west side of the Lake in a canoe, stopping at Whitesand to fish for trout. At Wabinosh Bay, they met “a young ranger, only seventeen, the embodiment of

⁶⁷⁹ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 69 - 70.

⁶⁸⁰ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 94.

⁶⁸¹ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 112, 114.

⁶⁸² Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 115.

⁶⁸³ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 115 - 135.

⁶⁸⁴ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 124.

⁶⁸⁵ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 128.

shyness, the son of an Irishman and an Indian woman”.⁶⁸⁶ Moving on to Nipigon House, they found the trader, Paddy McGuire, was away, but met his wife and children, of whom the “young ranger” was one. “I have rarely seen such lovely children”, remarked Longstreth. From the top of a high hill near the post, Longstreth could see Dog Island, “while to the north the shacks of an Indian village were clear”. The younger of the boys taking Longstreth to the viewpoint told him of seeing a “windigo” behind a boulder earlier in the day.⁶⁸⁷ The tug *Ogama* came the next day to pick up the travellers and take them back to Orient Bay.

Longstreth’s next adventure was to travel by canoe from Orient Bay to the camp of a wealthy tourist at Pine Portage. For this journey, he was escorted by Stewart Michel, “a happy-faced breed” of about twenty-two, and Antoine Nanni, a boy of about seventeen.⁶⁸⁸ Michel explained to Longstreth that the Devil’s Rapids on the river was so called because “the devil reached out for an Indian now and then at this spot”. Nanni did not speak to Longstreth, but Michel and Nanni conversed in Ojibwe.⁶⁸⁹

Longstreth then took a trip along the north shore of Lake Superior east of the mouth of the Nipigon River. At Michipicoten, he found a private yacht and a private seaplane in the harbour, to the surprise of his escort Worth, who assured him that “most of the year there are just two families and myself here and a few Indians at the mission”. They visited Charles Oakes and his family at the harbour, and then Longstreth and Oakes went out in a gasoline boat with “Jim Andrie, an Ojibway”.⁶⁹⁰ Longstreth described Michipicoten as follows:

Here used to be an important post of the Hudson’s Bay Company, whence in a sixteen days’ journey supplies were shipped in to James Bay. Once it had known the activities of mining days, and Mr. Clergue had built a cabin on a charming islet...now raspberries crept from crevice to crevice, the blueberries rotted unpicked, and Michipicoten was sinking into dissolution with not ten souls looking on.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁶ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 136.

⁶⁸⁷ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 138 - 139. See also topographic map of the area reproduced with this report.

⁶⁸⁸ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 147.

⁶⁸⁹ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 148 - 149.

⁶⁹⁰ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 226 - 228.

⁶⁹¹ Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 228 - 229.

After a summer sightseeing and sport fishing, Longstreth decided to see some of the commercial fishing operations on Lake Superior. He took the CPR train down to Rossport, “the chief fishing village on the north shore of Lake Superior”. He arrived early in the morning and invited himself aboard a steam tug belonging to Fred Gerow, who was about to leave to check his nets thirty miles away at the Lamb Light[house]. The crew of the boat was Gerow’s three young sons and two “Indians”, one of whom was Zeno Singleton, “a breed”. Singleton recalled passing by in a canoe earlier in the summer and seeing Longstreth fishing with Stewart Michel on the Nipigon River. The fishermen hauled in some trout in the nets near the lighthouse, and Longstreth visited with the keeper (Alexander).⁶⁹²

Longstreth’s stories, while designed to be picturesque rather than scientific, identify some key “half breed” family members at various points around Lake Nipigon and on Lake Superior: the Morrisseaus, Mickelson, Michel, McGuire and Singleton. Except for John Mickelson,⁶⁹³ Longstreth distinguished these people as “breeds”, possibly within a broader category of “Indian”, noting their dual characteristics such as language skills (fluency in English as well as Ojibwe), knowledge of “Indian” stories and woodland skills, and greater ease with non-Aboriginal people. He recorded the continuation of some fur trade traditions such as the competitions at the portages, as well as the participation of the “half breeds” in the newer occupations of catering to tourists and commercial fishing.

During the period 1935 to 1944, the following commercial fishing licences for Lake Nipigon were recorded in Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources files: Allan McLeod, Angus McLeod, Jas. Wooldrage, Nipigon Fisheries, Grand Bay Band of Indians, John Kowtiash, T. Bouchard, F. S. Williams, Alex McKay/Albert Brulez/Roger McKee, Gull Bay Indian Band, P. Morrisseau, Kenneth McLeod, F. T. James Co. Ltd., A. F. Licknor, Fred Netamegisic, Andrew Sutherland, Robert Hardy, and John Hardy.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹² Longstreth, *The Lake Superior Country*, 268 - 272.

⁶⁹³ It is not clear if this is the John Michelson identified by J. A. Macrae as a Norwegian married to a Swampy Cree woman from Moose Factory in 1898 (who later was the lighthouse keeper on Lamb Island), or the son of this couple, John Michelson, who is listed in the 1901 census with the Red Rock Indian Band as an “Ojibwa OB” age 28.

⁶⁹⁴ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon - 1973”, W. Pearson, “Lake Nipigon Licenses”, 24 September 1973, attached to M. J. Brubacher to District Manager, Nipigon, 25 September 1973.

In the 1940s, the Longlac Pulp and Paper Company built a company town at Terrace Bay on Lake Superior to house the workers at its mill. The new town also provided a home for workers at the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission Aguasabon power development combining the Long Lake and Ogoki Diversions.

The following commercial fishing licences for Lake Nipigon were recorded in Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources files for the years 1945 to 1954: Andrew Sutherland, J. Sutherland, Nipigon Fisheries, Kenneth McLeod, Allan McLeod, James Wooldrage, F. S. Williams, A. W. McLeod, Angus McLeod, Estate of A. F. Ticknor/G. H. Humby/Kenneth McLeod, F. T. James Co. Ltd., Ray McKee, Andrew Sutherland jr., McIntyre [Bay] Band of Indians, John Kowtiash, Gull Bay Band of Indians.⁶⁹⁵ During this period, although the number of licences was reduced, the amount of thousand feet of net allowed per licence was increased. The licences issued to Andrew Sutherland were for pound nets instead of the long nets allowed under the other licences.

The Lake Nipigon licences recorded for the period 1955 to 1964 were: James Wooldrage/H. D. Goodman Estate/Frank Goodman, Mrs. Alma McLeod/Oscar Libe Koljie/Case and August Par, Ray McKee/Thomas Chevrier/Claude L. Hadley, Andrew Sutherland jr. (pound nets), Andrew Sutherland, F. S. Williams/Valentine Bergman/Geo. H. Humby, Angus McLeod, J. Sutherland, F. T. James Co. Ltd./Alonzo W. Nuttall, Kenneth McLeod, McIntyre Bay Band/Rocky Bay Band of Indians, Gull Bay Band of Indians, Malcolm Sutherland/Edward Soloway, Whitesand Band of Indians, Gull Bay Band (Aquin), Gull Bay Band (Readman), Rocky Bay Band (Readman), Ray Hardy. During this period, an increasing tendency to issue shared licences can be observed, as well as the issuance of additional licences for the Indian Bands on Lake Nipigon.⁶⁹⁶

Between 1965 and 1973, the following licences were issued for Lake Nipigon: Frank Goodman/Oscar Libe Kaljic/Case and Ilma Case/Harold John Davison, Claude L. Hadley, Andrew Sutherland, Geo. H. Humby (Kemp Fisheries), Angus W. McLeod, J. Sutherland, Alonzo W. Nuttall, Kenneth W. McLeod, Rocky Bay Band of Indians, Gull Bay Band of

⁶⁹⁵ AO, RG1-296, file "Lake Nipigon - 1973", W. Pearson, "Lake Nipigon Licenses", 24 September 1973, attached to M. J. Brubacher to District Manager, Nipigon, 25 September 1973.

⁶⁹⁶ AO, RG1-296, file "Lake Nipigon - 1973", W. Pearson, "Lake Nipigon Licenses", 24 September 1973, attached to M. J. Brubacher to District Manager, Nipigon, 25 September 1973.

Indians, Whitesand Band of Indians, Ray Hardy (Ind.), Edward Soloway/Orville Wieben, Nate McGuire/Denis Lesperance/Mike McGuire/Lake Nipigon Metis Corporation, Cliff Sutherland, Andrew Sutherland, Malcolm Sutherland, John and Patrick Hardy, J. Sutherland/C. Sutherland, Ernest Enders.⁶⁹⁷

The presence of the licence for the Lake Nipigon Metis Corporation is noteworthy in this list. This organization was incorporated in October of 1969. Pat McGuire, the son of Paddy McGuire, whose family Longstreth met at the Nipigon (Gull Bay) HBC post in the early 1920s, was the first president and driving force behind the LNMC and later (1971) the Ontario Métis and Non-Status Indian Association (OMNSIA). McGuire had a home in Macdiarmid. Other early Métis organizations in the Lake Nipigon/Lake Superior area include the Armstrong Indian and Metis Association (incorporated 1970), the Garden River Metis and non-Status Indian Association (incorporated 1972), the Geraldton Metis and non-Status Indian Association (incorporated 1973), the Longlac Metis and non-Status Indian Association (incorporated 1973), the Macdiarmid North Wind Metis and non-Status Indian Association (incorporated 1973), the Nipigon Metis and non-Status Indian Association (incorporated 1974), Red Rock Metis Association (incorporated 1975). The Métis of the Lake Nipigon/Superior area were the first in Ontario to develop their own organizations to promote the interests of the Métis in economic development and programme delivery.⁶⁹⁸

A small Indian Reserve for the Rocky Bay (also known as McIntyre Bay) Indian Band was set apart in 1971, adjacent to the hamlet of Macdiarmid.

In October of 1972, Chief Patrick Hardy of the Rocky Bay Band forwarded a proposal to the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests by the commercial fishermen of Lake Nipigon, endorsed by Pat McGuire of the Lake Nipigon Metis Corporation. Among the recommendations in the proposal was that “any meeting concerning Lake Nipigon should be held in Macdiarmid...since Macdiarmid residents has [sic] the biggest investments in Lake Nipigon”. This proposal was signed by forty-four persons, including members of the Hardy, Goodman,

⁶⁹⁷ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon - 1973”, W. Pearson, “Lake Nipigon Licenses”, 24 September 1973, attached to M. J. Brubacher to District Manager, Nipigon, 25 September 1973.

⁶⁹⁸ OnCorp Direct Ontario Company Searches, “Metis”, database accessed March 2010.

McGuire, Dumas, Thompson, Adam, King, McLeod, Bouchard, Kowtiash, Morriveau, and Lesperance families.⁶⁹⁹ In responding to one of the elements of the proposal, Chief Ranger W. R. Doyon proposed trying a coarse fish fishery in 1973 with “Metis fishermen”.⁷⁰⁰ At a subsequent meeting with Department of Lands and Forests staff held in Macdiarmid, Ray Hardy, A. W. McLeod, and C.L. Hadley of Macdiarmid were present as licence holders, as well as Clifford Sutherland and Ernie Enders of Beardmore and Chief Hardy of Rocky Bay. Licence holders not represented at the meeting were identified as Andy Sutherland and Ken McLeod of Macdiarmid; Frank Goodman and Dave Davidson of Beardmore, Alonzo Nuttall of Hurkett, George Humby of Thunder Bay, the Lake Nipigon Metis Corporation, and the Gull Bay Band of Indians.⁷⁰¹

Métis Organizations in Lake Nipigon and Lake Superior, 1971 - 1973

A small number of accessible government documents record the role of Métis organizations in the Nipigon-Superior region in community development, not only for Métis but for the small communities as a whole. In July of 1973, a “Submission on Physical Services for Remote Unorganized Communities” developed by the Indian Community Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services identified Armstrong, Heron Bay North, Hillsport, Hurkett, Jellicoe, Macdiarmid, and Rossport as having active Métis organizations as “representative organizations”, in some cases as the only active community organization. Of Hurkett in particular, the submission indicated that the hamlet was “mostly Metis people, the community is reviving around the Hurkett Metis Association and is over the 100 population mark at present”.⁷⁰² In 1972 and 1973, Pat McGuire, on behalf of the Lake Nipigon Metis Association, wrote to the Ontario Government requesting the establishment of a police service in Macdiarmid

⁶⁹⁹ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon 1970 - 72”, Patrick Hardy to Leo Bernier, 4 October 1972, with attached “The Position of the Lake Nipigon Commercial Fishermen and other interested persons on the status of the Lake Nipigon Fishery”.

⁷⁰⁰ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon 1970 - 72”, W. R. Doyon to District Forester, Geraldton, 16 October 1972.

⁷⁰¹ AO, RG1-296, file “Lake Nipigon 1970 - 72”, W. R. Doyon to District Forester, Geraldton, with attached “Minutes of the meeting between Commercial Fishermen and the Ministry of Natural Resources to discuss the report, ‘The Status of the Lake Nipigon Fishery, 1971’.”, 1 December 1972.

⁷⁰² AO, RG47-138, file “Indian Community -- Unorganized Communities”, Indian Community Branch, “Submission on Physical Services for Remote Unorganized Communities”, July 1973.

and a proposal to keep the sawmill near the hamlet operating.⁷⁰³ In 1974, the Indian Community Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services recommended that the Nipigon Metis and Non-Status Indian Association receive a small grant to “defray the costs of a person engaged to deal with family social and employment problems, providing Native individuals with the most expedient and efficient mode of action appropriate to their immediate needs”. The organization had been attempting to provide some of these services on a volunteer basis, receiving no “outside financial assistance” and relying on volunteers for everything from cleaning and secretarial services to programme development and assistance with social and economic problems. The Nipigon Metis local, according to Indian Community Secretariat staff, had “been instrumental in developing many social and recreational programs” in its community.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰³ AO, RG47-138, file “Indian Community -- Ontario Metis and Non Status Indian Association”, Pat McGuire to Rene Brunelle, 24 August 1972; Pat McGuire to Jack Stokes, 12 November 1973; AO, RG47-138, file “Lake Nipigon Area Native People: Indian Community”, Pat McGuire to Wilf Weldon.

⁷⁰⁴ AO, RG47-138, file “Nipigon Metis & Non-Status Indian Association Ind.”, Indian Community Secretariat, Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, “Proposal to Pay Grant”, 20 June 1974.

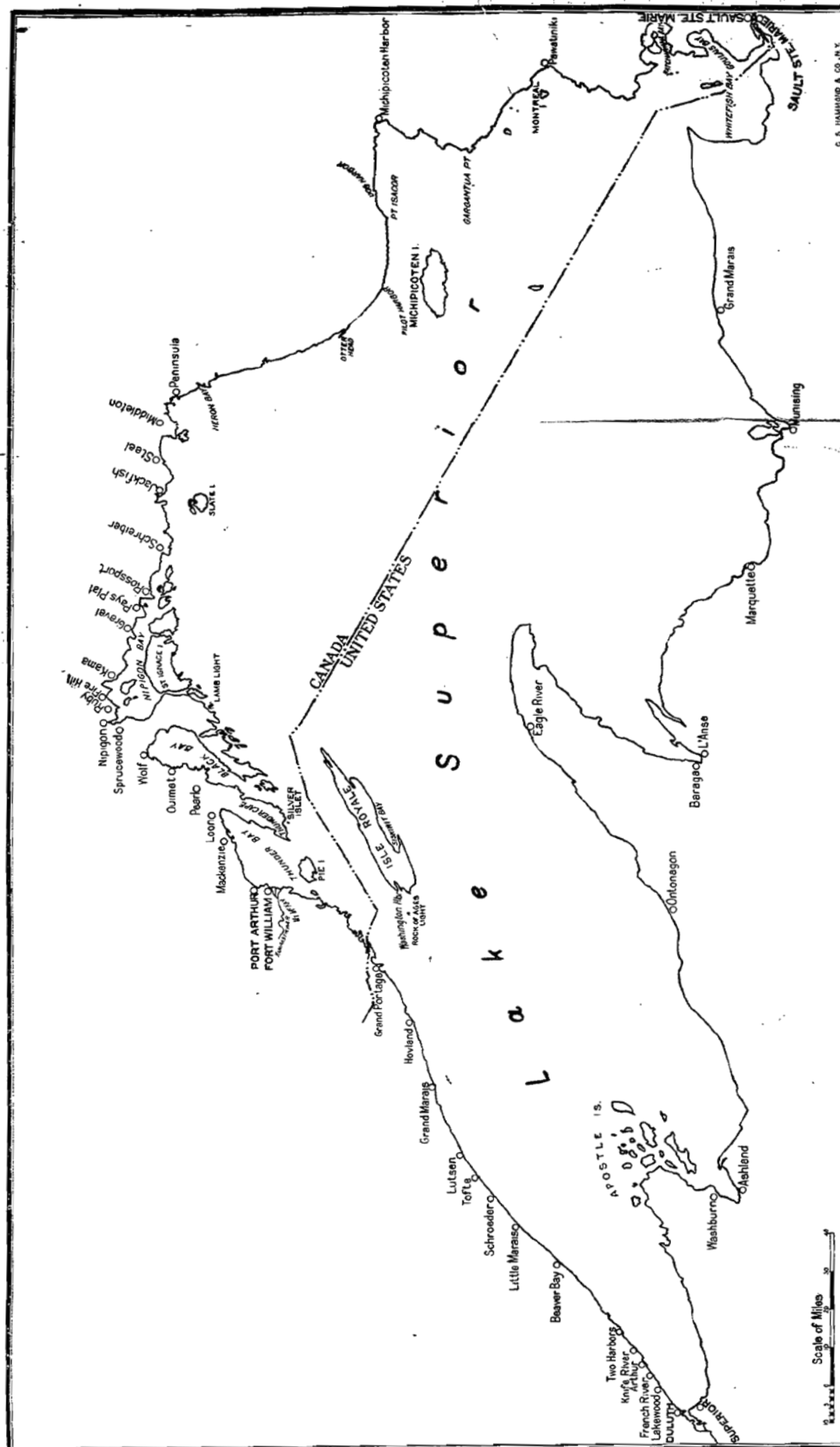
Appendix

Maps and Illustrations



Watercolour, “Miss Le Ronde, Hudson Bay Post, Lake Nipigon”, William Armstrong, dated 1901 (first sketched by Armstrong on a visit in 1867?). Inscription on back reads: “Leronde’s daughter cleaning white fish. Leronde married a squaw.” LAC, Acc. no. 1989-492-5, MIKAN no. 2833402, copy negative no. C-010505





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