

**RURAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION:
GROWING UP IN WILLIAMS LAKE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1945-1975**

by

ANTONIO FILOMENO ARRUDA

B.A., The University of Western Ontario, 1979
B.Ed., The University of Western Ontario, 1980
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1992

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ABSTRACT

Histories of childhood and youth have generally focused upon social policy toward young people. This dissertation chronicles the actual experiences of youth growing up in and around Williams Lake in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia, a “western” community surrounded by open spaces, ranches, and Aboriginal reservations. Williams Lake underwent economic, demographic, spatial as well as social transformation in the first three decades following the Second World War.

Forty-three oral interviews with two sets of subjects who were adolescents in the study area furnished the bulk of the primary evidence. Most of the first “generation” were born in the Great Depression and were teens sometime between 1945 and 1955. The second generation are “baby-boomers” born between 1947 and 1962 who were teens between 1965 and 1975. This joint narrative details select aspects of their lives at school, at paid and unpaid labour, with friends, and at leisure. It suggests changes and continuities in the experience of local youth between 1945 and 1975.

First generation non-Aboriginal subjects grew up with a somewhat coherent peer group albeit with relatively little physical and social contact with Aboriginal youth. Gendered domestic labour around home and property honed work skills and dispositions from an early age. The emergence of local sawmills greatly expanded work options for males but not females. Males also enjoyed comparatively more spatial and temporal freedom throughout their youth.

Second generation subjects grew up in a context of greater urbanization and access to mass culture. The merger of regional youth in the high school along with natural population growth, demographic change including the enrollment of first Aboriginal and then Indo-Canadian youth encouraged factions as well as cultural gulfs among youth in the school and community. Their leisure was comparatively less divided, at least on the basis of gender, as many non-Aboriginal parents eased traditional restrictions upon daughters. With notable exceptions this generation contributed less labour to their household and directed part- and full-time earnings into satisfying their own personal interests.

The author suggests the pattern of youths' recreational use of hinterlands during the period reflects common practice in many Canadian communities located in similar rural and isolated settings. He illustrates how factors such as family affluence and circumstances, gender, "race" and ethnicity continued to mediate the experience of growing up in this post-war period. He concludes many more local accounts of the experiences of youth are needed before any attempt is made at an inclusive national historical synthesis of growing up in Canada after the Second World War.

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PREFACE

This dissertation is an oral history of growing up in Williams Lake, colloquially, “the Laketown,” between 1945 and 1975. It is a contribution to the history of childhood and youth, in the Canadian context a field once described by Patricia Rooke and Rudy Schnell as a “truly marginal subspecialty” of historical scholarship dominated by studies of the child-saving movement, juvenile immigration movement and juvenile delinquency, and yielding a paucity of dissertations. That observation remains as true now as it was a decade ago.¹

Unlike many traditional histories in the field at large, which since the heuristic Centuries of Childhood have focussed upon the changing social sentiment toward the child and childhood itself, the discipline of the child, or public policy toward children, “Rural Youth in Transition” features the actual experience of young people.² It embodies the “bottom-up” perspective, one

¹Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, “Canada,” in Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, eds. Children in Historical and Comparative Perspective (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 179, 181, 182. Even as our historical understanding of childhood and youth in the various contexts of Rome, Third Republic France, Wilhelmine Germany, Sweden, and the United States expands, Canada, unfortunately, remains under-represented. See ProQuest, Dissertation Abstracts on CD-ROM (Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms, 1989-).

²Benchmarks in the field at large must begin with this classic addressing the historicism of the childhood concept, Phillipe Aries, [L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime], Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vantage Books, [1960] 1962). Among works focussing upon the history of social sentiment toward children, the most vigorous responses to Aries' thesis were launched by Linda A. Pollock, Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Boswell, The Kindness of Strangers: the Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); and Shulmith Shahar, Childhood in the Middle Ages (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). For the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century middle class view of American children, see Viviana A. Zelizer, Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children (New York: Basic Books, 1985). On the psychological aspects and discipline of the child, see Lloyd de Mause, “The Evolution of Childhood,” in Lloyd de Mause, ed., The History of Childhood (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974); Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977). On public policy toward children, for the United States, Stephen Schlossman, Love and the American Delinquent: the Theory and Practice of Progressive Juvenile Justice, 1825-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); for England, Marjorie Cruikshank, Children and Industry: Child Health and Welfare in North-West Textile Towns during the Nineteenth Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981); for France, Colin Heywood, Children in Nineteenth-Century France:

that is neither novel nor amply employed in recent historical scholarship.³ This study features, first and foremost, recollections of lived experience. It reflects the fact that, asked about their adolescent lives, subjects viewed their lives primarily in the immediate context of Williams Lake and area, and only secondarily in the larger political and philosophical context of the 1960s, the decade with a “long half-life” that “continues to contaminate our own.”⁴

“Rural Youth” addresses three shortcomings in the study of Canadian childhood and youth. First, it focuses primarily upon the experiences of young people aged thirteen to nineteen, whom we often refer to as “teens” or “adolescents,” as well as “youth,” those aged fifteen to twenty-four.⁵ Second, the study concerns the recent past, specifically, the three decades from the end of the Second World War to 1975. Third, it focuses, not upon urban Canada, but upon a rural, resource-based Canadian town which like many other Canadian communities experienced dramatic change in this post-war period.

Williams Lake in central interior British Columbia, 546 kilometres north of Vancouver and 240 kilometres south of Prince George, provides an excellent opportunity for an historical

Work, Health, and Education Among the Classes Populaires (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and for Canada, Neil Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Lorna F. Hurl, “Overcoming the Inevitable: Restricting Child Factory Labour in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario,” Labour/Le Travail 21 (Spring 1988), as well as Prue Rains and Eli Teram, Normal Bad Boys: Public Policies, Institutions, and the Politics of Client Recruitment (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

³Early exemplars in this tradition are Jenny Kitteringham, “Country Girls Work in Nineteenth Century England,” in Raphael Samuel, ed. Village Life and Labour (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), and David Vincent’s examination of boys’ growing up experiences in Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography (London: Europa Publications, Ltd., 1981).

⁴Peter Collier and David Harowitz, Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the 1960s (New York: Summit Books, 1989), 15.

⁵Canadian Youth Commission, Youth and Jobs in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945).

study of youth growing up in a rapidly transforming social, economic and spatial context.⁶

While change occurred virtually everywhere in Canada after the Second World War, the extent of post-war change in this rural community is particularly striking. Chapter 2 undertakes a more thorough discussion of the setting. It suffices here to point out that between 1945 and 1975, Williams Lake evolved from an isolated cattle shipment village of around 500 people into an important regional centre of about 6,000 with important lumbering manufacturing and services sectors.⁷ Vast improvements in road and air transportation strengthened links both within the area as well as outward to urbanized southwestern British Columbia.

This dissertation details the culture of young people in this area between 1945 and 1975. Considering the dramatic transformation of rural Williams Lake over the course of three decades, I wanted to know what it actually meant to be a young person growing up in this area in each of two time periods, 1945-55 and 1965-75. Forty-three living subjects who were in their teens at some point in one of these decades, collaborated with me in recalling and recording their past in detail unavailable in the sorts of sources which have traditionally informed the history of childhood and youth. Together, we describe for each of the periods, 1945-55, and 1965-75, from the perspective of subjects themselves, the conditions and practices found in young peoples' daily lives at school, in paid and unpaid work, at leisure, and among friends, and peers and in the community. I consider how family circumstances, gender, "race" and ethnicity mediated their experiences.

A secondary task of this dissertation is to isolate continuity and change in select aspects

⁶These distances are established in British Columbia, Ministry of Regional Development, British Columbia Regional Index 1989 (Victoria, Central Statistics Bureau, 1989), 342.

⁷First incorporated as a village in 1929, Williams Lake was designated as a town in 1965 and as city in 1981. The 1971 census population figure of just over 4,000 excluded significant subdivisions encroaching upon the town.

of growing up in and around Williams Lake as it transformed from small village to regional centre. In other words, broadly speaking, what features of youth changed? Which endured? Thus, the core question, “What did you do as a teen in Williams Lake in 1948?” animates this study far more than does any question of an ideology of adolescence, although the two topics are inextricably linked.

The point of view expressed in this study is primarily that of non-Aboriginal and “mixed-race” peoples.⁸ While Aboriginal families populated the reserves and countryside around Williams Lake, few of them resided in the village throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Although there is need to create more inclusive histories in general, proportional representation of the Aboriginal adolescent experience necessitated doubling the sample size of subjects in order to probe the gender, class and personality complexities within the category of “race.”⁹ That experience simply demanded its own separate treatment as does the case of Indo-Canadians. While I do investigate the experiences of some Aboriginal and Indo-Canadian youth, pragmatic reasons (I could not undertake one hundred and twenty or so interviews), never mind the issue of appropriation of voice, prevented a more thorough examination of those realities.

The orientation of this dissertation is more micro- than macroscopic. It differs, for instance, from Doug Owrarn’s treatise of the Canadian “pig in the python” generation. Born at the Right Time provides an invaluable context on a national level of a generation shaped by shared historical experience (by such things as the Cold War, a cult of domesticity, and growing

⁸I employ “Aboriginal” to describe people who self-describe themselves variously as “Indian,” “First Nations,” or “Native” peoples. I prefer “non-Aboriginal” to “White” when describing all others because “White” was not then, nor is now sufficiently inclusive so as to include all other peoples. I offset the term, “race,” following the British sociological and anthropological tradition to emphasize it is a socially and not biologically constructed category. See Robert Miles, Racism (London: Routledge, 1989).

⁹See for example, Antonio F. Arruda, “Expanding the View: Growing Up in Portuguese-Canadian Families, 1962-80,” Canadian Ethnic Studies. Special Issue on the Family XXV, 3, (1993): 8-25.

nationalization and activism). In other words, unlike this study, Owram's history of the baby-boomer generation overlooks the complexity of individual lives and regional, never mind local experience.¹⁰

Two decades ago, John R. Gillis suggested an authentic history of youth required an examination of the interface between the expectations of the young and those of their elders while considering the demographic and economic experiences of differently situated class and status groups.¹¹ This dissertation attempts to capture some of that conflict which was central to youth culture in the Laketown, while recognizing both the general constraints adults placed upon youth and the different social locations of subjects. It does not delve deeply into the political and cultural context of their "rebellions," "autonomy" or their "rites of passage" during that "stormy decade," concepts which have framed classic works on adolescence and youth.¹² As with the concepts of children's dependence, separation, protection and delayed adult responsibilities, these ideas are implicit, and sometimes explicit in this discussion, but they do not serve to systematically structure or frame it.¹³

Post-war adolescent culture in the Williams Lake area was partly animated by young

¹⁰Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: a history of the baby boom generation (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1996). On the "momentous occurrences of an era" that shaped collective memory and a "common generational identity" among American college students in the late 1970s, see Arthur Levine, "The Making of a Generation," Change (Sept/Oct 1993): 8-14.

¹¹John Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present (New York: Academic Press, 1974), x-xi.

¹²Albert Bandura, "The Stormy Decade: Fact or Fiction," in Rolf E. Muuss, Adolescent Behaviour and Society: a book of readings. 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, 1980). For enduring works, see G.S. Hall, Adolescence, 2 vols. (New York: Appleton, 1916). Gillis, Youth and History, 1975; and Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the present (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

¹³For this sort of orientation in the field of the history of Canadian childhood, see Sutherland, Children in English Canada as well as Patricia T. Rooke and Rudy L. Schnell, Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada, 1800-1950 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983). For America, see Schlossman, Love and the American Delinquent.

peoples' growing struggle to be clear of any sort of adult confinement in order to seek membership in groups and activities of their own choosing. In the first decade after 1945 adolescence was marked, in the broadest sense, by relative acquiescence to practices established by adults in the theatres of family, school, church and wider community -- in other words, young people appear as relative conformists.¹⁴ Young peoples' struggle for self-expression took root in the greater social permissiveness of the 1960s. In seeking to establish their individual identities, however, Laketown youth of the late 1960s and early 1970s did not reject, but desired to emulate some adult practices, especially ones yielding freedom and pleasure. Certainly, compared to their counterparts in the early 1950s, youth of the 1970s collectively, if not always individually, gained greater access to what Neil Postman has pointed out were adult-oriented privileges.¹⁵

If there was a shift on the part of youth themselves toward self-segregation or at least greater seclusion from adults, by 1975 few teens in this area had achieved functional independence from adults. Adult-fashioned and controlled arenas such as family and school which had shaped the lives of the young people in the 1940s and 1950s, still organized much of the daily life of the boomers. Church, community clubs and sports remained important, although perhaps only into one's early teens. Although many teens, especially males, had the opportunity to become economically independent of parents most failed (intentionally) to do so. By age sixteen, for example, many males had opportunities to participate in the local economic structure to the extent that had they chosen to do so, they might have left their parents' households and set up their own. Most disregarded this option and effectively delayed the onset

¹⁴Gillis, Youth and History, x-xi. The "myth" of rebellious youth North American culture was first refuted using Canadian data in F. Elkin and W. A. Westley, "The myth of the adolescent culture," American Sociological Review 20 (1955): 680-4.

¹⁵Neil Postman, The Disappearance of Childhood (N.Y.: Delacorte Press, 1982).

of adult responsibilities. These youth directed their entire income toward satisfying their own immediate needs and wants, and not those of the family economy. Largely, they enjoyed both independent income and freedom to decide how to dispose of their leisure time, attributes Barbara Hanawalt assumed prerequisite in defining a real youth culture.¹⁶

My tribute to scholars who have channelled me into the perspective that shaped this dissertation is sprinkled throughout its footnotes. Three histories featuring young peoples' lives front and centre are particularly relevant. The most immediate and obvious influence upon its theoretical framework and methodological perspective are the histories of Canadian childhood constructed by Neil Sutherland in the last two decades, much of which culminates in his latest comprehensive publication, Growing Up.¹⁷ In the 1980s, Sutherland relinquished a focus on social policy and sentiment toward Canadian children and published a series of studies of the actual experiences of some Canadian children between the 1920s and the age of television. Oral testimony, mostly drawn from urban and rural British Columbia contexts, Vancouver and Evelyn (in the north central part of the province), constitutes much of Sutherland's evidence. Where this study differs from Sutherland's is in its intent to discern change as well as continuity in young peoples' experience over time.

Elliott West and Elizabeth Hampsten are also noteworthy as their historical studies of American children illustrate how historians of children, despite using similar (autobiographical)

¹⁶"To have a real youth culture youth must have both independent income from wages and freedom to decide how to dispose of its leisure time." By this definition, the Middle Ages had no youth sub-culture. Barbara Hanawalt, Growing Up in Medieval London: the Experience of Childhood in History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11-12.

¹⁷Neil Sutherland, Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

sources, formulate different narratives.¹⁸ West employed hundreds of autobiographies in order to bring American frontier children back to life, arguing that through their labour children were indispensable to the development of the frontier family economy and thereby to the frontier itself. In exploring and growing up with the country, West theorized, children thereby “shaped who they would become” and the uniqueness of their experiences contributed to “the making of a region, the West, and to our evolving national character.”¹⁹ Elizabeth Hampsten also concluded that children’s labour was invaluable to the family’s survival in the post-frontier American Midwest, but unlike Sutherland or West, she assumed a far more critical view of their growing up experiences. Hampsten painted a bleak portrait of children facing “regressive” shorter childhoods dominated by work – childhoods quite unlike those she thinks were evolving in American cities. Hampsten finds in their lives despair, misfortune, and hardship. Unlike the case in this dissertation, we see pain on almost every page. Surely at least a few lives were filled with more than just tears.

What justified my focus upon youth in the Williams Lake area as opposed to Prince George, Hope, or Nanaimo, British Columbia? Many of the narratives such as those concerned with dating, alcohol and drug use, or hockey, for example, might easily have been drawn from many contemporary Canadian communities. First, for reasons more elegantly articulated by Ruth Sandwell, I desired to focus upon a British Columbia rural instead of urban setting although neither one is in danger of over-representation in the history of Canadian childhood and

¹⁸Elliott West, Growing Up With The Country: childhood on the far western frontier (Albuquerque: State University of New Mexico, 1980); Elizabeth Hampsten, Settlers' Children: growing up on the Great Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

¹⁹West, Growing up with the Country, xviii-xix.

youth.²⁰

Second, there was my connection with and knowledge of this particular community and area. Like Katie Jean Kurtz, one of the subjects of this study who spent two short but formative years in Williams Lake, I was simply drawn back to the Cariboo-Chilcotin. I am an “insider” by virtue of my modest knowledge of the community’s and region’s geography, schools, and people. Between 1980 and 1988 I taught in the local school district: for two years in Horsefly’s Elementary Junior Secondary School; for four years at Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary in Williams Lake and for a year in the city’s Columneetza Senior Secondary. I was active in local community life, interacted with people from a variety of occupational and educational background, had travelled, camped and fished across the region, and knew a little of its history.

The third part of the answer lies in Joy Parr’s Gender of Breadwinners, a startling and compelling illustration of how workplaces influence gender roles.²¹ The book stirred me to imagine how emergent lumber mills might have transformed what was, in 1945, a tiny village of wooden sidewalks, unpaved roads, and a single school. I began to ponder the ways in which new workplaces offering permanent, well-paid, and gendered jobs might have played upon the psyche and life course of local boys and girls in transition from the school to work and even marriage.

In Growing Up with the Country, Elliott West made a passionate case as to why the human history of a region cannot be complete without at least some attention being paid to its

²⁰See R. W. Sandwell, “Introduction,” Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

²¹Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

youngest participants, children, the “frontier’s most versatile workers.”²² With this notion in mind, “Rural Youth in Transition” is a history of the most silent constituency of a Canadian community, its young people. Stories about young people may sometimes dominate the news, but this is a story written from their point of view. It is animated by a sense of urgency to capture memories of the way life was for rural youth before flickering memories of that past mutate, fade or are lost forever. This study is intended to be heuristic. Hopefully, it will motivate individuals to commit their memories to print or tape and not have others do so on their behalf. Its preserved narratives may resonate for many British Columbians, if not Canadians, who will see in a place such as Williams Lake something of the community they once knew.

Given the paucity of historical studies of post-war adolescence, “Rural Youth” is a deliberate effort to relay the collective story along a broad spectrum of topics (See Appendix I). Where there was a choice, aspects of adolescence in this area were often amplified with several narratives and not just one. I know from my own adolescence in Manitouwadge, in Northern Ontario, in the early- to mid-1970s, that many subjects’ stories were not particular to the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Yet this dissertation focuses upon a particular place without engaging in a systematic comparison of local patterns of adolescence with those in other regions across Canada.

Thus, this piece is a partial response to Paul Axelrod’s recent challenge to Canadian historians: it is far more an attempt at the individual “portrait” he prescribed as a new bearing in

²²West cites a pioneer mother: “When all is said and done, man alone never settled a country, never built an empire, never even stayed ‘put’ unless accompanied by wife and children... the unconquerable spirit of man may subdue, but it never yet has settled a new country; the family does that.” West, Growing Up with the Country, 245-8.

Canadian historiography -- and far less an effort at the whole "canvas."²³ As a local study of growing up in one area of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, it begins to represent the array of adolescent experiences across this region. It can only begin to suggest what is distinctive about British Columbian and perhaps rural Canadian adolescence in the years after the Second World War when many other Canadian places sprang from tiny settlements into small cities casting economic and cultural shadows upon their own rural hinterland while maintaining important continuities with their rural past. In any case, the history of Canadian childhood and adolescence needs far more portraits before any "big picture" is assembled with any accuracy.

²³Paul Axelrod, "Historical Writing and Canadian Education from the 1970s to the 1990s," History of Education Quarterly 36, 1 (Spring 1996): 19-38, 38.

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Chapter 1

Memory, Oral Narrative and Reconstructing Adolescence

One feature of the modern sensibility is dazzling in its implausibility: the idea that what has been forgotten is what forms our character, our personality, our soul.¹

No matter how integrated, coherent, and structured our experience of the past 'already' is one cannot deny that the historian must piece together, interpret, articulate, and configure remnants of the past in constructing a narrative about it. And this will always leave room for suspicions of misrepresentation.²

In December 1948, fourteen year old Katie Jean Kurtz was uprooted from her native Vancouver home, school and neighbourhood.³ Hoping to overcome financial misfortune, the Kurtz family packed the family car and set out to seek fresh economic opportunities in the tiny village of Williams Lake located over 500 kilometres away in the Central Interior region of British Columbia. Katie Jean, her parents and three siblings took refuge from their first Cariboo winter in two rough cabins. Katie Jean still remembers her father's humiliation at the time: "He didn't want anyone from Vancouver to come up and see how we were living." After struggling with an autocourt enterprise in Williams Lake for less two years, Katie Jean's family abandoned the village in the summer of 1950, the summer she turned sixteen.

Katie Jean Kurtz, in her late sixties at the time of the interview, treasured wonderful

¹Ian Hacking, "Memoro-politics, trauma and the soul," *History of the Human Sciences* 7, 2 (1994): 29-52, 33.

²Andrew P. Norman, "Telling It Like It Was: Historical Narratives on Their Own Terms," *History and Theory* XXX, 2 (1991): 119-135, 128.

³All forty-three of the subjects of this study have been given pseudonyms. All including the Japanese and Sikh males were given Anglicized first names to reflect the fact they grew up within the dominant society with such names.

memories of that short but influential period of residence in Williams Lake. Unlike her father, Katie Jean quickly fell in love with the village and the new range of activities compressed into an area roughly the size of her old Vancouver neighbourhood. In January 1949, she was ushered into a wood-heated classroom in the annex of the Williams Lake Elementary-Senior High School which now served as the high school. The principal, Joe Phillipson (later the deputy minister of Education), introduced her to Owen Kerley, her new teacher, and to her new class, twenty-one grade nines and tens, many of whom were from outlying ranches and boarding in private homes or at the Catholic-run residence, Rosary Hall. Katie Jean was quickly accepted by her classmates, especially the girls whom she found to be especially friendly. Almost immediately she joined in some of their activities. She fell in love with skating, for example, a favourite after school pastime with village girls. Among the first items ordered through the Sears catalogue were a red parka and skates, items cherished and still in her possession.

This temporary residence in Williams Lake became an impressive period in Katie Jean Kurtz's life course, shaping her identity as well as her long-time image of the region. It was there she met Jim Holt. Reminiscing about her teen years, she recalled many happy hours with the elderly cowpuncher whose horses, photographs and tales of cattle drives and life out in Chilcotin only served to whet her appetite for horses, the outdoors, and the dream of owning a ranch one day. Indeed, to the disappointment of her parents who re-established themselves back at the coast, Katie Jean returned to interior British Columbia several years later to teach in a small and isolated one-room Chilcotin school. She was then barely out of her teens, armed with four months of Normal School, and fortified by an image of a romantic west forged in those early adolescent years. Many years later, she would return yet again, this time as an artist

in order to capture impressions of the Chilcotin.

Katie Jean's oral narrative, lovingly told, provides a glimpse of adolescence in and around Williams Lake in the first decade following the Second World War. It also suggests Katie Jean was in many ways typical of girls her age in the village. She was raised in a two parent household with "strict" parents. She grew up performing myriad domestic tasks but never paid labour outside the household. Her enrollment in the only village school largely determined her peer socialization. Warm friendships were struck immediately with schoolmates in her small, "closely-knit" combined grade nine and ten class. Her friends were local or country "White" girls as Aboriginal heritage was usually hidden or downplayed.

Katie Jean was also typical insofar as she abided by prevailing norms concerning a teenaged girl's freedom. Her parents, especially her father, imposed temporal and spatial restrictions upon her leisure time. Both parental and societal values were internalized as "common sense" understandings. Like most girls Katie Jean did not consider challenging parental restrictions, nor did she fight prevailing norms. As adults, she and the other subjects of this study expressed that cultural hegemony in clear and simple terms: "I didn't even think about it [rebellious]," or "We didn't even question it."

Of the many hours teenage girls spent out-of-doors, walking, swimming at the nearby lake, biking and hiking in the summer and skating, tobogganing and cross-country skiing in the winter, most were spent in the company of other females. Katie-Jean recalls only "a few" girls in her grade nine and ten class associated somewhat more freely with boys in their leisure time. By the time Katie Jean left Williams Lake just before her sixteenth birthday, she had not yet, she claimed, ever dated, used alcohol or drugs, and aside from walking to and from the local skating rink, broken an implicit sunset curfew: home by dark, summer or winter.

In 1968, twenty years after Katie Jean stepped inside the village's school, another youth, thirteen year-old Cal Reid, left one of Williams Lake's small elementary schools and entered grade eight at Williams Lake Junior-Senior Secondary School. Cal was typical of male subjects born in the 1950s in the Laketown. He grew up in a two-parent household with a modicum of household chores (which he seems to have performed with more enthusiasm than most males). Like most subjects of Katie Jean's generation, much of his adolescent leisure time was spent out-of-doors whether at the family lakeside cabin, at a relative's or friend's ranch, or skating at the local rink or on the frozen lake just below the village. As with most mid-teen males (but not females) in Williams lake, Cal had little difficulty securing a well-paying job part-time while going to school. He took it for granted full-time employment offering excellent remuneration and benefits was a likely option if he dropped out of school before graduating grade twelve.

One of the aspects of adolescent culture that had changed most dramatically since Katie Jean's time was school culture. The student population had grown tremendously over the two decades. Thus, Cal Reid, born and raised in the Laketown and familiar with many of its adolescents, found the elementary-secondary school transition an almost overwhelming experience. He recalled age thirteen as a transformative year that stands out in his memory of adolescence: "Grade eight. That was the big one." Here he stood, thrust into halls teeming with hundreds of students, enough grade eights alone to warrant multiple classes by grade: Grade 8A, 8B, 8C, and so on.

Once in the high school, Cal faced stiff competition from his peers in athletics. Ironically, despite a greater offering of extra-curricular sports in the high school compared to their elementary school, proportionately fewer students -- a small core -- participated on school

sports teams. Consequently, many grade seven students active in sports in their elementary schools, even athletic ones such as Cal, suddenly found themselves unable to secure positions on a high school sports team. While still in the junior high grades, Cal abandoned extra-curricular sports in the school in order to focus upon community-organized hockey.

In 1973, Columneetza, the town's only senior high school was not only adult-structured into distinct grades and classes, but it had become decisively fragmented by youth themselves. Cal recalls youth sorted themselves into well-defined social groupings. Cliques, a palpable daily feature of school life, also permeated the school-community boundary. Male and female subjects both articulated a male-oriented typology of youth groups. Cliques coalesced around interests, the "heads" around drug usage for instance, and the "jocks" around school athletics. They formed around common lifestyles. Terms such as "ranch," "cowboy" or "dorm kids" often referred to the same individuals. Other nuclei included a common geographic origin. Youth from Glendale, for example, differentiated between the "the North Lakeside guys" and those "from South Lakeside," while "town" youth looked upon those "from Glendale" as "the greasers." Finally, among smaller friendship circles in the school, there appeared at least one group self-described by a female subject as students who found each other by default: "We were the no-fitters." Cal Reid became part of the "hockey players," an exclusive, high status, and powerful group in the school and community. By the end of grade twelve, Cal had witnessed interpersonal and intergroup conflict particularly those involving the "cowboys," "greasers," "hippies" or "heads" both at the school and in some "pretty major bloodbaths" in the community.

There were distinct social cleavages along ethnic and racial lines. Although structural integration of high school Aboriginal students had begun in the 1950s with the phasing out of

“the Mission,” the residential school southeast of town (see Chapter 3), at this juncture “Natives,” or “Indians” were far from being culturally integrated into the mainstream high school culture as it was defined by its more visible reference groups. Similarly, aside from a handful of Indo-Canadian youth, most “East Indian” students, whose families had been attracted to the Laketown by its sawmills, kept to themselves in the school and withdrew entirely from community events.

Cal Reid entered his mid-teens preoccupied by schoolwork, a well-paying part-time job, hockey and partying. By his late teens, unfettered by parental strictures, his weekends consisted of hockey games and post-game drinking alongside teammates. Laketown teens’ drinking habits are legion, if not hyperbolic, among Cal’s generation. In Katie Jean’s adolescence, substance abuse was mostly confined to alcohol consumption among males in their late teens. In sharp contrast, among Cal Reid’s graduating class of 1973, drinking and general substance abuse became prolific among both males and females in the mid-teen years. Miraculously, like many teens his age, male or female, Cal survived the weekend ritual of racing home inebriated over rough gravel roads in the early hours of the morning following a country dance or party. Among his friends, Cal was in fact often the one at the wheel.

Unlike most of his male friends, Cal resisted the lure of earning “big bucks” in the large local sawmills, finished high school, and left the Laketown to complete a university degree on a hockey scholarship. He returned to Williams Lake, married, raised children and resides there now. He makes regular forays from Williams Lake into Vancouver, “the big smoke,” but he is at heart a Laketown boy. He remains active in the Minor Hockey and Williams Lake Stampede associations, two organizations that have shaped the character of the Laketown and many of its youth throughout the historical period.

In order to lay out the principal features of adolescence in and around Williams Lake after the Second World War, I interviewed forty-three subjects who had grown up in the community or within a present-day hour's car drive of current city limits. This is an area delineated in the north, by the community of McLeese Lake; in the east, by Horsefly; in the south, by 100 Mile House, and in the west, by Alexis Creek (See Chapter 2, Illustration 1). Subjects are roughly distributed into two generations. Katie-Jean Kurtz belongs in the first group of nineteen subjects consisting of ten males and nine females, which for simplicity's sake, I henceforth refer to as the "first generation." Fifteen of these subjects were born between 1929 and 1939, entered their teens between 1942 and 1952, and with the exception of 2 seventy year olds, are today in their sixties. The birthdates of three older subjects are 1922, 1923, and 1927.

Cal Reid belongs to the "second generation," a group of twenty-four subjects consisting of thirteen males and eleven females born between 1947 and 1962. Twenty-one entered their teens between 1964 and 1972. Demographically, by Doug Owrām's definition, all are "baby-boomers" born between the end of the war and 1962 and with the exception a thirty-eight year old woman, all are in their forties and early fifties.⁴ Notably, eight, or one-third of this generation are cohorts, although not necessarily friends, born in 1954 or 1955, who were either grade twelve graduates in the Class of 1973 or might have been had they been attending the school. Their narratives permitted a more detailed snapshot of the culture of youth in the Laketown between the late-1960s and mid-1970s. The temporal interval between the first and

⁴Culturally speaking, or in terms of shared historical experience, baby boomers are those born between the end of the war and 1956 and 1957. All but three younger subjects (two born in 1959 and one in 1962) fit this cultural criteria. Doug Owrām, Born At the Right Time: a history of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), xiii, xiv.

second generation subjects serves to accentuate changes and continuities in the growing up experiences over time. By relaxing the rules of cohort studies I also gained glimpses of adolescence in this area before 1945, between 1955 and 1965, as well as after 1975.

I recruited subjects through the technique of snowball sampling wherein a contact suggested other cohorts as well as their typicality. Often, this occurred while subjects leafed through a set of photographs or school annuals. Some remarked, "Oh, you should talk to . . .," or "_____ would be a great person to talk to." In this regard, Cougar 1973-1993 Memory Lane, a booklet compiled by the Class of '73 Reunion Committee, proved an invaluable find. Cougar is a collection of single-page questionnaires completed by the graduating (and some non-graduating) students from the class of 1973. The booklet provides information, as of 1993, on individuals' marital status, their occupations, travels, hobbies, clubs and associations, major accomplishments, likes and dislikes, as well as changes in ambitions since graduation. Judging from the responses most questions seem to have been taken seriously. An advertisement posted on various bulletin boards around Williams Lake yielded only one subject (See Appendix IV).

Thirty-seven of the forty-three subjects were living in and around the Laketown (or the "Lakecity" after 1981) at the time of their interview. Some had left the area for periods of time for school, work, and personal reasons, but returned. Most subjects usually referred me to other local residents, and rarely to those who had moved away years earlier and with whom they did not correspond. For practical and sampling purposes, I sought out some subjects who had left Williams Lake and found the remaining subjects throughout the Lower Mainland and eastern Vancouver Island. Not only were these individuals more accessible, but I surmised their stories of adolescence in Williams Lake would be sharply confined to exactly those years

of residence in the area. In fact, although Katie Jean and several other subjects endeavoured to place the Laketown experience in the context of adolescence elsewhere the resulting narrative proved too thin to allow many comparisons between youth in the Laketown and elsewhere. I decided to cease recruiting new subjects when I began to reach a “saturation point,” or corroborating stories from a variety of subjects from one generation.⁵

A semi-formal interview schedule (see Appendix I) allowed interviewees open-ended responses, but was formulated to address key questions. What was the nature and extent of paid and unpaid work performed by boys and girls? At what ages was such work performed and what changes had there been over twenty years? How had sweeping province-wide educational changes played out in this area? How had the school and its role in young lives changed over time? How had changes to the local economy, notably the rather sudden emergence of new and seemingly-permanent workplace (large sawmills in the fifties and a burgeoning service industry in the sixties), affected Williams Lake families? How had such changes affected family relations and gender identities? What role had the church played in their lives? How had young people spent their leisure time? What changes had occurred in their popular culture? And, in general, what difference did class, gender and ethnicity make in their growing up years?

My choice to rely upon oral history, a methodology based on memory and voluntary storytelling, rather than the written, iconic and documentary sources traditionally favoured by historians of childhood and youth drew restrained criticism from one local historian. This was

⁵This is only true for the non-Aboriginal and non-Indo-Canadian subjects. Bertaux, Daniel, ed. Biography and Society: The Life-History Approach in the Social Sciences (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publications, 1981; see also, Carl F. Kaestle, “Standards of Evidence in Historical Research: How do we Know When we Know?” History of Education Quarterly 32, 3 (Fall 1992): 361-66.

“soft” history. I did search for the traditional “hard” sources such as manuscripts, diaries and journals. I skimmed material such as maps and newspaper clippings (many of these undated), in the Williams Lake Library archival room. Unfortunately, I discovered the local archives housed in the Museum of the Cariboo-Chilcotin closed to my research. Its curator, Diana French, a well-known and long-time local historian of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, noted my persistence but informed me flatly she was familiar with the museum’s holdings and made it explicit that none of the sources that lay unsorted in the museum pertained to my study.⁶ The provincial archives failed to yield reminiscences of childhood and youth in this area. Among subjects themselves, roughly a third of the subjects stated they had kept a childhood diary or journal at some time, but only one woman had done so systematically for a period of years. While all other subjects had lost or discarded such sources, this woman still held her volumes of diaries which she consulted before and during our interview.

Among published works, local classics still only offer a select perspective of the region’s past, often as a mythical frontier. Elizabeth Furniss recently summed its history up quite simply: “The settling of the Chilcotin by non-Natives is reduced to the cliché of the American Wild West.”⁷ Places, like people, are also subject to the so-called erasure and reinscription of culture. In depicting veritable human struggle in the wilderness or on isolated ranches, local authors have also narrated an ethnocentric “imagined community” that generally

⁶See Diana French, The Road Runs West: a Century Along the Bella-Coola/Chilcotin Road (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1994).

⁷For exhaustive, and exhausting elaboration of this point, see Elizabeth Furniss, “Pioneers, Progress, and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia,” BC Studies, No. 115/116. (Autumn/Winter 1997/8): 7-44. Her anthropological study of contemporary “race”-relations in Williams Lake, however, is an excellent, if not provocative reference. See The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

overlooks cultural plurality.⁸ Certainly, most local authors overlooked children. For example, although it is sometimes apparent how central his part-Aboriginal spouse and child are in his life, Eric Collier's well-known 1959 "classic Canadian wilderness tale" of life around Meldrum Creek just east of Williams Lake is too often Collier's romantic recollection of his own adventure.⁹ This imbalance was addressed only recently by the Lee brothers.¹⁰ This exception aside, even the most recent blossoming of popular local history, including Diana French's well-written Road Runs West, blooms mostly on old wood as the colourful offerings continue their focus upon notable pioneers and adult ventures. Remarkably, even female authors still focus mainly on men and men's activities. In short, local authors have yet to focus upon the actual experiences of children and youth in any meaningful never mind systematic way.¹¹ The only academic treatise of children's experiences in this area remains Elizabeth Furniss' tightly-focused anthropological study of the Cariboo Indian Residential School experience.¹² It is therefore appropriate to apply Jay Meechling's observation that children and youth remain, "the last underclass to have their history written from their point of view" to the

⁸This observation was first noted of nation-states. See Benedict R. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1983).

⁹See Three Against the Wilderness (Toronto: General Paperbacks, 1991 [1959]). In fairness to Collier, other works are much more preoccupied with adult perspectives, in particular, Richmond P. Hobson, Jr. Grass Beyond the Mountains with its grand subtitle, Discovering the Last Great Cattle Frontier on the North American Continent (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1993 [1951]); and Paul St. Pierre's "bestselling Canadian classic," Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966).

¹⁰ Todd and Eldon Lee, Tall in the Saddle: Ranch Life in the Cariboo (Surrey: Heritage House, 1995); and From California to North 52: Cariboo Experiences (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994).

¹¹See Irene Stangoe, Cariboo-Chilcotin: Pioneer People and Places (Surrey: Heritage House Pub, 1994), as well as Looking Back at the Cariboo Chilcotin (Surrey: Heritage House, 1997); Diana French, The Road Runs West: A Century Along the Bella Coola/Chilcotin Road (Madeira Park: Harbour Pub, 1994); and Veera Bonner, June Bliss and Hazel Litterick, Chilcotin: Preserving Pioneer Memories (Surrey: Heritage House, 1995).

¹²Elizabeth Furniss' book was "one component of a broader research program undertaken by the Cariboo Tribal Council to assess the long term psychological and social impacts of the residential schools on their communities." See her Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of The Williams Lake Residential School (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 9.

history and literature of the Cariboo-Chilcotin.¹³

Some traditional sources served to contextualize the oral testimony. I examined an entire year's run of the local newspaper, The Williams Lake Tribune, for select years (17 years total) between 1931 and 1974.¹⁴ The legislative library in Victoria remains the only depository in which it is possible to thumb pre-1960 paper copies. I read through the minutes of the first few years of meetings of the board of School District No. 27 after consolidation of schools in 1946. I consulted all published Annual Reports of the Public Schools of British Columbia from 1871 through 1975 especially the reports of School Inspectors and school enrollment figures, the latter of which I used to compile Appendices II and III. Other useful sources were acquired selectively, mostly through personal contacts. These included newspaper clippings, photographs, a dozen or so unpublished manuscripts (most relating to First Nation children at "the Mission"), the minute book of the local Parent-Teacher Association meetings between 1949 and 1959, as well as secondary school annuals.

These "hard" sources preserved certain logistical facts, for example the numbers of pupils in a class, its ratio of boys to girls, the year one school expanded, another was constructed, and so on. But they provided little insight into what Neil Sutherland has called the "interior" dimensions of childhood: how one was treated within the family, the sorts of activities one preferred, the age or year when one might have begun to drive a tractor, cook a full-course meal, date, or begin to consume alcohol. School board minutes or annual reports easily establish the historical "hard facts" of policy changes, for example, the simple record of

¹³Jay Meechling, "Oral Evidence and the History of American Children's Lives," Journal of American History 74, 2 (September 1987): 579-586, 579.

¹⁴Years examined: 1931-33, 1943-46, 1949, 1954-55, 1960, 1965-67, 1970, 1973-74.

the school district's decision to bus students in the fall of 1949, but they completely fail to endow the event with the specific and personal meaning Katie Jean still associates with that watershed event.

I sought to minimize some of the limitations of research involving adult memories explored by autobiographers, novelists, narrative psychologists, and historians.¹⁵ Oral testimony is limited in its ability to recover exact dates and figures. Even if autobiographical memory has developed in individuals by the age of four so that they can recall an image of an important event in their life, the subjects of this study could usually only approximate figures, ages or dates in their youth.¹⁶ Oral testimony proved far more useful in harvesting anecdotes and impressions of the past than in obtaining facts and figures.

Surely historians should expect something more practical from oral testimony than insights into how human beings construct or otherwise relate to their past. As the furor over recent revisionist histories claiming the Holocaust never existed illustrates, "It matters enormously that our histories be true."¹⁷ Did individuals merely present me with socially acceptable life scripts?¹⁸ If they perceived themselves as protagonists and their life

¹⁵A systematic review of the literature is redundant considering the overviews which exist. See Neil Sutherland, "Listening to the Winds of Childhood," Chapter 1, Growing Up; Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History (New York: Routledge, 1991); Ian Hacking, "Memoro-politics, trauma and the soul," 1994; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/revue de la Societe Historique du Canada, 5 (1994); William H. Sewell, Jr. "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities," Social Sciences History 16, 1 (Spring 1992): 479-488; David Thelen, "Memory and American History," Journal of American History 75, 4 (March 1989): 1117-1129; Donald Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1988); Trevor Lummis, Listening to History: the authenticity of oral evidence (London: Hutchinson, 1987); and Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past: Oral History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

¹⁶Patrick Huyghe, cited in Emmy E. Werner, Pioneer Children on the Journey West (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1995), 4.

¹⁷Cited in Norman, "Telling It Like It Was," 131.

¹⁸Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing, 162.

circumstances as “adventure,” how accurate were those projections?¹⁹ To what extent did individuals consciously or unconsciously downplay or edit out details off the way “it really was” in their youth?

All adult perspectives of the past, regardless of their form, warrant the historian’s skepticism. Why should oral narratives of the past told by ordinary people under conditions of anonymity to a single researcher be more suspect than written narratives of prominent figures cast by biographers and autobiographers? Furthermore, many print sources such as police and newspaper reports and the census are rooted in oral evidence.²⁰ An oral interview actually permits two-way communication between researcher and subject, unlike the one-way communication left to those who sift through sanitized diaries, journals, biographies, and autobiographies. Confidence in oral narratives mounts when we begin to hear corroborating stories from a number of people, when we begin to reach in aggregate narratives what Bertaux and Bertaux-Wieme called a thematic saturation point.²¹

As I became more experienced with interviewing, I sought to invoke detailed reminiscences. Subjects became more confident in dating their memories when asked to associate an action or detail with a dated reference point, perhaps their grade level, or whether the described incident occurred in the “new” house, or back at the “old” one. Additionally, interviews were usually preceded (sometimes punctuated) by informal talk stimulated by photo albums, school annuals, or by my growing collection of photographs of the village, classmates,

¹⁹Karl E. Scheibe, “Self Narratives and Adventure,” in Theodore R. Sarbin, Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 130-1; also see Sewell, “Introduction: Narrative and Social Identities,” Social Science History.

²⁰Neil Sutherland, “When You Listen to the Winds of Childhood, How Much Can You Believe?” Curriculum Inquiry 22 3 (Fall 1992), 7.

²¹Bertaux, Biography and Society, 1981.

hockey teams, Scout and Brownie groups. Such things resurrected episodes, memories clustered about a particular event and appeared to “lift into consciousness the more abstruse and out-of-the-way facts or series of facts.”²²

While all interviews are ultimately unique experiences, the interview with Katie Jean Kurtz typified my procedure. Katie Jean, like other subjects, was invited to take part in the study through a process set out by university protocols on research which, among other things, stipulates the voluntary nature of being a subject as well as the right at any time to withdraw themselves, or any information provided, from the project (See Appendix V). With few exceptions, subjects were interviewed in their homes where I spent between one and a half to five hours. Four hours were spent at Katie Jean’s home, three of these on the formal interview itself. Although I had already done so by telephone, I re-explained the study, again sought consent to make an audio-tape of the interview on condition of anonymity and impressed upon her that either one of us could stop the interview or taping at any time, and that she would later receive a copy of the tape or tapes.

If memory is episodic one takes advantage of that phenomenon by attempting to trigger clusters of memories associated with even a small object or event. I learned to begin interviews with the tape recorder running. After instructing Katie to nod toward the tape recorder, or turn it off herself if she wished to tell a story “off the record,” Katie Jean began to reminisce aloud as she reviewed her collection of photographs. These transposed her into the ordinary daily spaces in which she had lived her life: in and around her home; skiing with a close friend; with her dog on the Stampede grounds; alone beside the tree on a hillside which she recalled marked one of her boundaries; with horses; or among her 1949 class of grade

²²Beatrice Webb cited in Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, 167.

nines and tens, all save one of whom she could identify by name.

Except for opportunities to tell a story “off the record,” the tape recorder was left running continuously. Conscious of the recorder, Katie and other subjects undoubtedly left out some stories, but audio-tape also captured many other accounts fresh and flowing in vivo without the mad scrambling with pen and paper, or the necessity of having to ask to hear the story again, a practice which in my experience effectively killed the narrative stream. I could not be sure of what would be said in future interviews or what new questions would be raised which would force a re-examination of interview tapes. Furthermore, I intended to make transcripts which I could sort for patterns.

The interview schedule helped standardize the interviews. I attempted to cover all questions with each subject, often rearranging their order to make for more natural conversation. Sometimes, I stopped interviewees to ask a question. While some interviewers may be perceived to intrude omnipotently and others to remain too politely detached, I struck a compromise. Robert Harney pointed out good interviewers attempt to minimize the effect of their presence but do not hesitate to interrupt in order to “ensure honest results,” for example, to challenge that which seems “patently wrong.” Raising contradictions or similarities with other testimonies could encourage the interviewee to expand upon central themes.”²³

The schedule also evened out peoples’ tendency either to prolixity or taciturnity. Without prompting questions, some passive subjects failed to depart spontaneously upon their own stories of adolescence. They appeared reticent and their stories vague and general, lacking in the details or any sort of conflict which root them to place and time. Were people feeling the need to spare the details of what they may have decided was an uninteresting story? Were

²³Robert F. Harney, Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies, Toronto: MHSO, 1986, [5].

some wanting to tell a large and important story but left paralyzed not knowing where to begin? After all, when an “historian from UBC” is at your kitchen table with a tape recorder waiting to “collect” your memories, how much of the past can you recollect all at once?

I learned at such times to resort to the strategy of the miniaturist, encouraging subjects to begin by detailing the everyday spaces in which they grew, beginning with the layouts of their homes, its appliances, their yard and neighbourhood. An inventory of seemingly trivial details often gave flight to interesting stories I sensed were not yet configured into well-honed plots, or scripts, and which might not have been told “on demand.”

Undoubtedly I influenced the direction and depth of the stories that were told. I did so, consciously and unconsciously, through my own limited knowledge of the area, through the sources I acquired and brought out in the interview, through my selection of questions, because of my very presence and what I might have represented to subjects. Additionally, the emplotment of narratives was probably influenced by the greater contemporary sensitivity to issues of gender and race inequality, or physical, emotional and sexual abuse not only in residential school, but more generally in society.²⁴ There in my collection of copies of old photographs was a 1910 photo of Cariboo Indian Residential School much the way it looked in the early fifties when one subject, Norman Flit, resided there. Unprompted, Norman’s finger went straight to the old fence that he recalled had separated the girls from the boys, his sister from him. For a long while, Norman directed the story. That fence became the springboard for finely detailed, but overwhelmingly bitter memories of his school days.²⁵

²⁴See for example, Breaking the Silence: An Interpretive Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nations Individuals (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

²⁵Apparently the fence was gone by 1956 and boys and girls could be seen playing together two years after a fire ravaged most of the original buildings. Father Leo Casey, “An interview with Sister Josephine Ludwig” (Unpublished paper in possession of author, 1995).

I was surprised at how little subjects were moved by the sorts of agendas that one comes to expect in academic analysis. Most subjects did not themselves point out gendered employment patterns in the Laketown. Nor were most male and female subjects critical of the racialised and gendered nature of sport and organized activities although one woman did laugh exclaiming, “When the hockey game was on that was it!” Commonly, two photographs were shown to subjects in juxtaposition. One is of young males playing hockey in front of the community, another of Queen of the Lake participants posing in bathing suits in front of the community (See Chapter 7). These merely evoked comments concerning either details or the identity of individuals in the photographs such as “Oh, that’s _____’s backyard,” “I remember those boats,” or “That looks like _____.”

The issue of voice is an important consideration in this dissertation. The furious debate over appropriation of voice and concern over the erasure and re-inscription of subjects’ identities first waged in the fields of literary criticism, anthropology, and culture theory, has over the last decade also helped reconfigure history.²⁶ In fact, questions of power relations in memory-making seem to have eclipsed the problematic nature of memory per se.²⁷ David Thelen summarized this recent historiographical problem: “Since people’s memories provide security, authority, legitimacy, and finally identity in the present, struggles over the possession and interpretation of memories are deep, frequent and bitter.”²⁸

I reconcile the oral narratives employed in this study as “joint narratives” constructed

²⁶See for example, Linda Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking for Others,” *Cultural Critique* (Winter 1991-92): 5-32

²⁷For elaboration see Strong-Boag, “Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory.”

²⁸Thelen, “Memory and American History,” 1126.

by interviewer and interviewee.²⁹ I perceive the narratives as an artifact of speaking “with” and not speaking “for” subjects.³⁰ This story is not entirely “their” story. As interviewer and writer, I am hardly the “neutral medium” that some researchers have considered ideal.³¹ Living subjects like Katie Jean, Cal Reid, and Norman Flit are dynamic sources. They suggested new ideas and brought their own sources into the research, often in the form of photographs and newspaper clippings. They corrected themselves, or my misconceptions. Whether or not I asked, they offered explanations for particular actions. They suggested typicality in adolescent experience and elaborated with examples. Even now most are untapped sources who can be contacted with new questions. Sadly, if past practice is any indication, too few of them will ever commit their own stories to tape or other storage medium of their own accord.

This history compromises between featuring people’s own experiences verbatim, analyzing emerging patterns in that experience, as well as historical contextualization. It examines the collective experience of subjects, navigating a course between minimalist author intrusion of the sort seen in Julie Cruikshank’s Life Lived Like a Story and the reductionism of

²⁹On joint authorship, see J. P. Roos, “From Farm to Office: Family, Self-Confidence and the New Middle-Class,” Life Stories/Reçits de vie 3 (1987): 7-20. Polkinghorne gleans from the philosophy of history to provide a good overview of the idea of “joint narratives” in history. Unfortunately, Polkinghorne drowns in his generalizations about the nature of historical narratives and hermeneutical understandings and so fails to offer much in the way of the “rigorous methods and sensitivity” he feels social psychologists can offer historians. Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing. Practitioners of oral history, on the other hand, have tackled methodology more pragmatically and vigorously. Thompson, The Voice of the Past, and Lummis, Listening to History.

³⁰See for example, Harry Robinson and Wendy Wickwire, Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1989).

³¹James H. McMillan and Sally Schumacher, Research in Education: A Conceptual Approach 2nd ed. (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foreman and Company, 1989), 265-6.

Lois Weis's Working Class Without Work.³² It attempts to recapture some sense of the variety of the adolescent experience as influenced by different social locations while recognizing even exemplary scholarly works cannot satisfactorily recreate the multiple paths to adulthood followed by real people.³³ Some contextualization was necessary as subjects did not offer stories of the past that were chronologically or thematically ordered. Nor did they spontaneously place their experiences directly in historical context, for example, of provincial labour or school practices. Asked to speak about their own lives, subjects often did not, and could not, place their own experiences in the context of others' lives.

Ultimately, what has been constructed is an aggregate narrative of transcripts. Stories of individual lives have been sacrificed for the sake of a whole new story. Individual's coherent stories have transcribed, then atomized and the bits reassembled into a novel narrative, a story of stories with a beginning, middle and end perhaps quite unlike any most subjects might have envisioned. I have tried to get the story "right" nonetheless hoping that subjects themselves will, upon some reflection, see it as faithful a rendition of the past as one can achieve out of dozens of different paths.

³²Except for its scholarly introduction, Life Lived Like A Story, a collaborative work, offers little further contextualization for three aboriginal women's stories. Julie Cruikshank with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned, Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Elders (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990). At the other end of the spectrum is a good illustration of ethnographic work wherein "an ambitious fieldworker is imposing a rather narrow and crude portrait on a reasonably subtle people" (John Van Maanen, Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 48. In Lois Weis's critical but ultimately unsatisfying ethnography, adolescent boys in a suburb of a "rust belt" American city are reduced to virulently sexist and racist caricatures who seek little more out of life than a job (like their father's) and domestic wives who will stay at home. At the same time, teenage girls, in contrast, are seen performing neat and rational ends-means calculations aspiring to professional careers while putting off marriage and thoughts of marriage until they are all financially secure. See Working Class Without Work: High School Students in a De-industrializing Economy (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).

³³See Harvey J. Graff, Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Chapter 2

“Alas, Civilization is Catching Up!”

Accounts of ordinary life in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia in the 1920s and 1930s often capture people engaged in intense day-to-day struggles with a hostile environment, risky and labour-intense ranching ventures, isolation, transportation difficulties, and even severe material privation.¹ Indeed, even toughened residents of Anahim, then a lonely spot in the west Chilcotin without store, post office or school, populated by Aboriginal peoples and a few British gentry, acknowledged the difficulties. Anahim might not have been the end of the world, some admitted, ““but you could almost see it from there.””²

A white male-driven mythology about “guts” and “hard work” conquering all still narrates the lives of many people who make a living from the land in this part of the province. The roots of a regional ranching ethos can be traced to earlier days (as late as 1935), when self-fulfilment for men like Wild Horse Panhandle was still measured in relation to their conquest of a wild and feminized Chilcotin frontier:

Yeah -- that’s my gold mine. Grass! Free Grass reaching’ north into unknown country. Land -- lots of it -- untouched -- just waiting for hungry cows, and some buckeroos that can ride and have guts enough to put her over.³

¹For compelling descriptions, see for example, Richmond P. Hobson, Jr., Grass Beyond the Mountains: Discovering the Last Great Cattle Frontier on the North American Continent (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1951), at the time of the writing of this dissertation, the basis of a successful CBC television series, “Nothing too Good for a Cowboy”; as well Eric Collier, Three Against the Wilderness (Toronto: General Paperbacks, 1959); and Diana French, The Road Runs West: A Century Along the Bella-Coola/Chilcotin Road (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1994).

²Cited in French, The Road Runs West, 97.

³Hobson, Grass Beyond the Mountains, 16.

The myth and mentality of the conquest of a frontier casts long historical shadows.⁴ In 1970, near the end of the study period, Chilcotin, a vast expanse of land west of the Fraser River, persisted “as much a state of mind as a piece of geography.” And Williams Lake, “Heart of Cariboo Country,” continued to reflect and market its historical cow-town persona in the face of major diversification of the local economy and creeping change in the region. Visitors and newcomers to the town and region, including Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, gained a sense of “western” heritage and residents’ laid-back “unaffected” manner when experiencing the annual Williams Lake Stampede.⁵ Some quickly sensed the western image was deeply rooted and that the ubiquitous jeans, checkered shirts, cowboy boots and Stetsons were for many residents, perennial, and not ceremonial garb. One observer noted, correctly, Williams Lake was “an all-year cowboy town that doesn’t go western only when they are putting on the wildest western blowout [the Williams Lake Stampede] this side of Calgary.” Change, however, was sweeping the area. “Cows outnumber people in the Big Sky country,” lamented a Williams Lake newspaper in 1971, “but, alas, civilization is catching up.”⁶

A regional self-image of Williams Lake as a “western” community continues to be narrated through promotion pamphlets, postcards, and annual editions of a commercially-successful series of Williams Lake Stampede posters. By the late 1980s, Williams Lake, dubbed “the Lakecity” (it achieved city status in 1981), still boasted British Columbia’s busiest

⁴Williams Lake’s frontier legacy as a “rural settler colony community” is explored in Furniss’ critical anthropological study which is also largely unsympathetic of past or present “cowboy” or settler realities. See Elizabeth Furniss, The Burden of History: Colonialism and the frontier myth in a rural Canadian community (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999). For the argument in the American context, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

⁵The Williams Lake Tribune, 12 August 1970, 1-3.

⁶Tribune, 13 March 1971. For invaluable insights into the character of ranchers in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and their perceptions of change, see the engaging work, Terri Cundy Aihoshi, “The Best Place to Be”: “Keepin’ Cowboy” Through Narratives of Place, Experience, and Identity” (York University, Toronto: Unpublished M.A. thesis, 1992).

stockyards⁷ and Canada's second largest rodeo.⁸ Today, many local residents maintain close contact with the outdoor life of "Big Sky Country," and harbour a keen sense of, and pride in the region's distinctive character, even its isolation from urbanized southwestern British Columbia. Certainly, many who grew up in the country, including some subjects of this study, possess an intimate understanding of, as one subject put it, "that ranch toughness." That special long-term attachment to the land, or as Elizabeth Furniss put it, a "quasi-indigenous local identity," has served to spawn a non-Aboriginal demand for greater voice in the future development of the region.⁹

For decades, several key events helped define the character of Williams Lake. One was the Fall Cattle and Bull Sale with its Klondyke Night festivities, which drew many families from across the region.¹⁰ In 1944, for example, the event drew an estimated attendance of 1200, twice the population of the village.¹¹ The famous Williams Lake Stampede is a more consistent reference point in subjects' narratives. Held at various times in late spring or early summer (for years it has been fixed on the July long weekend) the Stampede sometimes coincided with a Queen of the Lake contest and almost invariably with another for Stampede Queen. Between 1933 and 1950, the winner was the girl who sold the most tickets to the

⁷Diana French, "Celebration 60", unpublished manuscript [n.d.] (1989); for overviews of Williams Lake history, see John A. Roberts, Cariboo: a brief history, 2nd. Ed. (Williams Lake: Williams Lake Public Library, 1986); Irene Stangoe, "Nostalgia," Tribune Casual Country, Annual Supplement, 1983.

⁸Williams Lake Profile, 9.

⁹Burden of History, 98-103.

¹⁰Williams Lake Profile, 14.

¹¹Tribune, 12 October 1944, 1.

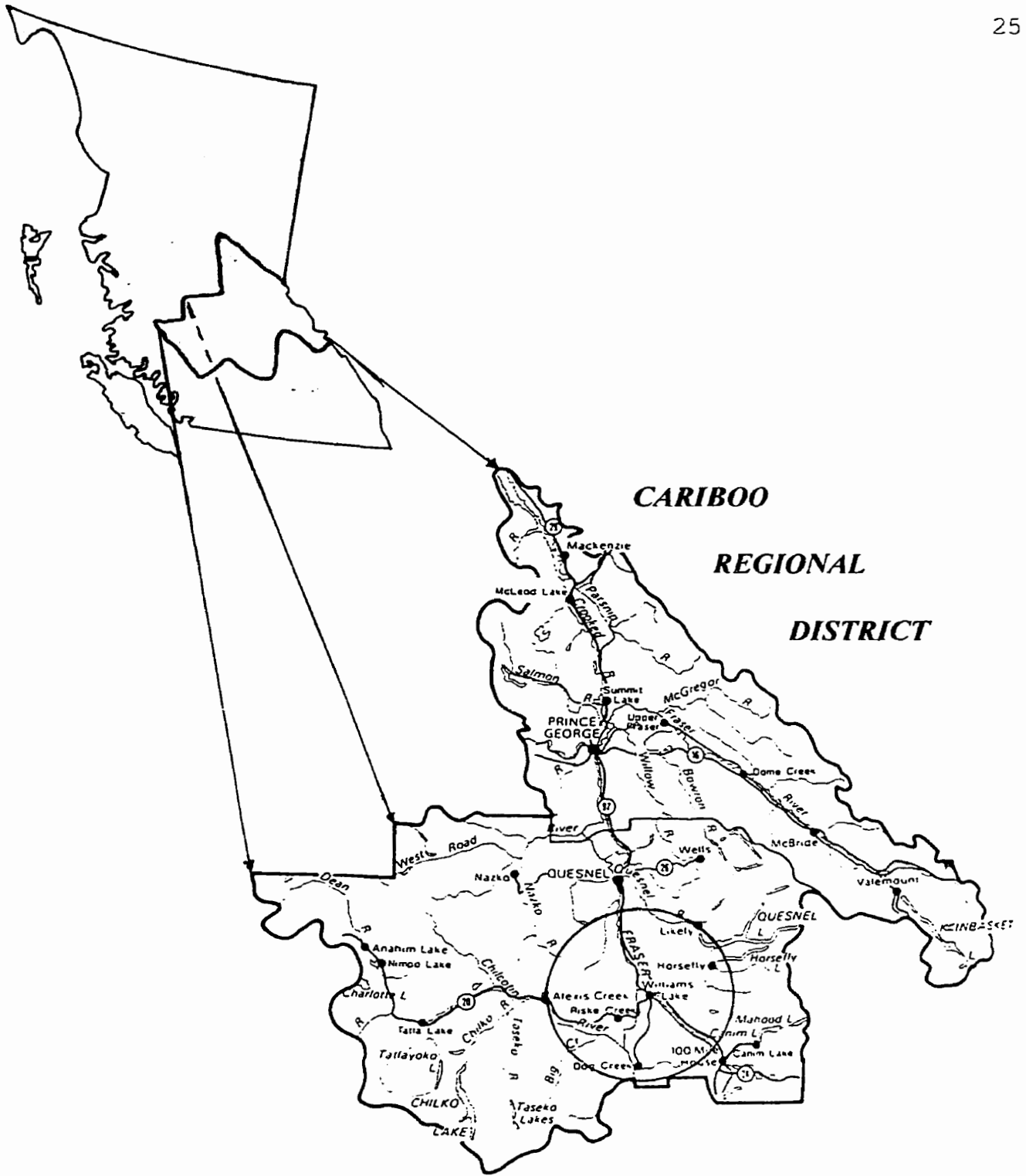
Stampede or Dance.¹² The tradition was interrupted twice, first by the Second World War and again beginning in 1951 when Juanita Haines ceased sales objecting she felt she was being “raffled off.” The contest resumed in 1957 and was in place for the visit of Princess Margaret the next year. Whether Aboriginal people, as a subordinate group, “played Indian” or expressed agency in displaying a distinct cultural identity, they were seen as willing participants in such events.¹³ From 1950 until 1964, the practice was to crown both “White Queen” and “Indian Queen.” In 1964, it became a non-racialised competition for a single Queen (a fact some non-Aboriginals continue to lament as a loss for the “Indian” people) with criteria including “horsemanship, personality, special abilities and beauty of face and figure.” Two years later, Joan Palmantier not only became the first Queen to represent both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, but went on to become Indian Princess of Canada the next year.¹⁴ The Stampede Queen tradition endures to this day despite criticism. Some perceive it is but a beauty contest and suggest the competition for Queen be turned into one for “ambassador,” opening it up for males.¹⁵

¹²“Who’s to be Queen of the Stampede?” Tribune, 30 March 1933, 8; “Stampede and Elk Carnival to be a Riot of Fun,” Tribune, 13 April 1933, 1.

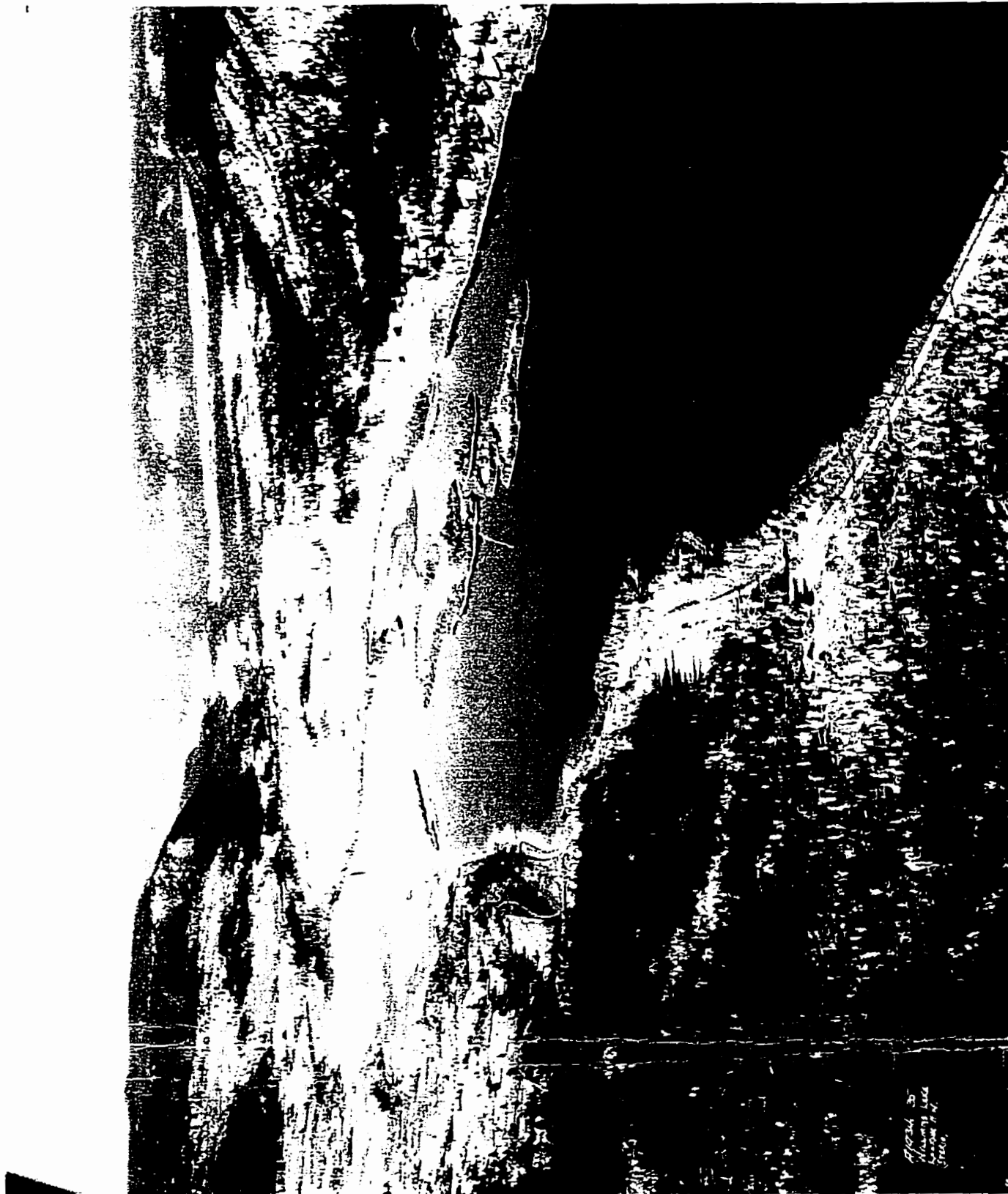
¹³For elaboration, see Burden of History, 171-73.

¹⁴Manuscript, “Who’s to Be Queen of the Stampede.”

¹⁵Tribune, 24 January 1995, A8.



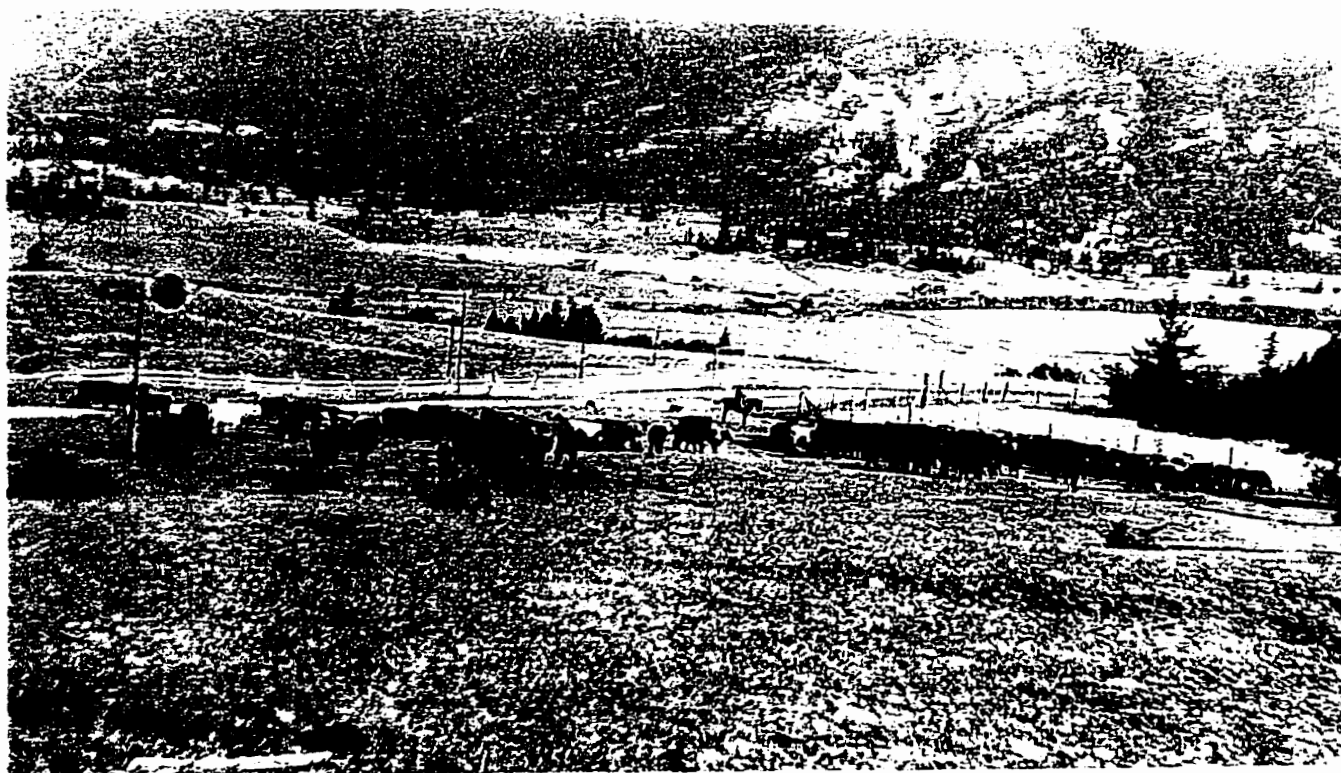
III. 1. Map of Study Area. Adapted from British Columbia Regional Index (Victoria: Ministry of Regional Development, 1989), 328, 338.



III. 2. "Tiny Village of Williams Lake, 1934." RCAF aerial photograph. Courtesy of UBC Department of Geography Map Library.



III. 3. Williams Lake circa early 1940s. The Kings Studio, Vancouver. Courtesy of Sisters of Child Jesus Archives, Mother House, North Vancouver.



Ill. 4. Cattle Drive holding area above Williams Lake [1949]. Courtesy of Katie Jean Kurtz.



Ill. 5. "Some local customers arriving at main gate at Stampede, 1958." Aboriginal family arriving at Stampede Grounds in rubber-tired wagons, 1958. Courtesy of Lil Deschene.



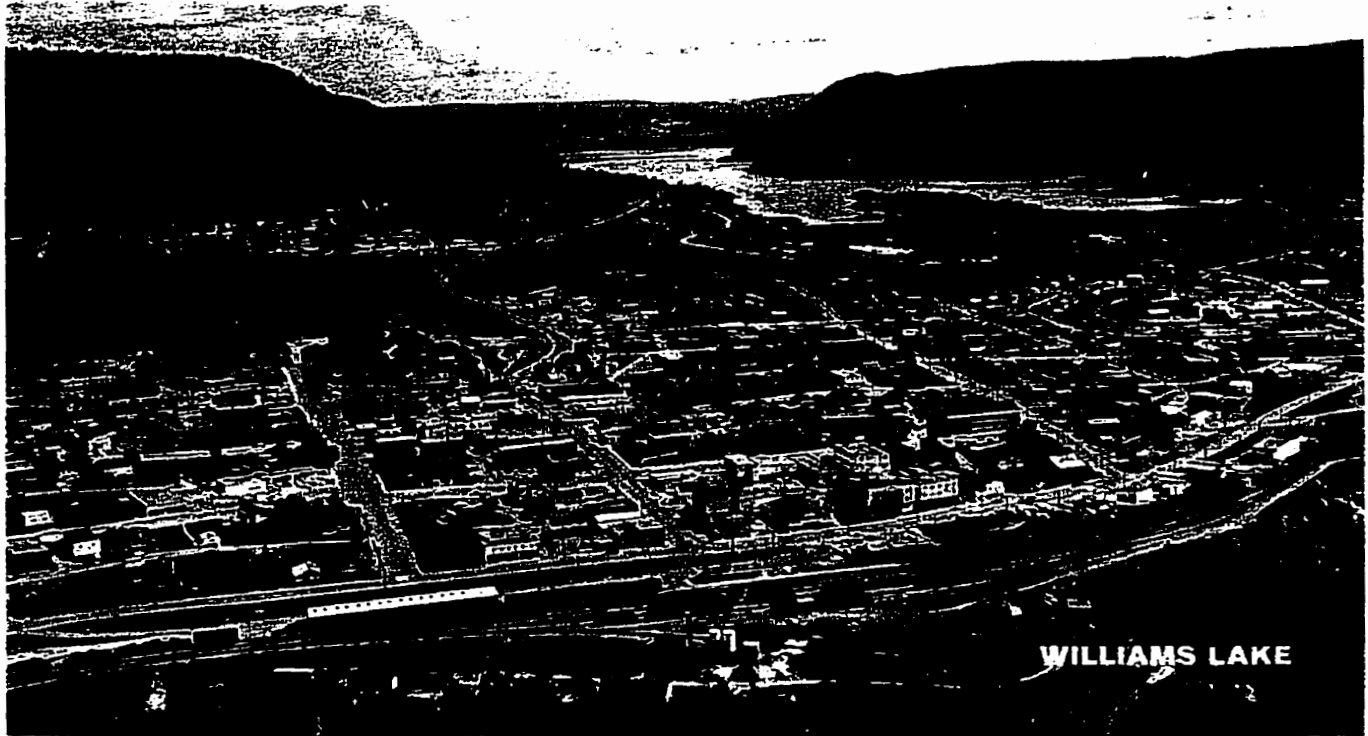
III. 6. "Williams Lake Stampede held in natural amphitheatre." Beautiful British Columbia (Summer 1968), 20-21.



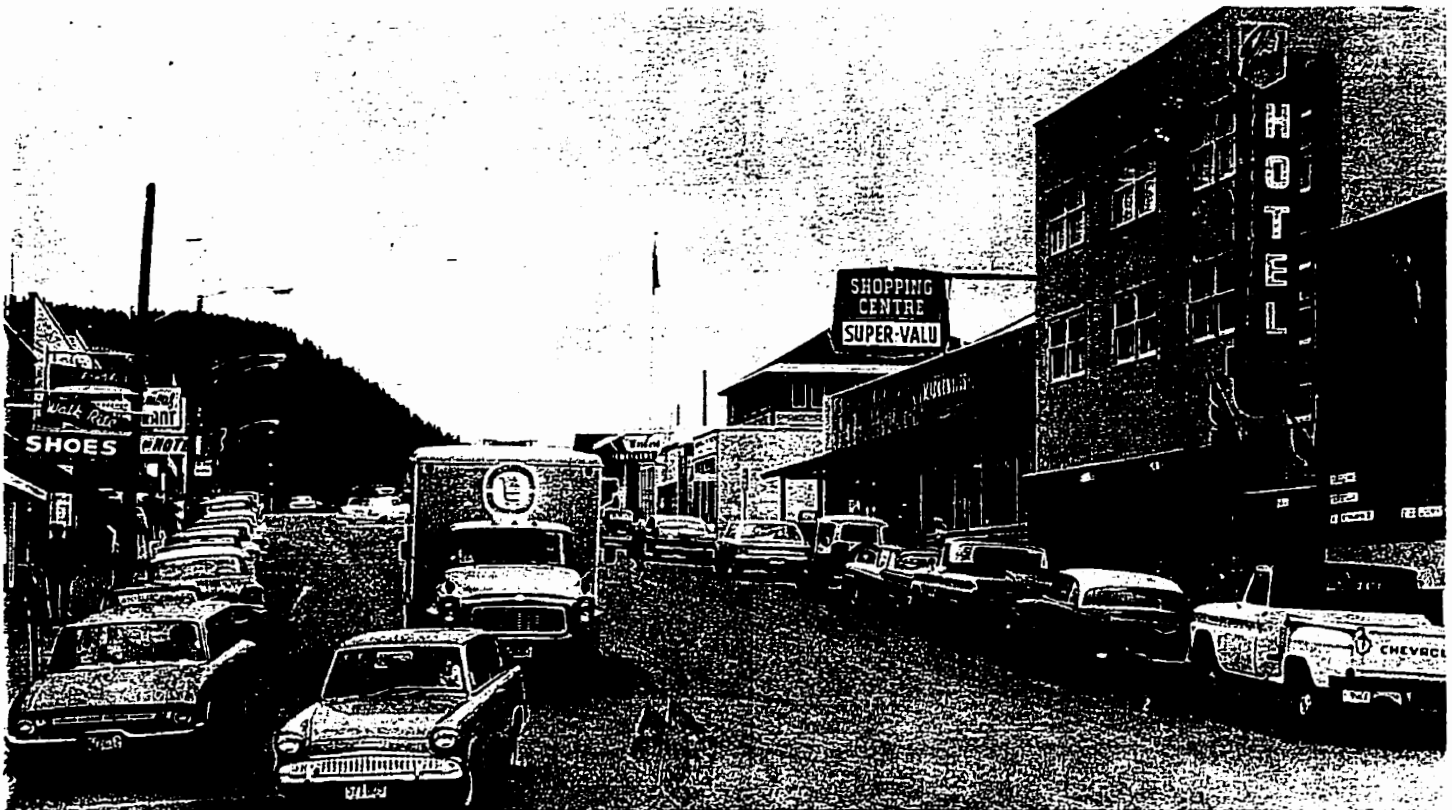
Ill. 7. "1960 Williams Lake Stampede Queens." Shirley Mackenzie – Queen of Williams Lake; Irene Dick – Indian Queen of Alkali Lake. Courtesy of Lil Deschene.



Ill. 8. "Aboriginal Princess Greeting Princess Margaret, Williams Lake, 1957." BCARS Photograph #H-05839.



Ill. 9. Williams Lake, 1964. Beautiful British Columbia (Winter 1964), 33.



Ill. 10. Downtown Williams Lake, 1964. Corner of Railway (Mackenzie) and Oliver Streets downtown Williams Lake. Williams Lake Times, 16 September, 1964, 1.

An infamous event defining the Laketown in the eyes of locals and visitors who experienced it, and one that was relevant to youth, is “Squaw Hall” which has passed into folklore as a metaphor for the drunken revelry associated with Stampedes of the past.¹⁶ In 1946 two directors of the Stampede including police constable Bill Sharpe suggested Aboriginal peoples who made annual treks in horse-drawn rubber-tired wagons into the Laketown for the famous Stampede deserved their own entertainment space while “Whites” were at the “uptown” dances in Williams Lake. A forty by sixty foot dancefloor of shiplap lumber was constructed, ringed by a single railing and evergreen trees and there Aboriginal people danced till four in the morning. Soon folks from the uptown dances began to crash this venue discovering it to be more exciting than the uptown dances and transformed it, a sore point with Aboriginal peoples in later years. In 1970, at a time when the “dancing” (and beer-bottle throwing) went from dusk till dawn, 8,600 paying customers, including teenagers, passed through its door.¹⁷ The Hall was closed permanently in the mid-1970s.

Overview of Local Economy

The village of Williams Lake underwent several changes in its economic base. During the colonial era of the 1860s, the non-Aboriginal presence in the area consisted of the Oblates’ St. Joseph Mission and a few non-Aboriginal settlers such as William Pinchbeck who occupied land in the Williams Lake valley.¹⁸ Although the valley lay at the convergence of the Douglas and Fraser Canyon pack trails, it saw limited Gold Rush traffic when a road to the goldfields was built through 150 Mile House fourteen kilometres to the east. In 1919, Williams Lake

¹⁶Of the 169 cases brought before the local magistrate during Stampede Week, all but fourteen involved liquor and the Indian Act. Tribune, 6 July 1960, 5.

¹⁷Literature on display at Museum of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, Williams Lake.

¹⁸Irene Stangoe, Cariboo-Chilcotin Pioneer People and Places (Surrey: Heritage House, 1994), 10.

became the northern terminus of the provincially owned Pacific Great Eastern Railway.

Within a year the site at the western end of the valley transformed into a community with street blocks and residential lots, restaurants and hotels and a post office.¹⁹

Compared to the Cariboo Gold Rush or the arrival of the railroad, the cattle industry made a more lasting impression upon the image of the Laketown and region. By 1941, the Cariboo-Chilcotin raised two-thirds of the beef cattle in Central British Columbia and Williams Lake had become the single largest cattle shipment centre in the province.²⁰ Yet this stature was only nominally impressive. Aside from the cattle industry, and limited seed potato, sheep, swine, poultry and dairy production, there was little economic diversification.²¹ Ranch households survived low beef prices in the 1930s and 1940s by working traplines and lumber contracts. In the late 1930s, for example, two young teens, Todd and Eldon Lee of the Sunnyside Ranch, half an hour's drive south of Williams Lake, were left to manage ranch work while their father took up a spring contract to hew 500 ties. That work brought 350 dollars into the Lee household, a "bonanza" covering the cost of the entire year's groceries.²²

During the Great Depression, the low beef prices and general economic and demographic stagnation of the region prompted MP Louis LeBourdais to promote the Cariboo among Vancouverites.²³ Some individuals such as Alex Lord, Inspector of Schools, contended

¹⁹John A. Roberts, Cariboo Chronicles (Williams Lake: n.d]. Booklet of broadcasts over CKWL local radio, 8., as well as Irene Stangoe, Cariboo-Chilcotin Pioneer People and Places (Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House, 1994). The rapid emergence of Williams Lake is chronicled in Wrigley's British Columbia Directory, 1920 and 1921.

²⁰Census of Canada, 1941, "Livestock on farms by subdivisions", 74-7.

²¹"Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture For the Year 1944," Sessional Papers, Vol II, 1945, S-120.

²²Todd and Eldon Lee, From California to North 52 (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994), 104.

²³Winston A. Shilvock, "The Saga of LeBourdais," B.C. Historical News (Summer, 1992): 25-26.

the region's harshness of climate and an ailing ranch economy were sufficient reasons to preclude its promotion. There was little economic justification for promoting many of its communities as transplanted city-dwellers would soon be demanding such urban amenities as roads, schools, and relief.²⁴ Nonetheless, LeBourdais addressed the Vancouver Rotary Club in 1939, soliciting their sponsorship of his "Back-to-the-Land-Movement" hoping to attract some of the 5000 Vancouver families on municipal relief. LeBourdais zealously portrayed his Cariboo as a place of "abundant rainfall and a climate unequalled in any part of the province" and one where "happiness in the great out-of-doors will repair the wasted tissues caused by lack of food, insufficient sunlight and crowded living conditions" of the metropole.²⁵

In 1945, interior and northern British Columbia was promoted in the new "outdoorsman" journal, the Cariboo and North West Digest.²⁶ While the image of the Chilcotin as a wild "grasslands" for "buckeroo" ranchers with "guts-enough-to-put-her-over" persisted through to the 1970s, there emerged in this journal a new collective image of the interior and northern region of British Columbia as a whole. The region beckoned: here was plenty of land for pre-emption to be cleared for a variety of agricultural uses which would support families. One (presumably) non-Aboriginal resident proudly declared Williams Lake and the surrounding area was not only "essentially" a district of landowners, but that it was a decidedly anti-CCF one.²⁷

²⁴John Calam, ed., Alex Lord's British Columbia: Recollections of a Rural School Inspector, 1915-36 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991), 8.

²⁵"Cariboo Settlement LeBourdais Plan," Williams Lake Tribune 19 January 1939, 1,4.

²⁶Cariboo and Northwest Digest (Quesnel: Cariboo Digest Ltd, 1945.) This popular government publication was precursor to Beautiful British Columbia magazine. Apparently even Winston Churchill held a prescription.

²⁷Tribune, 27 January 1944, 2.

Promotions may have aimed at non-Aboriginal “families,” but they appealed mostly to males. In 1960 the Williams Lake and District Board of Trade unabashedly portrayed Williams Lake as a place “where men are men.” Close at hand lay boundless outdoor recreation opportunities in the form of camping, fishing and hunting. If there was ever any “dream” to come north, subjects attested it was usually the father’s not the mother’s dream to do so. Fathers speculated that the area was sure to blossom as a result of growing agricultural and forestry activity. They reasoned, correctly, the village of Williams Lake stood to develop into an important supply centre.

After 1945 Williams Lake, like much of interior British Columbia, witnessed rapid economic, political, demographic and spatial change.²⁸ The local economy was first stimulated by returning soldiers who began to set up small businesses with their “overseas gratuities.”²⁹ Williams Lake’s “western” image notwithstanding, wood and not cattle began to emerge as the economic backbone of the local economy, especially after 1948. Before the Second World War, local markets had consumed local lumber production. Rising post-war lumber demand in Canada and the American mid-west stimulated large-scale logging operations in interior British Columbia as the province diversified away from coastal lumber and into new wood supply areas.³⁰ Full-time work became available for able-bodied males in any of the dozens of small portable bush or “popcorn” mills around Williams Lake. By the early 1950s, there were

²⁸See for example Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); J. Lewis Robinson and Walter G. Hardwick, British Columbia: One Hundred Years of Geographical Change (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1973).

²⁹Interview with Lil Deschene, 14 January 1994.

³⁰Barman, West Beyond the West, 285-7; Mary McRoberts, “Corporate Structures and Local Economies: The Case of the Williams Lake District Lumber Industry,” in Canadian Papers in Rural History, VI (1988): 154-171. Author names and provides brief autobiographies of interviewees some of whom were directly involved in the Williams Lake District lumber industry.

approximately 150 portable mills in the area.³¹

In 1948, Lignum opened a planing mill just outside the village along the Williams Lake Creek valley. Other mills such as Gardner & Sons, West Fraser and Pinette & Therrien also opened permanent local sawmills in the following years and lucky young men in the village began to find employment only steps from their homes.³² By 1956, the local lumber industry had grown from a “minor, predominantly seasonal economic activity” into a significant industrial sector.³³ In contrast to the low wages paid “lumbermen” in the 1930s, workers in the 1950s were well-remunerated. Most mills did not unionize although workers received union-level wages in order “to keep the unions out.” In the mid-1960s, these mills and others such as those owned by Jacobson Brothers and Merril and Wagner not only replaced the dispersed bushmills but together became the single largest employers in town.

By 1966 cattle ranching was more a labour of love and a preferred lifestyle than a profitable business. Over the last decade, the number of ranches and livestock had declined. Only those enterprises raising grain-finished cattle on large Chilcotin tracts turned profits while most small ranches continued to struggle through low beef yields per acre and volatile beef prices.³⁴ Farm labourers were difficult to procure given that they were poorly paid by the

³¹City of Williams Lake, Williams Lake Profile (Including Surrounding Communities), (n.d. [1995]), 1. By 1959, the list of mills is much shorter, at least according to the list enumerated. See Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, List of Sawmills, Prairie Provinces, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories, 1959. Cat. #35-503 Occasional.

³²McRoberts, “Corporate Structures and Local Economies.”

³³Ibid., 154.

³⁴British Columbia, The Cariboo-Chilcotin Region: A British Columbia Regional Economic Study (Victoria, Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, 1969), 43.

standards of the day.³⁵ The large ranches employed only “a few hundred persons, mainly Indians,” on a seasonal basis from the area.³⁶ In 1965, at a time when the region was still labelled “a man’s country,” entire families of First Nations peoples, including children and youth, could still be found camping and labouring on some ranches.³⁷ Generally, rural youth in the area faced slow and uncertain economic mobility through inheritance of small ranches, or via the theoretical “agricultural ladder” proceeding from unpaid to wage labourers to tenant farmers before they finally became owner-operators.³⁸ Despite their dream to go into ranching, recognition of ranching’s economic limitations dissuaded not only Todd and Eldon Lee, but at least two male baby-boomer subjects from developing their interest in the business.

While agricultural activity, mainly ranching, constituted the “predominant” land use activity before as well as after the Second World War, by the mid-1960s, the forestry industry was contributing “many more jobs” to the local economy.³⁹ Lumbering supported over three-quarters of the local village economy in 1960, directly or indirectly, and wood came to be perceived as “green gold.” Certainly, by 1965 resource industry jobs in the interior and northern British Columbia had become so plentiful that even the Vancouver School Board was urging students to head north into places like Williams Lake.⁴⁰ Forestry dominated the local

³⁵For purposes of comparison, average weekly salaries for various occupations by heads of family in 1931: Teachers fared comparatively well, averaging \$21.87; locomotive engineers averaged \$21.64. Others made a fraction of such wages: brakeman: \$14.09; salesmen: \$13.47; cooks: \$8.78; clerical: \$14.66; carpenters: \$8.63; lumbermen \$6.70; and unskilled labour \$6.70. Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 7, Table 11, p. 210.

³⁶Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, 44.

³⁷Interviews with subjects, Raylene Erickson and Myles Osborne.

³⁸Canada Youth Commission, Youth and Jobs in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945), 189-90.

³⁹Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, 9.

⁴⁰“Students told to go north,” Tribune, 29 September 1965, 21.

economy into the early 1990s at which point the B.C. Ministry of Finance remarked Williams Lake, had a “very high dependence” upon the sector compared to places such as Salmon Arm or Fort St. John.⁴¹

Until the early 1970s, males commanded all high-paying jobs on “production” in Laketown sawmills while females were absorbed into their lower-pay clerical and administrative tasks. Although some women had long worked alongside husbands on small family-owned bushmills, it was not until 1973 that a few materialized on production at the Lignum mill (See Chapter 7). In 1997, the local International Woodworkers Association president estimated that approximately two dozen women were working in production in the Williams Lake sawmills, notably, most at the plywood plant.⁴² In contrast, women at the Port Alberni ALPLY plywood mill constituted a significant, and sometimes the major part of the workforce throughout almost five decades of operations.⁴³

The “Hub of the Cariboo”

By the time the second generation of subjects entered their teens in the 1960s, Williams Lake had emerged as the veritable “Hub of the Cariboo” although this term masks the Laketown’s vital importance as a critical supply and regional centre in the entire Cariboo-Chilcotin.⁴⁴ Notable among improvements made to provincial infrastructure in this area was the strengthening of the main north-south connection, linking the region with urbanized

⁴¹In 1991, approximately 20 percent of the labour force in Williams Lake were directly or indirectly employed by the forestry sector, most of these in sawmills, planers, and logging. Williams Lake Profile, 15, 18. Measured against its vitality in 1960, however, the forestry sector had declined in relative importance to the local economy. See note 47.

⁴²Interview, Brian Symmes, President, IWA Local 1-425, 28 April 1997.

⁴³Susanne Klausen, “The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991” Labour/Le Travail (Spring 1998), 41.

⁴⁴See cover, “The Story of Williams Lake.”

southwestern British Columbia. Regular air service to Williams Lake began in 1950. Ten years later, the town was part of the Canadian Pacific interior service. The Cariboo Road, Highway 97, was paved north to Williams Lake in the mid-fifties and significant alterations were made to the highway through the Fraser Canyon in 1958. Both improvements reduced the travel time to Vancouver to a one day rather than the two day adventure.⁴⁵ However, many roads in the Cariboo-Chilcotin languished throughout the period awaiting a new Highways Minister, Alex Fraser, who was elected to the provincial legislature in 1976. Residents and especially newcomers lamented deplorable roads. In 1962, the road running west out of Williams Lake, the legendary Chilcotin Highway, mostly clay “gumbo” in the wet season and once described as “the longest worst road anywhere,” was paved only a few kilometres west of Williams Lake, as far as the Chilcotin Bridge Fraser River crossing.⁴⁶ In an open letter to “Flying” Phillip Gaglardi, then Highways Minister, one resident wrote, Cariboo was “beautiful,” in fact “ideal living” were in not for the roads and the pervasive dust both of which were “slowly breaking our hearts and spirit.”⁴⁷

Despite such transportation difficulties, the “Hub” had intensified control over the

⁴⁵See Lee, From California to North 52, 7-8. Images of the Fraser Canyon before major construction in the 1950s is captured on film footage. See British Columbia, Department of Highways, The Fraser Canyon [n.d]. Alterations to the old Cariboo Wagon Road occurred in various stages and at various times and, according to the Central Cariboo Regional office of Transportation and Highways, there was as yet no summary of highway development in this area. The route from Cache Creek to Williams Lake is completely overlooked in what is an otherwise interesting publication, British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Frontier to Freeway: a short illustrated history of the roads in British Columbia (Victoria: Ministry of Transportation and Highways, 1986).

⁴⁶See Diana French’s lively and highly readable account of the building of the road to Bella Coola, The Road Runs West, 1994, 241.

⁴⁷Tribune, 6 October 1965, 14.

social and natural environment of its hinterland by the 1960s.⁴⁸ Williams Lake was designated by provincial legislation as the seat of Cariboo Regional District (which included the Chilcotin) government in 1968. In the early 1970s, after debating development strategies for the Cariboo, regional planners consciously adopted a “centres” rather than a “corridor” pattern of development and Williams Lake was designated a “first-order regional centre.” Adopting a “corridor” pattern might have spurred a “linear city” from 100 Mile to Quesnel along Highway 97 and preserved more of the region’s backcountry. Instead, a “centres” strategy was chosen, one aimed at concentrating people and facilitating more efficient and cheaper delivery of municipal services, and deliberately encouraging expansion east and west of Williams Lake.⁴⁹

By the mid-1970s, Williams Lake had evolved into an essential “central place” in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, in part because of resource development, and in part by provincial design.⁵⁰ The Laketown occupied an excellent cross-roads geographical position in the region as did Prince George and Kamloops, two cities which were also growing rapidly at the time.⁵¹ The establishment of Cariboo Regional District, installation of District Forester Headquarters and intensification of provincial government services in the town resulted in an influx of professionals and others from urban centres.⁵² The Laketown now offered facilities such as

⁴⁸Ostensibly, regional districts had no statutory functions (aside from hospital authority) and no taxing authority, yet were aimed to foster inter-municipal co-operation in the development of a region. British Columbia, The Regional District Concept: What It Is, How It Works. An Interview with Dan Campbell. 1968.

⁴⁹Vancouver Sun, 13 March 1971.

⁵⁰According to Walter Christaller, “central places” supply central goods for regional communities; essentially, they provide services in excess of those demanded by its own residents. The model is useful in regional planning of newly settled areas. See Peter Haggett, Geography: A Modern Synthesis, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), 362-74, and 378-9.

⁵¹Robinson and Hardwick, A Hundred Years of Geographical Change, 47.

⁵²Williams Lake, Submission to the Government of the Province of British Columbia concerning the Establishment of a District Forester Headquarters and Construction of a New Government Building at Williams Lake, B.C., August, 1964.

supermarkets, an indoor mall, specialty shops and an array of professional services. A burgeoning service sector began to compete with the forestry base of the local economy, providing more economic opportunities for the youth of Williams Lake. Sometime in the mid-to late-1970s, the Laketown also became a more “liveable” town for professionals, including teachers, a place to settle and perhaps have a family, and not just a place in which to work a year or two before departing on account of the lack of adequate amenities including cultural activities. In this regard, the Laketown followed a pattern established earlier in Prince George, when that city supposedly evolved out of its notoriety as “a place to come, and put in your time, and then get the hell out.”⁵³

Demographic Profile

Although various ethnic groups were represented in the village in 1941, the overwhelming majority of its 540 residents were of British origin (433), followed by a small minority of French origin (21), as well as Scandinavians (14), Germans (13) and Chinese (13), and a sprinkling of other “races.” The 1941 Census reported no “Indians” living within Williams Lake although aboriginal peoples from reserves, for example, the Sugarcane Reserve a few kilometres east of the town, frequented downtown businesses and streets.⁵⁴ Because it was common practice in late nineteenth-century rural British Columbia for non-Aboriginal men to have families with Aboriginal women, especially in the absence of non-Aboriginal women, a significant number of local “pioneer” families are of “mixed-race.” That hybridity traditionally disappeared in Census data. Chinese men were established in the area well before

⁵³Cited in Robert Rutherford, “Approaches to Community Formation and the Family in the Provincial North: Prince George and British Columbia’s Central Interior,” BC Studies 104 (Winter 1994-95): 103-126, 103.

⁵⁴“White” and “Indian” social discourse and commonplace racism is rendered in vivid detail in Furnis, Burden of History, Chapter 5.

the study period, living along the west bank of the Fraser River near Williams Lake, along Soda Creek and Dog Creek as well as in Williams Lake.⁵⁵ Throughout the period a few Chinese-Canadian families operated stores and restaurants in and around Williams Lake.

Regional developments together with the lure of Cariboo lifestyle and the continued availability of relatively cheap residential land stimulated population growth. In the quarter century before 1945, the population of Williams Lake had grown very slowly, but in a single ten-year period of the post-war (1956-66), it grew 77 percent to a population of 3,167, a figure excluding large residential subdivisions immediately adjacent to town limits.⁵⁶

The region was truly a “young” country, as it was described in the late 1960s. More than a quarter of its population was under the age of ten; more than a half were under the age of twenty-four. Its median age of twenty-two years was well below the provincial average of twenty-seven and its average family size of 3.9 somewhat larger than the provincial average of 3.6.⁵⁷ By 1991, three-quarters of the population of Williams Lake and immediate area was under age forty-five, again below the regional or provincial average.⁵⁸

In 1991, only half of the residents of Williams Lake and the surrounding areas of Commodore Heights-McLeese Lake and South Lakeside-Dog Creek claimed a single ethnic origin. Of these, the majority were of European, mainly British, descent.⁵⁹ In Williams Lake

⁵⁵Both Roberts, Cariboo: a brief history and Drinkell's “Address” provide some detail of the Chinese presence.

⁵⁶Census data cited in The Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, 21. The authors of this regional study indicate that analysis is difficult because the study region takes in 2 Census Divisions and little published data is available. See p.17.

⁵⁷The numbers of children up to age 14 was also disproportionately higher than the provincial average (0-4 years: 14% versus 10.1% provincially; 5-9 years: 14% versus 10.8%; 10-14 years: 11.3% versus 9.7%. Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, 18.

⁵⁸Williams Lake, Williams Lake Profile, 9.

⁵⁹Ibid.

itself, Indo-Canadians, who constituted more than ten percent of the population, were the second largest “single ethnic origin” group, outnumbering Aboriginal peoples who made up between seven and eight percent of the population.⁶⁰ It was not only Aboriginal peoples who became the objects of passive and active discrimination.

Table 1. Population of Williams Lake, 1931-1991.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1931	402
1941	540
1951	913
1956	1,790
1961	2,120
1966	3,167
1971	4,072
1976	6,199
1981	8,362
1986	10,280
1991	10,385

Source: Census of Canada. Note that as of 1986, subdivisions such as South Lakeside and Commodore Heights lay outside municipal limits.

Schools

It is tempting to argue that, their pedagogical function aside, schools were prime conduits of ideas and provincial, national and global matters into this area, at least before the widespread advent of television.⁶¹ By the end of the Second World War, however, and well

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹For compelling elaboration of the school’s purported role in constructing like-minded and nationalistic individuals – and counter-hegemonic responses to attempts at social control from “above,” see Bruce Curtis, Building the Educational State, Canada West, 1836-1871 (Sussex and London: Falmer Press and Althouse Press, 1988). More readable, but less critical are Eugene Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), and Roger Thabault, Education and Change in a Village Community: Mazieres-en-Gatine, 1841-1914, trans. Peter Tregar (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

before “prime-time Canada,” several other media transmitted urban ideas and news about life and events in other parts of Canada and the world into this village. There were the books and magazines read at home, the local and provincial press, and films. From 1928 until it burned down and was replaced by the Alston Theatre, the Oliver Theatre exposed young and old alike to popular cinema narrating Hollywood’s version of North American popular culture. Highly didactic films from the National Film Board also toured the region on their monthly B.C. Rural Circuit.⁶² One first generation subject recalled the “showman” and his reels in Horsefly in the mid-1940s. In the 1950s, another individual, Lily Deschene, became involved along with a teacher, Hazel Huckvale, in a local film board which brought non-commercial films into Williams Lake. Local low power radio relay service began in August of 1943 with the opening of CPRL which transmitted to audiences within a ten to fifteen kilometre radius of the village.⁶³ Canadian and American radio was picked up on nightly airwaves throughout the period although Williams Lake was licensed for radio only in the late seventies (CKWL, Cariboo Central AM in 1975; CBC, CBRL AM in 1978) and cable TV in 1974.⁶⁴ But there were other ways young and old in the region might learn about the outside world. One girl, for example, accompanied a father to meetings of a local Farmers’ Institute where political issues (eventually support of the Social Credit party) were subjects of intense debate.⁶⁵ And of course, as travel became more possible, trips to larger cities such as Kamloops, Prince George, and Vancouver were other eye-opening experiences. In 1964, CBC television was broadcast

⁶²See C.W. Gray, Movies for the People: The Story of the National Film Board’s Unique Distribution System (n.p.: 1973).

⁶³Tribune, 19 August 1943, 1.

⁶⁴CRTC records. Telephone interview with Marguerite Vogel, Senior Regional Officer, CRTC, 28 March 1994.

⁶⁵Interview with Lily Deschene, 1 April 1994.

into the village by repeater station.

Schools had been built in the Cariboo-Chilcotin as early as 1875.⁶⁶ The first school in the village of Williams Lake opened in 1920-21 after the community became a divisional terminal of the Pacific Grand Eastern Railway.⁶⁷ This school, like the one at Dog Creek, fared better than most in the region including the school at 150 Mile House which closed for several years.⁶⁸ From the outset the Williams Lake school faced increasing enrollment.⁶⁹ Five of the seventeen pupils under Miss A.M. Macphail, the first teacher in the village school, were engaged in the Fourth Reader, roughly the equivalent of Grade VIII normally enrolling thirteen year-olds. The following school year, enrollment soared to forty-four, seven of these working in the Fourth Reader. In 1929 the village school, known locally as the "Parkside School," was designated a Superior School which usually meant one offering instruction through Grade X.⁷⁰ That year, the school enrolled twenty-nine pupils in Grades VII through IX alone. Grade XI

⁶⁶A school was built at Lac la Hache in 1875; at 150 Mile House in 1880; Big Creek and Soda Creek in 1908; Harper's Camp (Horsefly) in 1911; Chimney Creek in 1912; Springhouse in 1919; Meldrum in 1920; Williams Lake and Rose Lake in 1921; and Alexis Creek in 1925). A chronology of rural and assisted schools construction is provided in Patrick Dunae, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, The School Record: A Guide to Government Archives relating to the Public Education in British Columbia, 1852-1946 (Victoria: Ministry of Government Services, 1992).

⁶⁷The first "Williams Lake School" was actually opened at 150 Mile House in 1880. Hereafter, references to the Williams Lake School refer to the school constructed within the village of Williams Lake shortly after completion of the PGE Railway to Williams Lake. Reports of G.H. Gower, Inspector of Schools. Annual Report of the Public Schools of British Columbia, [hereafter ARPSBC], 1919-20, 1920-21.

⁶⁸The school at Dog Creek southwest of Williams Lake was once praised as "the model one room rural school." See A.J. Drinkell's 1954 "Address before the Cariboo Historical Society." (UBC: Special Collections).

⁶⁹As an interesting aside, the 150 Mile school illustrates the precarious nature of rural schooling in the province at the time. Uninspected between 1880 and 1900, it was closed for five years on 31 May, 1893, and again in the 1919-20 school year. However, attendance had been relatively good in its first two years of operation. In 1880-81, Henry Bird, the first teacher enrolled 17 boys and 3 girls. The school recorded an average daily attendance of 18.21, exhibiting "less irregularity than any other school in the Province." In its second year, average daily attendance of 16.21 (24 students) was second only to Craigflower School's attendance record. But attendance fell rapidly in the third year when 7 pupils left. ARPSBC, 1880-81, 265; 1881-82, 224, 1919-20, 1920-21.

⁷⁰A brief but interesting story of early school construction in Williams Lake is found in "The little old school house," Tribune, 30 November 1978, 15; "Old school house to become new classroom," Tribune, 18 December 1980, 18; and "The fight for the old Parkside School," Tribune, 5 September 1974, 17.

was introduced in 1933 and Grade XII in 1936 although there were never more than four pupils enrolled in the latter grade until the 1945-46 school year (See Appendix II). Overall, the success of any rural school owed much to the diligence and affluence of local school board trustees and ratepayers, fluctuating local enrollment of the sort experienced at the 150 Mile House School, and the tenacity of teachers facing poor, even “pathetic” boarding arrangements as in the case of one teacher forced to resort to accommodation in the Soda Creek jail.⁷¹

Public schooling in Williams Lake rode the crest of rapid and significant changes in provincial educational infrastructure after 1945. Acting in accordance with the recommendations of the provincial Cameron Report, local school districts were consolidated in 1946.⁷² September of 1946 witnessed closings of some one-room schools in the district. Over the next few years, the Williams Lake School Board undertook to transport students into the village and build a dormitory to supplement the Roman Catholic-run Rosary Hall.

Public schools in the area did not service all children and youth equitably. Commonly, the children of “mixed-race” families in the village attended the Williams Lake School, although any Aboriginal heritage was usually downplayed to the point, as one resident put it, “you wouldn’t know they were native people.” Seeking this sort of invisibility was common in communities with an indigenous presence.⁷³ Aboriginal children and youth outside the village,

⁷¹J. Donald Wilson, “Visions of Ordinary Participants: Teachers’ Views of Rural Schooling in British Columbia in the 1920s,” in Patricia E. Roy, ed., A History of British Columbia: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989); See also, J. Donald Wilson and Paul Stortz, “May the Lord Have Mercy on You”: The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s” in Jean Barman et. al. Children, Teachers & Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig, 1995).

⁷²Maxwell A. Cameron, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Educational Finance (Victoria, 1945). H.B. King’s 1934 recommendation that British Columbia’s 800-odd school districts be consolidated was finally taken up. Unlike King, Cameron had noted British Columbians were ready to follow the trend established in Ontario and Alberta. See Jean Barman and Neil Sutherland, “Royal Commission Retrospective,” in Barman et. al. Children Teachers & Schools, 414-7.

⁷³See Burden of History, especially Chapter 5.

however, usually attended day schools on the reserves or were sequestered at the Williams Lake Indian Residential School at the Oblate “Mission,” fourteen kilometres southeast of the village near the Sugarcane Indian Reservation. If anything raised the profile of “the Mission” among townsfolk, it appeared to be its successful hockey teams and 4-H Club, its famous Cariboo Indian Girls Pipe Band which toured eastern Canada as well as Scotland during Canada’s Centennial, or particular individuals such as Nancy Sandy, the teenager from the award-winning Paul St. Pierre film, The Education of Philistine.⁷⁴ Otherwise, Aboriginal students were generally overlooked by the dominant society. The Williams Lake and District Board of Trade, for example, boasted of the town’s modern public schools and appeared satisfied with the segregated nature of Aboriginal education. The board put it this way in their 1960 promotional pamphlet: “The requirements of the Indian pupils are met through the services of the modern Cariboo Indian Residential School about ten miles from Williams Lake and by day schools on the various reserves.”

In the 1960s, Aboriginal students across the Cariboo-Chilcotin began to attend secondary school in Williams Lake boarding weekdays in town and returning home on most weekends. Thus such youth finally began to fall in step with a decades-old practice amongst non-Aboriginal rural youth across the region who boarded either privately, or since 1944 at gender-segregated quarters at Rosary Hall run by the Sisters of the Child Jesus, or since 1952, in the school district’s dormitory.⁷⁵ The number of Aboriginal families living in town also increased between 1945 and 1975, although as previously noted, they were eventually outnumbered by Indo-Canadian ones. By 1975, however, non-Aboriginal society had done

⁷⁴Tribune, 11 October 1967, 9.

⁷⁵This point is explored in Chapter 5.

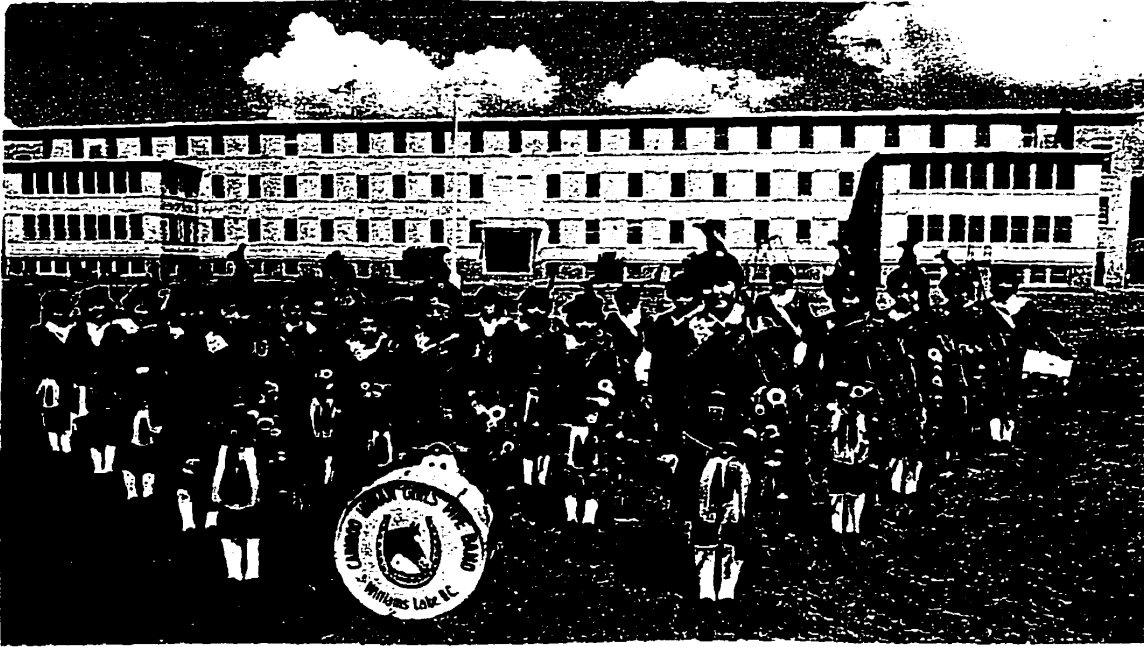


Fig. 11. “Cariboo Indian Girls Pipe Band, St. Joseph’s Mission.” ca. 1965. The original band of 16 girls was formed in 1958 and gained fame as the only known Indian Girls Pipe Band in Canada. Courtesy of Sisters of Child Jesus Archives, North Vancouver.

little to ensure Aboriginal students were culturally as well as structurally integrated into the public schools. These young people lacked the sort of empowerment seen among their peoples in the 1990s. Relatively recent legislation regarding qualifications for Indian status, and the achievements of Aboriginal peoples who attempted to reclaim cultural traditions, if not land, has greatly bolstered Aboriginal pride and a “great number” of individuals have applied for reinstatement of official Indian status and membership with bands and reserves.⁷⁶ Some long-time “White” residents of the area also began to declare their own aboriginal ancestry.⁷⁷

The post-war immigration of Indo-Canadians, particularly Sikhs from the Punjab, to

⁷⁶Bill C-85 passed into law in 1985. Its implications are discussed in Furniss, *Burden of History*, 120.

⁷⁷Interview with Alice Tressiera, August 1995.

Williams Lake was a significant addition to a mix of origins in the Laketown. When Pinette & Therrien of North Vancouver built a large sawmill in Williams Lake in the early fifties, Indo-Canadian men migrated there from their jobs at the company's North Vancouver mill. Family reunification followed beginning in the late 1960s.⁷⁸ Even as aboriginal youth became dominant visible minorities at an older, more centrally-located Williams Lake Junior Secondary, Indo-Canadian children became the dominant visible minority at some local elementary schools such as Glendale or Nesika, and eventually at Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary built at the end of the period in a modern subdivision.

Before and after the Second World War children could grow up in veritable near-frontier conditions in homesteads not too far from town. Hunting and fishing, farming and ranching, and other social practices brought these children and youth into daily contact with the physical landscape. These young people developed strong connections with their environment. As we shall see, many subjects of both generations growing up in the Laketown itself maintained close connections with the out-of-doors despite the community's growth and spatial transformation. The human-made landscape, once clustered in disarray about the small business core on the benchland of Williams Lake Creek in the 1920s, remained small-scale and largely unchanged until the 1960s.⁷⁹ Outside village limits lay virtual wilderness. The present day subdivisions of North and South Lakeside remained very sparsely populated throughout the

⁷⁸Interview with Andrew Rainier, 14 January 1994. This wave of Indo-Canadian immigrants targeted other resource communities in British Columbia such as Quesnel. For the context, see Norman Buchignani et. al. Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart in association with the Multiculturalism Directorate, Department of the Secretary of State, 1985).

⁷⁹Riley, Bill and Laura Leake. History and events of the 1920s: a mounted policeman's bird's-eye view of the Old Cariboo Country (UBC: unpublished paper, Special Collections, 1980), 31.

1940s and 1950s. Maps show an occasional residence or outbuilding. The northern hillside overlooking the mills across the creek on the benchlands was nothing but acres of wooded grassland yielding deer and grouse – hunting grounds for boys.

By 1975, however, much of this natural environment had transformed into an urban landscape. Three secondary schools and four elementary schools punctuated residences laid out in orderly subdivisions sprawled across former natural spaces. Youth had access to a greater selection of urban amenities including a few coffee shops and diners, a bowling alley, a billiards parlour, downtown stores as well as a shopping mall, a theatre, and a drive-in theatre. Ostensibly, population growth and spatial transformation of the physical landscape had pushed wild places further out of the reach of young people. Nonetheless, many young people recall that much of their leisure time was spent out-of-doors: “We were always outside.” Factors such as greater autonomy of youth, their widespread use of the motor vehicle, and reduced labour requirements in the household, meant, as we shall see, many young people of the second generation were, relative to the first generation, not only comparatively free to act upon their own peer-driven desires, but were also better able to range further out of Williams Lake where they sought seclusion from adults.

Chapter 3

“A Centre for People”: Teachers, Curriculum and School Culture

Schools are unique sites where young people coalesce in large numbers. Designated adults confine them for significant portions of a day, directing if not always controlling their minds and bodies, demanding and usually receiving “reasonably automatic compliance.”¹ In this chapter the school is the historical stage, its actors the subjects of this study who responded in various ways to the time, space and energy adults directed towards their formal education. The chapter begins with a brief educational history of the local area before examining, by generation, subjects’ memories of their secondary schooling including impressions of teachers, curricular and extra-curricular activities, and the general culture of the school. Two brief qualifications are in order at the outset. First, this chapter makes only periodic references to the education of Aboriginal children at St. Joseph’s Indian Residential School, known locally as “the Mission,” a subject demanding separate and comprehensive treatment.² Second,

¹Neil Sutherland, “The Triumph of ‘Formalism’: Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1960s,” in Robert A. McDonald and Jean Barman, eds., Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), reprinted in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, Children, Teachers & Schools in the History of British Columbia (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995). Sutherland employs oral history to recreate school and classroom settings. Another good example of this orientation is Steve Humphries, Joanna Mack and Robert Perkins, A Century of Childhood (London: Sidgwick and Jackson in association with Channel Four Television Company, 1988).

²Williams Lake Industrial School, Williams Lake Residential School, St. Joseph’s Residential School, are names used interchangeably. “St. Joseph’s Mission” or simply, “the Mission” was in the time period under study, the most widely accepted local name for the school which officially opened in 1891. See Elizabeth Furniss, Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 47. It was also known as Cariboo Indian Residential School. The appellation, “The Mission,” originates with the opening of a school at St. Joseph’s Mission in 1874 for Indian and “white” boys by the Oblate order of priests, an early form of “co-education” which did not take girls into consideration. Sr. Ethel M. Devlin, S.E.J. “The Sisters of the Child Jesus and Native Catholic Expansion in British Columbia” (St. Paul University, Faculty of Canon Law, Ottawa: unpublished paper, 1983), 6. Also see Margaret Whitehead, The Cariboo Mission: A History of the Oblates (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1981). On the British Columbia residential school experience from the perspective of its students in this time period, see the CBC’s investigation

discussions of culture in this chapter is confined to that found within the high school itself.

Unprecedented enrollment and expansion of school facilities in Williams Lake began in 1946 when the village was established as the administrative centre of the newly-created School District No. 27 (Williams Lake) in the province-wide project of school consolidation recommended by the Cameron Report. In the first five years following the Second World War, the newly amalgamated School District extended formal schooling in the region through a combination of school closures, consolidation of small schools, improved transportation of students, and better living arrangements for teachers. Although there was only “minor consolidation” in the first year after amalgamation, over the course of the next few years, unrelenting demand for school expansion and an improved transportation network pre-occupied both Inspectors and the local board of school trustees who sought to overcome historical difficulties in the area. In 1948, for instance, a five-room house and duplex teacherage was constructed in Williams Lake. The following year saw “considerable consolidation” in the district, as well as construction of a new four-room elementary school in the village.³

into St. Joseph's Residential School, “The Fifth Estate: Violation of Trust,” aired in 1991; Cariboo Tribal Council. Impact of the Residential School. Williams Lake: 1991; ““The Way We Were”: Reunion 1867-1981, St. Joseph's Mission.” [Illustrated booklet with photographs of Aboriginal Children in the residential school], Sisters of Child Jesus Archives; for interviews with former residents, William Gaspard, “St. Joseph's Mission” (University of British Columbia: Unpublished Paper for Anthropology 329, 12 March, 1990); for context of other residential schools, consult, Shirley Sterling, My Name is Seepeetza (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992); as well as Celia Haig Brown, Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School (Vancouver: Arsenal Press, 1988)

³Report of F.A. McLellan, ARPSBC, 1948-49, N92; 1949-50, O93. Initial consolidation efforts in this Inspectorate in the mid-1930s failed due to the mitigating effects of alarmed ratepayers as well as physical barriers of distance between settlements, severe winters and abysmal road conditions throughout most of the year. See Report of F.A. McLellan, Inspector of Schools, ARPSBC, 1946-47 Y96-7. The first meeting of the board of trustees for School District No. 27 was held 9 November, 1946 [hereafter Minutes]. Records are located at the office of the School District No. 27, in Williams Lake. Rough roads and isolation (including bi-weekly mail service to Anahim Lake) is discussed in W.J. Mowat, Inspector of Schools. Letter to Mrs. Fred W. Tonge, Vancouver, 8 February, 1955; as well as Letter to R.C. Grant, Executive Assistant, Department of Education, Victoria, B.C., 8 June 1954. Copies at school board office.

Secondary enrollment at Williams Lake Elementary Senior Secondary (as the village school was renamed after amalgamation) grew rapidly after the Second World War, rising from forty-six at war's end to sixty-five in 1946 and then six-fold to 407 in 1956. Overcrowding in Williams Lake schools, a nagging theme of School Inspectors' reports throughout these years, became the focus of a local referendum over school taxes and even found its way into the 1956-57 high school valedictorian's somewhat lofty address. Taking note of the situation, Marlene Gardener quoted Sir Richard Livingstone: "Overcrowding in education as in housing turns the school into an intellectual slum."⁴

Outside the village of Williams Lake, the rural school problem, and especially access to local secondary schooling plagued some Cariboo-Chilcotin families at least through the end of the Second World War.⁵ It was "quite common" for "country" adolescents to get only a Grade Eight education. Isolated children in cash-strapped families like the Potters around Lac la Hache either received their schooling by correspondence course through Victoria, received a rudimentary education from one or both parents, or delayed or ceased schooling altogether. The most isolated ones like Axel Vickers seldom received any formal schooling. Axel, who lived two hours by horseback ride from the Riske Creek school, was only enrolled by its school trustees so that the school might secure the annual grant from the Department of Education for schools with at least ten registered students: "I think I got into a school on about two occasions

⁴Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School Annual. Lake High, '57.

⁵In the 1945-46 school year, 38 schools in the Inspectorate were closed, including some near Williams Lake such as Big Lake, Chimney Creek, Felker Lake, McLeese Lake, 144 Mile House, and Riske Creek. ARPSBC, 1945-46. For the rural school problem, see J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "May the Lord Have Mercy on You": the Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," BC Studies 79 (Autumn 1988): 24-48, revised in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, Children, Teachers & Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig, 1995). For the effect consolidation had upon rural families around Evelyn, British Columbia, see Neil Sutherland, "I can't recall when I didn't help": The Working Lives of Pioneering Children in Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in Barman *et al.*, Children, Teachers & Schools.

at Riske Creek. They had barely enough children to start a school and they used to borrow me to get it going.”

Traditionally, parents with the disposition and financial means exercised their options and sent their children to board privately in Williams Lake or to boarding schools around the province including those in the Lower Mainland. In 1929, the solution to the school problem for the Smith family of the Chilco ranch out in the remote reaches of the south Chilcotin was to move into Williams Lake for the winter so that the children could attend school.⁶ Beginning in the late 1930s, Harriet Wilson boarded with five different Williams Lake families in order to complete Grades I through X. Camille Summerland from another affluent ranching family followed suit. In her case, she was entrusted with her own self-contained apartment in a private family dwelling. In the late 1940s, some mothers left husbands on home ranches west of the Fraser River to board along with their children at Soda Creek in order that their children could attend its school. In the early 1950s, Myles Osborne’s family actually purchased a home in Williams Lake expressly for the purpose of educating the children. Myles’ father remained on the ranch while mother and children resided in the village in the winter returning to the ranch every summer, and weather-permitting, on winter weekends.

The Roman Catholic Church, and not the provincial government, responded first to the “urgent educational need” for student accommodations in the village. In 1944, Father Redmond, a Redemptorist, opened Rosary Hall in Williams Lake as a boarding place for “country girls” to attend high school in Williams Lake. Although only four girls boarded the first year, new quarters were soon constructed to house thirty boarders. Country boys and girls “of any religious denomination” (only six of twenty-four students in one year were Catholics)

⁶Williams Lake Tribune, 19 January 1939, 2.

but “deprived of adequate educational facilities” began to board at Rosary Hall. Pupils were charged monthly fees of thirty dollars for full “board,” twenty-five if they returned home on weekends. Boarders breakfasted, left for school, returned for lunch, and completed homework after school. Following supper, they studied or with a parent’s consent, went “downtown.”⁷

The newly amalgamated school district offered a staggered threefold response to the school problem: Superior schools, bussing and a high school dormitory. By designating schools in select nodal communities as Superior Schools, beginning first with the community of Horsefly in 1946, the school district kept adolescents in their own communities and at school for at least two or three years after the elementary grades.⁸ Lacking school buses, the board first addressed the transport of pupils into the village school on a case-by-case contract basis, usually after receiving letters from parents requesting financial assistance or from individuals interested in providing taxi service.⁹ In 1949, for example, a handful of students living around 150 Mile House, including Evelyn McLeod, were taxied into the Williams Lake school in order to continue secondary schooling. The board undertook to bus students from the Cariboo and Chilcotin into Williams Lake Elementary-Senior High beginning in the 1949-50 school year.¹⁰ Ten years later, twelve buses, three contracted, nine owned by the board, transported a total of 826 students across the far-flung school district. The longest run in the district was a sixty-mile round trip to McLeese Lake north of the village. These buses ran

⁷Rosary Hall, pamphlet. n.d. [1948]. Also, “What a Memory! – Sister Patricia Tuite at Rosary Hall, Williams Lake, BC.” Williams Lake: unpublished manuscript of interview with Sister Clare Sansregret, July 1986. Sisters of Child Jesus, Mother House, North Vancouver, B.C.; as well as Tribune, 24 August 1944, 1,

⁸By 1948, this Superior School also enrolled 5 students in grades XI and XII. ARPSBC, 1929-30; 1946-47, Y-159; and 1948-49, N-155.

⁹Report of F.A. McLellan, ARPSBC, 1947-48, JJ-88, as well as Minutes, 5 May, 7 July, 4 August 1948.

¹⁰The board signed ten bus contracts for the transportation of pupils to consolidated schools. Report of F. A. McLellan, ARPSBC, 1949-50, O-93.



Ill. 12. “L’enfants pensionnaires du ‘Rosary Hall,’” Williams Lake, B.C. La Rn. Pere Redmond et Frere Bede, C.S.S.R. Photo E9 [n.d.]” Photo courtesy of Sisters of Child Jesus Archives.

without accident causing personal injury at least until 1960 and were operated under a safety policy whereby school buses did not operate in sub-thirty below weather.¹¹

In September, 1952, the school board finally augmented boarding facilities at the Roman Catholic-run Rosary Hall by opening a public school dormitory in Williams Lake for thirty-two secondary school students.¹² By 1954, the dormitory accommodated sixty-one pupils or one-fourth of the school’s Grade VII to XII enrollment of 244.¹³ Evidently, the dormitory even served as a temporary shelter for local pupils. One subject employed the “dorm” as a

¹¹Williams Lake Tribune, 13 January 1960, 6.

¹²Capacity was expanded to eighty that year. Reports of Inspector W.J. Mouat, ARPSBC, 1951-52, N -99; 1952-53, P-96. The province began a public school dormitory system for large rural areas in 1948. See John Calam, “An Historical Survey of Boarding Schools and Public School Dormitories in Canada” (UBC: Unpublished M.A. thesis, 1962).

¹³This included a few pupils from four other districts. Report of Inspector W.J. Mowat, ARPSBC, 1953-54, O-87. The dormitory sustained this capacity into the 1990s and remains a defining feature of only a handful of B.C. school districts.

haven whenever she was “stuck” in the situation of being unable to go home. On evenings when she feared her drunken father, she “crawled under the wing” of Mrs. Bryce, the dorm mother: “And she was just like a mother hen, she was all over us.” In all, six of the nineteen first generation subjects, either boarded with Williams Lake families, at Rosary Hall or at the high school dormitory, a figure approximating the ratio of in- to out-of-town secondary students in both Katie Jean Kurt’s grade nine and ten class of 1948-49 and 1953-54 enrollment.

Private boarding arrangements, a high school dormitory and an extensive grid of school bus routes all served to shorten if not sever the daily contact rural adolescents had with their families, their work in and around the family home, and rural life in general, while confronting them with more urban forms of youth culture.¹⁴ If the merger of village and country teens promoted their social intercourse in the Williams Lake School, such interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth remained limited to structured extra-curricular competitions between the village school and the residential school. A significant number of “mixed-race” individuals (enumerated as “Whites” in the 1941 Census), were enrolled in the Williams Lake School. Wilme Ruth Baxter estimated that up to one-third of her adolescent classmates in the early 1940s were of Aboriginal descent. Dusty Shaw identified three of his classmates as “mixed-race,” adding, “You know how the old saying goes, ‘Slapped with the tar brush?’ Well I am too. My one grandmother was half.” In fact, excluding two first generation subjects, Norman Flit and Millie Jacobs, and two second generation subjects, Joseph St. Michelle and Marnie Williams, who self-identified as “Indian” or “First Nations,” thirteen other individuals, seven from the first generation and six from the second, confirmed

¹⁴Children around Evelyn, British Columbia, experienced similar changes in daily rhythms after consolidation. See Neil Sutherland, “I can’t recall when I didn’t help”: The Working Lives of Pioneering Children in Twentieth-Century British Columbia, *Histoire sociale/Social History* 24 (November 1991) revised in Barman, et. al. *Children Teachers & Schools*.

Aboriginal lineage and were enrolled in public schools.¹⁵

The issue of enrolling a few Japanese-Canadian students into the Williams Lake school after the Second World War preceded widespread public discussion of integrating Aboriginal children into public schools. David Tomiyasi, whose family had been forced away from the Lower Mainland in 1942, remembers that at the end of the Second World War, “there was difficulty in me getting into school” as there were “some pretty strong feelings against our family.” Although some local residents clearly sought repatriation of all persons of Japanese descent, influential “friends” of the Tomiyasi family not only assisted the family in establishing itself economically in the community, but convinced school trustees to accept the Tomiyasi children.¹⁶

The First Generation

For almost a decade after the Second World War, pupils in Williams Lake were without a separate high school so that for most of that time, those making the transition from single- or split-grade elementary classes in the school to its secondary grades simply adjusted to a new curriculum, a few new classmates, and perhaps a new teacher. Whatever adjustments village youth made, young people leaving one-room “country” elementary schools to enroll in the secondary grades in Williams Lake endured additional pressures: boarding weekdays in Williams Lake, establishing relationships with new and more numerous peers, and for some after 1949, a bus route which made for a longer school day. Background, personality and readiness mediated their experiences. Dusty Shaw, one of the oldest and biggest boys in a one-room school house outside the village, was “scared stiff” the first few days in the larger

¹⁵A few subjects attested their own parents are among those recently seeking to establish Aboriginal ancestry.

¹⁶For the context, see “Neither Japs, Douks, Nor Nip-Douks in our part of the Country,” Tribune, 10 March, 1944, 1.

Williams Lake school when confronted with Grades IX to XII pupils cloistered in a single classroom as classes were sorted out.

In contrast, Katie Jean Kurtz, the outsider who entered the school in January 1949, felt welcomed by the girls in her combined grades nine and ten class. Compared to the Vancouver school she had left before Christmas, she was instantly at ease in what she perceived as a tightly-knit classroom. While she “didn’t have much to do with the boys,” the girls were “really friendly” toward her from the first day.¹⁷ Like other girls, her friendships in the village began and were sustained at this school. Wilme Ruth Baxter, for example, had “really enjoyed going to school” in the early 1940s. Evelyn McLeod recalled this sentiment echoed into the early 1950s:

Well there was so few of us you know that we were all buddies . . . I really made hay while the sun shone while I was at school. I mean every moment counted, you know, it was togetherness with this one and togetherness with that one.

Although the girls in the 1948-49 grade nine and ten class grouped themselves according to different interests (see Chapter 5), one’s social class seemed to be less divisive a factor in Williams Lake than in the much larger Elmtown, USA.¹⁸ Katie Jean, who was usually “quite alone” and “didn’t do a lot in larger groups” nonetheless socialized comfortably with at least six other girls in her class. That intimacy, kindness, and a lack of “trying to outdo each other” contrasted sharply with the fights and name-calling she witnessed between girls almost a decade later when as a high school teacher in Williams Lake she heard girls spread “all sorts of

¹⁷While the class photograph portrays 22 students (9 boys, 13 girls) with their teacher, Mr. Owen Kerley, official enrollment for the class is 30, a discrepancy perhaps owing to student absence on the day of the photograph as well as fluctuating enrollment throughout the year. ARPSBC, 1948-49, N-155. See Appendix II.

¹⁸In 1941-42, Elmtown (population 6000), had over 700 pupils in the local high school. Social class clearly differentiated not only their curricular but extra-curricular activities such as athletics, clubs and even attendance at dances. See August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown’s Youth (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1949), Chapter 8.



Ill. 13. 1949-50 Grade 9-10 class with teacher, Owen Kerley. Williams Lake Elementary-Senior High School. Courtesy Katie Jean Kurtz.



Ill. 14. Williams Lake Elementary-Senior Secondary, c. 1950. The small building at left is the original school. In 1949, it served as Katie Jean's high school. Courtesy of Randy Aston.

stories of who they were, and what they were – whether they were whores. . . . I never experienced none of that.”

Friendships in this school were influenced by post-war demographic change in the district. The board’s decision to bus individuals into the Superior School, for instance, not only increased enrollment, but helped balance the ratio of its village to out-of-village pupils. In one year alone, new faces in the school began to erase the former intimacy of the school. What Katie Jean recalled most vividly of her second school year in Williams Lake is the negative impact bussing had upon her friendships in the fall of 1949. A tightly-knit class of village and boarding teens simply vanished forever. Katie Jean was almost relieved to be leaving Williams Lake in 1950 at the end of her second school year in the village:

Oh! The whole school felt different. . . . Although I cried and felt very bad all the way from Williams Lake to _____, I felt that it was the right time to go because I felt that suddenly this dream world that had been a most amazing [time] and opened so many horizons was changing.

At least into the mid-1950s, village school teachers were generally esteemed by their pupils as well as the general community. According to Hazel Huckvale, who arrived in Williams Lake in 1953 as an experienced teacher, teachers at the time were “all Protestant and expected to work in the local church,” and recognized as active if not “leading members” of the community. Hazel sang in the school choir, taught Sunday school in the United Church, was involved in the Women’s Institute and was expected to uphold community standards in the school: “I was in charge of discipline and hemlines.”¹⁹

Subjects’ recollections of their teachers follow roughly the pattern in Sutherland’s study of Vancouver pupilhood with the exception that the first generation tend to claim that all their

¹⁹Hazel Huckvale, “Laketown Profile,” *Tribune*. (Williams Lake Library Archives, [n.d.]).

teachers were generally “good” teachers.²⁰ Two local schools, Marie Sharpe Elementary and Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary, were later named after such teachers who had at some point taught many first generation subjects: “Mrs. Sharpe was a real honey and so was Anne Stevenson, just a favourite, favourite lady.” “Good,” in fact, usually denoted those who were strict and demanding: “They were really good teachers. They expected you to do your homework and you better do it . . . they were very strict which I think was good. . . . I think they were all very strict . . . I never had one teacher I never got along with.” Principal Phillipson was regarded in this manner by several subjects: “He was a very stern person, quite highly respected”; and “I’ve never forgotten old Joe Phillipson, he was a real discipline man. They had the strap in those days – he was a bugger for that – well anyway I guess we all had it coming.”²¹

A few subjects illustrated teacher faults, but usually mollified teacher misdemeanours and idiosyncrasies, expressing their criticisms in conciliatory, humorous and certainly less derisive or even bitter tones than did some second generation subjects. Teacher A, for example, “He was a great one for throwing chalk . . . if you were just daydreaming or something, you would get a little ‘bite’ on the side of the head. That was a piece of chalk.” Teacher B “had a hot temper, God, he had a hot temper. He’d get mad and throw books around the room. He’d blow his temper. Little things like that you remember.” Katie Jean Kurtz, later a teacher herself, was the only subject of this generation to cast a teacher as incompetent.

²⁰Sutherland’s subjects give their highest rating to the “good” teacher. These “no-nonsense” “but fair” teachers “emphasized fundamentals,” “drilled and tested.” The second type, the “nice” teacher is “lovely,” “quiet,” “mothered or fathered their charges,” and is remembered through a “pleasant haze.” The third were simply “mean,” “nasty,” “sarcastic, even vicious.” The fourth were “ineffective,” “incompetent,” and “scorned” teachers. Sutherland, “Triumph of Formalism,” 113-15.

²¹Phillipson became Deputy Minister of Education in the Social Credit government. He was later appointed as the first Superintendent of Independent Schools after passage of Bill 33 in 1977. My thanks to J. Donald Wilson on this latter point.

She remembered Teacher C, a new teacher with “very little self-esteem” and poor classroom management: “She had a fairly difficult time with us grade tens.” Katie Jean who had never dreamed of showing disrespect for any teacher began to seize the power to manipulate the classroom environment:

And I remember for the first time in my life feeling naughty and badly behaved, or [having] a desire to be naughty and badly behaved in school, and to a certain extent, cheeky, which I would never have done in a classroom where the teacher was fully competent . . . and this is disturbing, very disturbing. . . . Feeling safe in that situation — I think that’s really important in a classroom, to make all her children feel safe. . . . You don’t feel safe because you don’t trust your own power and you know that you can disturb the whole balance of the atmosphere in the classroom very easily because this person just doesn’t have the ability to command the respect.²²

Unquestioning respect for authority had been drummed in early by parents, church and elementary school teachers.²³ Families like the Shaws not only supported a teacher’s decisions concerning discipline, but upon receipt of “bad news” from the school, they sometimes reinforced its more severe forms such as corporal punishment. As Dusty Shaw put it: “If you’re like me, you got the strap in school and you got it at home too!” Rusty claimed he got strapped in his rural school “about every day” for minor incidents such as talking when you were supposed to be studying, or things, that in his current view, “didn’t amount to anything”:

. . . Slinging the odd spitball, just normal things, really, that kids try to pull in class. Until it got investigated, I used to get the strap about every day off that one teacher . . . every time I turned and looked at her, she went cross-eyed. . . . Man, she used to whittle up on me every time! [emphasis in original].

The day also arrived when his mother intervened and urged her husband to talk to the teacher:

²²This critical narrative not only accurately construes the classroom as a dynamic stage of power struggle between teachers and students, but illustrates that benevolent authority also creates pedagogical space permitting transmission or discovery of knowledge. By the 1950s, it is unclear from the Annual Reports how many teachers were certified. Certainly, by the 1955-56, Inspectors were still reporting difficulties in obtaining either fully qualified teachers, or adequate teacher housing. Report of D.G. Chamberlain, ARPSBC, 1955-56, FF-86.

²³For elaboration of this point, see Sutherland, “Triumph of Formalism,” Chapter 9.

“And that was the last time I got the strap. He stepped into it “figuring I didn’t need it that many times” but informed the teacher, ““If there’s any problems you just write me a note and I’ll see that he gets the strap.””

While the sub-text of the first generation’s narratives suggest pupils generally complied with teacher demands throughout the childhood and adolescent years, student resistance against authority, even in the pre-teen years, was not unknown. When one boy accidentally shattered a pane in a window of the Williams Lake School with a ball, the group understood, as David Tomiyasi put it, “that was bad news for whoever kicked the ball” as principal Phillipson was “someone you just didn’t fool around with”:

Anyways, I guess in order to kind of spread the pain, somebody else dropped the ball and kicked another one [window] in and pretty soon the whole works of us started kicking the ball . . . next thing you know, it was nothing but a bunch of wood frames – I think even the wood frames was kicked in. [T: “And you did this on purpose?”] Oh yeah, spread the trouble around. Everybody took a crack at it. Anyway that caused a whole bunch of people to be lined up in front of the principal’s office [emphasis in original].

Although secondary students moved into a new high school in 1952, secondary enrollment remained insufficient to warrant implementation of the wide-ranging curriculum or facilities of the sort found in the large urban high schools such as Vancouver’s Kitsilano or Templeton which had showcased their beautiful grounds, and well-equipped Domestic Science and manual training shops three decades earlier in Department of Education annual reports. In 1949, principal Phillipson and teacher Owen Kerley were entirely responsible for the high school students providing instruction in all core subjects and tutoring a variety of correspondence courses such as Homemaking 91, Record-Keeping, Commercial Art, Agriculture 10 and 20, and Typing. The school faced major equipment shortages. In April 1950, it still lacked a microscope; two years later, a public address system; and even in 1953,

travelling speakers arrived at this and other district schools armed with their own generators and Bell and Howell film projectors. In June 1954, parents complained about the lack of manual training in the schools.²⁴ Some of these shortages became, in turn, major fund-raising objectives of the local Parent-Teacher Association (P-TA).²⁵

Athletic activities remained diffused among limited sites in the community until 1959. Around 1950, school athletics often consisted of softball and soccer as these required only the school field. Skating and hockey took place on the community's outdoor rink situated halfway between the school and the arena. Skating was a "major winter activity" for both genders: "Owen would say, 'Go off and skate you guys!'" Physical education classes, extra-curricular sports like badminton and basketball, as well as dances and graduation ceremonies were held in the community's only suitable venue, the Elks Hall: "All the dances were held in that hall, and if they needed a large building for anything it was usually held in there."²⁶

In the decade after the Second World War, a relatively small population of adolescents combined with limited recreational facilities and organized activities encouraged teens to become involved in whatever extra-curricular activities were organized by teachers. Logistical necessity in the mid-1940s (there were only thirty-two pupils in grades VIII through XII in 1944-45 school year) forced most pupils into multi-age groupings, and except for the hockey

²⁴Nor was there manual training in Quesnel or Cache Creek. However, industrial education was offered in such places as Maple Ridge, Ladysmith, Cranbrook or Salmon Arm. ARPSBC, 1945, B-50.

²⁵The P-TA was also frustrated by the board's failure to find accommodations for teachers: "Mr. Phillipson addressed the P-TA speaking of the "desparate [sic] need of finding accommodations for teachers and requested that members assist them by informing them of any homes available." June [n.d] 1954. Minutes of P-TA Meeting, Williams Lake School. Minutes in possession of Mrs. Lil Deschene. On the role of the P-TA, see Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation Incorporated Handbook. 7th. ed. (Toronto: Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation Incorporated, 1951).

²⁶Cole Woleford reported school basketball and badminton was played on the canvas floor of the Wells (near Barkerville) community hall. Given its vital role in Williams Lake, the Elks Hall was quickly replaced after it burned down in 1949.

team, into mixed-gender sports such as badminton, and softball: “Oh, we played ball, we did all kinds of things -- boys and girls, yeah we usually played together.” Much larger high schools were more distinctly stratified by gender.²⁷ Well into the 1950s, compared to the second generation, a greater proportion of this generation participated in such activities as teacher Anne Stevenson’s Drama Club or the Christmas concert. As David Tomiyasi recalled, “Everybody took part in Christmas concerts in those days” beginning with preparations for the “big event” in the fall. If there were comparatively fewer activities organized for this generation they also appear to have grown up under more pressure to conform and join in whatever activity was taking place. Harriett Wilson who “wasn’t too crazy about baseball” felt coerced into playing: “It was forced on you at recess time.”

Teachers and the P-TA organized clubs, teams and activities for youth in and outside the school convinced extra-curricular activities addressed several vital needs. Young people needed to be kept physically and mentally “occupied” while experimenting in a variety of activities thought to enrich one’s life. Friendship formation and positive socialization would be guided if not monitored by well-intentioned adults. Last but not least, organized activities helped forge school esprit du corps.²⁸ Thus teachers organized extra-curricular “ball” and “hockey” teams and structured competition with aboriginal student teams from the “Mission” (practices were often confined to lunch period to accommodate bus pupils). With the help of the P-TA, they organized popular events, including “totally chaperoned” and well-attended monthly dances, as well as the famous annual Sports Day down on the Stampede Grounds for

²⁷See John Modell and J. Trent Alexander, “High School in Transition: Community, School, and Peer Group in Abilene, Kansas, 1939,” History of Education Quarterly 37, 1 (Spring 1997): 1-24.

²⁸See Chapter 7 for elaboration. This needs ideology is amplified in John R. Seeley, R. Alexander Sim and Elizabeth W. Loosley, Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life (N.Y.: John Wiley, [1956] 1963), as well as Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the present (New York: Basic Books, 1977), Chapter 9.

all students from surrounding schools. Youth looked forward to such events and rural teens who otherwise had “no real reason” to come into town often arranged overnight stays with friends in order to attend.

In the late-1950s the student population of Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School began to approach a “threshold” mass of around 500 pupils enabling a range of extra-curricular activities, athletics, and clubs of the sort offered in large secondary schools.²⁹ On 8 April, 1959, over 400 students moved into a new two-storey high school with a full-sized gymnasium and a “beautiful new stage and proper lighting system.”³⁰ That year, pupils were offered an array of extra-curricular options including Annual, Photography, Model (replica construction), Square Dance, School Newspaper, Drama clubs, even a Dorm Choir.³¹ Students held a Musical Fashion Show, a Spring Tea, and five dances. Although a few team sports were lacking (for example, volleyball, curling, or a hockey team as in the 1940s), pupils had a choice of others including boxing, mixed badminton, senior boys and girls’ basketball, junior and senior boys and girls softball teams which competed inter-scholastically (both senior teams won championships in Prince George that year), as well as girls and boys track and field teams.

Girls clearly assumed leadership roles in school in these years. The 1958-59 Students Council President was female as was the editor of the 1956-57 school annual. In the 1956-57 school year, girls predominated in most school clubs including a sixteen member Student

²⁹ A synthesis of the literature on “school size effects” suggests that enrollment beyond this “threshold” has little “appreciable effect” on students’ academic or social activities. James Garbarino, “Some Thoughts on School Size and Its Effects on Adolescent Development,” Journal of Youth and Adolescence 9, 1 (1980): 19-30.

³⁰ Students were impressed. Here was a “spacious” two-storied wood-clad school with a “colour scheme” that “really rocked us back on our heels. Blue and yellow and flamingo – or is it orange, red or salmon pink? – were a little startling to the eye.” “Moving Day,” Williams Lake High ‘59 Annual, 40.

³¹ Under the direction of Mrs. Anne Stevenson, the Drama Club won the highest mark in the Regional Finals of the B.C. Drama Festival in Prince George, Rita Brown taking the cup for best actress, and Phillip Mayfield, later Reform MP for the riding, the cup for best actor.

Council, and seventeen member Inter-House Council. The latter played “a big part in school affairs,” organizing lunch-hour and after-school activities “to keep students occupied.” This Council divided the school population into Four Houses, each with their own emblem, the “Hound Dogs,” “Blue Moon,” “Thunderbirds,” and “Be-Bopping .” Each House was responsible for organizing such events as the St. Patrick’s Day and St. Valentine’s Day Dances, the Sadie Hawkins Party as well as the Fall Tea. The Inter-House Council also instituted the famous Indoor Track Meet at Elks Hall, a tradition enduring at Williams Lake Junior Secondary into the 1980s.

By 1959, growing student enrollment, high teacher turnover and a two-storied school complicated the patrolling of students and called for the institution of a limited peer surveillance system.³² Twenty students elected from grades nine through twelve sported armbands and Prefect badges, began to roam the hallways and parking lot offering “assistance to duty teachers.” The Prefect system was a visible attempt to arrest student misbehaviour by initiating self-regulation among individuals of the student corpus, at least according to its stated intent as “an invaluable means whereby responsible members of the student body may sponsor the development of a higher degree of self-discipline.”³³ Students in leadership roles internalized the need for rules governing proper conduct. However, the next year, when a four student panel appearing before the P-TA pointed out a system of “rules” facilitated an adolescent’s development into “happy, well-adjusted adults,” they did not hesitate to add their own theory as to why peers sometimes broke those rules. As the local paper reported it,

³²Williams Lake High '59. According to the school’s annuals, only 5 of the 19 faculty of the 1956-57 school year were teaching at Williams Lake Junior-Senior Secondary in the 1958-59 school year. High teacher turnover rates persisted in the school district as well as in the village. In 1960, 55 of just over 100 teachers in the Williams Lake Teachers’ Association were oriented as “newly appointed staff” to the district. Tribune, 21 September 1960, 4.

³³Williams Lake High '59, 40.

The rebellion of some of their [students] age group was mainly against the harsh unfairness of some adults who expect respect while unwilling to earn it and who break many of the laws they expect young people to uphold. . . . Many who run afoul from society are often those children whose parents tried to make them different from themselves. If a child was truly loved and forgiven it will accept discipline.³⁴

The Second Generation

In June 1964, Bob Scott, principal of Williams Lake Junior-Senior Secondary School, announced the cancellation of graduation ceremonies after fifty-seven of the sixty-five grade twelve students along with some of the grade elevens pulled a “sneak day and cut classes” in order to picnic out at Felker Lake. To make matters worse, it was reported, “They compounded the crime by forming a motorcade on their return to town and drove through a playground and school zone at excessive speeds.” The president of the student council, David Zirnelt, quickly repented: “Most of us wish now we hadn’t done it.” Thus was a future member of the provincial legislature and Cabinet first cast into the public eye. Although Laketown residents initially split over the principal’s decision, most eventually sided with the school and supported Scott. The following year, graduation once again vied with the annual Stampede for the community’s attention.³⁵

If this adolescent prank portrays senior high school students in the mid-1960s as comparatively more assertive, even brazen than those a decade earlier, it was unlikely those same students had entered high school with such confidence. Their elementary to secondary transition was more likely a year of adjustment, even trauma. Whether they had come from local or rural elementary schools, many subjects specified “grade eight” (as opposed to age

³⁴Tribune, 30 March 1960, 6.

³⁵Tribune, 30 June 1965, 7.

thirteen) as one of their most important adolescent years.³⁶ The trepidation with which they approached “high school” was fashioned, in part, by formalistic elementary school teachers, curriculum, and the use of the strap. Males in particular recounted use of the strap in their elementary school. Randy Aston remembered that when someone threw a cowpie into a student’s face, the teacher of his one-room school “lined us all up, everybody in the whole school and gave us a licking.” Like Rusty Shaw, what worried Cal Reid was not the “strap at school,” but the fact that “then we got it at home.” Lynn Blacksmith, the only woman who claimed she was strapped (for stealing a lunch), said, “You didn’t mess around too much in school – it was fun – but you didn’t mess around too much.” Eldon Lee recalled a single occasion in the 1930s when a girl received the strap. Applied lightly and almost perfunctorily, it was nonetheless a humiliation which apparently “any” of the boys in the class would have gladly suffered in her place.³⁷

Student timidity at high school entry was also a response to a considerably larger school and cohort group, more teachers and classes, and a “rotation” system. In the 1965-66 school year, there were 183 grade eights alone in Williams Lake Junior-Senior Secondary; in the 1968-69 school year, 276, including most subjects of the Class of ‘73.³⁸ Randy Aston, who arrived at WLJS from a local elementary school, recalled the new juniors were treated like “peons” by older students: “Grade eight kids – it didn’t matter who you were, you just minded your own business and git [*sic*] out of the way!” Grade eight was “tough” on Carol Davis, but after that first year of high school, she remembered every year was a bit better than the last so

³⁶The other age often cited is age sixteen when subjects procured a driver’s licence.

³⁷Todd and Eldon Lee, “Miss Milligan and Her Grade One Class,” From California to North 52 – Cariboo Experiences (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994), 17-21.

³⁸Beginning in 1961, Grade VII became an elementary grade (See Appendix II).

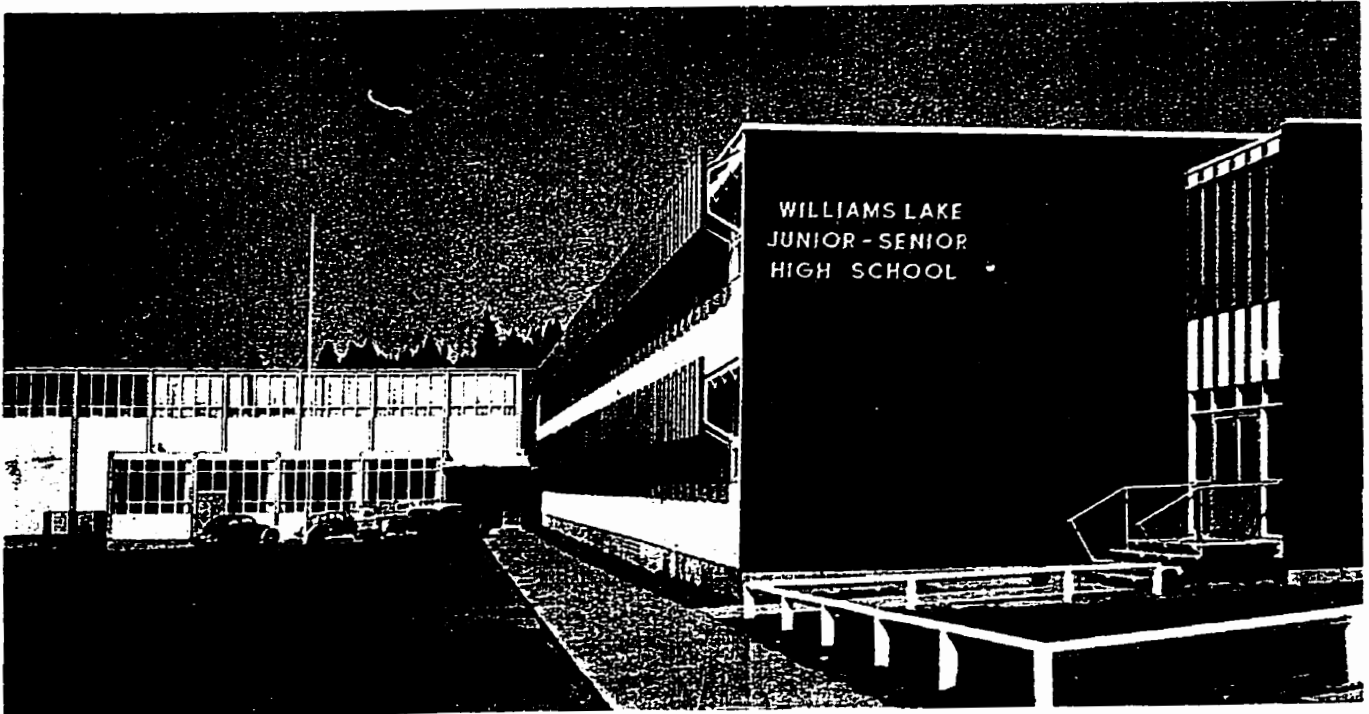
that “grade twelve was a super time . . . one of the best times of my life.”

As in the past, “country” students from rural elementary “feeder” schools faced generally greater adjustments than “town” kids. Going to school “in town” still meant they not only immediately enjoyed a major reduction in the number of hours spent working alongside family on the farm or ranch but also faced new pressures such as longer busing routes or living arrangements with a family or in the dormitory at least on weekdays. It was in the high school that many Laketown and country youth met for the first time. Cal Reid recalled the fall of 1968:

Grade eight was a big change in our lives because that’s when the kids from the rural areas start coming into the school so you went from four grade seven classes [in the largest elementary schools] to eight or nine grade eight classes . . . it was a completely new world. A lot of those kids never came into town to play hockey or baseball . . . Grade eight was the big one . . . that’s when the rural kids came into town in their lumber shirts or their blue jeans and their cowboy boots.

One such “cowboy,” Logan Lassiter, had just moved from a ranch in the western United States to a Cariboo ranch outside Williams Lake. In contrast to the “really solid,” “bright and shiny and clean” brick American high schools, Williams Lake Secondary struck him as a “dark and dingy,” even “shoddy” school, but “the main thing was that there was so many kids there and you just got lost in the shuffle. So grade eight was pretty rough on me. I was lucky to get through it.” Not all country teens fared so badly. Raylene Erickson, for example, was “almost programmed” by her older cousins to fit immediately into high school in the “city.”:

It’s not easy coming from the country. I’d been warned that for three years. I sort of rebelled the country. I wanted to become a city kid. I left grade seven here -- remember I had cousins before me and they said, “Town’s terrible, they’ll call you a hayseed,” and I thought, “I won’t be this way. I’ll get tied in with some town kids right to start with and I’ll make my way.” And I did. I was very big for my age back then too. I was tall in grade eight. Everybody thought I was a teacher -- backcomb[ed] my hair way up. I got in with the town kids and it was good.



Ill. 15. Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School, 1964-65. Source: annual, The Laker, 1965.



Ill. 16. "Pushing their way through jammed corridors of Williams Lake High School are some members of this year's student explosion in population. The teacher at the left has to take a bowl of soup down to the other end of the corridor. Tribune photographer, Art Long, did not wait around to see what happened." September 1966. Courtesy of Williams Lake Tribune.

In 1967, country students at the dormitory were ruled by Miss Green, a “dorm matron” with a “firm and steady hand.” The “dorm” students adhered to her task schedules outlining bed-making, hall cleaning and kitchen duties – no doubt labour lighter than that faced at home:

Table 2. Schedule at the High School Dormitory, 1967.

7:00 am	Wake
7:30 am	Breakfast (temporarily in Home Economics room until cafeteria is completed); pack Lunch
3:30 pm	Classes finished
5:00 pm	Dinner
5:00-9:30 or 10:00	Free time until they return to their rooms

Green did not compel students “to follow definite study programs.” Students were paired in bedrooms. They spent hours in the “spacious” dorm recreation room which had a television set, ping-pong table, shuffleboard, record player, and piano and even a stove for making after-dinner snacks. Written notes from a parent permitted them to smoke in that room, or allowed them access to the drive-in or the theatre although they had to return immediately after the movie was over. According to Green, “most” students returned home on weekends, but others had “so much fun that after they have been here for three or four months, they’d like to stay forever.” Green had to “ease away” from these students.³⁹

The 1960 Chant Commission’s promulgation of a focus on pupils’ intellectual development met with the opposition of classroom teachers as well as academics, and by the mid-1960s, discovery-based curricula and neo-progressivism sweeping Canadian public

³⁹Tribune, 4 October 1967, 16.

education began to displace the formalism and focus on academic rigour in the district.⁴⁰ As the local paper reported it, “The old concept of education for the sole purpose of advancing economically is being replaced by a new ideal – education for the reward of knowing more.”⁴¹ Martin Hamm, the assistant superintendent, explained the trend to area residents in the fall of 1966. Emphasis had shifted from “the traditional classroom to that of the enquiry-discovery oriented classroom,” for example, from a “lecture and question orientation” to “students learning on their own.” Teachers now “guided” students. Classrooms would function as “source centres,” and teachers as “resource people.”⁴² The paradigm shift in education was, in part, also prompted by the notion that schools had to be more humane when dealing with students such as Janet Bailey who had failed a primary grade and thereafter struggled with a “poor self-concept.”

If the new educational philosophy turned classrooms into less formalistic places, subsequent experimentation on the part of educators also claimed a new sort of victim. Two female subjects recalled their disastrous encounter with “the new open learning thing” at Marie Sharpe Elementary School in 1968 where a select group of able grade seven students were “put into a room to work” and “left to do anything” at their own pace. Left with too little teacher intervention and guidance, at least some students with proven academic ability apparently began to suffer. “The experiment” failed, claimed one of these women, because at age twelve, “we weren’t responsible enough”: “I really suffered. . . . Of course all we did was bring our

⁴⁰See British Columbia, Report of the Royal Commission on Education (Victoria, 1960); for the Chant Commission in perspective, see Jean Barman and Neil Sutherland, “Royal Commission Retrospective,” in Barman, et. al., Children, Teachers & Schools, esp. 419-20; on neo-progressivism, J. Donald Wilson and Hugh A. Stevenson, eds., Precepts, Policy and Process: Perspectives on Contemporary Canadian Education (London, Ont.: Alexander Blake Associates, 1977).

⁴¹Tribune, 10 November, 1965, 14.

⁴²Cited in Tribune, 23 November 1966, 21.

record player in there . . . that's when the Monkees were 'in' and we were dancing to albums."

The other woman was even more frustrated over the experience which in her case destroyed her former good work habits -- a prerequisite for success in high school:

I was a smart kid in grade six, A and B average. All of a sudden, [teachers announced] "We're not going to have teachers, this is a new program . . . we have six months of work figured out, we have the guidelines." There are seven of us stuck in this little room. There were four snotties . . . and all we did was yak and giggle. I just failed so miserably and yet you could not go for help. They'd tell you, well, there's your guidelines. Well, I'm sorry -- to this day I don't think that experiment worked That was a terrible experiment because it screwed up my life so by the time I got to grade eight, I was getting Ds and Es.

Students entering junior or senior high school in the mid-1960s and early 1970s found themselves segregated on the basis of academic performance. Janet Bailey was bitter about the process at Williams Lake Junior Secondary:

They classified us. They made us write this test and however we did on this test, they put us in either 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-4, 8-5, 8-6, 8-7 and 8-8. Most of the Aboriginal kids were in 8-7 and 8-8. That's where I ended up. . . . We were in the dummy class. The 8-1s and 8-2s were the smart kids. And lots of my friends were in that, 'cause I hung around with smart kids, but I was always the one that was in the lower end.

Additionally, between 1963 and 1971, a minority of students at WLJS (never more than three or four dozen) were identified as "Occupational," "Occs" being students whom teachers regarded as unable to continue successfully with the core curriculum and who would otherwise drop out of school. From 1966 to 1974, senior students at the new Columneetza Senior Secondary, were streamed into one of four high school curriculum streams: Academic-Technical (renamed Arts and Sciences after 1972), Commerce, Industrial, Community Services.⁴³ A fifth stream, "Combined Studies," was added in 1973. Most students fell into one of the first three categories (See Appendix III). By offering expanded and more relevant

⁴³Columneetza Senior Secondary opened in the 1966-67 school year. "Columneetza" was the name chosen from student contest entries. It resembles an Athapaskan term meaning "meeting of the princely peoples."

programs, the province sought to encourage a greater proportion of adolescents to complete secondary schooling.⁴⁴ Cal Reid who was on the Arts and Sciences program summed up the streamed curriculum, “It was cut-and-dried. If they felt you struggled with the academic side of it, you went straight into the vocational . . . get your woodwork, metalwork, basketweaving, just to get through the system.”

It wasn't really that simple when one also considers the gendered curriculum. Between 1967 and 1974, for example, 440 males and 413 females were enrolled in the Grade XI Academic-Technical, or Arts and Sciences stream at Columneetza Senior Secondary. Gender parity diminished when students enrolled in Grade XII. In the same time period, 451 males enrolled in Grade 12, but only 354 females. Tracking Grade XI students' movements into Grade XII reveals females were more likely than males to leave the stream. In 1972-73, 104 Grade XI males were enrolled in Arts and Sciences program. A year later, seventy-one were enrolled in Grade XII. In 1972-73, there were 113 Grade XI females in the program, but a year later only forty-nine were enrolled in Grade XII. More females than males left the stream for the “Combined Studies” program which allowed students a broader range of courses. Nowhere was the curriculum more gendered than in the Commercial and Industrial streams. Between 1967 and 1974 the Grade XI Commercial stream attracted a total of seventeen males and 259 females while the Grade XI Industrial stream drew 257 males and only two females (See Appendix III). One subject, “thoroughly bored” with the gendered curriculum, “the typical female stuff” (“I'd rather be pulling wrenches than making bread”) persuaded a

⁴⁴Barman and Sutherland, “Royal Commission Retrospective,” 420.

counsellor at Columneetza to allow her to enter a Power Mechanics class at Columneetza.⁴⁵

Literacy, numeracy, race and gender aside, factors such as motivation by parents, self-initiative, and visions of a career propelled students into different programs. A girl in the “experiment” at Marie Sharpe Elementary later claimed she lacked encouragement from teachers and especially her parents, and eventually shied away from the Academic-Technical stream at Columneetza Senior Secondary: “I just knew there was nobody pushing me to do any better, so I took all the easy [courses], you know, General Math . . . I did all the General courses.” Another subject, Raylene Erickson graduated purely to please her parents, “especially my dad,” a task she accomplished by also steering clear of all academic courses. Parental encouragement, even threats, kept other students hard at work on courses even when such courses turned out to be disappointing or otherwise did not meet their needs or interests. Cal Reid’s father seemed forceful in this regard. When a report card came home with “a couple of Fs and Ds,” Cal’s father simply announced Cal wouldn’t be playing any more hockey if the trend wasn’t reversed: “That’s when my dad threatened me with my hockey skates.” Cal’s grades improved.

Typically, however, most parents appeared to remain uninvolved in a son or daughter’s school work, a point many subjects now regretted. There was “no push” claimed one subject. “Mom and dad never helped us with our homework. School was our responsibility,” claimed

⁴⁵This subject recalled the fact there was no restriction on girl’s attire at the school made this easier. As an aside, a systematic comparison of rural and urban schools on the issue of girl’s dress might prove interesting. It is noteworthy that while Katie Jean Kurtz recalled her female pupils wore pants in the one-room Chezacut School in the mid-1950s, schools in Williams Lake itself enforced a sexist as well as impractical (considering the cold climate) urban-based imposition upon girls’ freedom of dress until the late 1960s. Evelyn McLeod hated the constraint of a dress. She “couldn’t wait to take off the dog” and get into pants and a shirt as soon as she got home from school “so that you could do something useful.” Twenty years later, Cindy McEwan also “hated dresses and skirts” which she had to wear to WLJS. She recalls having to wear jeans underneath her dress because of the cold and then removing the pants upon arrival at the school: “And that was kind of a stupid thing, especially for Williams Lake, I mean, it’s so relaxed and so easy-going and we’d have to wear dresses and skirts.”

another. One woman remembered she “sort of just breezed through” her high school years. If any parent came to the school, it was her mother whenever “my brothers got into trouble.” For students on the verge of failure, parental expectations and “push” helped determine whether they entered the academic-technical or a “vocational” stream.

Many second generation subjects, unlike their older counterparts, placed part, or even a great deal of the responsibility for their own lack-luster performances upon teachers. High school teachers, of course, brought varying skills as well as motivations and commitments to bear upon their pedagogical task. For three decades after the Second World War, for example, interior districts like Williams Lake were known at least among some teachers as “a place to put in a year or two” before trying to land a permanent job in what they considered a more favourable area such as the Lower Mainland, Okanagan Valley, or Vancouver Island.⁴⁶ Non-individualized instruction failed to address Janet Bailey’s academic difficulties in junior high: “Basically, it was more lecture-style and it was boring.”⁴⁷ Janet’s isolation deepened at Columneetza Senior Secondary School where students were comparatively more independent as well as more responsible for their learning: “I got through because the teachers all liked me you know . . . I was popular.” Most other subjects graduating high school in the early 1970s described a “fairly lax” curriculum which they associated with low teacher expectations. Steve Teller from the class of ‘73 earned top marks through junior high school but thereafter allowed

⁴⁶This point is substantiated by Peter Smith, teacher at WLJS since 1970. Smith taught for two years at Burnaby South Secondary before moving to the Cariboo. Smith described teacher turnover around 1970 and put it this way: “If you were here for two years, you were probably going to stay for a while. If you were here five years, you were an old-timer.” Over the course of the 1970s, however, Williams Lake was increasingly perceived as “an easy drive to Vancouver,” teaching jobs became more difficult to secure in the province and teachers began to stay. Interview, Williams Lake, 17 August, 1995. In 1980, approximately 80 (or almost one in six) of the district’s almost 500 teachers were new or replacement teachers.

⁴⁷This criticism is well-documented, and castigated, in A.B. Hoggetts, What Culture? Whose Heritage? A Study of Civic Education in Canada (Toronto: OISE, 1968).

grades to slip. He “coasted” through grade twelve:

I graduated no problem with Bs and Cs when I could have had As. I just couldn't be bothered. I didn't do homework. It wasn't cool to take home homework. It's sad . . . but I never took home homework all through senior high school. . . . And there's no getting around it. I had very few teachers . . . who challenged me.

Dick Uldorf, who completed an undergraduate university degree, also characterized his high school Academic-Technical courses as “boring” and irrelevant. Even Maths and Sciences (his favourite subjects) had been barely tolerable: “Some of the subjects I was really looking forward to enjoying were the greatest disappointments sometimes.” He thought “a lot of the teachers” were “quite mediocre” in their “understanding of their subject matter,” citing the example of one teacher “who did not understand basic grade eleven and twelve Chemistry and the concepts being taught there,” a teacher who often relied upon “the answer book”:

I still remember, we just pissed ourselves the day he decided to look at the chemical properties of phosphorus and so he started to take this piece apart . . . and it's still in oil so it doesn't get to the air, and he says, ‘Oh, this piece is quite big, let's cut a small piece off and see what its properties are,’ so he picks it up, cuts it off on his desk and we had this great big fire! [Laughter].

Few subjects esteemed a teacher who proved unable to control the learning environment. Sandy Butchart, for instance, recalls how she and her classmates “terrorized” substitute teachers: “I used to feel so sorry for them and we went out of our way to make their lives miserable. I can remember just tearing those poor people apart, now that you think about it.” Howard Underwood recalls he deplored what he perceived to be shifts towards more permissive and easily intimidated teachers coming into high school in the mid-to-to late 1960s. Howard's upbringing (his involvement with the Air Cadets, as well as his father's military background) meant he understood and appreciated discipline and orderliness and had been unable to condone shifting student attitudes toward authority. Howard dealt at length with his

Math teacher whom others had also cited as a good teacher, and whom he still greatly admired:

I don't think there was anybody that didn't like _____. He'd get along with the jocks and they respected him . . . He demanded respect. . . . [He] was one of the best teachers you'll ever find . . . he could teach for twenty minutes and he could bugger around for forty – but don't ever start bugging around before he gave the go-ahead. No one would lend him a racquet [laughter] because if he missed a shot, he was sure as heck to break it! God! if he spoke – and you goddam-well listened and I don't care who you were or what a rascal or an asshole or what type of an individual you were at sixteen. _____ would just take you and thrash you. . . . But there were a lot of teachers intimidated or started to become intimidated [by students], and that became almost a shame as it progressed [emphasis in original]. And I could never do that to a teacher.

This narrative aside, this generation generally constructed what they considered their best teachers in terms other than strictness. It is not that this generation didn't value strictness, which they did, but unlike their older counterparts, they preferred “committed” teachers who “worked hard” to get students to understand and pass a subject, by devoting attention to individuals within or outside the class, by making the subject more relevant, or by structuring new educational projects. Teacher A, for example, “really worked hard with me to get me through my Math.” Teacher B was a band teacher who “challenged” and “pushed” each student to become proficient with a variety of instruments. Subjects dismissed other teachers precisely because they failed to stimulate students: “You'd be half-way through the semester and they really didn't have anything else to teach you.” Teacher C devoted considerable time and energy to the “fabulous” Europe '70 Tour in which over sixty students from grades nine to twelve spent six weeks in Europe. This became a significant event in students' lives fostering relationships among students in different grades who up to that point would not “dare” to speak never mind associate with each other. The trip remains etched as a watershed event in the

collective memory of many graduates of the Class of '73.⁴⁸

Subjects also considered their best teachers to be those who tempered instruction with a sense of fairness, humour, or an ability to “relate” to and respect young people.⁴⁹ Teacher D “was strict yet he was a very pleasant teacher. I found that if they were pleasant and easy to get along with, school and the subject seemed to go much better.” Teacher E, another good teacher, “was hilarious.” Teacher F was creative, relevant, and built rapport with students by having them analyze the meaning of Beatle lyrics in English class: “It made it a little more interesting; you were relating to something.” Apparently, teacher G’s sense of good pedagogy appealed to many students. He appeared initially as an “odd” teacher who conducted classes with only “five or ten” students in attendance. Eventually, G won over his senior class. Dick Uldorf recalls, G not only “presented the material quite well,” but his approach to students was also the “first sort of a mature one” many of them had experienced. G told students from the outset, “If you want to come, I’ll teach you something; if you don’t want to come. . . . Kids liked him . . . by the end of the year, he actually ended up with a full class.”

How surprising is it that a generation desiring everlasting youth (“Never trust anyone over thirty”) learned to value young and energetic teachers? Teacher H “just came in when I was in grade nine . . . new, young . . . so many of our teachers were old . . . ancient [emphasis in original].” One’s youth did not, however, compensate for character flaw or poor judgements. Teacher J was young, but is best remembered as a new coach who directly or indirectly pitted team-mates against one other. The girls became bitter when she failed to lead

⁴⁸One couple began a romantic relationship on the tour and later married. The trip was the topic of many discussions at the Twenty-Year High School Reunion of the Class of '73.

⁴⁹“Circular respect” between teacher and student was seen as an important basis for exemplary teaching in one analysis of American high schools. See Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 209.

the team into the high school provincials championships. “I hated her,” one woman said, “We all hated her for what she did.”

Finally, Laketown youth appreciated teachers who stayed and accepted young people on their own terms. Cal Reid, for instance, disliked the sort of teacher “from Vancouver” with an urban-minded “attitude,” set of “expectations,” and “way of life,” who “couldn’t relate” to regional “lifestyles.” To ranch kids “busy with chores,” or “town” boys tied to hectic hockey schedules, homework was regarded as an imposition, an invasion of “our time.” Teacher attitudes changed as their residency in the Cariboo-Chilcotin lengthened and as they became more “laid back”: “The ones that had been here for a while I liked. . . . The ones that I always had trouble with were brought in. It was their first or second year of teaching.”

Fewer than a dozen “good” teachers were identified repeatedly by various subjects as individuals who had an effect on their lives. One teacher cited for her outstanding efforts initiated athletic programs for girls:

We had _____ for grade eight and nine for P.E. and she did field hockey. Field hockey was very big in Williams Lake in those days because of her [emphasis in original]. Every year we would . . . win the zones to go to provincials. . . . She was an excellent teacher, an excellent coach, probably why I enjoyed sports so much . . . and she did them all. She did the basketball in those days.

Influential teachers were not always drawn from the high school. William Sangha still admired his elementary school principal. The woman was a touchstone in his life. Following his father’s accident (see Chapter 4), she had looked in on the family, overseen William’s education in the broadest sense, and taken a vital interest in the “key points of my life.” She had ensured William integrated into the wider community by taking part in such things as Junior Forest Wardens and the Music Festival and she had also tracked his progress throughout his secondary and post-secondary years.



Ill. 17. "Beatnik Dance at WLJS, 1964-65." From left to right, Students Eddie Illnicki and Lynn Fourt, and teachers, Miss Jellett and Mr. Stedham. Source: Laker 1965.



Ill. 18. Teachers at WLJS. Mr. B. Sales and Mr. C. Wyse. Source: WLJS annual, 1973-74.

Despite such appraisals, compared to their first generation counterparts, this generation was more critical, even bitter, of both curriculum and teachers. Teachers gained notoriety for various reasons. One was “boring”; another was “narrow-minded”; a third individual “drank too much.” One teacher was “too rough” with students. Others were unfair: “I had ‘X’ I didn’t like. He was a bully. He had favourites, extreme favourites. My daughter actually had him in grade eleven . . . and he was exactly the same way. . . . He wasn’t a fair teacher. He didn’t grade you fairly.” Several subjects cited examples of teachers who knew the subject-matter, but were nonetheless pedagogical failures. As one man put it, they were “the type of person . . . that’s taken for industrial education because he knows how to cut lumber straight but doesn’t know how to handle people, or knows the basic electricity, only knows the right answer, doesn’t know how to really explain it. If you don’t get it right, you’d have to come and do detentions.”

Instructional methods in the late 1960s may have dampened student interest in the subject matter, but Columneetza Senior Secondary’s voluntary attendance policy also increased student absenteeism while lowering academic performance. In 1967, Principal Al McMillan reported “most” parents endorsed the notion that students should learn to “regulate their own life,” and attend classes at their “discretion.”⁵⁰ Four Columneetza students returning from a Kiwanis-sponsored exchange in Bewster, Washington, proudly asserted their American counterparts were comparatively coddled: “Students down there seem to have to be pushed into everything.” They couldn’t leave the school grounds without parental consent. The students also noted other differences. Grade twelve girls at Columneetza typically went out with “older

⁵⁰ Approximately 100 grade XII in 3 classes at Columneetza began this experiment in mid-November 1967, following a year’s consultation with Campbell River Senior High which had voluntary attendance. Tribune, 15 November 1967, 7.

[out-of-school] guys”: “Down there, they all stick right to their own grades! [sic].” When it came to chaperoning dances, Columneetza teachers “all mixed in,” while at Brewster, “they sit by the walls and look stupid.”⁵¹

At the time, Columneetza’s student attendance policy fit in well with its avant-garde architecture. Local school district trustees and architects had visited the “ultra-modern” Joel E. Ferris High School in Spokane, Washington, and impressed after witnessing “one of North America’s few campus-type high schools in action,” promptly imported two of its features into Columneetza’s design: a lack of bells and a “campus” with a spacious courtyard.⁵²

Columneetza’s physical layout, “among the first in Canada,” consisted of several modules connected by covered walkways, an aesthetically pleasing yet ecologically poor design students and teachers came to lament in cold winters.⁵³ At the time, however, Columneetza exuded freedom to students such as Steve Teller:

We really took full advantage of the fact that it was a free school – that’s kind of what they called it. It was brand new, California design, we all sat around and ate chips and gravy in the cafeteria and smoked cigarettes and just had a blast! [emphasis in original]. There was no learning, absolutely no learning. And I know the same applies for the same friends that were my age that went to school. I didn’t learn very much in high school. Most of my learning came from me having to go back to school.

In 1971, five years after Columneetza Senior Secondary opened, the vice-principal, Dave A. Shore, cautioned students its laissez-faire days might be drawing to a close. Shore pointed out that Columneetza students “enjoyed the privilege of certain freedoms not typical of

⁵¹Tribune, 29 November 1967, 12.

⁵²Ferris High School, unlike “any other high school in the continent,” had no bells to sound the end of classes and consisted of five modern buildings centred about a spacious courtyard: “On the perimeter are the sound or odour areas which include the industrial or fine arts building, homemaking building, gymnasium, field house, and science building . . . the physical structure is built for team teaching, the facet of the institution which most interested the Williams Lake party.” Tribune, 13 October 1965, 8.

⁵³Ibid.

most secondary schools” including freedom from overcrowding, liberty to organize their own free time, the use of the cafeteria as a common room, as well as “the goodwill of the community.” But, Shore warned, the school could no longer steer this sort of course as it faced its largest enrollment the following year; furthermore, freedoms were “in jeopardy” as the school was “under close scrutiny by people who believe in a more regimented system.”⁵⁴

When a second junior high school, Anne Stevenson, opened in the 1973-74 school year, comparisons were inevitably made with Williams Lake Junior Secondary. Subjects and past teachers at both schools acknowledged perceived differences in teacher outlooks and expectations between the older WLJS with its core of established teachers and ASJS with its so-called “radicals” freshly graduated from Simon Fraser University.⁵⁵ William Sangha who attended both schools, recalled his negative experience at WLJS:

One time in grade eight – I was very good in English – I wrote an essay and the teacher said to me, “You did not write this essay. I’m only going to give you a C plus, you must have plagiarised.” I said, “Why?”, and he said, “I don’t think you’re capable of writing it.” Now nothing was spoken but I think his conception was that a little Indo-Canadian kid isn’t capable of writing it, because he had never met a little Indo-Canadian kid like me who could speak English very well, who was articulate, all those things.

William lived in the ASJS catchment, enrolled in the school in the fall of 1973 and was soon admiring its “very young,” “idealistic” teachers. He felt they empathized with him. He felt validated by them:

Things began to really change for me. I started to perform better and have more confidence. . . . I really, really developed a lot of confidence and there was a lot of support from the teachers and they began to also recognize me in the sense, ‘You’re doing good work’ . . . ‘you are smart’ [emphasis in original].

According to Norman Flit and Millie Jacobs, Aboriginal families on some reserves such as

⁵⁴D.A. Shore, Vice Principal’s Message, Cougar 1971, Columneetza school annual.

⁵⁵Interviews with Dick Shute, Jack Berger and Pete Smith as well as my own recollections.

Alkali Lake also began to target this new school rather than WLJS, which for two decades had integrated Aboriginal students. Despite WLJS' much larger Aboriginal enrollment and resources including Native language classes, such families chose to send children to ASJS supposedly because it "accepted the Natives more than they did at WL."

By the time the Class of '73 entered Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School in 1968, the school offered a full-fledged assortment of extra-curricular activities commensurate with any contemporary high school of its size. In 1965, three dozen staff sponsored junior and senior boys and girls basketball teams (the Lakers and Lakettes), a junior and senior cheerleader team, sixteen clubs, as well as the usual almost bewildering assortment of student events such as Students' Council campaigns, pancake eating contests, and dances including a Volleyball Victory Dance and a Beatnik Dance.⁵⁶

Numerically, females continued to dominate many of the service-oriented clubs in the school as well as in the community, an observation publicly lamented in the local paper:

Strangely, in spite of the great community efforts of the Men's Service Clubs, in the youth field girls are far more apt than boys to be engaged in good works. Why should service at that age seem all too often to be a female prerogative?⁵⁷

There were thirty-one members in the school's all-female Y-Teens, a group pledging "service to school and community" about twice the number (sixteen) in the male counterpart group, the Boys' Club, that provided only "service to the school."⁵⁸ All five members of the Student Council Executive, and eighteen of the twenty-two members of the Annual Club were female.

⁵⁶High School Annual, The Laker, 1965.

⁵⁷Tribune, 29 September 1965, 11. Thirty young girls volunteered as Candy-Strippers, a group helping out in the local hospital. Local reorganization received the assistance of the Dawson Creek's auxiliary, apparently a "very active group." Ibid., 15 December 1965, 16.

⁵⁸Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School. Annual. The Laker -- 1965.

The Library Club, Dance Committee, and Prefects consisted mostly of females. Forty-two of the forty-three members of the Pep Club and all of the cheerleaders were female.

Students who had been active in extra-curricular activities in smaller elementary schools faced stiffer competition for team membership and often narrowed their focus. Steve Teller only made the “B string” in the late 1960s partly for this reason: “The fact that I couldn’t do as well as I wanted probably is the reason I didn’t do very much of it.” William Sangha had “participated in everything” from music festivals to spoken verse to sports teams in his elementary school. In grade eight, he said, “You’re no longer on the school soccer team. Only the best soccer players in the school get to play soccer and I wasn’t quite in that category:

Only the best volleyball players get to play volleyball. And basketball. And those guys are cool. And some of them drink and they smoke and they have girlfriends, and I wasn’t part of that . . . and also I think I was then excluded. There was an exclusion. Junior high was different . . . [But] I think this applied to a lot of kids who were not visible minorities: it’s a class thing, it’s a nerd-jock thing, it’s those who are a little more beautiful than the others or going into puberty quicker . . . [emphasis in original].

Even those “jocks” became more selective in honing their talents. Cindy McEwan, who played “a lot of sports” and considered it a “very important part of my growing up,” began to concentrate upon field hockey and basketball, sports in which she excelled. Cal Reid who had enjoyed playing all team sports “quit” basketball and volleyball in order to devote time to minor hockey and his skill developed to the point where he was later offered hockey scholarships.

Tighter time budgets and declining interests in such activities kept other students from extra-curricular participation. William Sangha hurried home to attend to his father and supervise his younger sister. Sacrificing extra-curricular activities entirely was “an easy choice” for Dick Uldorf who worked after school in order to save for university. Howard

Underwood, who devoted many hours to a variety of intramurals in his elementary as well as junior secondary grades such as curling, bowling and badminton, restricted extra-curricular to curling in his senior years, but remained active in hockey, horse riding, and hunting.

Commuting students found distance from school mitigated against their involvement in athletics even if they were so inclined. Lynn Blacksmith, who loved “rough and tumble” type of activities, was only able to participate in floor hockey as she didn’t dare miss the bus: “If I missed it I walked.” Swamped nightly by domestic labour, Lynn devoted lunch hours in the library catching up on homework. With several children to drive into town, Raylene Erickson’s parents allowed each child a single team sport each year so that parents “weren’t running back and forth” between home and school.

Compared to the first generation, many more individuals of this generation perceived extra-curricular activities as, at best, only a minor aspect of one’s adolescence. In 1970, Vice-Principal Shore noted the year had been marked by a “lack of student participation” and interest in “school affairs” including the Student Council.⁵⁹ Although Steve Teller did commit time to this Council he considered all other extra-curricular activities as redundant: “I had a big enough circle of people to hang out and do stuff with that I was busy. I didn’t need to be in a club to find things to do.” Mike Edson was becoming involved in the “party” and “street scene” in Williams Lake and losing all interest in extra-curricular activities: “I didn’t take part in anything.” Sandy Butchart would occasionally play baseball at lunch time “if there was teams organized”; otherwise, she remained a passive participant: “If there was a basketball game going on we would occasionally go and watch that.” Although Raylene Erickson made a sports team she was cavalier about sports. Road trips were a mere excuse for another “party”:

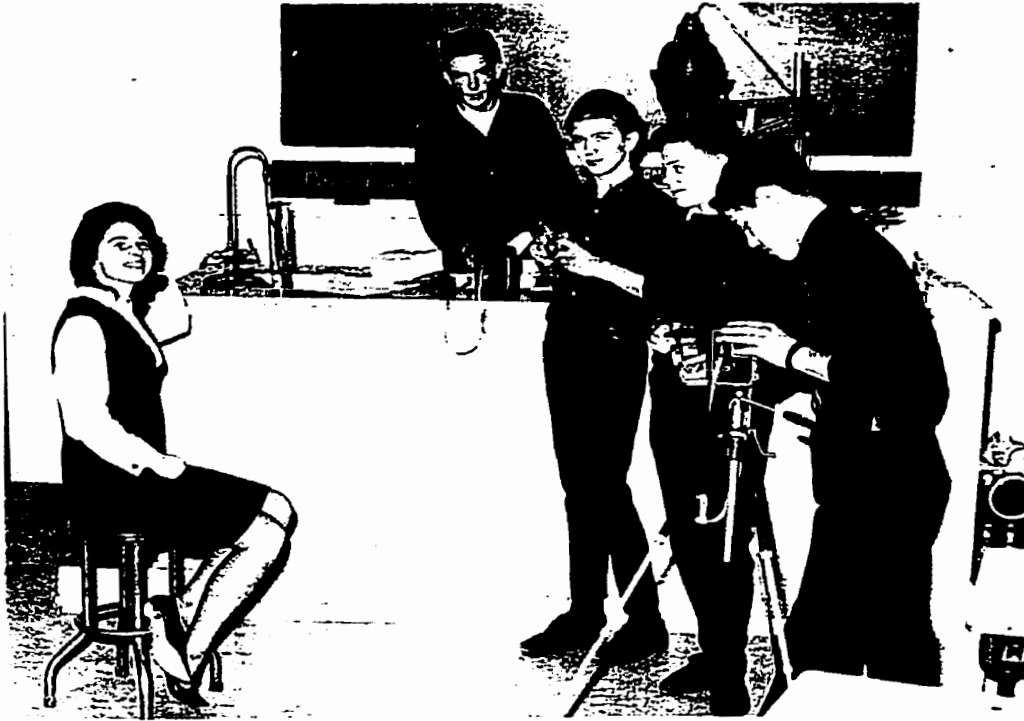
⁵⁹Columnneetza Senior Secondary School Annual, Cougar 1970.



III. 19. "First Student Council Dance, 1964." Source: Laker 1965.



III. 20. "Prefects. Help to maintain order in the school." Source: Laker 1965.



III. 21. "Photography Club. 'Smile Carol!'" Source: Laker 1965



III. 22. Pep Club at WLJS. Source: Laker 1965.



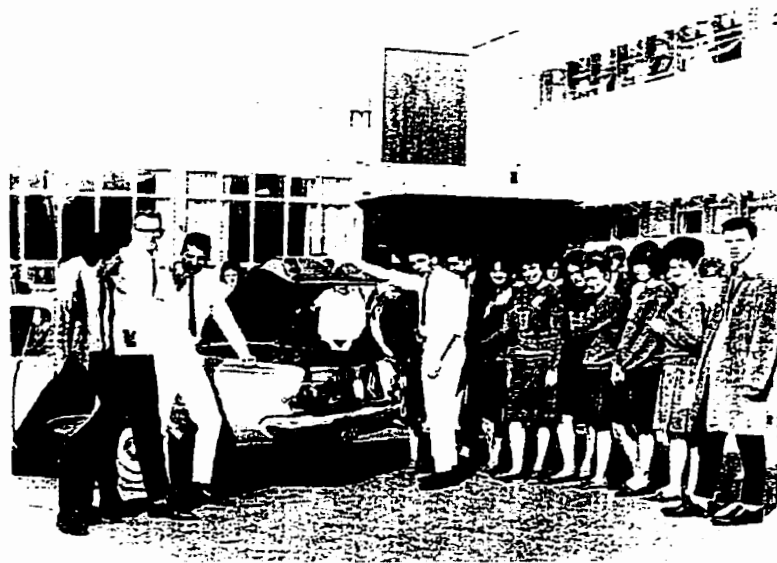
Ill. 23. "Boys' Club. Gives service to the school." Source: Laker 1965.



Ill. 24. "Y-Teens. Pledge to give service to the school and community." Source: Laker 1965.



III. 25. The Lakettes. Senior Girls Basketball Team. Source: Laker, 1965.



III. 26. Lakers [Sr. Boys Basketball team] preparing to leave for Vancouver. Laker 1965.

“It was nothing for girls to take booze with them, and leave the hotel room, go to the other side of [100 Mile House], sit around, drink, drink, drink – the big thing was sneaking back.” They were found out “the odd time,” but more often than not, the boys would be blamed: “The guys would get into trouble . . . and you’d hear the girls’ teacher say, ‘Those boys’ . . .”

As in the case of the first generation, the high school remained important as a site of friendship formation. Given the nature of this region, many students such as Sandy Butchart or Lynn Blackford lived miles apart from and unable to gain access to friends. School fulfilled the same social function in their lives as it had for Wilme Ruth Baxter or Katie Jean Kurtz. School, said Sandy, “That was my recreation. I loved going there.” For Lynn, it meant respite from household labour. It was the one place Wendy Lorimar could get “away from responsibilities at home,” the only place where she could avoid her father’s restrictions over her social life.

An undetermined number of youth mostly valued the social aspect of schooling. The school, as Mike Edson put it, was simply “a centre for people” into which individuals of different origins were “all basically just dumped.” According to Mike Edson, “School was important because that was where all my friends were. . . . If you wanted to meet girls, you went to school.” Mike’s attitude only changed when, as part of a magistrate’s disposition, he attended a term at an outdoor camp facility where he learned self-discipline and that he, in fact, “could do things.” Having once considered himself “academically a failure,” Mike returned to Columneetza: “I came back and finished high school off with honours, whereas high school before was just a place to hang out.” That camp and not the high school proved the “turning point” in Mike’s life as far as his self-esteem was concerned.

Raylene Erickson’s secondary schooling also remained synonymous with “social life.”

After a summer of work, she says, "I wanted to go back -- for the social life." For a minority of students such as Raylene, the Columneetza cafeteria became only one of many sites to cluster, socialize, smoke and play cards ("We used to play poker all the time"), while skipping classes. Unlike another subject who described her group as "the losers," the "no-fitters" without access to vehicles and who habitually retired to the cafeteria before or after classes, or at lunchtime, Raylene was one of the chronic absentees at Columneetz in the early 1970s. With myriad indoor and outdoor sites in which to congregate freely without adult supervision, money in their pocket, and access to a vehicle, this group often fled the school site:

_____ [another girl] and I, this is our schedule. We'd get off the bus, we'd have good intentions, we'd have to go to school -- we'd missed so much. You sit in the cafeteria because we'd get to the school early -- the bus did double runs in those days. We'd sit there, we'd sit there [and say], "let's not go, let's not go." "Okay." So we go down to Sam's Restaurant, drink coffee 'til the bank opens, go to the bank, get our money and . . . go straight to the Chili [Chilcotin Pub]. _____ was the barmaster in the Chili and he would let us play pool for free until the first customers came in. After that we had to pay and we played pool for money. We would win money playing pool. And then after school, the teachers would all come in there, we'd see them. There's _____, there's Mr. _____. They'd all be sitting there, never said nothing, never said nothing. And that was just over and over and over. On this one report card, I missed all these days and I just scratched out the number.

This generation of subjects grew up in a comparatively more diverse, if not divisive, student culture based on somatic differences, age, and physical development. "Gawky," "flat-chested," teen-age girls such as Sandy Butchart felt "awful" next to "all these other chicks blossoming out." Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students generally didn't mix, nor did seniors and juniors. "Tough" teens intimidated or imposed themselves physically upon weaker peers. While this sort of physical harassment did not usually cross gender lines at least in the school setting, psychological and sexual harassment was another matter. The older generation had been silent on this point. Sandy Butchart, who otherwise loved school, had vivid memories of

agonizing peer torment: “I can remember getting a cold sore on my lip and these two guys in the back of the classroom just made my life miserable . . . ‘Oh, you’ve got syphilis!’”

Increasing enrollment and cultural diversity among the student corpus in the 1960s and 1970s promoted social distance between individuals and encouraged development of distinct factions. By the time subjects entered Columneetza Senior Secondary they recognized distinct clusterings of youths (See Chapter 5). The “jocks,” for example, were distinguished as “better-dressed” individuals involved in many extra-curricular activities, a clique who “all sort of stuck to themselves.” Other groups, the “greasers,” “cowboys,” “hippies” (or “heads”), and “hockey players” had more difficulty sharing space amicably and most physical conflicts occurred between individuals from these cliques. These groupings appear male-defined as did most conflict. The culture of male physical prowess evident in the mill and on Laketown streets also tainted school culture:

If it wasn’t Friday after school, it was always after school, word would get around school, so and so is going to have a fight. Of course, everybody would charge down there and watch this fight. . . . Fighting was a sort of, well let’s put it this way, a form of entertainment.

“Dorm kids,” “Indians,” and “Hindus” all appear cast as under-classes in the school culture. “Dorm kids” formed a “group amongst themselves.” “Most” were “cowboys and Indians,” but “a lot of the kids came from Likely,” a logging community approximately an hour and a half’s drive from Williams Lake. At the time, these youth struck one “town” female subject as backward:

A lot of social misfits lived in Likely. The Likely kids stood out because they were weird . . . I would suspect if you were looking for something out of Deliverance you could find it in Likely . . . morally not acceptable stuff. Nowadays, it’s mostly heads that live out there, you know, back-to-nature kind of people. Likely was [at the time] more loggers . . . party hard, that sort of thing.

Although a few non-Aboriginal subjects claimed they crossed clique and “race” lines, typically, Aboriginal peoples are not only forgotten as classmates, but Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal narratives suggest there were few meaningful and enduring friendships struck between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. A decade after Aboriginal students began to attend public high school in Williams Lake, they “still didn’t integrate very well” with non-Aboriginal students – nor apparently, among themselves.⁶⁰ In the mid-1960s, Joseph St. Michelle and Marnie Williams faced their own factions at the Mission based on age (“You were told who to beat up” by older students), on reserve (“the Canim Lake guys”), or Nation (“Chilcotin,” “Shuswap,” or “Carrier”). After Joseph left the Mission and entered grade five at Marie Sharpe, peer conflict transformed into “all the Natives against the Whites. We used to stick together.” Steve Teller of the Class of ‘73 described how non-Aboriginal students typically viewed “race” relations in the high school in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Non-Aboriginal society was guilty not so much of overt racism, thought Steve, but of “just ignoring them”:

The ones I would have known the most were kids from Sugarcane, a lot of _____ [family] and those ones, the _____ [family], and they were all soft-spoken and shy and so tended, I’m sure – and this is maybe a bad thing – but they tended to sort of blend in a lot. You didn’t pay much attention.

Carol Davis confessed the reality of Aboriginal students’ experiences really only “sank in” for

⁶⁰If this disharmony was a misconception held by non-Aboriginals, it was also a prevalent one in the Laketown at the time. Several subjects, including Joseph St. Michelle, pointed out heterogeneity among Aboriginal students. Members of the Shuswap nation were differentiated from those of the Chilcotin. “Shuswaps” were purportedly “much more soft-spoken and generally easy-going and not as aggressive as “Chilcotin” students. Shuswap, Chilcotin and Carrier nations, but particularly the first two nations were understood to be traditional and bitter enemies. Neither did there appear to be a single “Indian” culture at St. Joseph’s Residential School. Individuals from the three nations intermixed “very little or only when necessary.” Joseph St. Michelle; as well, Sister Germaine Lavigne, Teacher at Cariboo Indian Residential School. *Untitled Manuscript*. Sisters of Child Jesus Mother House, North Vancouver [n.d.]; Sister Ethel M. Devlin, “The Sisters of the Child Jesus and Native Catholic Expansion in British Columbia” (St. Paul’s University, Ottawa: unpublished paper, Faculty of Canon Law, 1983).

her almost two decades after she graduated from high school when an Aboriginal woman, a former classmate, explained she could not attend the Class of '73 twenty-year school reunion to celebrate what had been "absolutely the worst time of my life."⁶¹

Janet Bailey was assigned to the "8-7" and 8-8" classes along with many Aboriginal students, but kept to her "own group" of friends. She witnessed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal passivism with teachers doing little to promote cultural understanding or social integration.

Social distance spurred stereotypes:

There didn't seem to be the animosity. . . . The native kids kind of kept to themselves and we kind of kept to ourselves. There wasn't anybody kind of facilitating a situation, or there wasn't an outside influence to get us together and so we were all pretty separate, but lots of times in class where we have some interaction, they kept to themselves really a lot. And of course, I had my own group of friends so I didn't make a big effort to get to know the native kids at all. But I didn't grow up thinking that I hated Indians and natives, but in those days . . . there were all the drunks downtown and staggering and [such drinking establishments as] the Ranch and the Maple Leaf and the Chilcotin Inn and all that -- so we basically were used to and we related to natives as being, you know, drunks.

Members of visible minorities and "othered" individuals sometimes gain deeper insights into the plight of other "overlooked" subjects. Unlike most subjects, Indo-Canadian William Sangha was much more sensitive to the school experiences of Aboriginal youth. Although Joseph St. Michelle initially failed grade eight at WLJS ("I failed miserably"), he became the only Aboriginal student from that class to graduate from grade twelve without subsequent failure. William noted a very high attrition rate among "a large number of Aboriginal kids" in his grade eight class who were bussed into WLJS in the mid-1970s:

By about grade ten, I would say eighty to ninety percent of them are gone . . . there was

⁶¹While in conversation with this woman, Carol asked her if she was planning to attend the twenty-year reunion to which the woman replied, "Why on earth would I want to come to a school reunion when that was absolutely the worst time of my life?" This woman's response was an epiphany for Carol. Up until that point, nothing had made her consider the plight of Aboriginal students in school.

a very overt racism, like it was aboriginal boys and girls who sat at the back of the classrooms, they were always shunned – even in gym it manifested itself. They would get pushed around sometimes on the fields. And there was always the jokes about them being lazy or drunk or how easy the girls were targets for some of the guys . . . it was more like, “Ha, ha, guess who was drunk and guess who got her?”

Although there were only sixteen Indo-Canadians present at Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary in the 1973-74 school year and fewer at Williams Lake Junior and Columneetza Senior Secondary, an arguably more impermeable boundary began to divide Indo-Canadians from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Unlike the relationship between at least some non-Aboriginal males and Aboriginal females in this community, for example, there was no courtship of Indo-Canadians in this time period – and, as William Sangha, Cal Reid and others pointed out, everyone knew there could never be. Indo-Canadian parents were vigorous in restricting their children’s association with the opposite sex regardless of background. But Indo- and non-Indo-Canadian adolescents also drew boundaries. Unlike her town friends, Raylene Erickson was raised in the country alongside Aboriginal peoples, got along with them at school (but not usually socially). She developed a different relationship with Indo-Canadians:

East Indian kids . . . they were all in there in school and we never riled at them and they never riled at us. It was a separate thing, right? We stayed separate. We never tried to mingle. . . . That was common, we called them all Hindus whether they were Sikhs, whatever. We didn’t call them East Indians back then – just like we didn’t call Indians, “Natives” back then. “Indians,” “Indian kids” – “wagon-burners,” actually – and I still call my friends at the reserve, “you wagon-burner you.”

Logan Lassiter, who had never encountered “East Indian” people in his rural American school, recounted his own relationship with an Indo-Canadian male at WLJS who was “as Punjabi as they come.” Perhaps because he found this particular boy “fascinating,” or perhaps recalling his own arrival and subsequent isolation in the school, Logan “felt sorry” for the boy, tried to

befriend him but found that language definitely limited friendship:

I never made fun of him, but you couldn't really be great friends because of the fact of the language barrier . . . Like I remember him in our French class and he couldn't even speak English! . . . you know he felt so out of place [emphasis in original]."

No Indo-Canadian seemed more desperate to integrate socially in this time period than William Sangha. William was Canadian-born, literate, intelligent, and considered himself well-integrated into curricular and extra-curricular mixed-gender groupings in his elementary school where he habitually played alongside both non-Indo-Canadian boys and girls. Entering high school, and eager to pursue friendships, including romantic ones with non-Indo-Canadian girls, William discovered to his dismay that "most of my friends became males, not females." In high school, he only established limited and superficial relationships (usually based upon discussions over curriculum) with girls:

In my class, the females would talk to me, I'd help them with their homework, they'd help me with theirs, but . . . let's put it this way: I don't think there was an interest on the part of the girls towards me. And it may have been just that [William] is a scrawny little kid," or it might be that I'm not cool enough, or it may be that I'm also actually a visible minority [emphasis in original].

By the mid-to late 1950s secondary schooling not only became a realistic option for most youth in and around Williams Lake, but going to "high school" began to convey roughly the meaning it held for thousands of secondary students in larger urban British Columbian schools. Improved access to secondary schooling informally through private boarding arrangements, and formally via the district's tripartite system of Superior Schools, systematic busing of students and the dormitory system all helped ensure most young people in this area completed at least grade eight. The dormitory remains to this day a distinct feature of secondary schooling in this area. Current wait lists attest the dormitory still provides an

essential service to rural families.⁶²

In the late-1960s, individuals enrolling in grade eight, “the year you stopped playing as a kid,” at Williams Lake Junior-Senior Secondary experienced the same excitement, if not trauma North American young people associated with entry into high school. Since 1959, its enrollment and facilities permitted implementation of practices found in other schools of comparable size including age-graded classrooms, different teachers for each subject, a differentiated curriculum and a wide spectrum of extra-curricular activities. Compared to the intimate school context of the 1940s with its multi-age and mixed-gender groupings, students in the 1960s and early 1970s found themselves sorted formally by their teachers, and informally by peers. Gender, athletic ability, fashion and personality stratified youth as well as their clubs and sports teams. Aboriginal youth were structurally but not yet culturally integrated into the high school. Immigrant Indo-Canadian youth began to repeat that process late in the decade. If the lives of Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and Indo-Canadian students intersected at all, it was apparently only infrequently and imperfectly in the school through curricular activities as structured by teachers.

By 1965, according to subjects, students were directed more by their individual will to succeed academically, than by the admonishments or “push” of caring parents or “good” teachers. Male and female subjects often cited lack of “push,” an irrelevant curriculum and a general disinterest in school as reasons for poor academic performance. As we shall see, for many boys, school often competed unsuccessfully with the world of work and the draw of disposable income. Mindful from a young age of the economic opportunities available locally for males in the community, boys paid little heed to their school achievement and often

⁶² Tribune, 15 November, 1994, B1.

dropped out of school before grade twelve. In fact, females not only outnumbered males two to one in the grade twelve class of 1965, but later outnumbered them three to one as graduates. Of sixty-two grade twelves registered in June 1965, eighteen failed to graduate that year, notably, eleven or over half of twenty-one males, and only seven of forty-one females.⁶³

Subjects point out that going on to, and especially completing, a university undergraduate degree was rare in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As Dick Uldorf put it, “the transition from high school to university was basically catastrophic in that time frame.” Dick recalled that in 1968, out of his graduating class of approximately eighty students, only “about a dozen” individuals went on to university, most of these to the University of British Columbia. Out of this number, only one completed a four-year university program “on track,” without interruption. Five others, or almost half of the high school graduates who went away in 1968, failed to complete their first year.

Factors mitigating against rural youth gaining access to post-secondary education are certainly not unique to the Laketown.⁶⁴ In the case of Williams Lake, for almost three decades, geographic and psychic distance from university towns and cities, the financial and psychological costs of relocating to Vancouver, “the big smoke,” and of course, the omnipresent draw of “green gold” at home, remained important obstacles blocking youths’

⁶³This ratio is derived from the Williams Lake Secondary School Graduation 1965 Programme, Thursday, 9 September, 1965 as well as the Tribune, 15 September, 1965.

⁶⁴The American literature on rural youth and education is rich in this regard. Consult New Mexico State University, “Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Rural Youth: A Selected Topics Bibliography of ERIC documents” (Washington, National Institute of Education, 1977), ERIC, ED 153 772. While no systematic comparison with other contexts was undertaken, rural-urban differences among American youth exist in their high school dropout rates and post-secondary aspirations. See for instance, Ronald G. Downey, “Higher Education and Rural Youth” (Paper presented at the Annual Kansas State University Rural and Small School Conference, November 1980), ERIC, ED 201 459; in the 1960s, educational expectations of North Carolina youth rose while the “traditional variance” between rural and urban youth depreciated. Lawrence W. Drabick, “Some Longitudinal Perspectives on the Education Expectations of Rural Youth” (Memphis, Tennessee: Paper presented to the Rural Sociology Section of the Annual Meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, February, 1974), ERIC, ED 096 027.

route to post-secondary education. Individuals from families buoyed by good union-level wages often pointed to their families' inability to fund further education. Those Laketown youths who did manage to enter university actually compared themselves to their new peers, especially graduates from Lower Mainland high schools whom they saw as having more of a "reality check" insofar as "they were a lot more aware of what they needed to get through these places."

Recognizing the special problems facing post-secondary students emanating from central and northern areas of the province, including the financial costs associated with leaving one's community, three "educated cowboys" staged a rally in downtown Williams Lake on 19 November, 1966. With the support of the University of British Columbia's Alma Mater Society, Laketown boys Don Wise and Doug Poelvarde led a Saturday "campaign" to force the issue of equalization of grants for students from communities such as Williams Lake as a subject in a local by-election. Completing the trio was David Zirnhelt of 150 Mile House, the young man who a year and a half earlier had led senior students in cutting high school classes. Capped and robbed in university regalia, the three university students spent fifteen minutes on local radio. Later, they walked the streets handing out pamphlets and hammering up posters, led an hour and a half rally in front of the local courthouse, and rode horseback up and down Oliver Street. Along with dozens of Laketown secondary students, they "mobbed" Social Credit headquarters. In the evening they toured drinking establishments. Ostensibly, the students received support of "all sections of society," including local school board and teachers. Don Wise claimed, "Even the old boys in the bars support our drive."⁶⁵

⁶⁵"Cowboys trigger education issue," *Tribune*, 23 November 1966, 2.



Fig. 27. “Educated cowboys” bring higher education into the limelight.” Photo is of David Zimhelt in downtown Williams Lake. Source: Tribune, 23 November 1966, 2.

As other youth gained more spatial, temporal and fiscal autonomy in their lives, however, many appeared far less concerned with their secondary let alone their post-secondary schooling. These individuals were clearly distracted from the academic function of the high school, or even from their primary goal, “to get grade twelve.” Oral testimonies from the second generation suggest that morning after morning many youth entered the high school simply to socialize because “that’s where all my friends were.” Only in hindsight did some subjects, as adults, later understand the school not only as a social “centre for people,” but as a site with the potential to enrich their lives as well as open rather than close doors to the vocational and professional aspirations they began to entertain only after the teen years.

Chapter 4

Learning to Work and Learning from Work: Unpaid and Casual Labour

According to Billy Allen a first generation subject, born, raised and retired in Williams Lake, by the 1940s few adolescents under age sixteen quit school clandestinely in order to assist the family economy.¹ In the Laketown, Billy recalled, "The days of having to leave school to go and work because your family didn't have anything were in the thirties, the twenties and thirties."² Indeed, by 1951, overall school attendance in this region was generally better than in most of the prairie or Atlantic provinces, although admittedly poorer than in Lower Mainland, Kamloops, Okanagan-Shuswap or Kootenay areas.³

Unpaid work, however, endured as a central feature in the lives of many adolescents in

¹For a discussion of child labour laws in British Columbia, see Neil Sutherland, "We always had things to do': the Paid and Unpaid Work of Anglophone Children Between the 1920s and the 1960s," *Labour/le Travail* 25 (Spring 1990): 105-141, especially, 108, adapted in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, *Children, Teachers & Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig, 1995); Such legislation did not materialize without considerable struggle. See Lorna F. Hurl, "Overcoming the Inevitable: Restricting Child Factory Labour in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in *Labour/le Travail* 21 (Spring): 87-121; as well as John Bullen, "Children of the Industrial Age: Children, Work and Welfare in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario" (University of Ottawa: unpublished dissertation, 1989). For examples of young people leaving school to support a family economy, in the early twentieth-century, see Jean Barman, "Reflections on the Role of the School in the Transition to Work in British Columbia Resource Towns," in Barman et al. *Children, Teachers & Schools*; and Rebecca Coulter, "The Working Young of Edmonton, 1921-1931," in Joy Parr, ed. *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1982).

²This is not a novel observation. See Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada From the Great War to the Age of Television* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), Chapter 5.

³Enrollment for grades V through VIII is comparable between Cariboo and Kamloops areas: 1212 males/1260 females out of a total 2472 students (Cariboo); 1315 males/ 1315 females out of total 2630 students (Kamloops). However, Cariboo figures drop proportionately for grades IX to XII: 392 males/456 females out of 1268 total (Cariboo) compared to 596 males/699 females out of 1268 total (Kamloops). *Census of Canada, General Population Characteristics*, 1951. 60-11. In 1961, the percentage of 15 to 18 year-olds living at home while going to school was still lower in the Cariboo (68.7%) compared to those in Kamloops (78.8%) or the Okanagan-Shuswap (84.2%) Census Divisions. *Census of Canada*, 1961. V. 2.1. Table 55.

this area, particularly girls, and in the case of out-of-town households, both boys and girls. Not all adolescents growing up in rural households after the Second World War were as economically-indispensable as those in nineteenth-century Canada when children were considered “the source of a farmer’s wealth.”⁴ Yet, teens from less affluent country or Laketown households shouldered a heavier burden of unpaid domestic labour than their more affluent peers.

Despite the different context, the composite set of chores performed by Laketown boys and girls are congruent with norms in other Canadian communities. The working lives of subjects of the first generation as well as some of those of the second generation often echo those detailed for Vancouver in the same period.⁵ The housework experiences of girls, for example, parallel those of women in the company town of Flin Flon, Manitoba, and the instant resource town of Manitouwadge, Ontario, in the 1960s and 1970s – although Laketown girls and women may have had comparatively more out-of-the-household employment opportunities in this developing regional services centre.⁶ Well into the 1970s, a few subjects worked as intensely at domestic tasks as their counterparts in Evelyn, in north-central British Columbia between 1920 and 1960.⁷

Like generations of Canadian children (and their parents) before them, both sexes grew

⁴Neil Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 9.

⁵Sutherland, “We always had things to do.”

⁶See Meg Luxton, More Than a Labour of Love: three generations of women’s work in the home (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1980) as well as Margaret P. Nunn Bray, “‘No Life For A Woman’: An Examination and Feminist Critique of the Post-WWII Instant Town with Special Reference to Manitouwadge” (unpublished MA thesis, Queen’s, 1989).

⁷Neil Sutherland, “‘I can’t recall when I didn’t help’: The Working Lives of Pioneering Children in Twentieth-Century British Columbia,” Histoire sociale/Social History 24 (November 1991).

up with the historical understanding that housework was girls' and women's work while boys' housework was limited and temporary even when it was inescapable.⁸ From the 1940s through the 1970s, adolescents in this area grew up with a variety of gendered unpaid tasks in and around the household, the family property, and in the case of Aboriginal children, the residential school. Aside from the effects of technological advances in labour-saving mechanization, the only aspect of unpaid work to change significantly between the two generations of adolescents is a general diminution of unpaid domestic labour. Otherwise, there was little break in the traditional pattern of housework and its gendered spatial distribution: girls, more than boys, continued their "invisible" unpaid labour in and around the household, sometimes into their late teens. Before and after the age of fifteen that work kept girls more than boys geographically closer to the family home. At the same time, boys' "housework" generally took them out of the house and further afield.⁹ Aboriginal and Indo-Canadian narratives indicate a similar division of domestic labour at "the Mission" as well as among Indo-Canadian families in the Laketown. Thus, variables of gender, class, "race," ethnicity, type of household (rural or non-rural) as well as parental dispositions toward work intertwined to determine the nature and intensity of unpaid work. Informal labour around home and property not only instilled work skills, but influenced adolescent attitudes toward work, sometimes helped determine the work children would do as adults and so helped shape adult identities.

⁸Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English-Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Limited, 1988), as well as Growing Up, Chap. 5.

⁹See for example, Elliott West, Growing up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier (Albuquerque: State University of New Mexico, 1992) as well as Veronica Strong-Boag, "Growing up Female" in The New Day Recalled. This feature of work continued into the 1970s in Flin Flon, Manitoba. See Luxton, More Than A Labour of Love.

First Generation Village Households

Well before and well after the Second World War, economic necessity and an ideology of gendered work generally meant girls in Williams Lake grew up closer to house and property than did their brothers. Wilme Ruth Baxter was born in Williams Lake in 1927 and raised with the “natural” expectation that certain kinds of unpaid work were expected of her as a girl and later as a woman. Washing dishes, sweeping and dustmopping floors were among the first tasks she learned to perform from a “very young age.” “Helping out” in the kitchen began with “easy things to do,” such as peeling potatoes and carrots. By 1939, housework had largely pre-empted play for twelve-year old Wilme. At that age, she recalls, she was considered much more capable of completing tasks then understood to constitute “woman’s work.” She became involved in the more precarious task of cooking on woodstoves: “I don’t remember my mother allowing me to bake a cake until I probably got up to around twelve years old.”

By age fifteen, girls’ unpaid labours could vary greatly depending upon family size. Wilme came from a family of five and “so there was more of everything, there was more food to prepare, more cooking or cleaning, and more washing and ironing and actually the house would get messed up more because of more people in it.” Wilme not only kept a part-time clerical job after school (which she qualified as unusual for a village girl at the time), but regularly washed floors, cleaned, and ironed, “a big job” in the pre-polyester days when heavy irons were routinely applied to most articles of clothing. She also worked in “dad’s garden.” Sewing absorbed much of her spare time. Although the Williams Lake school did not offer Home Economics until after the Second World War, her mother, “an excellent seamstress,” taught her to sew at a young age: “By the time I got into high school, I was making most of my own clothing to go to school.”

Village boys also worked in the household in the 1940s and early 1950s, but their work was of different nature. Male subjects tend to be much more vague about the nature and extent of their “indoor” labour simply because, as a rule, they did less of it than did their sisters. Chief among the duties of Billy Allen, Wesley Smith and David Tomiyasi were outdoor tasks such as the chopping and splitting of wood and “making kindlings” for the wood stoves, and weeding gardens. Otherwise, Billy Allen recalls, he would “just help with the chores around the home.” Although most village houses obtained their water from a domestic water supply, hauling water was a common task in the Cariboo where three-quarters of all households were without running water, flush or chemical toilet.¹⁰ Wesley and David each lived more than a kilometre from the village and each faced the drudgery of hauling water for household use, David from the local lake and Wesley from the Williams Lake Creek. Some Glendale households managed without running water or a well into the 1960s. William Sangha’s father, for instance, drew water from the creek until the arrival of his family in Williams Lake in 1960 at which point the family moved into a residence with piped water.

Although David Tomiyasi’s family owned and operated a motel less than two kilometres from the heart of the village, David’s adolescent tasks were rather more consistent with those associated with rural life than a business. The family property permitted both a business and room for some domestic livestock. Thus, besides hauling water for the motel or helping his father “wire,” or electrify the tourist cabins, David also fed and helped maintain quarters for a pig, cow, and chickens. Otherwise, David was hardly involved in day-to-day

¹⁰Of 10,975 households in 1951 in Division 8, 24% had hot and cold piped water, 8.4% had cold water only, while 68% were without any running water. 77% were without bath or shower, and 74.5% were without chemical or flush toilet. It must be remembered that this total includes municipal households between Hazelton in the north-west and McBride in the north-east (including Prince George) south through Quesnel to Williams Lake. Canada. Census of Canada, 1951. Housing.

housekeeping operations, even during the hectic summer season. Katie Jean Kurtz, on the other hand, worked all summer in the family's autocourt business and had to endure the often "disgusting" job of cleaning guest rooms frequented by hunters, fishers, and salespeople,

The gendered division of labour was not, however, a static feature of family life. Such circumstances as a family crisis including illness, accidents, or death precipitated change in a household's domestic labour patterns. The two young Lee brothers witnessed radical changes in sex-typed domestic labour when their grandmother fell ill in October of 1943. This was "a severe blow" to the family. At that point, Todd and Eldon's step-father continued to care for the livestock and "other work he could do around the home ranch," but also began to assume more domestic tasks in the household.¹¹ Cole Woford remembers there was "more work than play" after he was pressed into service as a ten-year old when his mother fell ill on their rural property in the mid-1930s. In this case, the father was often absent from the household and Cole, the oldest sibling, not only cut wood and packed water but out of necessity, also had to cook. From the age of ten, he "looked after my brothers and sisters quite a bit," and was sometimes responsible for them at night except when the family could afford "a hired girl." Until her death, Wesley Smith's mother cooked for a large family of sons and daughters, but apparently not because her husband was incapable of doing so. In fact, when Wesley's mother died, his father took over the key role in the kitchen; in Wesley's words:

Oh after Mom died, my old dad done most of that. Well, sure, he cooked for haycrews, he could make bread or anything, pies . . . [T: "Your sisters never did that?"]. No, he done it. That guy could cook, boy. Better than a woman. He'd make that yeast bread,

¹¹Published accounts of ranch life in the Cariboo usually focus upon adult hardships and exploits. For rare insights into work facing boys on a ranch in the thirties and forties, see Todd and Eldon Lee, From California to North 52 (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994), pp. 126-7. The sequel to this popular history of growing up on Sunnyside Ranch, located 30 miles south of Williams Lake, is far more detailed on the aspect of work. See Eldon and Todd Lee, Tall in the Saddle: Ranch Life in the Cariboo (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing, 1995).

all that stuff. He was a smart old guy [emphasis in original].

The volunteer work involved in the construction of War Memorial Arena beginning in the summer of 1948 reflected contemporary norms regarding the tasks expected of men and boys and those assigned women and girls. Building the arena, once recognized as an “ambitious” if “foolish” enterprise, soon galvanized the community. Although the project became a defining milestone in the community’s history, the local newspaper did not cover the whole story. A dozen or so local men led the project, but most of the construction was done by volunteers including “professional men, tradesmen and merchants” who turned up to lend a hand.¹² Twenty years later in 1971, it was acknowledged the “ladies group” had assisted with the fund-raising.¹³ According to Billy Allen, however, virtually every hockey player in their mid- to late-teens also pitched in alongside the men putting in long hours after school and on weekends. Billy remembered long hours spent on the community venture: “Helped for a whole year, pounding spikes, packing lumber, and shovelling rocks and Christ knows what to get that arena built -- ‘course everybody in town did that.” Another hockey player, sixteen-year old Dusty Shaw, and his friend also worked at the site after school: “Everyone that wanted to do it could do it, ‘cause we were told, the more we help, the sooner we get into that arena. That was the idea.” Emily Potter and Camille Summerland recall putting in hours on the site, but along with other girls and women, they were assigned a function commensurate with their gender. During the construction phase, their task was to fuel the men and boys on the work site by selling food and refreshments. Once the arena was completed, Camille and other girls

¹²As work neared completion, tributes were made to men but not women or youth. Williams Lake Tribune, 10 November 1949, 1.

¹³For a retrospective look at its construction after two decades of operations, see “War Memorial Arena -- job well done,” Tribune, 19 May 1971.

continued to help women operate its food concession.

First Generation Out-of-Town Households

Before arriving in Williams Lake in 1948 and enrolling in the village school, fifteen year-old Emily Potter had spent a few years in a family bush camp in the Cariboo labouring alongside her mother and grandmother cooking and housekeeping for fifteen to twenty men. Living ten miles from the nearest school, unable to afford the cost of boarding and schooling in another community, and largely unsuccessful with correspondence courses, Emily focused her energies upon assisting the family economy: “We learned to cook, we learned to make bread . . . make meals for men on sawdust burners.” Ice had to be chopped in the lake and melted on the stove. She helped wash the bunkhouse men’s laundry “just to make a little bit” of money for the household. Such experiences served as, as Emily put it, “a real education for us.” The economic reality was that had Emily boarded in another community to attend school, her parents “would have had to hire someone” to replace her in the bush camp.

Material necessity and not merely isolation from the nearest one-room school also explains why Axel Vickers, born and raised near Riske Creek, never received any formal schooling throughout the 1930s and 1940s. While Axel made appearances in the school some Septembers, he recalls he did so only briefly and in order to bolster the registers and ensure the school’s survival that year. Otherwise, he received all schooling from his parents, although school work was often squeezed into mornings when the family was not too busy with work. On the one hand, Axel explained, his parents had disliked the thought of his boarding in Williams Lake in order to go to school. On the other: “I think the main reason was just it was beyond their financial means and also they needed me home to work. I think that had more to do with it than anything.” In contrast, Todd and Eldon Lee who grew up too far from any

established school, completed the primary through grade XII grades through the province's Correspondence School Program (Todd from grade I and Eldon from grade II). Rather than relegating school work to odd bits of time, the usual pattern of work in their household was to devote a whole day and part of an evening to a single subject, in order to make up for time lost to working on the "home ranch." Both boys completed post-secondary schooling. Todd became a minister and probation officer, and Eldon a physician.¹⁴

Country boys such as Axel Vickers, Evelyn McLeod's brother, or Ray Winters out at Horsefly began to help fathers on traplines from an early age in order to supplement the family income. All three boys also ran their own small trapline. Axel did so at age nine as he could set and check snares and skin animals independently. Invariably, the lucrative pelts generated household, and not personal, income for the boys who understood "trapping was a group effort to get money for the house." At a time when British and Canadian children generally came to expect a "Friday" or "Saturday penny," a nickel, dime, or even all of their earnings as their due in the "new childhood," a small portion of the revenue from their personal trapline was allotted to the boys as disposable income.¹⁵ Youth were sometimes frustrated by constant donations of time and labour to the family economy. In his mid-teens, Axel began to wrestle with a sense of obligation to his family and a personal need to strike out on his own.¹⁶

Evelyn McLeod's work narratives illustrate how, at times, families concerned with

¹⁴Lee, *From California to North* 52, 108-9. Also see "School on the Range," in *Tall in the Saddle*.

¹⁵After the Second World War, "many" working class families allowed their children to keep "some or all of their earnings." See Sutherland, "We Always Had Work to To Do," 130, as well as Steve Humphries, *et. al. A Century of Childhood* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson in association with Channel Four Television, 1988.), 30.

¹⁶Generally, this was much more a point of contention among some immigrant youth. Following the homeland tradition, many Portuguese parents expected offspring to surrender earnings to parents at a time when most Canadian teens considered money they earned as theirs to keep. Antonio F. Arruda, "Growing up in Portuguese-Canadian Families: an oral history of adolescence in Vancouver, 1962-80" (UBC: unpublished M.A. thesis, 1992).

securing unpaid labour disregarded contemporary gender or chronological age boundaries regarding work. In 1947, Evelyn's parents spent months researching British Columbia communities in order to uncover the ideal place to set up a business and raise a family, and finally targeted the proprietorship of a promising highway hotel and dining room outside Williams Lake. The decision proved a watershed event in the lives of ten year old Evelyn and her twelve year old brother. The entire family was soon consumed by the enterprise. The very "survival" of the family demanded that "everybody worked":

When we came up here, everything we had and every ounce we had as a family was poured into this business and it didn't seem to matter if you were 8 years old, here's your chores and you just hang in there and do them. I mean this is going to put food on the table and this is the way it goes. . . . Survival, you know, was uppermost. And I think the only way you can say is survival -- I mean it was definitely uppermost. [emphasis in original]

While summer vacations from school often meant isolation from some friends and increased labours for girls and boys, in this sample, few accounts of domestic labour rival the intensity of the task set before Evelyn McLeod and her brother. Katie Jean Kurtz, for example, recalled that work in the family's autocourt occurred mostly in the summer as her parents did not want such work to impose upon school labours. For the two young McLeods, however, it seemed all they knew was work. "In the summertime," Evelyn recalls, "We were totally devoted to work and had a huge garden . . . grew all the vegetables we served in the dining room." While most rural children grew up accustomed to raising, slaughtering and processing some poultry or livestock, the MacLeod family had decided they would also grow all the fryers served in their dining room.¹⁷ Much of the preparation from feeding through slaughtering fell to the pre-teen children. From the ages of ten through twelve, Betty and her brother spent

¹⁷See Neil Sutherland, "I can't recall when I didn't help" in Barman, et. al. *Children, Teachers & Schools*, 136.

every summer morning butchering twenty-five chickens in preparation for lunch:

Oh, I tell you, we sure learned about chickens. . . . From the time you grabbed them, cut their heads off, hold their wings, dip them in boiling water, strip their feathers off, gut them, wash them, cut them up and put them into the frying pan, it was quite a procedure. And you can't let them really beat their wings or kick around on the ground, you've got to hold them . . . we used to have a five gallon bleeding bucket . . . we'd chop their heads off, and hold their wing tips and the feet and they would sort of pump it – to make sure that all the blood went out of them . . .

The whole bloody “procedure” was then repeated after lunch in preparation for supper!¹⁸

This all-absorbing period in Evelyn's life-course was also a short one. Within two years of its startup, the McLeod family was forced to give up their “hustle-bustle” roadside business. This proved another watershed event in their family life – an emotional and financial upheaval for her parents, but almost absolute respite from constant work for the younger McLeods: “It was a total change from being regimented . . . from total responsibility . . . and Grandma fed the dog! [emphasis in original].” Suddenly Evelyn had more disposable time and she began to socialize with peers and pursue avenues of personal interest.

Girls on the “home ranch” performed household duties demanded of village girls as well as those normally associated with rural life. They cared for livestock, milked cows, processed milk into various products such as buttermilk or cottage cheese and helped with the haying – in other words, unlike their brothers, they often had indoor and outdoor tasks. When the variable of class is taken into account, however, girls growing up in the 1940s on large prosperous ranches faced far less domestic labour than the average ranch girl. Harriet Wilson and Camille Summerland, for example, both grew up with a cook and hired ranchhands. Both boarded with Williams Lake families throughout most of the year in order to go to school and both did very little housework aside from keeping their rooms in order. Both spent summers

¹⁸Photograph with inscription in Evelyn McLeod's possession. The family raised the chicks in lots of roughly 500.

out on their ranches. Although Harriet's ranch remained without running water or electricity throughout her childhood and adolescence, her summer-time tasks nonetheless differed significantly from those of Evelyn MacLeod. She performed few kitchen tasks, had no younger siblings to mind and spent much of her school vacations out-of-doors. With paid help to do much of the labour, Harriett's "work" merged pleasureably with leisure. Summer work consisted mostly of range riding ("a lot of riding, that was the main thing") and sometimes, helping out in branding or cattle drives ("It was sort of work and fun too").

Second generation Town Households

With notable exceptions, second generation "town" subjects faced less domestic labour than the first generation. Mike Edson, for example, kept his room clean, took out the garbage, "helped out" in the garden and learned to cook a few basic meals for himself especially after his mother began to work outside the house. Neither Steve Teller nor his sister (a year younger) performed more than a modicum of work in the household in their teens: "We did chores, all of us as kids -- probably we were all pretty slack about them." Their mother who was employed outside the house part-time was also the "homemaker" in their family. Similarly, Cindy McEwan and her younger sister performed few onerous domestic tasks. Cindy was heavily involved in extra-curricular sports throughout high school which perhaps kept her from some after-school household work. The McEwan sisters were spared much of that drudgery by their mother; consequently, "we didn't have a lot of household chores that we really had to do." They "helped with the dishes," and "occasionally" the laundry while avoiding dusting and vacuuming altogether. Neither girl, however, escaped girlhood's traditional unpaid task, childminding.

This diminution of domestic labour aside, baby-boomers such as Myles Osborne, Bob

Riley, Steve Teller, and Mike Edson confirmed the pattern of gendered domestic labour evident in the first generation was manifest in their own households two decades later. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, “household” tasks still tended to take males outside the house itself. Myles Osborne recalls his mother performed indoor tasks: “As far as the house-cleaning and that sort of thing, Mother used to do all that . . . of course we cut the grass.” Bob Riley’s chores in the late 1960s and early 1970s usually took him out-of-doors: “We always had to haul our wood. When it was time to get wood for winter, we all went and got wood.” Howard Underwood had grown up on acreage and learned to love, in his words, “outside (emphasis in original)” and not “inside” work from a young age. At the tender age of six, “It was my job to unload a whole pickup of sawdust for the burner, put it in the shed, with a shovel . . . that’s how you survived, that was part of it . . . that ranch toughness.”

In a few families, work appeared to be distributed more equitably among siblings. Cal Reid, for example, washed the dishes, folded clothes, scrubbed and waxed floors and helped with the cooking. He claimed he was an early riser and at age ten or so enjoyed helping his mother with breakfast before anyone else had risen. Dick Uldorf grew up socialized to work, “to do a lot of the work when we were kids even when we were seven, eight years old . . . make your bed, do the dishes.” At the age of nine, his family moved from town out to Likely where his father worked in forestry operations. The move to a rural setting prompted new expectations of Dick, for example, that he pack water when the waterline froze, be able to start a Coleman lantern or light a fire. As he recalls there was little gender discrimination in the “well-structured” assignment of tasks when the family returned to Williams Lake less than two years later. Brothers and sisters worked their big garden on a large property on the outskirts of town. Beside mowing a “good-sized lawn” they tackled a large garden on hot Cariboo days:

“We had to weed that son-of-a-bitch . . . it was 150 feet by 50 feet. Three of us would be out there at that time.”

As in the 1940s and 1950s, unfortunate family circumstances intensified, even reconfigured, the responsibility girls and boys had to their family. Between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, Wendy Lorimer lived in Williams Lake with her father and younger brother. Her adolescence in the Laketown revolved around two basic pre-occupations: school labours and work in a household without a mother. Her father, a shiftworker in a local mill, took care of the laundry and grocery shopping on weekends while Wendy did “most” of the cooking, house-cleaning and childcare. Her father’s afternoon shifts (four p.m. to midnight) were a particularly onerous and lonely time for her because he permitted little socializing. She remained “basically responsible” for her brother who was four years younger, feeding him and seeing him dressed and off to school. Wendy reflected woefully upon those teen years spent in surrogate motherhood: “I did feel in a sense that I was like a mother.”

A family crisis could thrust boys into non-typical roles in the family forcing upon them longer hours and a greater variety of tasks than those facing many of their female peers. The deaths of both parents in 1963 left thirteen year old Myles Osborne and his two older siblings to shoulder a far greater share of ranch and household duties. That summer, the trio carried out the usual ranch work, haying, cattle herding, cutting fence posts and rails, opening and closing irrigation ditches on a daily basis. An adult male relative stayed with the trio lessening the responsibility, but it was the eldest, an eighteen year old brother, and not a sister in her mid-teens, who did most of the food preparation. A serious head injury in 1968 left the father of ten-year old William Sangha permanently brain-damaged and with the “mental faculties of a six-year old.” The tragedy interrupted traditional work rhythms in the family, transforming the

identities and outlooks of both mother and children. William's mother began full-time work outside the household, at that time an act unprecedented in the Indo-Canadian community. William's sense of responsibility to the family sharpened considerably. Until William left the Laketown for university, he devoted most of his after-school time feeding and caring for his father, and a sister six years his junior whenever his mother worked the night-shift.

Second generation Out-of-Town Households

In the 1960s and 1970s, ranch work still revolved around the seasons absorbing the whole family, even determining their leisure time.¹⁹ Pete Anderson and his three brothers grew up on a ranch about fifteen kilometres from Williams Lake. Throughout the year, the family worked a six-day week on ranch tasks, although milking was a twice-daily affair and mother's "kitchen work" a thrice-daily or more chore. Sundays were "basically the family day." From spring to November, the Anderson's cattle fended for themselves. In anticipation of a hectic haying season, the last two weeks of June and first two weeks of July were usually relegated to whatever vacation time the family could muster together. Typically, their vehicle would be loaded up with picnic basket and fishing rods and the family would sojourn to a Cariboo "pond" to fish or to their lakeside cabin to waterski. Once haying began (sometime in mid-July through August or even later) ranching transformed into "a seven day a week job." The work load lightened through October and part of November, but with the onset of winter and snow the cattle had to be fed through till spring thaw and "it was back to a seven-day week." The boys helped haul hay from distant meadows back to the barn, enduring minus thirty and forty below zero degrees weather on the back of the wagon, putting their backs to the wind while "dad would be out there in an open tractor."

¹⁹Eldon Lee details the seasonal rhythms of ranch work, See From California to North 52, 88.

That sort of ranch experience, broadly delineated, permeated the rural-urban boundary throughout the historical period and remains an integral part of many Laketown youths' memories. In other words, regardless of their future in either a mill, local business, or in a profession, there was a good chance a Laketown youth (boys moreso than girls) grew up with a personal experience of ranching and some "feel" of the Cariboo-Chilcotin as a "western" region. Tom Denny, a well-known local resident born in 1928, began work out on ranches during summer holidays at age thirteen, eventually becoming a full-time cowboy.²⁰ Wesley Smith, his brothers, and their father all hired out as ranch hands at various ranches for entire summers throughout the 1940s.

By the mid-1970s, a significant number of Laketown subjects had developed more than a fleeting relationship with ranching. Of course, many of them, like Bob Riley, Mike Edson, Randy Aston, Max Pritchard or William Sangha, or girls such as Wendy Lorimar, Lynn Blacksmith, Cindy McEwan and Sandy Butchart seldom if ever visited a ranch, much less worked on one. Nonetheless, seven, or almost a third of the second generation subjects were well-acquainted with ranch life. Four, including Raylene Erickson, had grown up on a ranch while three others had worked on a ranch, or customarily visited and helped out at a friend's ranch on weekends or summer vacations. In Dick Uldorf's household, the whole family went out to the Tatlayoko Valley in the West Chilcotin to "make hay" at a ranch belonging to friends of the family. A few girls visited a friend's ranch on a school weekend or during a vacation period, but on the whole, women in this Laketown sample experienced less sustained contact with ranches. Boys moreso than girls tended to spend weeks or an entire summer vacation working out at a ranch. From the age of thirteen to sixteen, for example, Howard Underwood

²⁰Upon his death, the local paper reviewed his life. Tribune, 3 August 1995, B3.

worked for wages at a ranch owned by a family friend. His brother worked at another ranch throughout his teens. Cal Reid estimated “thirty, forty percent” of the males his age who had grown up in Williams Lake had experienced ranch life and purportedly, “A lot of the kids that grew up in the city [Williams Lake] ended up being cowboys.”

In the 1960s and 1970s, some adolescents on rural properties bordering the Laketown had much in common with youth on distant ranches as far as unpaid labour was concerned. (In fact, country youth boarding in town and enrolled in the town’s secondary schools often escaped farm labour at least on weekdays). Brenda Langford noted her family’s move from a town lot to a larger property just outside the Laketown resulted in all siblings assuming a share of chores associated with having a big garden, and maintaining horses, pigs, cows, goats, chickens and rabbits. Even after Raylene Erickson and her sisters moved from their ranch to a rural property twenty minutes from Williams Lake, there was work. “Each kid had to weed a couple rows every night” in a “big garden.” Canning relishes and carrots as well as Okanagan fruit such as peaches, pears and cherries remained an annual “big thing” for this family of girls. Lacking sons, her father pressed the girls into service constructing a huge barn on the property for a “new business venture,” a chicken farm: “We’re going to go chickens, right?” For a year or two, every night after school until suppertime, the sisters spelled off their mother who had been working all day processing eggs. The eggs laid by 10,000 chickens had to be washed in big laundry tubs, dried on racks, waxed and candled.

Men in this generation who acknowledged a gendered division of labour in their teens usually did so briefly, unlike a few women who recall it more precisely, vividly, even bitterly. One of Joseph St. Michelle’s pastimes on his Soda Creek reserve, netting Fraser River salmon with male relatives of all ages, was an enjoyable activity blending work, play, and

socialization. Marnie Williams, from the same reserve, today shudders at the thought that she, along with other females, ended up cleaning hundreds of those fish: “tons of fish – oh my God! . . . “ Lynn Blacksmith grew up as the eldest daughter in a family of more than a dozen children on a large rural property outside the town. Unable to rely upon her alcoholic, often-absent husband Lynn’s mother became increasingly self-reliant, whether managing the garden, fixing the old gas-powered wringer washer, or repairing the engine or body on their old vehicle. But she also had assistance. In fact, most domestic toil fell upon the two eldest females in the household. As Lynn recalled, “It just seemed to be me and mom . . . if mom didn’t do it, I did it and if I didn’t do it, mom did it.” From the age of about nine, Lynn fed a few livestock on their acreage, worked in the garden, washed, hung and folded laundry, cut and brought in wood and began to undertake cooking. Meanwhile, two older teenage brothers lived with the family doing “basically nothing,” but “tinkering with this and that” although they helped with the chore of securing firewood.

In 1973, a constellation of domestic responsibilities, including dinner preparation and child-minding, could still fall “naturally” upon an eldest daughter when a mother took up paid employment outside the house. While Mike Edson learned to cook “a few things” for himself and his brother when his mother began to work outside the home, he admitted he never did gain “much of a repertoire.” In contrast, Lynn Blacksmith’s domestic labour intensified when she graduated from high school. Driven to escape poverty, her mother undertook two full-time jobs outside the household. At age seventeen, Lynn inherited virtual control over the household and younger siblings. Necessity demanded that she become as self-reliant as her mother who “had to be everything.” Although her siblings screamed incessantly that she was “not their mother,” Lynn had unquestionably stepped into motherwork. She rose early each

morning to get the fire going (“We had a wood stove all my life at home”), in order to bake twelve to fifteen loaves of bread every other day. Lunches had to be prepared and laundry done on the old gas-fired washing machine. Finally, she meted out physical punishment freely whenever she felt it was warranted. Her own marriage at the age of twenty-one ended this phase in her lifecourse.

Another girl, this one with two working parents, also grew up with a similar set of chores. Sandy Butchart’s family moved between several residences in and around the Laketown. On one rural property, Sandy and her younger sisters stoked the woodstove, the only heat supply, hauled wood, and emptied the toilet: “Of course, ‘cause we were girls, that was just our chore.” Sandy not only looked after siblings but found herself catering to a constant stream of visiting relatives who were “always, always at our house, always.” Spouses and kids would come over and then “they would go play cards while my sister and I would be still there doing, trudging away trying to clean dishes and pots and pans – ooh, it was awful!” She was swamped with work including dishes, the laundry, the beds, and housework in general: “Mom did nothing, we did it all.” When Sandy graduated grade twelve (with good grades), she too found herself isolated on a rural property as housekeeper and surrogate mother. Unlike Lynn, within months, Sandy decided to move into the Laketown where she began to live independently.

The Meaning of Their Work

In this region, the economic, geographic and economic constraints of the 1930s persisted through the 1940s forcing families in and particularly outside Williams Lake to mollify any idealized notions of sacralized middle-class North American childhood. If legislation kept most adolescents under age sixteen from full-time year-round employment,

separating them from the labour pool and rendering them as “economically-useless,” labour laws did not reach into the household to regulate the intensity and extent of a son or daughter’s unpaid domestic labour.²¹ From the 1940s through 1975, families demanded at least some unpaid labour of both sons and daughters. Some young homemakers proved themselves indispensable to the family economy. Outside Williams Lake, families that ranched, farmed, or relied upon hunting and fishing for their food supply, were especially dependent upon the unpaid labour of their children. Youth from such households grew up as had generations of rural children and youth before them in the sense they were fashioned by work, that “toughness,” and they were also able to make much more than “the vaguest connection between the milk on the table and the cow that produced it on some distant farm.” Some youth’s unpaid labour, aside from its educative value in honing work skills and a positive work ethic, proved economically invaluable to a family unable to afford necessary hired help. Before they gained an adult’s physical strength and stamina, the energy some young people directed to a home without a mother, a chicken farm or a ranch clearly reduced the number of hired hands required to run it.

The boundary dividing children’s work from that of teens, and the work of teens from that of adults, was sometimes an obscure one even if the task was arduous or potentially dangerous. In the late 1930s most indoor tasks such as cooking, cleaning, childminding and starting stoves were encoded as work for females aged twelve or older. In the 1960s or early 1970s, at age “thirteen, fourteen,” a boy like Myles Osborne typically “would have been able to do everything” on a ranch that a man could do including operating all its machinery as well as driving cars or trucks over miles of Cariboo-Chilcotin backroads. At this time, children aged

²¹See Zelizer, Pricing the Priceless Child.

ten and under frequently operated a tractor although not without some tragic consequences such as when nine year old Dennis Patenaude was crushed by a tractor he was riding while assisting his father.²² Ranching families like the Osbornes began upgrading ranch machinery as it became available in early to mid-1960s. Teens aged thirteen or fourteen were commonly restrained by parents from operating the most dangerous ones, for example, a chainsaw, a “wicked thing,” especially if one “didn’t have the actual physical strength” to handle it.

Across the region, youth’s unpaid labour remained differentiated by gender and from an early age began to configure about a pattern socially determined by social class, cultural expectations, as well as prevailing norms regarding gender and work.²³ If family affluence freed Harriett Wilson from household drudgery, her gender kept her from other tasks. She assisted with ranch tasks such as livestock tallies or vaccinating, but not others, for example, roping. In the eyes of her son, Axel Vickers’ mother was “quite capable” of, and occasionally did carry out such tasks as feeding horses or getting in the wood or packing water on their isolated homestead. Yet without a word being uttered, aside from helping in the hayfields, she usually left these tasks to her husband and son in order to do the cooking and look after the house.

Such social boundaries governing gendered work were not fixed. Material necessity and watershed events in the lives of families in and around the Laketown reconstrued family dynamics including the work patterns of children and adolescents. Out of necessity, Lynn Blacksmith and her mother learned and assumed all types of work on their property, and as a

²²“Boy Dies While Helping his Dad,” Williams Lake Tribune. 11 August 1965, 1, 3.

²³For the historical and sociological debates and case studies of sex-typing of jobs, the allocation of specific tasks to men and to women, see Harriet Bradley, Men’s Work, Women’s Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

seventeen year old, Lynn inherited more domestic duties than most traditional “mothers” when her mother became the sole breadwinner. Boys like Cole Wolford and William Sundhu also assumed new and non-typical roles within the household because of parental absence or incapacity.

A noteworthy feature in the narratives of unpaid work is the singular way in which some outdoor work is romanticized. Joseph St. Michelle’s view of fishing, and Pete Anderson, Cal Reid, Howard Underwood, Myles Osborne, and even Harriett Wilson’s adult views of the ranch work they usually performed as teens contrast with those seen in Marnie Williams’ memories of fish processing, in Evelyn McLeod recollections of the chicken butcher, or Axel Vicker’s view that hard work was performed on the family homestead only out of necessity and not “for work’s sake.” Unlike the bulk of narratives encountered in Settlers’ Children²⁴ second generation male subjects remember their ranch work as strenuous, but also often as “fun,” a sentiment likely reflecting the gendered spatial distribution of boys’ work (out-of-doors) and girls’ work (both in- and out-of-doors).²⁵

Outdoor work was unavoidable on a ranch and much of it hardly pleasurable, but unlike women’s reminiscences of domestic chores, those of ranch work in the teen years conjured up images of pastoral and friendly competition among males. Cal Reid was contracted out to a friend’s ranch one summer. He recalls baking “out there on the flats” under a hot sun: “It was

²⁴Elizabeth Hampsten, Settlers’ Children: Growing Up on the Great Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

²⁵Elliott West notes this tendency but is not too critical on the point. See his Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier (Albuquerque: State University of New Mexico, 1989). Like other social norms, distinctions between boys and girls work have blurred over the centuries. For insights in the astonishing array of field tasks assigned farm girls, particularly roving gangs of girls, see Raphael Samuel, ed. Village Life and Labour (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975). For a more theoretical historical and sociological approach to the division of labour, see Harriet Bradley, Men’s Work, Women’s Work.

120 degrees out there . . . I mean you couldn't stand it in the hay stack with rubber boots on. It was just too hot . . . that wasn't fun." And yet, he rationalizes, at the time, most ranch chores were internalized as "something you had to do . . . so why whine and whimper and complain about it, just go and do it . . . same with the haying: we're laughing and joking while we're out there throwing hay." Cal Reid remembers work was more bearable when it was transformed into a game:

I remember the one time we got up early in the morning . . . still dark outside and we were trying to find the stupid bales in the dark, and we were joking about it. Someone ran back to get a flashlight and then the sun would come up and there's three or four bales that we'd forgotten and I mean, we'd have a race over to the stupid things, pick them up and run them back to the stupid sleigh – we wouldn't drive the tractor over – it might be a 100 yards away . . . the younger ones would grab one bale and the bigger guys would probably grab two and we'd race. And all I wanted to do was beat one of them big bastards!

There were always trees to buck, fence posts and rails to cut, and long hot days of haying, recalled Myles Osborne, whose family still used horses and slips into the early 1960s. But even in haying season, there were sometimes breaks for a teen: "I remember my mother saying, "Kids go out and have some fun." Often the siblings would gallop off on their horses, sometimes out to the cliffs towering high over the Fraser River where they rolled boulders into the water well over a hundred metres below. Of course, there was also the roundup which they viewed as adventure: "Bringing cattle in from the open range, that [meant] out riding horses and herding cattle from early morning till sometimes well after dark." Furthermore, the Osborne siblings were often allowed to invite a friend from town on weekends, "but only one," to ensure that the work also got done. Norman Flit remembers more horseback riding and fishing than work on such visits to the ranch owned and operated by his Aboriginal relatives: "I was thirteen, fourteen, and we used to help once in a while, but it wasn't anything really

important if I did or not. I could be who I wanted to be.”

As these teens grew into and through adolescence they were initiated into different tasks and given greater responsibilities. They continuously sought the approval of older adolescents and adults and derived great satisfaction when they achieved a sense of belonging. Most female subjects were silent on this point. Myles Osborne remembers the pride of promotion to a new task by men: “I felt pretty important when I was big enough to be what was called the ‘trip man’ when the loads of hay would go up in the slings and onto the loose haystacks.” Cal Reid, born and raised in the laketown, recalls the feeling of working out on a ranch alongside the men: “There were fathers, there was older brothers. You were part of the men, you were part of the group . . . you were working alongside men. It was almost like saying, ‘I’m a man.’”

A few subjects of both generations recalled conflict also occurred when working too closely with relatives, particularly parents or siblings. Emily Potter enjoyed an easy intimacy with her grandmother, her confidante, in the kitchen of the lumber camp. In contrast, her relationship with her mother was cast as a cooler, less intimate one, much of it determined by daily routines and tasks. This latter sort of relationship seemed pronounced among some male subjects who argued with fathers or brothers over the best way to tackle a task. It was true of Myles Osborne and his older brother on their ranch. Max Pritchard who normally derived “a sense of accomplishment” constructing, “building,” or “creating” things, “sometimes” had to tread carefully if a project involved his father: “He was very impatient and demanding and [you] felt like you had to be very careful around him.” Howard Underwood’s case illustrates one centuries-old advantage of the apprenticeship system: having someone less familiar than a father directing labour. Howard often worked alongside his father on the family property.

Conflicts often arose over how work should be done and he hated being called upon to work for his father: "We'd bait each other something terrible . . . it did create some friction, some sparks at times." Howard recalled that he never hesitated to help out a neighbour, but, he said, "Dad would ask you to help and you'd just as soon tell him to . . ."

"History," a senior professor once reminded me, "is not only about the past, it's about the present too." Subjects' unpaid household labour throughout the childhood and adolescent years, as social practice, fashioned work skills and dispositions toward work and helped reproduce gendered notions of work often held into adulthood. Thus their unpaid and casual labour also helped shape their adult identities. David Tomiyasi's life-long interest in electricity began in the early 1950s when in his early teens he helped his father "wire" cabins at their lakeside motel in the early 1950s. Twenty years later, Bob Riley fell in love with motors in the company of older brothers and his father who were car enthusiasts. Bob still loves mechanics: "I like to wrench, built my first motor before I was old enough to drive." Lynn Blacksmith left motherwork in her mother's house in order to marry and bear children of her own. She never worked outside the household.

Given the small sample size, it is difficult to test the observation that women's reminiscences, as "texts," configure about their relationships while those of men revolve around their individualism.²⁶ Evelyn McLeod cast two years of her past within a framework of family and obligations to family, and punctuated her account of endless work with the justification that the labour of all members of the family unit had been vital to her family's economy in the late 1940s. In fact, Evelyn in turn pressed many of what she herself termed

²⁶Sutherland, *Growing Up*, 6.

“survival” skills learned at home upon her own children, expressly out of the conscious need to do so in order to mitigate against unforeseen economic hardships. No matter what befell her children in their lifetime, she thought they would always, if necessary, be able to live off the land.

Some males, especially those of the first generation, did cast their reminiscences of domestic labour within a collectivist framework of family necessity. Evelyn’s contemporary, Axel Vickers, articulated he had been motivated to work by a deep sense of “individual responsibility” to the family around Riske Creek in the 1930s and 1940s – in fact, that is largely what kept him tethered to the household throughout his teens. In Axel’s case, however, the often solitary nature of his tasks fashioned, he thinks, an “attitude” whereby he became, ironically, “a very poor team player” both within the family, and later as an adult in the work force and the military contexts where co-operation is essential. A second generation subject, Logan Lassiter, also emphasized that only through the labour of each member had his family eked out a living on the ranch. While Logan clearly enjoyed life on his own rural property, he has reflected deeply upon his parents’ fortitude and their “huge struggle” to keep ranch and livestock alive some winters. Inflicting the long list of chores he endured upon his own children was far from Logan’s mind.

If the antecedents of learning to labour lie in childhood and adolescence, ingrained work habits and attitudes are sometimes difficult for adults to break. Near the end of his interview, second generation subject, Pete Anderson, reconsidered how much “fun” work had actually been. Ranch chores, Pete emphasized, had clearly been preferable to tackling his homework: “We enjoyed our chores.” By his late teens, however, Pete had tired of the endless labour and “didn’t want to have anything to do with the farm.” He attempted a term of post-

secondary schooling but grew homesick and turned to sawmill work “in town” for several years. And then he trudged back to the home ranch: “The farm was in your blood. I mean I had to come back to it.” Work with his hands, he explained, “creating” something he could see, taking pleasure in a job well-done, was something that was vital to him to this day: “It’s actually very important to my life. Working with your hands is very important.”²⁷

Reflecting upon how his mother held a part-time job and did all of the housework in the early 1970s, Steve Teller explained, “I never really regarded it as sexist to say it was women’s work . . . it’s just that my dad worked fulltime and my mom worked part-time . . . and I like to see a mother be a mother, I think.” Steve admitted he was sometimes caught in a “struggle” with his wife over such housework as laundry but rationalized the debate. He worked “full-time” and focused upon other tasks which he felt also contributed to the household: “When the truck breaks down, who rebuilds the motor?” There is little question of whether the pleasure Steve, a car buff, gained in rebuilding a motor out in the garage is comparable to that his wife derived from doing the laundry. The Tellers’ quandary illustrates that despite claims to the contrary, the extant and inequitable division of unpaid work endures as social practice, modelling gendered unpaid work for yet another generation.

²⁷For a poignant look at the intellectual conflict in workers’ minds over the nature and status of working with the “head” versus working with the “hands”, see the classic study of the meaning of “blue-collar” work, Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

Chapter 5

Friends and Cliques

Many twentieth-century parents discovered to their dismay that no matter how much they loved or otherwise provided for their children, they could not fulfill their teenaged offsprings' deep-seated need for personal exploration, self-knowledge and experimentation. As children became teenagers, establishing and maintaining friendships and gaining acceptance of peers sometimes began to appear more important than sustaining older bonds with a parent or other family members. As Edward Shorter put it, modern adolescence came to be distinguished, at least in part, by an emerging "indifference" to the family's identity.¹

This chapter examines adolescent friendship patterns and cliques in and around the Laketown after the Second World War while recognizing some limitations in this sort of study.² To begin with, the details of cliques or "friendship circles" are historically specific to

¹Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 269. Interest in the history of the family was stimulated by Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* [*L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*], trans. Robert Baldick (New York, Basic Books, 1962). The centrality of the family in North American children's lives is portrayed in Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), especially Chapters 3 and 4; Cynthia Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), and outlined in Tamara Harevan, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96 (February 1991). A useful macroscopic view of the changing structure and function of Canadian families as well as evolving issues is Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today: Recent Changes and Their Policy Consequences* (Toronto: Gage, 1988).

²The Norman-Harris Report of 1981 which polled 160,000 American teens describes cliques as "a continuum of teenage clustering that often emerges from their activities." A "group" becomes a clique when it begins to assume an "aura of exclusiveness." Jane Norman and Myron Harris, *The Private Life of the American Teenager* (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, Inc., 1981), 163. A comparable Canadian report accentuating the centrality of friendships in adolescence is Reginald W. Bibby and Donald C. Postersky, *The Emerging Generation: An Inside Look at Canada's Teenagers* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1985). This Project Teen Canada study is based on questionnaires distributed in 1984 to 3,600 youths aged 15-19, most of these in 150 secondary schools across Canada. Adolescent friendships including cliques are examined

time and place. For example, a conspicuous group of youth in Williams Lake in the 1950s, the “dorm kids,” had no parallel in Elmtown, USA.³ And cliques are dynamic. As James S. Coleman illustrated in considerable detail, determinants of status among adolescent groups vary considerably between high schools of a single state. In one school, higher status groups of youth tend to be correlated with affluent family background more than any other variable; in another, scholastic achievement is the most important factor; in a third, it is athletic ability that got an individual into the “leading crowd.”⁴ The “social climate” and cliques may differ markedly even within two high schools in one district of a single town.⁵ Finally, factors influencing group dynamics in one context may become less significant in other contexts where new hierarchies of dominance may be established based on new criteria. Ethnographic studies of both males and females indicate that factors such as intelligence, creativity, and spirit, may in the case of summer camps, replace physical dominance, physical attractiveness or popularity with the opposite sex as correlates of high group status.⁶

A second limitation is posed by subjects’ own narratives which permitted, at best,

in Rolf E. Mauss, Adolescent Behaviour and Society (New York: Random House, 1970), 181, 182, passim; Phillip F. Rice, 2nd ed., The Adolescent: Development, Relationships, and Culture (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, [1975] 1978); and Robert E. Grinder, Adolescence (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 245-49, passim. The term “clique” is also associated with ethnic, racial, disadvantaged or more violent “underclass” groups of youth. See John M. Hagedorn, People and Folks: Gangs, Crime and the Underclass in a Rustbelt City Chicago: Lakeview Press, 1988), ERIC, ED 400 356; and “The Danger of Cliques,” Time 153, 17 (3 May 1999).

³August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown’s Youth (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1949).

⁴James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of the Teenager and Its Impact on Education (New York: Free Press, 1961), 81,89, passim.

⁵Gerald R. Smith and Thomas B. Gregory, “Major Contrasts in the Social Climates of Two High Schools in the Same Town,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, (Washington, D.C., 20-24 April, 1987) ERIC, ED 280195.

⁶Roberta L. Paikoff and Ritch C. Savin-Williams, “An Exploratory Study of Dominance Interactions Among Adolescent Females at a Summer Camp,” Journal of Youth and Adolescence 12, 5 (1983): 419; Ritch C. Savin-Williams, “Dominance Hierarchies in Groups of Middle to Late Adolescent Males,” Journal of Youth and Adolescence 9, 1 (1980): 75-84.

glimpses into the private dimensions of young people's friendships. Understandably, few subjects cared to share the deeper strains of friendships of the sort we gain from "Tom," an eighteen year old American male who professed, "Misfits value their friends more: they invest a lot more in them because they can't have a lot of little acquaintances (like me, when I was fat and had a bad weight problem). Misfits have fewer but better friends."⁷ Thus, this joint narrative delineates groupings of youth in the Laketown. It tends to accentuate inter-group differences, and among the second generation, conflict, while failing, unfortunately, to capture fully the quality of friendships, or the loneliness felt by a "no-fitter" consigned yet again to another weekend evening at home with her parents and young siblings.

Two superficial pictures of youth in and around the Laketown emerge from the oral narratives. First generation subjects generally compose one picture of uncomplicated homogeneity in the first decade after the Second World War while second generation subjects strike another of a fractured youth culture in the early 1970s. Closer scrutiny of the first picture, however, reveals youth were not immune to the social cleavages that in different places, times and to varying degrees were tempered by variables such as "race," ethnicity, gender, social class, parental control, individual interests, and geographic proximity to cohorts.⁸ That sort of diversity was definitely present by the mid-1960s, at least according to second generation subjects. In fact, this joint narrative may overstate the exclusivity of teenage cliques especially by the early 1970s. In my effort to generalize about friendship formation, I

⁷Norman and Harris, The Private Life of the American Teenager, 153.

⁸Attention to such diversity generally marks most recent writings as well as older, but notable edited collections. See for example, Harvey J. Graff, Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Elliott West and Paula Petrik, eds., Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950 (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas, 1992); N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, eds., Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985); and Joy Parr, ed., Childhood and Family in Canadian History (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1982).

may have unconsciously constructed greater social rigidity than actually existed. It is important to note, however, that second generation males and female subjects often dwelt upon the most visible groups of youth in the school and community, the “heads,” “cowboys,” “greasers,” “hockey players,” and “jocks” while foregoing the other less visible groupings.

The First Generation

The initial impression gained from most narratives of adolescence around Williams Lake throughout the 1940s and early 1950s is of a comparatively small closely-knit, if not seemingly homogeneous group of teenagers. Billy Allen, for example, recalled that around the end of Second World War, “There weren’t many teenagers so everybody knew everybody else. We all did the same things. We were all in the same teams.” In the early 1950s, even the basic meaning of school, Evelyn McLeod emphasized, was first and foremost, “togetherness”: “It was togetherness with this one and togetherness with that one.” Out in the country, purportedly, “race” was not an issue in friendship formation, at least according to Axel Vickers. “Where there were other native kids, we’d play with them . . . we never even thought about it then,” he said, adding, “I’m part native myself.” Axel noted the historical shift in how young people perceived and accommodated “race.” Such mixing was “taught now” as “politically-correct.” At the time, said Axel, “we never thought about it -- you just went and treated everybody the same.” The reality of local youth culture was not that simple.

Clearly, “race” was a prime variable structuring youth in the Laketown itself throughout the historical period of this study. Most “mixed-race” individuals in this study integrated into non-Aboriginal, and not Aboriginal youth culture. In the case of Aboriginal young people, the “race”-based St. Joseph’s Residential School not only disrupted family socialization, but mitigated against formation of close relationships with either mixed-race” or Non-Aboriginal

individuals in the area. Furthermore, the long-term psychological effects of segregating Aboriginal children in order to “civilize” them outlasted the residential school.⁹

First generation “mixed-race” youth like Wesley Smith integrated into the village peer group at the end of the Second World War although the quality of that integration remains unclear. Wesley was a self-proclaimed “loner” who from the age of roughly eight through fifteen undertook countless day trips alone through the hills above the village on his horse. Sometimes a friend tagged along. As he said, “I picked a friend – out of the white bunch.” David Tomiyasi was more explicit about “race”-based differentiation in the village. David would have preferred to have socialized more with friends after school in the early to mid-1950s. Parental strictures, chores as well as lingering “hard feelings against my family” kept him closer to home than he would have liked: “I never had much opportunity to go downtown, go to local cafes, and just kind of spend the afternoon with the other kids – I could hear about it. That part I really missed for the most part.”¹⁰

With the opening of a high school dormitory in the early 1950s, Laketown youth also began to be divided on the basis of whether they were “dorm” or “town kids.” As described in Chapter 3, the secondary school served to consolidate youth from different social and economic backgrounds within Williams Lake. Besides providing a uniform programme of studies to pupils, the school proved a vital factor in friendship formation in the region enabling lifelong bonds between village youth and country youth boarding at Rosary Hall, the high school dormitory, or privately with families. Nonetheless, there remained salient differences

⁹Cariboo Tribal Council. Impact of the Residential School. Williams Lake: 1991.

¹⁰The general ethos is portrayed in the local press. See “No Japs nor Douks wanted in the Cariboo,” Tribune, 10 March 1944; as well as print version of radio address by Grey Turgeon, M.P. for Cariboo, 22 June 1944, 1; and “Repatriate all Japs,” 1 March 1945, 1, 3.

between “dorm kids” and those from “town.” Rita Dunsmuir, who had lived weekdays in the dormitory in the mid- to late-1950s, recalled a social distinction predicated upon lifestyle and parental expectations:

There was that separation. It was city kids versus country kids and there was that separation because they [“town” teens] could do all the things we couldn’t. They had no rules and regulations. We had them all because we had to be in at nine. They used to say, “Oh, you poor thing.” But we never used to feel sorry for ourselves. We kept thinking “You poor things” because we’d go home on the weekends and we’d go home to our horses, and our . . . fun and our freedom and we didn’t have to worry about what was going on in town . . . [emphasis in original].

Social class also flavoured youth culture, although as August B. Hollingshead noted of Elmtown residents in the 1940s, Laketown subjects were loath to employ the term “class” in casting social differences even where this appeared to outsiders as an unavoidable category.¹¹ In the 1950s, “town kids” in Williams Lake contrasted with “dorm kids” not only in terms of differing lifestyles, but in the amount of discretionary income and time at their disposal. By 1957, the “dorm kids” were typically separated from those Laketown youth enjoying the freedom associated with car culture that began to characterize the lives of many urban Canadian teenagers:

‘Town kids’ . . . a lot of them were into drinking, wild parties, had money, roaring around in cars. There were the beer drinkers that had money, like _____, the parents had mega-bucks. He always had a big fancy car and he was a nerd, but he had the bucks, but he had a lot of friends If you want my honest opinion about being in the dorm and being from the outside, I think all the people [who] came into the dorm from places all came from ranches, all came from places where they had such a workload – like our fun was we got up on Saturday and my sister baked and I scrubbed or vice versa because we had twenty-five on the crew at the ranch. My mother didn’t hire help.

Work and regulations imposed upon country teens by the “dorm mother” on weekdays

¹¹Laketown subjects preferred to describe people as being say, from “nicer” or “bigger” homes, from the “poor” side of town, or “the other side of the tracks.” See Hollingshead, *Elmtown’s Youth*, 83.

complemented norms established by parents on weekends in structuring leisure and friendship. Rita and Doddie Dunsmuir were thus regimented throughout most of their adolescence. Both girls internalized the rules of conduct:

You never would have said, 'Can I go to a dance with so and so or spend the night.' 'I want to go to this party' We were in the dorm . . . we knew what the rules were and if mom and dad said be home by eleven, or twelve o'clock, you just never would have questioned it. You would just never have questioned it [emphasis in original].

The girls never left the ranch unchaperoned. Doddie, for example, attended country dances with her family, went on her first date at fifteen, began "going steady" with her boyfriend, and obtained a driver's licence and even her own car at sixteen. Even then, her younger sister accompanied the couple until Doddie was seventeen.

Generally speaking, a teen's ability to associate freely with others also correlated with parental dispositions, subjects' preferences in choosing friends, as well as everyday proximity to other teens. Often, girls and boys who had frequently associated in single gender groupings in early childhood grew apart in the pre- and early-teen years as both genders began to exert restraint towards the sorts of play in which they had engaged at a younger age.¹² Billy Allen recalled that activities such as dances and mixed badminton and softball teams generally brought the sexes together again in the mid-teen years. Some teens missed this socialization. Until Harriet Wilson turned sixteen, boys were seldom part of her group of female friends in the late 1940s: "They sort of went their way and we went ours. Well there was a few around . . . they were allowed to be with us if they'd wanted to . . . [but] they had their things they were doing and I guess we had ours we were doing." Geographic isolation from other households with females compelled Evelyn McLeod to compromise her desire for female companionship

¹²This restraint is more pronounced in Victoria Bissel Brown, "Female Socialization among the Middle Class of Los Angeles, 1880-1910," in West and Petrik, *Small Worlds*, 247, 251, 254, *passim*.

and establish friendships across gender lines throughout most of her childhood and into her adolescence.¹³ Evelyn grew up associating with “mostly boys,” who became “just like brothers” to her:

When we first came here it was always boys, like even at [her previous town] there was a family of six boys and no girls. And I just tagged along and I had to rough it to hang in or else I got left behind. And the same when I came here. It was all boys.

Within the category of gender, there were factions based on different interests.¹⁴ A woman with the outsider’s perspective emphasized that varying tastes in fashion and proclivity to date had divided local girls. However tiny and isolated the village compared to large urban centres at the time, a number of the girls acquired urban attitudes in this regard. Vancouver-born Katie Jean hardly associated with two girls whom she considered were “more interested in fashion” than she had been. In fact, Katie Jean’s case overturns the stereotype of “city mouse” trying to transform country bumpkin. Katie Jean revealed “many of the girls in Williams Lake” were not interested in horses and the outdoors, “because they were more interested in city things, which I wasn’t.” Such girls pored over “the American girls’ magazines” and attempted to exude the teenage “magazine kind of image”:

I think there was a tendency for many of the girls my age, the ones that might have been interested in being cheerleaders if they’d been in a different kind of school [laughs] . . . I think some of those were more interested in clothes and looking pretty and makeup and how they did their hair and things like that. I was pretty naive at fourteen . . . I made my own jeans and jeans weren’t really that common at that time anyway.

Some of these same girls were also beginning to date in their mid-teens, a heterosexual

¹³Geographical proximity also allowed friendships to take root, as one man explained, “in that walk to school more than anything else.” Cited in Antonio F. Arruda, “Growing Up in Portuguese-Canadian Families: an oral history of adolescence in Vancouver, 1962-1980” (Vancouver: UBC unpublished M.A. thesis, 1992).

¹⁴See for example, Margaret J. Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (N.Y.: Teachers’ College Press, 1997), as well as Antonio F. Arruda, “Expanding the View: Growing up in Portuguese-Canadian Families, 1962-80,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XXV, 3 (1993): 8-25.

courtship phenomenon that had emerged in Canada three decades earlier.¹⁵ By the late 1950s, Canadian girls were venturing on their first date usually about age thirteen or fourteen with the practice peaking somewhere between the sixteenth and seventeenth birthday. Around this time, one often began “going steady” with a boy, a state of “premarital monogamy” with value systems of faithfulness and “cheating” paralleling those of marriage. At a time when active sexuality was sanctioned only within heterosexual matrimonial bonds, most Canadian parents apparently frowned upon their daughter’s going steady while in high school as they feared venereal temptation placed “too much strain on the moral fibre of the individual.”¹⁶

Laketown girls appear more restrained than their Canadian counterparts in taking up the custom of dating at least in the first decade after the Second World War. Wilme Ruth Baxter, aged sixteen in 1945, cited a relative lack of males during the Second World War, as a significant factor in mitigating against dating:

There wasn’t too many boys around you to distract you . . . and so we had to do things together. So it probably kept us out of a lot of trouble I think [laughter]. But it didn’t seem to bother us a lot at the time because we didn’t know any better. I mean that was the way it was.

Although there were numerous boys Wilme’s age in the village, only “some” girls in her age cohort had boyfriends at age “fourteen or fifteen.” “Going to the show” in mixed gender

¹⁵Owram, Born at the Right Time, 248-9. Sidney Katz, “Going Steady: Is it Ruining Our Teenagers?” Maclean’s, 3 January 1959. For patterns and details of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century “heterosexual sociability,” see Peter Ward, “Courtship and Social Space in Nineteenth-Century English Canada,” Canadian Historical Review 68, 1 (1987): 35-62; and particularly, Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Citing examples drawn from northern and rural southern Ontario, Dubinsky cautions middle-class models of courtship did not match “the realities” of rural or small town working class social life (pp. 116-19), especially when “race” is concerned. (p. 143). Hegemonic cultural forms and practices constructing normal and deviant sexuality are examined in Mary Louise Adams, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); On the evolution of twentieth century American courtship, including the dating form, see Beth Bailey, From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988).

¹⁶Katz cites a Canadian High News poll indicating 82% of parents were unfavourable. “Going Steady,” 1959.

groups with all parties paying admission separately was “more permissible” by parents than venturing forth as a couple. There were also practical reasons for the norm: “Kids just didn’t have money at that time – they were lucky to pay their own way into the show let alone take a girlfriend or boyfriend.”

Most women in this sample dated infrequently, if at all, before their fifteenth birthday even as girls grew attuned to sexuality. As Evelyn put it, “being with farm animals and raising dogs, I was exposed to mating . . . it was a perfectly natural thing.” Around age fifteen, after having associated mostly with boys (“my buddies”) all her life, Evelyn developed “crushes” and enjoyed dancing with a “particular boy.” Even when she was allowed to date, relationships were highly constrained. Such things as “talking on the phone” were discouraged by parents: “I mean we never had that liberty at all.” Furthermore, “the transportation factor” “definitely limited” dates among country youth without a driver’s licence and access to a vehicle: “If a boy asked you to a show, well, how are you going to get there? He doesn’t walk to your house and pick you up.” In Evelyn’s case, “I would be dropped off at the theatre with the boy and go to the show and then my parent or somebody would be waiting to bring me home.”

August B. Hollingshead discovered that over fifty-five percent of the married segment of the drop-out group of youth in Elmtown married locally and a baby was born within eight months of the marriage.¹⁷ While no such quantitative attempt was undertaken in Williams Lake, most first generation females like other Canadian girls at the time married around age eighteen, for some, very soon after high school graduation.¹⁸ Most married males from the

¹⁷August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown’s Youth and Elmtown Revisited* (N.Y. John Wiley & Sons, 1975 [49]).

¹⁸Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 12-14, 249, passim; Veronica Strong Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” *Canadian Historical Review* 62 (December 1991).

region. Women recalled the norm: one went steady with an individual and usually expected to marry them, perhaps, as Betty Friedan once suggested, because young people saw “no other true value” in society.¹⁹ Resisting the norm was simply too difficult for most girls. Evelyn McLeod, for example, graduated from grade twelve in June, 1955, married her childhood sweetheart that November (“and I was a virgin”), and bore her first child nine months later. Emily Potter never graduated, elected to marry, and was soon raising a family. As she pointed out “The group was always together and sooner or later you would match up.”

The Second Generation

Oral narratives of subjects of the second generation, particularly the eight subjects of the Class of ‘73, circumscribe a rough typology of youth in the Laketown in the early 1970s. One subject noted, “You definitely knew there were groups, that’s for sure,” a perspective contrasting sharply with the social context of the 1940s as described by some of the older generation. Subjects sometimes referred to youth by their geographic origins, for example, whether they were “out-of-town” youth (“country,” “rural,” “ranch,” “farm” kids), or those from “town.” Eight discrete groupings of youth also crystallized from the narratives: the “hippies,” “jocks,” “cowboys,” “greasers,” “hockey players,” “natives,” East Indians” and the “no-fitters.” Of these eight, the first five garnered the most attention from subjects.²⁰

Not much is unique about the jock and hippie groups given their ubiquitous presence

¹⁹Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (N.Y. Dell Publishing, 1964), 179.

²⁰Terms such as “greasers” and “hippies” were employed loosely by subjects. As indicated elsewhere in this chapter and again in Chapter 6, most individuals claiming to be, or described as hippies, for example, were not members of the rarer “total culture” of veritable “hippies.” “Hippies” generally referred to “bohemian and student subcultures” and lifestyles. They sought to escape bureaucratized society. Their quest for a “romantic revival of pastoral innocence” included sexual experimentation and substance abuse. True “greasers” wore black leather jackets, studs, boots and jeans, and were “violent, studiously working class” and “wild ones.” See Michael Brake, Comparative Youth Cultures: the Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 90.

across North America at the time and the two may be dealt with summarily. The first group, the “jocks” or “jock types,” included popular males and females active in school athletics, and especially in the case of males, community-organized sports. The second group, the “hippies,” were an ill-defined collective of youth manifest in Canada shortly after they emerged in the United States. Unlike the zoot-suits and bobby-soxers of the previous generation, hippies “threatened to eclipse” adult society at least in large Canadian urban centres.²¹ Although “hippies” emerged a little later in Williams Lake, by 1970 some individuals with long hair, beads and shabby dress had definitely gained notoriety among Laketown adults as pitiful and unkempt drug addicts or “junkies.” Based upon her witnessing of the events in a local courtroom in December of 1970, one woman cast them as “absolutely physical wrecks” squandering their God-given “beautiful bodies, souls and brains.”²²

On the whole, “hippie” youth requires qualification as most of those cast as hippies were just as likely to be described as the pot-smoking and acid-dropping “heads.” As one subject aptly put it, “The kids weren’t really hippies – they emulated the mannerisms and the mores of the hippies, but not the philosophy of the hippies.” Many were members of “partial cultures,” or “part-time versions of total cultures” who characteristically dabbled in aspects of the hippie culture.²³ In this sample of Laketown heads, however, substance abuse consumed much more than the occasional weekday evening and weekend. Eighteen year old Gwen

²¹Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time, 187. In 1967, Vancouver, with 1200 “hippies” was one of the first Canadian cities to see this group as a counterculture “menace.” Pierre Berton, 1967: Canada’s Turning Point (Toronto: Seal Books, 1998), 195. Canadians did not always lag in youth trends. Canadian teens were seen as “more permissive,” twice as likely to cohabit before marriage, and more likely to use the pill than their American counterparts. Elsie F. Jones, et. al. “Teenage Pregnancy in Industrialized Countries” cited in Seymour Martin Lipset, Continental Divide: the Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada (N.Y.: Routledge, 1990), 114.

²²“The Use of Drugs Did This,” Tribune, 14 January 1970, 4.

²³Herbert J. Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1974), 94-6. The point is explored in Chapter 6.

Thompson who had grown up in an “absurdly genteel” Vancouver family became familiar with hippie culture around Kitsilano before moving to the Laketown, finding work in a restaurant, and mixing with local youth. In retrospect, Gwen considered Laketown “hippies” comparatively “unintellectual” although she had enjoyed their “earthiness,” as well as the fact they were “more active” insofar as they often left town to camp, fish, party, or take in rodeos across the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

The third group, variously labelled as the “cowboys,” “cowgirls,” “country kids,” or “ranch kids,” came from ranches and small communities across the region. Like their counterparts a generation before them, many were largely dependent upon the dormitory and bussing in order to finish their secondary schooling in Williams Lake although, unlike the previous generation, a number of them were able to reside at home and commute into the Laketown in private motor vehicles. The social cleavage between country and village teens had not, however, changed. As Lynn Blacksmith noted, “The old adage of the town and country kids, it was very, very true.” Wendy Lorimar, who lived in town but socialized very little outside of school herself, observed that town kids “just more or less tolerated the kids that were from out of town.” While some country youth adopted contemporary fashions, ragged bell-bottom jeans, beads, “Jesus boots,” and so on, many others continued to distinguished themselves with the regional “western” or wrangler garb: cowboy boots and hats, “straight” pants or jeans, and plaid shirts. One subject recalled their presence in the mid-1970s in a stereotypic and masculine perspective. The “big thing” among country youth was “they seemed to always have the pickup trucks . . . and their girlfriends were always in their lap in the pickup truck.” Not all “country” youth originated on distant ranches. Lynn Blacksmith was no ranch kid. Yet, her work load and isolation on acreage only a few minutes drive from

town led her to identify with “country kids.” As she said, “We didn’t hang out with town kids.”

Subjects recall that the fourth group, the “greasers” or “greaseballs,” generally originated in Glendale (known as Smedleyville in the 1940s and 1950s), ideologically situated on “the other side of the tracks.” Between 1965 and 1975, Glendale (eventually annexed by Williams Lake) was widely if not infamously perceived as “the “poor section of town, there was no doubt about it” with Indo-Canadian as well as “sawmill,” “logger,” and “welfare-type” families. Glendale was separated from both Williams Lake and Columneetza Senior Secondary School by bush and fields (“the dairy”), linked to “town” by a single road and to Columneetza by trails. Shared outdoor pursuits such as hunting and fishing and part-time work in the sawmills sometimes cemented friendships between Glendale and Williams Lake males. But this sort of social glue was non-existent for Cindy McEwan and her “jock” friends who had nothing to do with the “Glendale group” of females. Cindy grew up thinking Glendale was a “scummy area,” and that the “Glendale group” “were scum [emphasis in original].” If “town” males identified the group as comprised of males and imbued it with descriptors linked to power and intimidation (“greasers,” “tough,” “gangs”), this woman distinguished the group by its female constituents. Glendale girls had a particular “look.” They were “hickey”:

They had their own group. . . . Not that their clothes weren’t nice, but they just didn’t put it together right, like the colours . . . big earrings, real bright lipstick when that really wasn’t “in” – that’s what I mean by “hickey.” Not that their clothes weren’t as good as ours, but it’s just the way they put them on. Or, maybe they backcombed their hair too much . . . there was absolutely a look. That was their look.

Although some subjects included the fifth group, the “hockey players,” in the jock category, narratives from hockey players themselves suggest that these athletes formed their own group. As noted in the next chapter, rigorous practice and game schedules disallowed

their membership on many school sports teams. If “Band” students comprised an elite corpus of sorts (as a result of their talent, if not socio-economic background), “Rep” hockey players also formed another, albeit more popular youth elite within both school and community. Like Band students, Rep players toured the region, province and even played outside Canada. At age “fourteen, fifteen,” they were billeted in gymnasiums and private homes in Prince George, Quesnel, Kamloops and the Lower Mainland, and on rare occasions, in places such as Seattle. Given the social role hockey played in the community, some hockey players became local heroes although some are still scorned by at least one subject who had grown up with them in the mid-1970s and who saw little change in the intervening years. One wonders if at the time that scorn for these athletes was not, in fact, teenage envy:

Oh, hockey was a big deal. The kids that were good, everybody knew their families and that was sort of like, a sort of a status thing. . . . The guys that were the hockey players were the guys that became the drinkers and had the vehicles and hot babes and most of them, in my view, ended up becoming bums. . . . They [were] actually unpleasant people as adolescents in school . . . sort of the tough guys . . . most never made it through high school. And they were the big drinkers.

After Pete Anderson made the Rep team, hockey “became the main thing in my life.” He disputed the team’s reputation: “We were a group bonding within ourselves. The girls weren’t a big part of it.

Individuals, of course, do not always live neatly within their ascribed categories. Several subjects could be placed within several aforementioned types. After his parents’ deaths, Myles Osborne, for example, lived in the high school dormitory. Summers were spent at the ranch, and winters “in town.” He “kind of wore two hats,” but was finally drawn into “town” culture: “When I was in school, I tried to mix and be socially acceptable to the

majority.” While he may have appeared to others as a cowboy, Myles didn’t feel that way at the time. “Cowboy” at the time had a narrower and specific meaning according to Myles: “When we talk about cowboys, these would be kind of the real true, old home, down-to-earth guys from ranches” with “more solid roots.” The case of Howard Underwood also illustrates the complexity of drawing boundaries among youth. Howard was what others might have called “straight.” By his account, he was focussed, academically, physically, and socially active, self-disciplined and inclined to “respect” disciplinarians. He was certainly busy. He had played hockey from the age of six, and taken up 4-H: “started with vegetables and next year got into pigs.” As a teen, he fished, hunted, curled, and loved dancing. He found time for a steady girlfriend throughout his senior high school years. Additionally, late in his teens he became part of the “horsey” set that hung out at the Trailriders Arena. Horses, and not just riding, began to consume much of his remaining free time: “I mean, an hours’ worth of riding is probably five hours of fiddling and farting and building fences and getting hay.” Howard was ambivalent about which group he fit into: “I didn’t fit anywhere. If I was part of a group, it was my dad’s hunting partners and riding.”

Aside from these five groupings of youth, other groups are less prominent, and even seem to have faded in the collective memory of growing up in the Laketown. Subjects were often prompted to consider youth such as the bookish “nerds,” Indo-Canadian or Aboriginal youth, or the “no-fitters” who relegated themselves to quiet spaces in the cafeteria. Even then, they sometimes volunteered little. Silences in the narratives regarding Indo-Canadians are partially explained by the relatively recent arrival of Indo-Canadian families in the Laketown.

In the 1973-74 school year, there were only sixteen Indo-Canadians present at Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary, and fewer still at Columneetza Senior Secondary. The case of Aboriginal youth, however, is a different matter. Although many of them dropped out before or shortly after entering Columneetza Senior Secondary, they nonetheless constituted a significant numerical presence at Williams Lake Junior-Senior High School by 1965. By the early 1970s Aboriginal students were simply too numerous to warrant any dismissal.²⁴

Both explicitly (by what little is said), and implicitly (by what is overlooked), non-Aboriginal narratives reflect the inescapable fact that Aboriginal youth were actively and passively ignored by the members of the more dominant groups. Raylene Erickson, raised on a ranch alongside Aboriginal families, recalled “town kids” generally didn’t mix with the Indians.” If they failed to mix within classrooms where close proximity presented opportunities to mingle, or where teachers might have engineered the fact (“Native kids” sat at or closer to the back of the room), there appeared to be even less attempt to do so outside the school context. As the following excerpt from an interview with a female “town” subject suggests, non-Aboriginal subjects denied, dismissed, downplayed or at least overlooked the racialized context facing youth in the 1960s and 1970s:

T: [Shows photo of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Stampede Queens] Do you remember thinking that there was differentiation between White and Indian Queens?

B: I don’t know. I never really thought about “race” a whole lot, I mean it was no big deal [she turns page to another photo].

²⁴Aboriginal students are prominent in some divisions of grade nine, for example, less so in others. In one case, Division 15, roughly half the class of 26 is comprised of Aboriginal students. The Laker, 1965. See also Williams Lake Junior Secondary School annual, 1973-1974.

Several subjects attributed racism between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth to “outsiders.” Cal Reid grew up in Williams Lake, at least played minor hockey alongside “Natives,” and comes close saying that locals became racist through contact with “outsiders”:

What caused a lot of the problems was the “outsiders” for lack of a better word. When they [went] downtown and they saw natives sleeping, passed out, or peeing on the sidewalk, that’s all they saw. They didn’t see the white guy lying down beside him. They didn’t. . . . Like it wasn’t a big deal to go out with a Native girl, like when I went through school, like people didn’t look down on you – that you were going out with a “squaw” . . . that outside influence has come in and all of a sudden, because of our white blood, or whatever, we paint them as a lower class because of what we see downtown.²⁵

Randy Anston from “town” echoed the sentiment, shifting the blame upon incoming youth:

T: Newcomers and town kids were different? That was striking?

R: Yes. . . . I don’t know where they came from, but just trying to make out that they were better than everybody else and they would work on [verbally abuse] as many as they could. The natives were naturally not interested in sticking up for themselves so they were easy. . . . A newcomer from Vancouver or a city kid could come into high school with an attitude and sway people, to put down a Native kid, or an East Indian kid.

T: Newcomers did this?

R: Generally, I don’t think people in town ever had that idea.

If many non-Aboriginal teens “ignored” or didn’t relate to “Natives,” a few subjects now appear more understanding of historical context, often compassionately so although this does not characterize how they had viewed Indo-Canadians. Cal Reid, for instance, was far more sympathetic towards Aboriginal than Indo-Canadian youth. Cal grew up with and

²⁵This is an unusual, if not sanitized, observation of mixed-race dating. The typical understanding is that of “White” males trying to extract sexual favours from “Indian” girls. A separate and deeper treatment of racialised “race” relations after the Second World War would complement Jean Barman’s “Invisible Women.”

continued to perpetuate a misconception about the Sikh homeland:

They [Indo-Canadians] were arrogant people, very, very arrogant people. . . . The kids were arrogant, self-centred. And, of course, we didn't realize it until years after why. They were very affluent in India – that's the only reason they got out here to start with. . . . Later on, they started coming to school with their turbans, good old numbers . . .

Narratives of Canadian and Indo-Canadian relations in the Laketown illustrate that racism had some economic basis.²⁶ Collectively, it was “East Indians” and not “Aboriginal peoples who entered the sawmills in those “good old numbers” and who were perceived as a relatively greater economic threat to white working-class families around Williams Lake. Peggy Bailey from a sawmill family apparently maintained a “couple” of loose friendships with “a few of the more outgoing Natives” in (but not outside) the school context. At the same time, she and her friends overlooked “East Indian” youth entirely, in part, due to what she admitted was her home-bred “mentality”:

T: East Indian families are arriving. What's the dynamic?

P: Not good. Well, for me, I remember my dad – he worked in the mill – saying you know, ‘bloody Hindus,’ ‘East Indians’ . . . ‘just stinky,’ you know, all that negative stuff. . . . I do remember them walking around town with turbans and I had this perception that they all came over here and lived together and took jobs away at the mill. . . . I just thought those people, they all live out in Glendale

²⁶See Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989). Also see Chapter 7 of this study. One subject wrote how her workplace in the mid-1970s, a “Chinese” restaurant, was stratified by race: “In terms of racial hierarchy, the White and Chinese groups both considered themselves to be at the top of the pile. The Chinese [cooks] were secure in their knowledge of this, and the Whites [waitresses] bitterly resented being treated as if they weren't, even though waitresses come below cooks in restaurant hierarchy. The East Indians, who were at the bottom of the pile, really didn't give a damn as far as I could see, and spent their working time together making jokes, probably about the Whites and Chinese, both of whom treated them like ignorant slaves.” Letter from Gwen Thompson to author, “‘Other Races’ in Williams Lake, 1973-75.” 15 January, 2000.

and they work in the mills and they all live in one big house . . .²⁷

T: Did you try to make friends with East Indians?

P: No.

Just as Michael Marker concluded that it was working-class kids who most disliked Lummi natives on the basis of competition for a natural resource, Logan Lassiter recalled it was the “kids from broken homes” in Glendale, who were “the ones that really disliked the East Indians because that’s where all the East Indians lived.”²⁸

Outside school space and time, young people gravitated to their own arenas whenever possible. While there was more geographical dispersal into outdoor settings, the finite number of venues within the community itself meant an overlap of factions. As in the case of classrooms, spatial delineations continued even in the closest of quarters. Various cliques shared the dance floor at the Elks Hall on a weekend night. “Cowboys” (along with some “cowgirls”), “heads,” “greasers” and “jocks” hung out at different tables in the local poolroom, or in downtown coffee shops such as the Lakeview, the Famous, Francie’s, or the Tastee-Freeze and the Dog’n’Suds located on the highway heading east out of town. Cindy and her “jock” friends went to the Famous, as did Steve and his hippie friends when they were “either drinking or stoned.” Two Aboriginal subjects, Marnie Williams and Joseph St. Michelle seldom if ever entered such places, although as a sixteen year old, Joseph began frequenting

²⁷Gwen Thompson describes this as a prevalent sentiment in the Laketown, but adds, “A few members of the white community -- working men -- actually expressed admiration of the Sikhs for doing this [sharing accommodations] and felt that the white community could do well to follow their example.” *Ibid.*

²⁸Michael Marker, “‘Lummi Stories From High School:’ An Ethnohistory of the Fishing Wars of the 1970s,” (University of British Columbia: Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, 1995).

the Lakeview and Ranch drinking establishments with older relatives.

Any overt conflict among the first generation subjects remained unreported, but such was not the case among the second generation. Youth violence surfaced largely but not wholly as a feature of male youth culture in this area. It was directed, not in protest against adult society and institutions, but at other youth or groups of youth. By 1965, compared to the context two decades earlier, the local press was reporting numerous cases of violence in the community. For instance, charges were not only laid for fights outside the Maple Leaf Hotel, and disturbances of the peace and weapons charges, but increasingly, against young people as in the case of a youth assaulting a police officer.²⁹ In fact, Mike Edson, one of the “heads” frequenting the downtown “street scene” in the early 1970s witnessed the melees that often escaped reporting in the local press:

There would be all kinds of people around and you would hear of an incident, say, that had just happened, where a cowboy had kicked the crap out of a friend of ours, so we’d get together and there were actually some street battles. . . . There could be up to 200 people involved . . . not a small gang at all.

Cal Reid confirmed there were occasional “major fights” between the factions of youth, sometimes with baseball bats and other weapons:

I mean there was guys with knives, guys with chains . . . oh there was some pretty vicious fights. . . . In most cases, it was one of the kids from the rural areas getting picked on because maybe the way he was dressed or his mannerism compared to some of the city kids . . . oh there was some pretty major bloodbaths.

Although the “instigators” of such conflict also originated in “town” homes, several subjects identified “greaseballs” from Glendale as the source of “friction” between factions of

²⁹For example, Tribune, 18 February 1970, 1; 2 September 1970, 17.

youth. According to subjects, these instigators were “different.” They wore black leather jackets and “Brylcreamed” their hair, “kind of hung around all together and there were a lot of really big families, so brothers would protect brothers.” They were often physically larger and stronger than their classmates. If enrolled in high school, many of them “had failed two or three years so they were fairly old to be in grade nine.” Others had dropped out of school (“a lot of the kids didn’t go to grade ten or eleven”) and “they were hanging around trying to pick up the younger girls.” Cal Reid summed it up. They constituted a “minority” of the kids, “but it’s the ten percent that everybody knows. I mean there was kids that were so scared of these guys that they saw them a block away, they’d start running.”

Randy Aston, who did not seem to fit into any particular category of youth, was one of their victims. Randy also cast Glendale as “the low end of town, tough neighbourhood,” with houses “like shacks” where the “kids were really tough. . . . You didn’t mess with them”:

Yeah, Friday night, Saturday night. Big fights. Oh, yeah, I used to get beat up quite regularly. I mean you either took it or you didn’t take it and depending on where we were, we’d get into fights. There was gangs. They had their little gang. Actually we tried to avoid them. I don’t think the high class kids ever got involved in anything like that. They stayed clear of that so I would say it was more the town gang and Glendale . . . There was the _____, the _____, the _____ [families from Glendale]. Some of them were crazy, literally sick. But just drinking, being mean – that was what they were known for. They would drink and just want to pick on you and beat you up, so you either walked away from it and if you couldn’t walk away from it, you tried to defend yourself.

A subject from a Glendale gang confirmed conflict between groups of youth:

There was always rivals. Like in our age group, there was rivals between town, South Lakeside, the Dog Creek and Chilcotin Creek guys. . . . Man I remember some pretty good fights back then . . . we used to call ourselves the _____. We even had a little song we used to sing. We stole it from a movie.

Conflicts were never so simple as greasers dominating other groups. Sometimes the greasers “got the hell beat out of them,” said Cal Reid. “A group of maybe cowboys would find three or four of them and then just kick the shit right out of them [emphasis in original].” Raylene Erickson pointed out conflict also arose between “hippies” and “cowboys” who “just didn’t get along – at all.” Rumbles ensued at the Chilli Cabaret in the Chilcotin Inn and the two groups “never mixed at a party. The hippies wanted to listen to AC/DC and the cowboys are gagging on Patch[ouli].”

Only a few subjects expressed reasons for conflict. Randy Aston thought overwork and abuse on the home ranch played a role in predisposing some youth towards violence:

They [ranch youth] had a hard life. They worked harder than we did, harder than I did – I know I worked hard. But farm life was not easy. And usually, as far as I can remember, their dads beat them around quite a bit. _____, and _____ – his dad used to beat him up all the time, so when he used to come to town, he used to beat on people too. . . . They got shit on, so when they come to town, they shit on us. And I know even with their kids now – I know them – they weren’t nice to their kids.

According to Cal Reid, violent conflict among youth was a “power struggle,” but one with limits. “It was more machoism,” a case of showing off for the peer group rather than hatred, Cal thought, “because a lot of these guys would have to go and play on the same hockey team.”

Outside the Laketown itself, fights among youth broke out at the infamous country dances. One night in the late 1960s, Howard Underwood and his girlfriend drove out to a barn dance at a well-known Black Creek ranch where “hundreds of people, three, four, five hundred people” were camped out overnight. When Howard broke up a fight that night, he was immediately “cornered” by a group of the “Stampedeers,” the hockey players, what he considered a “group of thugs, basically, bad, bad actors, a bad, bad group from Glendale.”

Rivalry sharpened between Quesnel, 100 Mile, and Williams Lake youth at community dances and hockey games. Not all youth responded to the rivalry the way a subject in his mid-teens from a Glendale gang did when he launched himself into an inter-town fray at 100 Mile in the early 1970s. Faced with a common enemy, enmity between “town” and Glendale was temporarily suspended:

They'd be on one side of the dance hall, we'd be on the other side . . . I remember diving off the steps into six or seven of them and [I] started swinging . . . 100 Mile always hated us [Williams Lake]. Well, I'll tell you, hockey was a bad one. We had better hockey players, better teams. Every time. 100 Mile if they ever did beat us -- I don't think I remember a game -- but when we went to 100 Mile to play hockey, even the parents in the stands [were] yelling back and forth at each other.

If a generation is an age group with shared historical experience, race, gender and class identities make it difficult to speak of all teenagers in and around the Laketown even immediately after the Second World War, as being of one and the same generation. Even non-Aboriginal youth who spent part of their adolescence in the tiny village in the decade after the Second World War were differentiated on the basis of gender and whether they were from town, Rosary Hall, or the “dorm.” By the mid-1960s, some lines dividing youth in and around the Laketown faded while others were redrawn. “Race,” however, continued to structure local youth culture. Aboriginal and later Indo-Canadian youth were physically integrated into secondary schools, but fell outside the most visible and socially dominant cliques in the school and community. By the mid-1960s, Laketown youth had fractured into recognizable if not always discrete groupings based upon social class origins, athletic ability, parental dispositions

toward a son or daughter's social freedom, as well as an individual's personal preference in friends. This generation was comparatively less divided at least on the basis of gender as parents and community eased traditional temporal and spatial restrictions upon girls' leisure time (as we shall see in the next chapter), but subjects' narratives do not permit close examination of the quality of female participation in cliques.

The change in friendship patterns, notably an accentuation of factions in the first thirty years after the Second World War, may not have been sudden but it was decisive. The rural transformation of Williams Lake helped reconfigure the experience of youth. Through natural and demographic growth, the Laketown reached a critical mass mitigating against the relative intimacy seen in the 1940s and 1950s, at least among non-Aboriginal youth. Culturally, a veritable barrage of "outside" influences including television, Hollywood movies, and "newcomers" from the Lower Mainland inundated Laketown youth with an array of urbanized adolescent outlooks and habits. Compared to their counterparts in 1950, the Class of '73 simply grew up with more diverse models of lifestyles which along with greater anonymity, contributed to greater inter-group friction, and occasionally, violence.

Inclusion also delineated exclusion. And so there was also growing alienation. In the late 1940s, if Harriet Wilson had found it difficult to escape the sometimes stifling joiner ethos permeating youth culture, twenty years later it was almost impossible for some young people to break into the most popular groups. At the time these individuals stood off on the sidelines garnering little attention. Even now they are the ones most easily forgotten. After all, these "quiet" types were not the sorts of more visible individuals who at the time helped construct

the popular image of teenagers in and around the Laketown and across the country as a risk-taking counterculture, however illusory that new image of youth might prove to be.

Chapter 6

Leisure and Popular Culture

In 1955, Frederick Elkin and William A. Westley, two sociologists at McGill University, challenged the existence of a distinct “American” youth culture citing as evidence their findings of a study of a small sample of fourteen and fifteen year olds in an upper middle-class suburban community of Montreal. The sociologists concluded these teens did not portray the characteristics of what was widely perceived as an emergent North American teen culture as their subjects were not concerned solely with “immediate pleasurable gratification.” Nor were these young people “compulsively independent,” contemptuous of adult values, or overly-susceptible to a deleterious “conformity-demanding peer group.”¹

With the advantage of hindsight, Doug Owsram recently argued that by the late 1950s not only had there emerged a palpable “teenage culture” in Canada, but it had become a “major force in most western countries”:

The institutions, cultural forms, and economic power of the teenager were all in place by the end of the 1950s. Most important of all so too was the conscious sense that youth had its own unique culture, not congenial to adults and therefore all the more special. By the time the baby boom reached adolescence the distinct world of the North American teenager was well-entrenched.²

By this time, teenager life was typified not only by distinctive fashion, dating, teen

¹The conclusions are based on a sample of twenty subjects as well as twenty other life histories. Frederick Elkin and William Westley’s, “The Myth of Adolescent Culture” *American Sociological Review* 20, 6 (1955): 680-4.

²Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 156.

consumerism, and music and television forms (for example, the American teenage dance shows), but by high school attendance. In short, Owram concluded, “teenager,” as a term, had come to imply “a whole culture rather than merely a state of hormonal transitions.”³ Owram might have more accurately categorized Canadian teenage culture as a “partial culture” in view of the fact young peoples’ daily lives were enmeshed often inextricably with those of adults who attempted to guide if not dominate young peoples’ lives in the various contexts of family, school, work, church, community and their use of leisure time.⁴ This truism aside, teens, often the objects of adults’ well-meaning intentions and interventions also found time and space to themselves.

Youth’s use of leisure time and their participation in select forms of popular culture and changes and continuities in patterns of use is the subject of this chapter. “Leisure,” defined as “spare” or “free time” not devoted to physically necessary acts such as eating, sleeping, studying, or household chores, involves some form of play, game, or relaxation with its “own” intrinsic reward.⁵ Popular culture is understood to include various cultural products and cultural practices including the music, film, fashion, and even the “folk wisdom” of a historical period.⁶ The terms “teen culture” or “youth culture” refer to the attitudes, behaviours, and peer

³Owram, Born at the Right Time, 145-55, passim. In 1954, one-half of all 14-17 year olds were still in school; within six years, the proportion had risen to two-thirds. Ibid., 145.

⁴Unlike “total” cultures which “seek to exist apart from mainstream or straight society and in fact to change or overthrow it,” “partial cultures” still participate in and “‘belong’ to mainstream society.” Youth cultures are partial cultures. Total cultures such as the “original hippie culture” act as “models for partial cultures.” Herbert J. Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 94-96.

⁵See Kenneth Roberts, Youth and Leisure (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983). Aside from descriptive studies, this is, according to its author, the first major sociological analysis of youth and leisure.

⁶Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture, 10-11. Paul Rutherford argues despite efforts by cultural bulwarks such as the NFB and CBC, Canadian mass culture has inexorably become part of a continental popular culture as a result of television and later cable. Paul Rutherford, “Made in America: The Problem of Mass Culture in Canada,” in David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning, eds., The Beaver Fights Back?: American Popular Culture in Canada (Montreal &

relationships of the young people who are the subjects of this study. Thus my use of these latter terms more closely parallels Sutherland's use of the term "culture of childhood" than the "problem" orientation usually assumed by media and sociologists when they refer to youth and society.⁷

Unfortunately, this chapter lacks proportional representation between male and female forms of leisure. If this unevenness is, to any degree, the result of my own bias in failing to "hear" or understand females' narratives on the subject, it is also symptomatic of other studies of leisure, including those carried out by female participant observers, who confessed that even in the 1970s, "girls are more difficult to track" as they "'go to ground' in their homes and remained "less accessible than boys in street corner groups."⁸ Of course, girls' early marriage, commonly in the late teens, also removed them from youth culture.

The First Generation

Sixteen year old Billy Allen and Wilme Ruth Baxter were in many ways typical non-Aboriginal Laketown teens living in Williams Lake at the end of the Second World War. Aside from his commitments to family, work, and school, Billy's leisure time was his to spend as he liked. While Billy and many other village boys spent hours indoors playing basketball and badminton, and sometimes reading books and listening to radio, these sorts of activities competed unsuccessfully with the outdoors for his leisure time. Billy did listen to radio

Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993). Various essays explore the successful merchandising of American cultural products in Canada.

⁷Neil Sutherland, Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the age of television (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). For the "problem" orientation, see for example, Michael Brake, Comparative Youth Cultures: the sociology of youth cultures and youth subcultures in America, Britain and Canada (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

⁸Brake, Comparative Youth Cultures, Chapter 4, especially pp. 60-2.

programs such as Johnny the All-American Boy, or The Carsons: "It was just an ordinary family discussing their problems, discussing who didn't cut the grass last week, or who didn't cut the wood, who didn't shovel the snow, family-oriented stuff" -- in short, portrayals of people and events "you could relate to."⁹ Nonetheless, Billy turned to radio "mostly just in the wintertime when it was maybe too cold to get outside." He spent many hours in wild spaces which began at or just beyond village boundaries. He fished with friends or built board dams at three or four different swimming holes in the Williams Lake River below the village: "We had three or four different swimming holes. We'd put dams in swimming holes, put the boards in ourselves until the guy living down the crik would come along with his horses, drag them out . . . oh yeah, we'd flood his land down there." As a young boy, Billy had also hunted for game with his father, and as he got older, alone, along the wooded slopes above the village, open spaces which would transform first into a local airstrip and then in the late 1960s into present-day residential areas.¹⁰

Much of Wilme Ruth Baxter's narrative typifies how most subjects, male or female, recall spending time with friends in a context of limited public recreational facilities and few present "distractions" such as television. Suitable buildings were pressed into service as recreation centres. Males and females spent evenings playing badminton at St. Peter's Church Hall or in the school basement, and basketball at the Elks Hall. The Elks Hall was, in fact, of such vital social importance in the community for sport events, community dances, meetings, and other social events that when it burned down in the winter of 1949 it was replaced within a

⁹For a unperiodized selection of radio shows geared to families, and later to children and teens, see Sutherland, Growing Up. For detailed program descriptions, runs, and analysis, see Paul Rutherford, Primetime Canada: when television was young, 1952-1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁰A 1967 photograph reveals the village airstrip occupied much of what came to be Western Avenue, an arterial route through present day subdivisions. Williams Lake Tribune, 7 March 1967, 1.

year. Katie-Jean, who had just moved to Williams Lake witnessed the social calamity:

It made a big difference to our lives because we went twice a week to badminton and once a week to basketball in the building and that was the only facility for winter sport except for outdoor skating and I remember that really, really clearly . . . and they replaced it very very promptly.¹¹

Wilme and her group of friends also went to musicals, "war pictures" and "a lot of westerns" each one preceded by the customary newsreel and the ten minute "comic." Generally, however, girls like boys spent much of their free time out of doors:

There really wasn't that much to do inside . . . I don't think we had the distractions you do now. We didn't have the T.V. and there wasn't any big things to do. We had to make up our own entertainment [emphasis in original]. We had to have our own ball games and we'd go skating on an open rink in the winter. We went skating every day in the winter.¹²

Women's narratives reveal a gendered division of leisure time and space in Williams Lake especially around the end of the Second World War. Boys took command of the Williams Lake River valley. Girls such as Wilme and her female friends generally walked down to the lake with a lunch where they would swim for an afternoon before returning home to help prepare supper, or they spent summer afternoons on bicycles touring the village and the dusty gravel roads leading out of the village. A major form of leisure for a more reclusive girl at the end of the Second World War was simply walking around the village, down to the lake, or across the benchlands "usually with Mrs. _____." According to Harriet Wilson:

¹¹The social disruption caused by the fire is reported in the Tribune, 20 January 1949, 1. Principal Joe Phillipson was Master of Ceremonies at the opening of the new hall ten months later. Tribune, 24 November 1949, 1.

¹²Sutherland's periodization of the culture of childhood in Growing Up certainly applies in the Laketown. The introduction of television in the early 1960s not only introduced local young people to much of what was previously kept "secret" by adults as Paul Goodman has suggested, but it helped change activity patterns among youth and organizers of youth in the village. In 1950, an estimated 13,500 Canadians, most in the southern Ontario and Vancouver area could pick up American television stations. The first Canadian telecasts occurred in 1952, and purportedly, by 1962, television had "conquered" Canada. It overlooked the Cariboo. As late as 1959, Quesnel, just north of Williams Lake, was known as "Radiotown" during Canada's "golden age of television" as it still lacked decent television. Rutherford, Primetime Canada, 50. This label might easily apply to Williams Lake in the mid-1960s when, according to Billy Allen, "What television you did get you couldn't see half the time!" Poor reception is covered in the press. Tribune, 15 December, 1965, 1.

I never did learn how to swim – still can't . . . and I try to tell that to people and they absolutely do not believe there wasn't that much to do in Williams Lake in those days. I don't know what they thought we were doing. Well, we had bicycles . . . picking berries, going for walks . . .

Teens did participate in mixed-gender activities. In the summer, softball games brought them together; in the winter, it was skating, or perhaps skiing “on wide flat wooden skis” and sledding above the benchlands of the Williams Lake River where they warmed themselves alongside “big fires.” Only “when it was really cold” would young people congregate at someone's house and perhaps “play Chinese Checkers and Checkers and things like that.” Occasionally, teens would “go to town to have a coffee at the Famous Cafe, to meet our friends . . . there was Sing Tooie's, a Chinese place.” Here, boys, “but not girls,” might enjoy a cigarette.

Subjects growing up outside Williams Lake with comparatively fewer recreational facilities relied almost exclusively upon family, nearby neighbours, and their imaginative use of the outdoors for their leisure.¹³ Cole Wolford, a teen around 150 Mile House in the late 1930s, recalls his siblings and neighbours “dug out a big hole, used water from irrigation ditches, and there was a swimming pool.” Their geographic boundaries were set by time-distance from home. Even as a ten-year old, Cole said, it was not “distance” from home that mattered, but how far one could walk or ride a horse and yet be home “at a certain time.” Dusty Shaw recalled this sort of context around Soda Creek:

We made our own games, there was none of the real fancy stuff like they got nowadays, crying the blues about nothing to do. We always had something to do. I've seen us in the winter, we'd go out after supper and never come in till nine o'clock. We'd be sleigh riding all that time, about a dozen kids.

¹³For a good sample of results of vivid imaginations, few toys, and a Cariboo wilderness setting, see Todd and Eldon Lee, *From California to North 52: Cariboo Experiences* (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994), esp. 55-59.

Children and parents accepted the inherent dangers in those unsupervised out-of-door leisure activities. Evelyn Macleod recalled the horror she felt as she dragged her older brother out of icy water near their home after he issued the challenge, "I'll race you to that black spot on the lake." As teens they continued to make use of the out-of-doors apparently with little regard for the inconvenience of inhospitable climate. Emily Potter recalled that out in the country,

We thought nothing of taking a team of horses and a sleigh and going to somebody's place to play military whist, or to go into the community hall and play badminton, or whatever. We went all over . . . you didn't even think about the temperature. If the tractor wouldn't go, the horses would still go. It was an outing and everybody went, just bundled up really warm. They don't do that anymore. And when television came in, why should we go out? It was too cold for us.

In rural communities teens participated in simple community events which became not only the social climax of a season, a year, but were etched as milestones and reference points in personal life histories.¹⁴ At Soda Creek, for example, the 24th of May heralded the annual picnic and "big ball game" for families in a large open field. An open three-ton truck would gather family members from Soda Creek, and nearby McCalister, Marguerite, Alexandria, and Kersey.¹⁵ In Williams Lake, the annual Cattle Sale and Klondyke Night held in the fall and the famous Stampede usually held on the July long-weekend drew Aboriginal and White families of the far-flung Cariboo-Chilcotin into the village. These events were unrivalled highlights of a year for many youth of both genders. Although boys rather than girls were more likely to take part in the rodeo events, Stampede generally meant a chance for all youth to socialize with friends across the region. It was a "fairly important" time to Harriet Wilson who milled with

¹⁴On this point, see Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up*, esp. 175-8.

¹⁵Such trucks were also employed by "the Mission" at the end of summer vacations to "round up" Aboriginal children.

other ranch teens and their horses around the corrals. For Evelyn Macleod and her brother, Stampede meant temporary respite from the chicken slaughter: "We always managed to wiggle to go for even half a day. We wiggled it in somehow, especially the parade."

A few subjects discussed the "harmless" pranks they felt typified their generation and distinguished it from their own children's, and especially grandchildren's, more destructive leisure habits. In the late 1940s, Dusty Shaw and his friends tipped over Mrs. _____'s outhouse. Sid Marquette and his "gang" masterminded more elaborate plots. For several years in the mid-1950s, a group of a dozen or more accomplices ranging from the pre-teen to late teens, and including "a few girls," devised Hallowe'en projects which sometimes engaged the attention of the local constabulary. Sid likened their efforts to those made infamous by Canadian engineering students. The group moved outhouses. One year a section of the village's wooden sidewalks disappeared and showed up days later neatly stacked in a local millyard. Another year, the group spent their free time in the days before Hallowe'en constructing a wooden ramp. On the fateful night, ropes were thrown over a local building and attached to a car on the other side. Within minutes, the cabal of youth had attached the ramp to the building, pulled and pushed the car atop its roof, and disappeared along with their implements. It took several days for community adults to remove the car. The police never found the perpetrators. Such pranks involved ingenuity and collaboration and, purportedly, never involved modern day vandalism including "painting."

As in hundreds of Canadian small towns, a core of adults including teachers, the Parent-Teacher Association (mostly mothers), and civic leaders ruminated over "idle hands" and the

inescapable Canadian fact of long winter nights.¹⁶ These adults considered it their moral obligation to provide for and direct young people's leisure time convinced busy youth didn't have time to become juvenile delinquents or "JDs."¹⁷ Lamenting a shortage of sponsored activities in Williams Lake in the mid-1940s, some adults mobilized in order to provide activities for teens. Altruism aside, however, members were also motivated to seek membership in the P-TA as it offered "most of us women with children" an opportunity "to get out of the house." In 1953, the local P-TA once struck a three-woman committee to persuade Sid Western, proprietor of the Oliver Theatre, to offer Saturday matinees for children and youth into the village. When haranguing failed to persuade Western, the three mothers began to bring National Film Board films for young people into the community and screen these themselves until finally, as Lily Deschene put it, "Sid capitulated."¹⁸

The number of activities organized by adults in Williams Lake around the end of the Second World War is noteworthy. In 1944, for instance, Bill Sharpe, a village constable, followed the lead of colleagues in Quesnel and Ashcroft and formed a Boxing Club with seven teens and began to take the boys into interior boxing matches.¹⁹ That year the local Athletic

¹⁶See Rex A. Lucas, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown: Life in Canadian Communities of Single Industry (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 20

¹⁷The number of war-time cases of juvenile delinquency in Canada peaked in 1942, declined through the 1940s, and thereafter held steadily or rose slowly through the mid-1950s. Factors credited for the declining "JD" after 1942 included: communities providing more "wholesome occupations" for youth during after-school hours; more "police and youth" programs; and after 1945, the "strengthening" of "family life" as fathers returned from overseas service and mothers from factories. Conversely, "serious and rapid" increases in juvenile offences between 1939 and 1942 were attributable to enlistment of fathers and increased "responsibilities" upon mothers resulting in "broken homes." Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the ratio of boy to girl offenders remained fairly consistent at roughly 9:1. Calculated from Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Canada Yearbook, 1948-49, 287-295; F.H. Leacy, ed., Canada Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1983), Series Z 249-60.

¹⁸Interview with Lil Deschene, November 1995. This piece of business occupied several monthly meetings of the P-TA: Minute Books, 14 September; 20 October 1953; 17 November 1953. Films by the National Film Board had already been screened in the village. Tribune, 19 July 1945, 1.

¹⁹Tribune, 30 April 1944, 1; 15 June 1944, 1.

Association, recognizing skating as one of the “mainstays of youth in the town” and hockey as “a sport enjoyed by all people in Williams Lake,” led the campaign for a covered arena.²⁰ Other activities organized with youth in mind included the village’s first mother-daughter and father-son “lads and dads” banquets (each involving dozens of parents).²¹ The P-TA sponsored a Glee Club for young people.²² The Junior Red Cross initiated a fund-raising rummage sale featuring “a senior tea served by the senior girls” from the high school.²³ The Canadian Forestry Association founded a local Junior Forest Wardens for training of boys in fire prevention, first aid, and wood-craft.²⁴ Recreation Leaders courses were delivered by the Recreational and Physical Education branch of the Department of Education in Williams Lake “as in pre-war days.”²⁵ A Youth Centre was organized by police sergeant McClandon, and Reverends Crysdale and McCormick.²⁶ Members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade who could not bear “having youngsters and others risk skating on the lake” set up a “temporary rink.”²⁷ With the assistance of a “party of young people from the coast,” volunteer youth and adults constructed a non-denominational Youth Camp at Lac la Hache.²⁸

Over the course of the decade after the war, some adults emerged as youth leaders or as

²⁰Tribune, 22 December 1944, 1.

²¹Tribune, 15 March 1945, 1.

²²Tribune, 19 April 1945, 1; 21 June, 1.

²³Tribune, 3 May 1945, 1.

²⁴Tribune, 7 June 1945, 1.

²⁵Tribune, 19 July 1945, 1.

²⁶Tribune, 6 September 1945, 1.

²⁷Tribune, 6 December 1945, 1.

²⁸Tribune, 20 June 1946, 1.

founding members of youth organizations, especially when the ideas they promoted met the practical needs and interests of the community including parents as well as the young people they were meant to serve. Following the deaths of youngsters in local lakes, for instance, Lily Deschene helped initiate an Aquatic Society devoted to the delivery of water safety programs. The Dennys, Delaneys and Mrs. C. Huston (president of the Skating Club and for many years, the “guiding light” behind the Winter Carnival steering committees made up of female volunteers), helped make figureskating the pre-eminent female sport in the village.²⁹

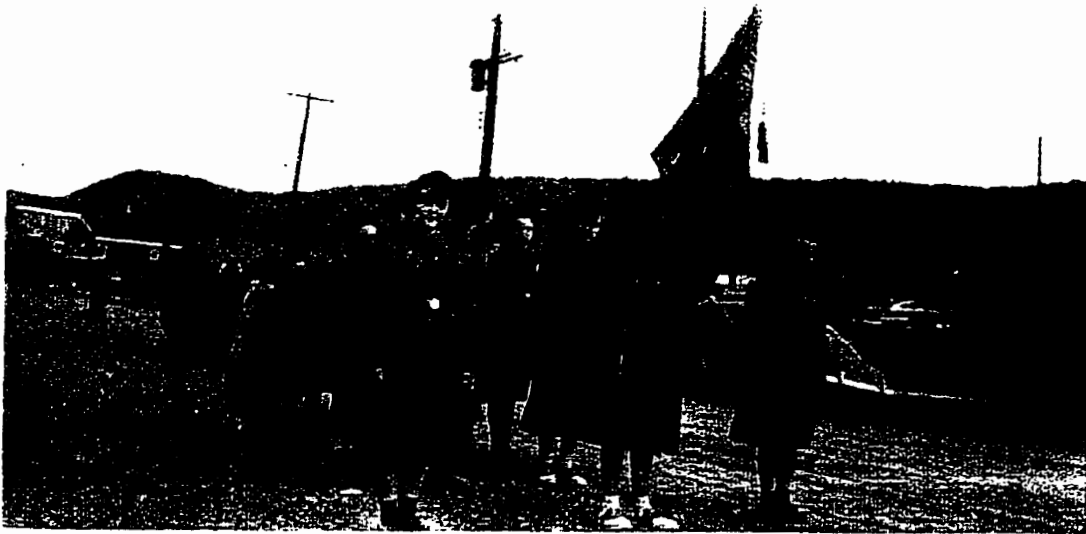


Ill. 28. “Williams Lake 4-H Club at St. Joseph’s Mission, c. 1951.” Photo 965E. Courtesy of Sisters of Child Jesus Archives, North Vancouver.

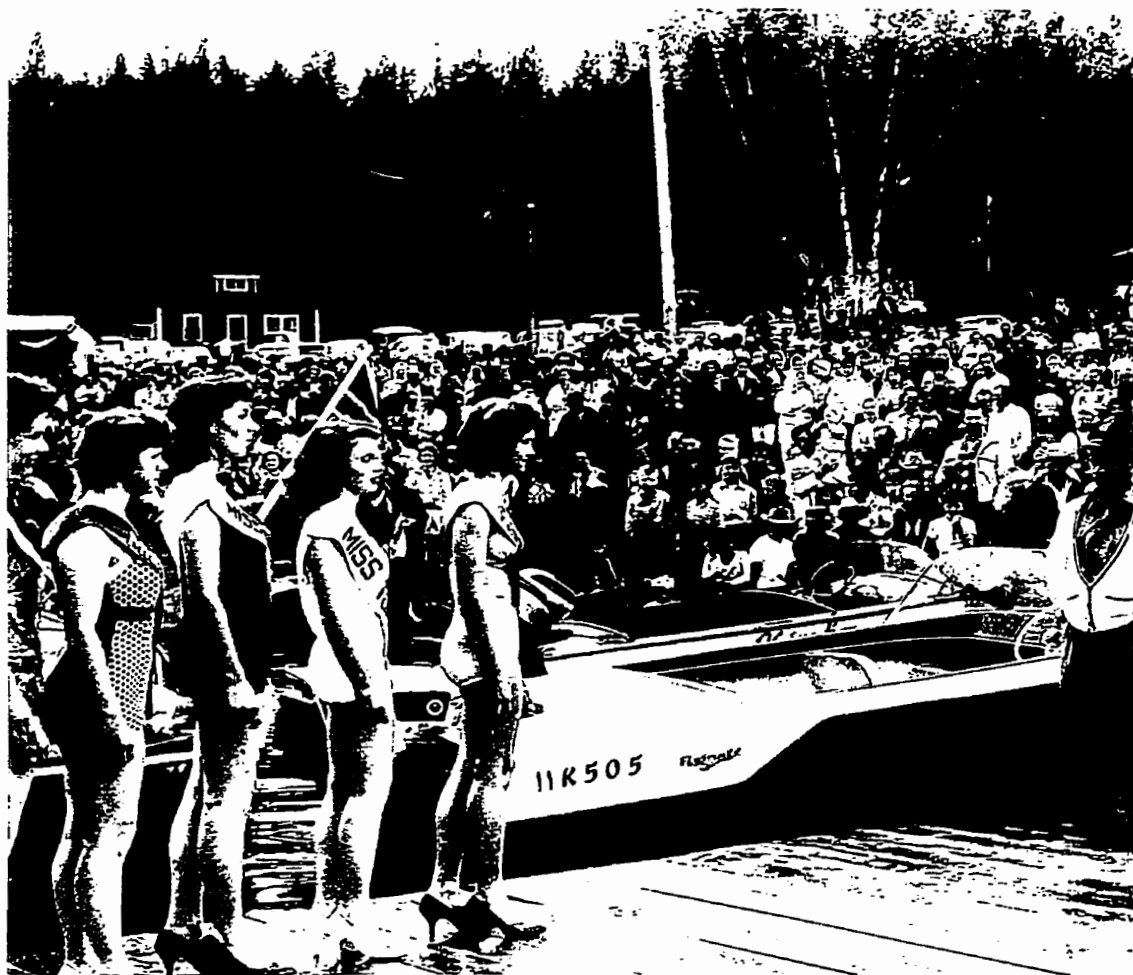
²⁹Tribune, 20 January 1960, 5.



III. 29. Scout Camp at Rose Lake, July 1954. Courtesy of Lil Deschene.



III. 30. "1st Williams Lake Girl Guide Company, Remembrance Day Parade." c. 1954.
Courtesy of Lil Deschene.



III. 31. "Queen of the Lake" Contest. Aquatic Day (Stampede Weekend), South Lakeside, 2 July 1959. Courtesy of Lil Deschene



III. 32. Williams Lake Rink. Behind BC Tel, c. late 1940s. Courtesy of Lil Deschene.

Intertwined in the narratives of leisure and sport in the age before television are snippets of adults who worked diligently promoting and running various youth programs in Williams Lake in order to complement the school's extra-curricular programs. To a degree, an adult's informal role as "promoter" constituted civic leadership. Katie Jean Kurtz had "always poked around in the backyard" in her native Vancouver seldom taking advantage of the urban array of adult-organized youth activities. In the more intimate Williams Lake setting, however, she found such activities much more accessible and personal. She participated in the "young person's group" sponsored by Sid Pigeon: "I really admired him because he didn't seem to be doing it for any particular reason except that he'd made it possible for this group to meet. . . . He was a really nice community leader." Other subjects referred to various "leaders" in a similar manner:

Tony Woodland . . . he was a promotor of anything and he promoted badminton like you wouldn't believe. His boy, Ralph, was a real good badminton player and he was in the fire department. And so he got the community band going through the fire department. He got a gymnastics team going. He was just a real promotor. It was good for the town.

Joe Phillipson. He was the principal of the high school. He was a dedicated guy. He went out and sold bonds and sold debentures, travelled around the country and worked his ass off to get that thing [War Memorial Arena] going -- him and Claude Huston worked really hard.

I recall the police sergeant . . . and he was quite helpful in regattas and Water Sports Days and they had queens and princesses . . . and of course, boat racing, and I took part in that.

Two adult-organized gendered sports animated much of village life in the winter.

Figureskating not only became the pre-eminent female winter sport in the community, but on one or two weekends of the year, even eclipsed hockey and drew greater crowds. Although the "whole town" supported the Ice Carnivals of the mid-1950s, it was hockey that usually

dominated the social scene and stands as a defining cultural product of the village at least into the age of television.³⁰ Hockey received extensive coverage in the local press over the course of a winter. The volume of hockey narratives (of both men and women) certainly outweighed all references to other leisure time activities except those centred upon alcohol consumption. Hockey (playing or watching) touched many community lives, regardless of age, sex, or “race” and ethnicity. Billy Allen illustrated the local sentiment towards the game in the 1940s and 1950s:

Oh, yeah, when you had a hockey game here on a Wednesday night, or a Saturday night, or Sunday afternoon, the whole town went, because there was nothing else to do. There was no T.V. to watch . . . what else are you going to do unless you can sit around and play cards or something. Every guy and his wife went and the kids. Everybody went to the hockey game.

Watching males play hockey was a significant passive pastime activity for girls when they were not honing culinary and service skills in the arena concession:

We took in a lot of the hockey games . . . My dad played on the first one [Stampeders] they had here. . . . And everybody was always keen to go to the hockey games and root for your home team. And you played against Quesnel. And the Alkali Indians came in – they had a really good team which I think was quite famous at one time – and Prince George used to come down, and Vanderhoof . . . it was quite a lot of entertainment – like Sunday afternoon, Saturday night, you could go and do that.

In the late 1940s the local paper reported that “the best junior hockey team in the north was ruined by taking players off for basketball” and choosing between school basketball or community hockey had become a “big problem for youth of the town.”³¹ Male subjects didn’t consider this a difficult choice. Typically, in a village where, by Billy Allen’s estimate, roughly half the males his age played Canada’s national sport, Billy’s fondest memories are those of

³⁰For comparison, see Trent Frayne, “Flin-Flon, The Town Where Everybody Plays,” *Maclean’s* 4 January 1958.

³¹*Tribune*, 29 December, 1949, 1.

playing hockey throughout and after his teens. Dusty Shaw (who like Andrew Rainier had quit school at fifteen and spent a winter working and playing hockey), recalls hockey as a hard, physical game. Dusty extolled its simplicity and ruggedness: "They gave us the sweater and the socks. That's all they gave us,"

. . . And it was hitting hockey. Even the little guys body-checked then, I mean there was none of this "you can't do this", "you can't do that." All I had on my head was a hat . . . some of the guys could afford knee pads, shin pads . . . I used catalogues. That was a big thing – hockey sticks, you had to buy one that didn't break. I used to go to Tony Borkowski to get my hockey sticks. I went to him because if I didn't have any money, he let me have it until I got some money to pay him, do some jobs after school until I got some money.

Hockey dreams germinated in young boys minds while watching older males, perhaps a brother or father play hockey. Boys fantasized about making the NHL, an illusion that almost materialized for a few males such as Rusty Patenaude and John Van Horlick. Billy Allen grew up immersed in the masculine game of hockey, grew up so close to the outdoor rink, he would strap on his skates in his house and "slide" down to the rink. He played hockey throughout his teens, played Junior Hockey, married at nineteen and joined the Williams Lake Stampeders. In his early teens, school, work, and hockey configured most of his winter hours; after marriage and the birth of his first child, it was work, family, and hockey. One can quickly surmise how hectic hockey schedules influenced family relationships at this time:

I was doing hockey. That was the going thing. We used to practice a couple, or three nights a week, and then we played three times a week and that kept you out of trouble . . . I was working six days a week. And you go to work everyday at 7:30 in the morning till 5:30, 6 o'clock at night, six days a week, and then practice 3 nights a week, play hockey 3 nights a week. You ain't got much time for anything else . . . except when it comes to summertime, and you maybe play ball all summer.

To a degree, hockey permeated "race" and ethnic lines. Subjects constructed the Aboriginal hockey team at St. Joseph's Residential School as if it was any good private school

team. The team's prowess was praised and the segregated nature of their school unquestioned: "The Mission had two or three teams out there with all the kids, we used to play against them. They used to have some good hockey teams [coached by] . . . priests and brothers." There were a few vicious games between the Mission and town teams. Sid Marquette recalled one game when after issuing several warnings to the town team to refrain from aggressive hitting, a brother from the Mission halted the game, pulled his team from the ice and went home.

Mixed-race subjects from the village played in the town's Minor Hockey teams. So did David Tomiyasi. David played hockey in the mid-1950s with full uniform and proper hockey equipment, unlike teens five years earlier. Hockey was a critical factor in David's socialization. It demanded commitment to several practices and games a week and soon evolved to become not only his "major winter recreation," but "an opportunity to have activity with a lot of other kids . . . the reason I had contact with a lot of other kids [my emphasis]." It also facilitated his travel outside the village.

Gender helped determine youths' leisure time and leisure spaces. Parents granted teenaged boys more control over the spatial as well as the temporal range of their activities than they did girls. Wilme Ruth Baxter, for example, grew up with a sunset curfew ("home before dark") which made for long winter evenings at home when "it was dark at four." Girls, she said, "didn't go out after dark unless you were going with somebody or you had a special reason to be out there . . . the stores were closed after five. You just didn't go out and hang around in the streets like they do now." Emily Potter and her sister had both spent a summer working away from relatives at a country lodge in late 1940s, but in Williams Lake their parents seldom permitted them to walk unescorted into the village. Fifteen year old Katie Jean Kurtz was allowed to roam the hillsides above the village on her own, and take day-long hikes

over to Sentinel Point, sometimes with a girlfriend, but other than walking a few hundred metres to the skating rink she too was restricted from walking around the village after dark. This limited her friendship with a female boarding on the other side of the village at Rosary Hall, the “convent.”

Males enjoyed considerably more spatial and temporal freedom in their social life. They were comparatively much more mobile in their early- to mid-teens. Axel Vickers, for example, was fourteen when he fell into a regular routine of riding out to the Chilcotin highway from his homestead and leaving his horse with a family in order to “hitch a ride into town.” After age sixteen, boys were more likely than girls to take control of a vehicle, a pattern likely to endure at least until marriage when wives began to make as much if not more use of the family vehicle.³² In turn, ranch girls were more likely to have a driver’s license and access to a vehicle than their female counterparts in Williams Lake. Harriett Wilson, for instance, obtained a driver’s licence at sixteen and was given a car by a relative, but emphasized most girls “never thought [emphasis in original]” of owning a car “at that time.” Generally, by age seventeen or eighteen, girls accompanied boys to a country dance. In other words, girls may have travelled in “mixed” groups out of town, but seldom ventured out without a male in attendance. Emily Potter who obtained a driver’s licence at age twenty-four (several years after the birth of her first child) recalled: “Very rarely girls ever went anywhere together. There was always a fellow driving.”

³² Tribune, 6 January 1955, 2.



III. 34. Youth at Riske Creek in the Chilcotin. Early 1940s.

By their late teens, males were relatively autonomous participants in what was at times a monosocial or homosocial culture.³³ Until he began to date as a nineteen year old, Billy Allen and the handful of eighteen and nineteen year old males in the village were “together most of the time.” Spatially, their social life extended far beyond the village. The males fell into a weekly ritual. On any given Friday or Saturday night, there was a local dance somewhere in the country and weekend after weekend, these boys hopped into a car or pickup truck, often inebriated, and negotiated dusty gravel or ice-covered roads in order to take in one of those dances. Thus, “hometown” boys like Billy Allen raised by “strict” parents whom he emphasized had both believed in, and doled out a “fair amount of discipline,” roamed far

³³On gendered leisure after the Second World War, see Roberts, *Youth and Leisure*, Chapter 4, esp. p. 60; also, Adele Perry, “Bachelors in the Backwoods: White Men and Homosocial Culture in Up-Country British Columbia, 1858 - 1871,” in R.W. Sandwell, ed., *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

outside the parental gaze on weekend nights in the summers of the late 1940s:

We'd say to him [father], "Well, how about if we go to the dance tonight at the 150 [Mile House]?" And he'd say, "Sure but no drinking" [laughter]. We'd take a picnic lunch, and get someone to buy us some beer and go and sit in the bush somewhere and drink a few beers, wait until eight or nine o'clock when the dances start, go to the dance and come home at 2 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the morning or not come home at all that night. Sleep under the truck. . . . We went to Soda Creek, Miocene, Rose Lake, Lac la Hache . . .

Some Fridays after work, the gang negotiated the narrow, winding and generally treacherous Fraser Canyon in order to get away to Vancouver for the weekend:

It took all night to get to Vancouver on them old roads in them days. Why we did to this day I don't know, but it was something to do. We had nothing to do here. Eighteen, nineteen, throw in a couple of cases of beer . . .³⁴

A shift toward more ubiquitous, heavier, and usually clandestine drinking among youth in this area, predominantly males, seems to have begun around the end of the Second World War.³⁵ Before and during the war, small communities appeared more vigorous in their condemnation of alcohol consumption among youth. Cole Welford, aged fifteen in 1939 recalled comparatively little drinking among teens during the Second World War. "It wasn't important" to drink heavily, Cole said, "and most of us didn't." Furthermore, adolescent drinking at community dances was usually censured by the community:

We didn't drink that much . . . if you went to a dance and got drunk, nobody'd dance with you anyway. There was always alcohol around, but it wasn't – parents, older

³⁴Images of the Fraser Canyon before major construction in the 1950s is captured on film footage. See British Columbia, Department of Highways, The Fraser Canyon [n.d].

³⁵During the Second World War Canadian men learned in British pubs that drink could be sociable and did not necessarily invoke "a deal with the devil." Robert Campbell, Demon Rum or Easy Money: Government Control of Liquor in British Columbia from Prohibition to Privatization (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991). Changing public attitudes and relaxed liquor laws in the 1950s also resulted in rising alcoholism among both men and women. The tragedy of rising post-war alcoholism among parents, including mothers, of the baby-boomers is discussed in Robert Collins, You Had to Be There Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997), 147-51. By 1970, British Columbia had the largest proportion of drinkers of the provinces and territories, and the third highest (behind Yukon and the Northwest Territories) per capita consumption of alcohol of the provinces and territories. Working Group on Alcohol Statistics, Alcohol in Canada, A National Perspective (Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada, 1984), 17, 27.

people, everybody was at this thing – and they would tell you to go home.

Ray Winters reported this ethos prevailed at the dances at the Horsefly community hall around 1945: alcohol was available and passed around, but it was “outside” and kept among “the men.”

By the mid-1950s, however, the all-night drinking phenomenon as described by Billy Allen and Dusty Shaw had generalized across male youth culture in and around Williams Lake. Males’ narratives are so consistent in describing excessive consumption that they are likely more than hyperbole. During the annual Williams Lake Stampede, Dusty Shaw and his friends enjoyed the rodeo, and clearly, the associated events: “We’d go to Elks Hall and then close out and go down to Squaw Hall, and go till daylight.” Among country dances, the “wildest” took place at Riske Creek where there were “shenanigans going on out in the car” and underage drinking outside “every dance.” Public policy regarding alcohol consumption eased in the 1950s, but subjects attributed change in drinking habits to economic and the accompanying demographic changes in the area. “People in the area changed,” said Cole Wolford, “as different sawmills came in,” attracting men accustomed to drinking in isolated logging camps “where that sort of thing was going on.”³⁶

The ritual of alcohol consumption, like the game of hockey, crossed males’ cultural boundaries and sometimes cemented cross-cultural relationships. In his late teens, David Tomiyasi befriended a group of males who bunked together in one of his family’s cabins, worked in the mills and seemed to live only for the country dances every weekend. Ed

³⁶In the early 1950s the number of cases in Williams Lake of supplying liquor to an “interdicted person” (6 resulting in gaol and 1 in a fine) was among the highest in the province, considering its population; for the purposes of comparison: Duncan, Kamloops, Nelson, and Prince Rupert each record only a single case. A similar trend is evident in cases of “drunkenness in a public place”: Williams Lake, 79; Chilliwack, 39; Campbell River, 53; Vernon, 48; North Vancouver, 50. Sessional Papers of British Columbia, 1952, M 20-24.

managed to save a "fair amount" of money for post-secondary schooling, but for a few years he too was immersed in a male culture of alcohol. This was in the mid-1950s, a period he described as "my rowdy days" with the "wild bunch," a group "growing up real quick in those days":

We were all working, especially during the summer, we just all had full-time jobs, making good money. . . . But my friends were a party bunch – ‘course not every day, but a least a couple of times during the week and especially on weekends. Friday or Saturday night, we'd head on out to Soda Creek, and the trunk full of booze and we'd be opening up the bottle, throw the cork away and just keeps [*sic*] on going around until it was empty. And we'd throw that one away. Grab another one and it keeps on going . . . oh yeah, we'd always drive. Oh, we shouldn't even be on the road!

Although David and his crowd were well under the "legal age," they had easy access to copious volumes of alcohol as one of his friends was over age twenty-one:

We had no trouble getting as much booze as we ever wanted to. Oh yeah, oh yeah. Oh, I remember Stampede time, that would be a major event for us and if it was over a long weekend, we'd have to really get lots. . . . I remember one weekend we got twenty-six cases of beer and that would last us the whole weekend. By the next night they were all gone and we still had a couple of nights to go [*emphasis in original*].

While no non-Aboriginal subject in this generation used the term "alcoholism," labelled themselves as ever having been alcoholics, or discussed the impact of life with an alcoholic parent, one Aboriginal subject actually initiated a sustained narrative on the general subject.³⁷ Norman Flit delved into the alcoholism which shattered Aboriginal families including his own. Norman claimed that the fathomless impact of residential school upon youth and their families aside, the passing of more egalitarian liquor laws had profound negative consequences on the lives of Aboriginal young people and their families. Before 1951, Aboriginal peoples with personal or family ties in the village procured the alcohol illegally and in limited quantities.

³⁷Unlike Norman, several non-Aboriginal subjects barely hinted of alcoholism in the family, but did not elaborate. Nor were they asked to. Just a brief mention of the "problem" at home was enough to bring tears to one woman.

As Wesley Smith, a “mixed-race” “town” subject, recalled, “The boys used to come in from Riske Creek. Some of them’d ride all the way in to get their booze and just rode it up behind their horse and away they’d go. My brother used to buy it for them – you weren’t allowed to do that.” In 1951, legal changes as a result of the post-war Aboriginal lobby allowed Aboriginal peoples limited access to drinking establishments where they could purchase and consume liquor on the premises.³⁸ Not only were these peoples unaccustomed to moderating such easy access to alcohol, Norman pointed out, but the fact that alcohol could be legally consumed only in drinking establishments meant that many, including himself, became alcoholics simply because they “had to drink it all right now, right then and there.”³⁹ Non-Aboriginal families living or working alongside Aboriginal peoples witnessed the transformation in their lives. “Liquor,” Rita Dunsmuir opined, “became a disaster” for Aboriginal families including youth who laboured on their ranch. Suddenly, those who had ranches and cattle were “not haying any more; they’re not feeding the cattle”:

We saw it as kids because all of a sudden all these ranches and all these people that were independent -- and the wives used to come and work for mom in the kitchen -- well you'd hear it from them because all of a sudden their husbands and sons are all drunk. They're no good. They won't work anymore. They don't go to school. So I saw . . . because we lived with it, only because we were intermingled with them. And it was very sad. Very sad.

Norman Flit concluded liquor legislation was a watershed event in his family and his own adolescence. He witnessed an uncle lose his livelihood to alcohol. The man was forced to sell his ranch and livestock, even selling off the last calf -- a calf he had promised to his

³⁸Aboriginal adults were granted limited access to establishments selling liquor for consumption on premises in 1951. However, full drinking rights to buy and possess alcohol outside reserve boundaries were not granted until 1962. For a concise and useful overview of legal changes and the debate over this issue, see Megan Schlase, “Liquor and the Indian Post WWII,” in *B.C Historical News* (Spring 1996): 26-29.

³⁹Other sources substantiate this explanation for the rise of native alcoholics in the 1950s over any “natural predisposition” toward alcohol. See Schlase, *Liquor and the Indian*, 27.

teenage nephew. The day of that loss remains a painful memory for this subject:

That was the last calf that he sold. I remember him coming home. He was drunk and he had five dollars. He said, "That's all I got left boy. That's from your cow . . . [tears]." He was crying and I never saw him crying.

Norman feared his father who became an alcoholic. At age thirteen, he witnessed his father beating up his mother:

My dad licked my mom . . . he was drinking . . . and I saw my dad licking my mom and I thought he was going to kill her and I took off . . . I can remember saying how I was going to kill my dad for beating up my mom.

At such times, Norman sought refuge with his "granny," a keel in his turbulent life.

As a result of counselling for his own alcoholism, Norman has reflected deeply upon "three" unfortunate antecedents of his own destructive affair with alcohol. One senses these are the "scripts" to which psychologists or historians refer, stories frequently dwelt upon or retold.⁴⁰ Norman recalled his first few drinks at age eight. The "second time," he was age twelve and drinking from a large "king-size" bottle of vanilla extract ("I remember waking up and I had one fuck of a headache"). The "third," "the first day they opened the bar" to Aboriginal peoples, is metaphoric and laced with, what is for Norman, an uncharacteristic bitterness at the dominant society:

I was drinking with my mother and dad. We got kicked out of the Ranch. My dad lost five dollars because he didn't have any change. He gave them five dollars. It was only ten cents for a glass of beer, so we lost all that five dollar bill when they kicked us out. That's what they did with us.⁴¹

⁴⁰For example, David Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988); Sutherland, *Growing Up*, esp. 9-13.

⁴¹Significant portions of Norman's narratives are relatively sympathetic toward White society of the past. This may be due to so-called "interviewer effects" although I had the sense Norman constructed racism as a phenomenon then beyond White society's control. This context is captured by Tim Stanley when he suggests racist ideology textured life to the extent it was "part of the air that people breathed." See his "White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study," in Barman, *et. al.*, *Children, Teachers & Schools*.

Although women gained the right to drink alcohol publicly, under certain conditions, decades before Aboriginal peoples, gendered drinking laws, such as those aimed at removing “Eve” (and thus “Gonnie” and “Syph”) from the beer parlour, reflected moralistic and paternalistic public attitudes toward women which endured at least until the 1950s.⁴² In any case, it remained relatively unacceptable practice for young women in any setting to drink as heavily as young men. Rita Dunsmuir recalled that at the after-graduation party of 1958 held at someone's ranch, “the boys got drunk” while some of the girls had “a beer.” Rita drank soft drinks. Rita married months after her grade twelve graduation: “I got married before I had a taste of alcohol.”

The Second Generation

Whether individuals grew up in rural areas or in the tiny village nestled amidst undeveloped and unfenced space, this generation participated in many of the informal outdoor activities enjoyed by individuals in the 1940s and 1950s. Understandably, Pete Anderson and other youth growing up outside Williams Lake spent most of their leisure time in an outdoor environment. Television at the home ranch was “nonexistent,” Pete claimed, “You didn’t do anything indoors.” It is the extent to which “town” subjects also accessed the natural environment in their leisure time that is noteworthy. Teens’ recreational use of the hinterlands in this area probably reflects a common practice in Canadian small towns in the last third of the twentieth century, but it is a phenomenon overlooked both by Rex A. Lucas in his examination of social life in Canadian single resource communities in the mid-1960s, and

⁴²Separate entrances for men and “Ladies and Escorts” did not begin to disappear until 1963. See Robert A. Campbell, “Ladies and Escorts: Gender Segregation and Public Policy in British Columbia Beer Parlours, 1925-1945,” *BC Studies*, 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 119-138.

Reginald W. Bibby and Donald C. Posterski in their 1984 Project Teen Canada study.⁴³

Like the older generation, many Laketown subjects had grown up amusing themselves out-of-doors and with little money and few purchased toys. Pete Anderson owned a few Tonka-type rigs; William Sangha “a couple of trucks.” William constructed a model of a sawmill where his father worked, and pushed “little trucks hauling logs” to the miniature “beehive burners”: “I could see the mill from my home.” “Ninety percent of the time it was guys playing with the guys,” Cal Reid recalled, “mostly outside.” Myles Osborne’s rink took up the entire backyard and became the “focal point” for most males in the immediate neighbourhood. An elaborate boarded rink, it was shovelled off and flooded daily. Warm or hot water was preferable to cold water when resurfacing a rink. Sometimes they depleted their domestic hot water supply at which point “Mom used to hit us.” Unless there was work to be done, Sandy Butchart was often ejected from the house: “Mom was slamming the doors and saying, ‘Get out!’ In those days you didn’t hang around the house. It was, ‘Get outside and come back when it’s time to eat!’” She and her siblings roamed the neighbourhood but were careful to remain within earshot of “dad’s whistle.”

Until they succumbed to car culture in their mid-teens, most subjects walked, rode bicycles everywhere, and a few even rode horses outside the village. Sandy Butchart walked several kilometres into town:

We always walked. You walked to the show. That’s all we ever did was walk, walk, walk. You remember the story: “You[’re] lucky enough to go to a show, so don’t expect me to give you a goddam ride!”

Bob Riley “used to ride bike everywhere where[as] kids nowadays don’t do that as much.”

⁴³Lucas, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown, especially 192-220. The Project Teen Canada study is based on questionnaires distributed in 1984 to 3,600 youths aged 15-19, most of these in 150 Canadian secondary schools. Reginald W. Bibby and Donald C. Posterski, The Emerging Generation: an inside look at Canada’s teenagers (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1985).

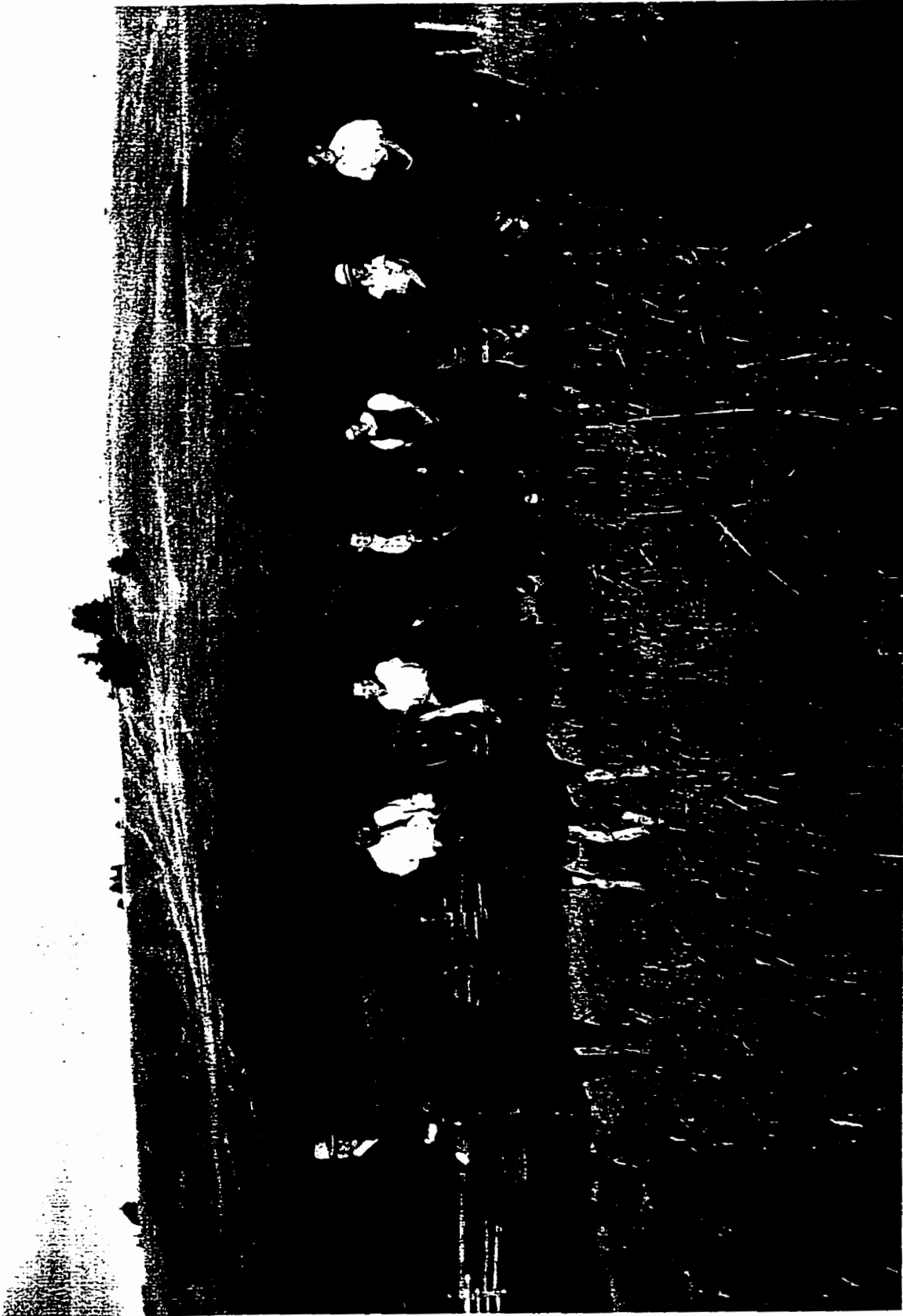
Harold Underwood looked forward to the solitude of horseback rides “right after school up to Fox Mountain” (today a subdivision) where there was nothing “but a couple of ranches.”

Individual as well as family-centred recreation was often set in the natural environment outside the Laketown. As in the 1940s and 1950s, boys tramped the Williams Lake River valley. Girls and boys skated on the frozen lake. Some skied with families at Little Squaw Valley just north of town. Many enjoyed unbroken periods of access to the outdoors at the family cabin, or a friends’ ranch. They fished and hunted. Cal Reid was virtually “raised at _____ Lake every summer — fishing every day.” Bob Riley was an “avid hunter at fifteen, sixteen.” Howard who had been shooting a .22 calibre rifle from a very young age, received a shotgun at age fourteen. Girls growing up on rural properties also learned to handle firearms. Lynn Blackwood used a .22 calibre rifle in her pre-teens. Raylene Erickson and her sisters all handled guns: “We were outside kids, not inside kids. . . . My sisters still hunt. I hunt now too. I love hunting. I get a deer, a moose every year.”

Unsupervised access to the natural landscape began in childhood and continued through the pre-teen years. Bob Riley spoke for more than one subject: “We were brought up to take care of ourselves.” Rural boys and girls under age ten saddled and rode horses. At age ten Harold Underwood rode his horses unchecked for hours. At age eleven, Logan Lassiter faced “few” parental constraints upon his geographic boundaries, could ride his horse “all day, but not into town” which was over twenty kilometres away. Even six year old “town” boy Cal Reid learned to saddle a horse. This was at a close friend’s ranch: one boy lowered the saddle by means of a pulley in the rafter, another would “kick the horse in the belly,” and a third cinched up the saddle. The young Erickson sisters who roamed their property with unbridled freedom learned the importance of this last step through experience. When a loose saddle



III. 34. "Nimpo Lake -- a fine holiday area in the Chilcotin." Source: Beautiful British Columbia (Summer 1970), 30-1.



III. 35. Young and Old Together on the Chilcotin Range. c. 1945.

slipped down her horse, Raylene's youngest sister fell off the horse, struck her head on a rock, and lay unconscious as a panic-stricken Raylene rode for help thinking her sister dead. On another occasion, the sisters started up a farm truck out in the field. Only its collision with the potato digger saved the girls from plunging over the cutbank into the Fraser River far below. The wheat bin was one of their play areas. One day, a girl "threw a switch and the grain just poured in" on her sister in the bin, and, once again, Raylene "had to run to get help."

Some outdoor activities remained dangerous into the early teen years. At Soda Creek, Joseph St. Michelle and his male friends scrambled ten metre banks of the Fraser River. He was still building tunnels with his friends in the fields around his reserve when he was in his mid-teens – until there were "cave-ins": "and then we gave that up. . . . We did that up to 1975 [age seventeen] until we began to grow up [laughter]." Cal Reid and Randy Aston scaled the bluffs near Sentinel Point just east of Williams Lake: "It was just a sheer drop." Across town, Bob Riley and his friends spent hours dangling out into the Williams Lake River Canyon on "Tarzan swings." One teen sustained a back injury that took months to heal. Bob and his friends dug elaborate "hidden" wood-braced tunnels in the sandy cliffs of the canyon walls ("We even had a chimney and fire in it"), but even these tunnels sometimes collapsed: "You were forever pulling someone out by the socks." They devised treehouses and forts in the wild spaces in the "bush" or "jungle," between Glendale and Williams Lake, even clever and clandestine means of defence: "We never walked straight to the fort. We had to backtrack, make sure no one was following us." These boys actively defended these strongholds of masculinity against other groups of males: "If somebody got a little close to the homestead, we'd send a decoy out and we'd whack them . . . body shots." They waged heartpounding war on at least one occasion with "guys from town." They used pellet guns. Bob delivered a

“couple of good wallops. Got hit myself with a pretty good one. But nobody lost an eye.”⁴⁴

Youth were, however, casualties in backcountry accidents. Snowmobilers sometimes broke through ice-covered lakes or ran into wire fences. Brenda Langford's brother narrowly averted death when his snowmobile flew off a snowbank and collided with a car. Some young people in the region were seriously or fatally injured with firearms. In a single two week period of the hunting season of 1965 alone, there were two accidents involving rifles and youth. In one case, a .22 calibre bullet lodged near the spine of a seventeen year old male who was target shooting. A week later, fifteen year old David Gallant was seeking squirrel pelts in order to “buy a Honda” when he accidentally shot and killed himself with his rifle as he passed through a fence.⁴⁵

Unlike the older generation, a few subjects admitted private or sadistic activities in the out-of-doors. Both boys and girls were implicated. At age “twelve, thirteen,” one subject and his friends met regularly after school with a sexually compliant girl: “We used to gangbang her all the time.” Cal Reid recounted his sadistic treatment of small wildlife. Cal and his friend snagged spawning trout in the shallows and sometimes sold them to frustrated and unsuspecting “American fishermen.” The boys also “dropped squawfish alive into buckets of boiling water,” and killed frogs: “Stuff straw up their ass or blow the shit out of them – easy to get firecrackers back then.” Girls were not completely immune to such behaviour. Lynn Blackford, for example, used to shoot squirrels “when I was 10 or 12” and along with cousins used to “go out and kill suckers . . . because we were brats!”

⁴⁴BB and pellet gun fights were not unusual in my hometown of Manitouwadge, but only a minority of boys in the pre-teen and early teen years engaged in them. My own recollections.

⁴⁵Tribune, 17 November 1965, 1; 24 November 1965, 1.

Like adults of the 1940s and 1950s, certain adults in Williams Lake had these sorts of incidents in mind when they set about organizing leisure activities for local youth. Older, wiser, and now a parent, Myles Osborne framed the ideology quite simply: the 1960s had been an era when “kids were more into mischief and more wrongful doing” and adults had organized activities “just to keep our minds interested,” “off the street,” and “out of trouble.” One teacher, Brian Rutherford, was active in community sports: “He would go out of his way – he would go without supper to try and get kids – try and keep kids interested in sports.” William Sangha joined Junior Forest Wardens in his preteens because Hazel Huckvale, his elementary school principal and unofficial, self-appointed guardian, “signed me up.” Promoters were sometimes newcomers to the Laketown. Bud Ladler initially came to town to play for the Stampeders but evolved into as a dedicated hockey coach and mentor. Harry Buchanan arrived in the Laketown and then organized lacrosse. Howard Underwood was one of a group of “three or four guys and thirty girls” who developed their “horsemanship” under the influence of “people moving in from Vancouver, Chilliwack.” Tom White was one of those adults. Not only was he involved in Minor Hockey, but he changed and revitalized horsemanship from its “Western” gymkhana forms to “a more sophisticated type of riding” with provincial competitions. Just how important such adults were in youths’ lives is borne out by Bob Riley. Bob played community baseball into his teens at which point it suddenly “expired.” It didn’t matter to a teen whether or not “financial problems” at the “management” level lay at the root of the problem. The sudden lack of adult leadership meant, “hardball just evaporated from this town. Quesnel had hardball, Prince George had hardball, 100 Mile even had a league. . . . We felt that someone had pulled the rug out from under our feet.”

As in the past, no single adult-organized leisure activity predominated in the Laketown

as public spectacle as did hockey. Hockey's traditional hegemony over all other sports in this town is readily apparent in an examination of winter issues of the local press in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the undisputed vitality of the Skating Club, which in 1960 boasted 150 members and sponsored captivating Carnivals (one female subject did, in fact, grow up to become a skating instructor), both female and male subjects spontaneously identified local male hockey heroes while none volunteered any names of female figureskaters.⁴⁶ Steve Teller summed up what remained a common experience for Laketown male youth: "In Williams Lake, that was it, you played hockey." In fact, nine of the thirteen male subjects played hockey during some or all of their teen years and at least four were at the time of the study actively associated with the game as players, coaches, or Minor hockey officials.

Hockey players typically started the game at a young age, usually as a result of a father's influence, and as in the past dreamed of making a career of the game. Cal Reid's parents placed him in figureskating at age three in order to prepare him for hockey; Harold Underwood started at age six; Pete Anderson at age seven. Bob Riley's father "pushed" him into the game. "This is why," Bob concluded, "hockey is still part of my life . . . my dad wanted me to play hockey. He played hockey [emphasis in original]." Hockey became serious business for some youth who excelled in the game. Two subjects were approached by Junior and university hockey scouts, but turned down offers when they learned they were solicited only for their size and strength. As one of them put it: "I wanted to be Bobby Orr. I didn't want to be the goon."

Others couldn't stick with the game. Steve Teller considers himself unusual insofar as he never played more than a few games in this hockey town "as it was a big part of our culture

⁴⁶Tribune, 6 April 1960 2; 5 October 1, 1960.

here. So many people that I know my age and grew up with, they all played hockey.” Steve soon dismissed hockey apparently “because of the goon-ness of the game. I could play the game until you elbowed or cheap-shotted me and then I’d want to beat the crap out of you . . . I didn’t do too well at aggressive sports.” Even William Sangha convinced his mother to allow him to play hockey at a time Indo-Canadian males were beginning to participate and excel in school- but not community-organized teams. Although William lasted one season and detested being benched (“I was lousy”), he became the first Indo-Canadian in the Laketown to play Minor Hockey. The context (“Hockey was a game for whites”) is portrayed by Ann Walsh in her novel, Shabash!⁴⁷

Subjects who participated in adult-organized church youth groups, sports teams and activities as Cubs and Brownies, Scouts and Girl Guides, 4-H, Junior Forest Wardens, Air Cadets, usually did so at least into the early teens. Encouraged by “our mother,” Myles Osborne went to Sunday School “almost faithfully,” took part in the teenagers’ church group and was a willing participant in its hiking, boating, picnics, dances, and fundraising activities. William Sangha was not only for a time seduced by hockey, but he succumbed for a year or so to the proselytizing of the local Baptist Church and its youth group. This occurred before the construction of a Sikh temple in Glendale. The Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus sponsored a significant contingent of Air Cadets in the Laketown. In 1965, sixty-five boys were trained by four former Air Force members.⁴⁸ At least four male subjects were members of the Cadets. One of them earned his pilot's licence through the organization.

⁴⁷Rana, a ten-year old Canadian-born Sikh boy (“I am Canadian, as Canadian as any other kid in town,”) faces considerable challenges including racism when he takes up “hockey a game for whites,” in Dinway, a fictional British Columbia milltown, Ann Walsh, once a resident of Williams Lake, drew upon local residents as well as her obvious knowledge of the Sikh community to fashion her novel. Shabash! (Victoria: Beach Holme Publishing Co., 1994).

⁴⁸Tribune, 29 September 1965, 17.

Somewhere in their mid-teens, most youth began to abandon these sorts of organized activities in order to pursue different interests. Cindy McEwan not only excelled in two high school sports but also threw herself into community sports. Typically, however, as another subject noted, “by the time you hit adolescence not too many kids are playing organized ball or organized sports, except through the school [emphasis in original].” The fact that fifteen year old Steve Teller belonged to both a church youth group and Air Cadets in the late 1960s may not have been typical, but neither was it anomalous among peers in the Laketown. Nor was it unusual that two years later this former “straight arrow kid” was spiralling into the vortex of “head” culture. Playing and listening to music, drinking and taking drugs in the company of other youth began to consume much of his leisure time. Raylene Erickson, who had enjoyed church camps at Lac la Hache every summer and who had even worked as a camp counsellor in her mid-teens evolved into a “party-hearty” girl in her senior high school years. Soon after entering high school, she was informing parents of her intent to go “camping,” only to “ditch” the camping equipment “and hitchhike into town” for the weekend. The summer she finished grade nine, she and a girlfriend hitchhiked to Vancouver where they stayed with friends for several weeks.

Residents noted a growing apathy in some organized youth activities even before this second generation entered their teens. In 1960, the Central Cariboo Music and Drama Festival reported “disappointing” participation from high school youth: only two of over 300 entries were from the high school.⁴⁹ Adults were linked to this sort of attrition. That year the existence of the Aquatic Society was threatened by a lack of volunteers despite the fact that nine swimmers had been saved from drowning between 1958 and 1960. “Everyone wants the

⁴⁹ Tribune, 23 March 1960, 7.

Aquatic Society,” claimed one of its promoters, “as long as someone else does the work.” In 1960, even hockey was portrayed as imperiled. A crisis of volunteers worried Dick Brookebank, a local hockey promoter, who lamented on a radio address that “hockey would pass from the local scene,” as “too much work was being done by too few volunteers.”⁵⁰ Two long-term area residents placed the decline in voluntarism in a larger social context. The 1960s was an era when “everybody” was “going a different way,” concluded Dusty Shaw referring to the contrasting joiner ethos of his own youth: “There’d be somebody with an interest . . . they’d get everybody involved. Somebody’d come up and say, ‘let’s start a ball team’ . . . we played all over the country. We played right to Puntzi Mountain.”⁵¹ Lil Deschene attributed the general decline to the introduction of television to the community in the early 1960s. Thereafter, neither youth – nor their sponsors – wanted to leave home: “Once television came in, no one had any time for meetings.”

Another, more plausible explanation for the falloff in organized youth leisure is that, by the mid-teen years, many subjects preferred informal associations with peers, and compared to the older generation, began to claim more space and time in which they could congregate freely without adults. Whether or not this freedom was wrested from adults, or in fact granted by parents who recalled some stirrings of teen autonomy in their own youth and committed themselves to giving their children everything they seemed to have missed (it was probably both), leisure time came to mean time free of adults’ control.⁵²

⁵⁰Tribune, 23 March 1960, 6; 12 October 1960, 4.

⁵¹Sociologist Rex A. Lucas noted small Canadian towns in the 1960s generally exhibited a tendency toward more active rather than passive recreational forms. Minetown, Milltown, Railtown.

⁵²Robert Collins, You Had to Be There (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997). Doug Owsram argues the freedom enjoyed by youth in the 1960s and early 1970s is an evolution of, not a revolution from the 1950s. See Born at the Right Time. Chapter 6. The decline in organized youth activities is illustrated by the decline of membership in Boy Scouts and

The informal forms of teenage socialization evolved unmistakably from bicycle and tractor rides, big baseball games, and having “the gang over” at someone’s house (usually in the presence of a parent and absence of alcohol) toward the popular, but not ubiquitous, mixed-gender party of youth usually socializing without adults and with alcohol and drugs. Friends and good music, usually “rock” (the country music played on the local radio, “basically, was more like trash to everybody”), may have been what Canadian teenagers enjoyed most, but for approximately half the subjects in this sample, a good supply of alcohol and drugs helped constitute a “good” weekend party.⁵³

Narratives of “good parties” are etched as milestones in this generation’s collective memory of adolescence. As a youth ritual, the party started in junior high school for many teens, but it had been modelled by adults years before that. According to one woman,

My father was an alcoholic and I had to live with that. That’s how I saw it . . . our parents partied. And they told us, of course, “You can’t get into alcohol. It’s not good for you,” “Don’t drink” -- but I mean, we saw it [emphasis in original].⁵⁴

Starting in the early to mid-teens, young people often “planned” their own small party when parents were out of the house for an evening or weekend, perhaps “curling” or socializing at their own adults-only parties. Cindy McEwan was in grade nine when “the boys brought over the booze.” With her parents out of the house, she and her girlfriends ended up drunk and nauseated: “We couldn’t make it to the toilet so we used mom’s laundry tub.”

Girl Guides in the mid- to late-1960s despite the lowering of age of membership. *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵³The first two components apparently were valued the most highly by Canadian teenagers ten years later, Bibby and Posterski, *The Emerging Generation*, 29, 32, *passim*.

⁵⁴Also see Collins, *You Had to be There*, 147-152. Lillian Breslow Rubin estimated that forty percent of the families she examined had at least one alcoholic parent, usually, but not always the father, a figure congruent with national samples controlled for class by the US Health Department. Roughly the same percentage of children were victims of desertion or divorce. *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 23, 221.

Raylene Erickson recalled trunkfuls of beer and liquor on school weekends: "Weekends, that was the thing -- get set up for the weekends!" Judging from copious bacchanalian references in her school annuals, one is tempted to conclude drunken parties constituted what was most precious and worth remembering of her five years in high school.⁵⁵ Raylene was once suspended from high school for storing the weekend stock of liquor in her locker. At her grad party, an apparently affluent young woman (her "Jim Dandy" father purchased her a luxury car) watched her car roll into the lake. Revellers hurried to rescue one of its passengers: "She had a baby in it. . . . Oh, all of us, we've been partying all weekend, right? . . . had to get the farmer's next door to bring his tractor next day to haul it out."

Partying among teens had a specific and local outdoor flavour in and around the Laketown. Typically, the "outdoor nature of things in Williams Lake" meant, as Steve Teller pointed out, that there were "a lot more things happening outdoors than indoors." Thus one mixed-gender group of teens often partied around an abandoned house on North Lakeside. Others "partied" in the woods at the "dairy fields" between Columneetza Secondary and Glendale ("that was a party hole"). Youth in general roved in groups across the "Old Golf Course" or what is now Boitanio Park adjacent to Boitanio Mall, the main shopping centre. They might have sorted out differences with "fisticuffs" in "the Pit" established by smokers along one edge of the golf course across from Williams Lake Secondary, but they also partied there. Among the most popular spaces and activities cited by subjects as a place to camp and party was Scout Island just outside the town, below the highway leading out of town.

⁵⁵This reference is typical of a dozen references to drinking in her grade 12 school annual: "One Friend to Another, _____, to the happiest drinker in the world. Even when you're passed out, you have a smile on your face. Don't drink too much, enough, but not too much." 1972 Cougar Columneetza Secondary School Yearbook.



Ill. 36. "The Gang at Deschene's – a Musical Evening, 1955." Courtesy of Lil Deschene.



Ill. 37. "Party out at the Lake." c. 1973.

Teens also socialized informally on downtown streets. Mike Edson, one of the “heads” in Williams Lake in the early 1970s, recalls a significant “street scene” materialized in the Laketown at the time. Many youth, presumably including those “adrift in the area” congregated in a two-block area along lower Oliver Street, near the site of the present-day library outside the pool hall, Lakeview Hotel, Francie’s, or the Famous Restaurant.⁵⁶ Mike’s group spent much of their leisure time “mostly hanging out on the streets,” sometimes panhandling “for kicks”: “That’s how everybody got their extra money to go and sit in the Lakeview and have a few coffees.”

The annual Stampede made comparatively less difference in the lives of this generation. Like their older counterparts, some subjects clearly looked forward to the rodeo, parade and associated events. They revelled in the excitement of large crowds, new and unusual “characters” in town and generally soaked in “regional character.”⁵⁷ One fifteen year old was a “majorette” in the Williams Lake parade: “Sticks in my mind because I dropped the baton in horse doody!” Stampede still interrupted daily family rhythms, even Lynn’s surrogate motherhood:

T: [indicates photo of Stampede].

Lynn: Oh, that was the highlight of our life, the Stampede! . . . The week before Stampede was so fascinating because the chuck wagons and the teepees that came from Alkali Lake would . . . go trucking by with all their horse and teams and then they’d setup at the top of the Stampede Grounds in their teepees and you’d go up there and it was just astronomical. It looked like these movies you see of the old squaws sitting out – I’m not being derogatory, that’s what they were called – with their little bandanas and they cooked over their fires. . . . That was the highlight of our life.

⁵⁶By 1960, links were being made between vagrancy and juvenile delinquency. According to the local probation officer, the “considerable number of young people attracted to and adrift in the area,” warranted a regional youth detention centre. Tribune, 22 June 1960, 6.

⁵⁷“Ol’ Antoine,” Chief Dan George, for example, opened the 1965 Stampede. Tribune, 30 June 1965, 1.

Like many other local residents Brenda Langford lived near the Stampede Grounds and could “just walk over and watch the Stampede” at a time when it was “small” and “so much more casual”: “Half the locals didn't pay to get in” but took over picnic baskets and sat on vehicles ringing the Stampede Grounds, or on the hillside of the natural amphitheatre.

Other teens had different motives for looking forward to the Stampede weekend. While first generation males had celebrated Stampedes with alcohol consumption in the 1950s (Billy Allen and his friends rooted for beer in unlocked pickup trucks in the 1940s), Stampede in the late 1960s and early 1970s had become a major excuse for many Laketown youth of both genders to “party” with unusual vigour. In their mid- to late-teens some “barhopped,” and joined long cues at the Chilli, Ranch, Lakeview, the Moccasin or the Boot pubs: “That was a big thing at Stampede.” If at age sixteen, one Aboriginal subject, Joseph St. Michelle, became a regular year-round patron at the Lakeview beer parlour along with his older brothers, underage drinking was even more likely to be overlooked in the mad social swirl around Stampede. Mike Edson also got into the Maple Leaf at age sixteen at a time when the legal drinking age was nineteen. For Mike, the word “Stampede” did not illicit narratives of various rodeo events, but rather conjured up visions of drinking and revelry: “People did lots of drinking, there was always lots of dances, lots of fights. It was quite an exciting time for me.”

Teens like Mike also frequented the infamous “Squaw Hall,” originally constructed on the Stampede Grounds for Aboriginal people who it was believed had a right to their own dances while the “white folks” were going to the “uptown” dances. The “uptown” types still went to those dances, “but a lot of the younger people and cowboys would go down to Squaw Hall.” Squaw Hall was “a big, square, outdoor building with no roof on it,” a very old structure

with eight to ten foot “boarded walls” topped with wire (see Chapter 2) but it was what went on in and around this bustling “little fort” that mattered to teens. Steve Teller passed through its door as a teen:

It was a real gong show. It was almost as if you had to do it to say you'd been there. You stood there listening to the band who [were] behind chicken wire. The band shell had chicken wire in front of it to keep long-bomb bottles from hitting the band. The Thompson Valley boys would be playing. . . . It was open air . . . bleachers on the side, but everybody kept moving. People would stand around outside, drink their bottles of beer or whiskey and then wing it over the wall. . . . You didn't really want to have anybody to see you, you'd get the crap beat out of you! . . . We probably would have brought beer in the car . . . everybody just stood outside in the dark, there was no big floodlights, it was just dark out there, you'd stand around the cars in the field around it. People would drink and then throw their bottles in.

Even Lynn Blackford once managed to get through its door before age nineteen:

I remember Squaw Hall dances, it was just lethal. It was totally lethal . . . rowdy and there'd be beer bottles flying from outside, inside, and it was just crazy . . . glass all over the floor, and vomit – it was just gross. Like I kept bugging Mom and bugging Mom [to let her go] because everybody talked about Squaw Hall, “It's a tradition” . . . oh, I was terrified, this little hick from . . .

Walking and bicycling which had constituted the main form of transportation until the mid-teens yielded to the widespread use of motor vehicles further expanding the geographic range of the outdoor activities of both genders. The Bibby and Posterski report on Canadian youth in the 1980s downplays the widespread use, if not enjoyment, teenagers derived from vehicles.⁵⁸ Laketown subjects, however, indicated that becoming mobile by getting a driving licence, if not one's own vehicle, gaining access to the family vehicle, or at least developing friendships with a car-owning teen, was an important aspiration for many teens in this area.

⁵⁸The authors devote only two paragraphs to teens and cars. In response to the question, “How much enjoyment do you receive from the following?” the percentage of those reporting “a great deal”: friendships (74); music (72); boy-friend/girl-friend (55); dating (50); your stereo (47); your mother (46); sports (44); your father (39); television (29); your grandparents (29); your car (22); your job (20); school (15); youth groups (11). Note church or synagogue life: (8). Bibby and Posterski, The Emerging Generation, Table 3.1, 32. For a deeper look at relationship between teenagers and cars, see Philip Rice, The Adolescent: Development, Relationships, and Culture (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981).

Usually youth had to supply the gas, something that Cal Reid recalls was occasionally obtained on the cheap: "We had to steal gas sometimes."

It appears both boys and girls typically sought a driver's licence at age sixteen, some obtaining their "learner's" within days of their birthday. "I had a drivers's licence at sixteen, day after my birthday," said Dick Uldorf, "That's the only thing you could do up here quicker than anywhere else. Just go down to the copshop, 'I want a driver's licence.'" After a quick road test with an officer ("You didn't even have to parallel park") Dick was granted an interim license permitting him a driving radius of 150 miles. Some youth could hardly wait to turn sixteen. Steve Teller and Bob Riley each had a car at age fifteen. Steve "drove up and down the driveway with this car" impatiently awaiting his sixteenth birthday. "Being sixteen and being able to drive" is the year that stands out in his adolescence. Other youth such as Mike Edson and Bob Riley drove rural backroads before their sixteenth birthday. Bob, a chronic absentee at school, chose to frequent "the pool hall" or take to local dirt roads in his car without a license: "From Glendale there was a backroad to everywhere."

As in the past, non-Aboriginal country youth faced relatively more pressure to obtain a driver's licence.⁵⁹ Myles Osborne observed, "A lot of kids lived out of town and they were only boyfriend and girlfriend when they were at school." Raylene Erickson got a "learner's" on her birthday, "took the driving test a week later," and then purchased an old car that greatly enhanced her mobility. Sandy Butchart went through high school without a license, but nonetheless managed to escape the ennui of rural life: "I found myself a guy with a car so that I could come into town."

Some semblance of Vancouver's Kingsway car culture could be found in Williams Lake

⁵⁹None of the four Aboriginal subjects in this study obtained their licence before age twenty-one.

in the early 1970s. Steve Teller recalled the “muscle car era” was “very prevalent in Williams Lake.” Given their choice of “plentiful” work and good wages, many non-Aboriginal males including Steve, men who are today “accountants and jewellers and who aren't even mildly interested in cars,” drove an SS 454 Chelle, a GTO, or a ‘67 and ‘68 big block Camaro in their late teens and early twenties.

“Cruising” the downtown and the strip of highway heading out of town was of “major, major importance” to some youth. Among Carol Davis and her group of friends, at age “eighteen, nineteen, twenty,” “it was nothing to put on between fifty and a hundred miles [emphasis in original],” on an odometer in a typical evening. As a break from cruising, they would stop for a “lemon beer and a foot-long” at the Dog ‘n’ Suds, or park on Oliver Street, place lawn chairs in the back of the truck, and engage people and friends who walked by, or count the number of cars that would “blow” the red light. They formed an audience for the “younger whipper-snappers,” the sixteen year olds with “real ratty, what they thought were hot-rod cars” and critiqued cars and their performance on the street. Carol's group were apparently well-known to police as law-abiding kids who “didn't carry alcohol,” “rat-race,” or “bag-drive.” Others, however, were targeted because they were always “showing off,” and “dragging anything.” These youths “dragged” the strip heading out of town past the Dog ‘n’ Suds and Tastee Freeze Restaurants (“the place to be because you got a lot of spectators”), while an “older group” drove out to the marked quarter-mile near 140 Mile House, the “Forty Straights,” for serious “dragging.”

An important hangout for area teens with access to cars was the drive-in theatre and in this respect, Williams Lake was also like other North American communities. From the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s, the movie itself was often only a superficial reason for many

subjects to descend upon the Star-Lite Drive-In on the hillside overlooking the lake. Instead, youth usually went to the Star-Lite to socialize, drink alcohol, “toke” with friends, or to “make out” with a date.” The “thing to do” among Myles Osborne’s crowd in the late 1960s was to take “a bunch of guys,” “hop in a car” and head to this drive-in: “And as always the thing to do is try to sneak some beer in and have a few beer and watch the movie, like teenagers everywhere.” Sometimes, he brought a girlfriend. The Star-Lite became a “major” “meeting place” for Sandy Butchart her late teens in the early 1970s. Thus youth helped transform a former venue for family outings into a local “passion pit”.⁶⁰

Everybody went to the Drive-In – that’s where we partied lots when we were growing up – the Drive In! I lost my virginity at the Drive in. . . . My parents used to take us to the Drive-In all the time. Then we watched the movies, [but] not when we were teenagers [emphasis in original].

The widespread use of motor vehicles expanded the geographic range of the “party” in this area. Teens shared their knowledge of “which cops were on shift,” and would “drive around, get drunk, and then find out where the parties were”:

If you wanted to know where the parties were, you always went to the Cenotaph. And then everybody would get together and say, “Party at this place, party here, party at Chimney Lake!” and everybody would hop into their vehicles and roar off.

Nearby lakes such as Felker and Tyee Lakes were popular venues where youth could escape adults. Sometimes they ranged much further. “Vancouver kids wouldn’t conceive of driving all the way to Anahim Lake for a weekend,” said Gwen Thompson. Often, young people had to go no further than the beach on South Lakeside, or a small lake off Chilcotin Road several kilometres from town. One group of friends took cars up to Sentinel or Signal Point, the promontory on North Lakeside overlooking the lake where they sat around a campfire in a

⁶⁰See Owram, Born at the Right Time, 151.

special space they dubbed “the Couch.” A major feature of their socializing aside from drinking and substance abuse was making music. Someone had a guitar “and you might try to sing every song ever written.”

As in the past, some teens in this generation drove to different community dances in the area although the participants in this weekend ritual were comparatively younger, usually non-Aboriginal, almost as likely to be female as male, while alcohol and substance abuse assumed a prominent, even alarming role. Until the mid-1960s, alcohol was still the drug of choice. In November 1966, an RCMP roadblock set up to avert yet another night of “disorderly conduct” at what had become the infamous Soda Creek dance, resulted in a “nab” of twenty-two youths, “a big catch” making front page news.⁶¹ In the early 1970s, aside from greater inclusion of girls, little had changed in the weekend ritual since David Tomiyasi’s days. According to Raylene Erickson:

Drinking couldn’t be done inside. You’d have to do it outside and there was always one [a dance] at Soda Creek, Big Lake, Alexandria, Likely, all those . . . kids with cars, drive the dirt roads – crazy! Load ‘em up with your booze and all your friends, head out there, drink all night and party, drive all the way back. Sheer luck we’re all alive. . . we might come back daylight, race each other back – dirt roads, side by side . . .

In the late 1960s, Laketown youth, like their Canadian counterparts, began to include substance abuse in their parties.⁶² According to Sid Marquette, the use of marijuana had begun in the Laketown at least by 1956 but only among a few individuals, particularly the children of local teachers and merchants. External influences ranging from Timothy Leary, the Beats, and the heroes of popular music shaped Canadian youth’s attitudes toward illegal

⁶¹Tribune, 23 November 1966, 1.

⁶²See for example, Tribune, 7 January, 1; 14 January, 4; 21 January, 1, 1970. After 1965, a year in which Canadians saw only a “small rate” of cannabis offences, the number of Canadian juveniles per 100,000 charged with drug offences rose rapidly. Incidence of drug offences charges per 100,000: 7 in 1965; 133 in 1967; 775 in 1969; 1,268 in 1971; 2483 in 1973. From figure 5.7, *Canadian Criminal Justice*, Statistics Handbook, 1977, 100.

substances.⁶³ Despite unusually aggressive prosecution of drug offenders, the rate of drug use across Canada soared in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁶⁴ “Booze was socially acceptable,” said Raylene Erickson who entered drinking establishments with her parents at age sixteen, “Drugs, I think my parents completely denied.”

Whether it was Burns Lake, Penticton, or Williams Lake, “instigators,” often new arrivals or transients to a town, also helped convince some local youth to adopt new outlooks on drugs.⁶⁵ Cindy McEwan identified one such individual: “_____ was really hippyish. He brought a lot of that in.” Another new arrival, eighteen year old Gwen Thompson, arrived in the Laketown from Vancouver in 1973. What distinguished Laketown youth from the Kitsilano hippie crowd, Gwen Thompson thought, was “more marijuana and less chemicals,” as well as Laketown youths’ proclivity to indulge in astonishing amounts of alcohol along with their drug-taking. According to subjects in the Class of ‘73, there developed widespread drug abuse among students especially seniors at Columneetza. “Drug culture was a large part of the street scene,” said Mike Edson, one of those closest to the problem: “A drug use problem did develop in the school system. There was heroin addiction and use of needles and that was quite prevalent in those days.”

For most users, however, the practice was an experimental phase confined to a relatively short period in the life course. As Logan Lassiter put it: “It was a little loop in life.”

⁶³On the rise of the use of marijuana and LSD across Canada at this time, see Owrarn, Born at the Right Time, 196-201.

⁶⁴In 1965, a total of 465 drug charges were laid in Canada; in 1968, 1,713; in 1970, 8,596. Ibid., 203. Among juvenile delinquents apprehended in 1974, seventy-six percent of “drug” offences resulted in formal charges being laid. No other offences saw such rates. Among “property offences,” the rate was 56%; among “violent” offences, only 50%. Canadian Criminal Justice, Statistics Handbook, 1977, 92-3.

⁶⁵Conversations with “boomer” James Long, at the time a teen in Burns Lake, B.C., 20 September, 1999, Nanaimo, British Columbia. Jack Arnold, another “boomer,” described the transient fruit-picker context in Penticton. Conversations, January and February, 2000, Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Most "trips" had harmless outcomes. In one case, a few youth dropped acid and then, unbeknownst to a shop teacher, "wetsanded" the teacher's old pickup. Steve Teller estimated "one third, a quarter for sure" of the Class of '73 had taken illegal drugs of some kind. Steve illustrated how easily a pattern of drug abuse could develop. He had been an academically inclined "fifteen year old straight arrow kid." He began to drink only at age "seventeen, eighteen," but was soon not only smoking marijuana, but doing "acid," "DA and mescaline: If you could snort it, drop it, short of doing glue, I was doing the whole scene there for a couple of years, year and a half. It seemed like longer, but it really was only that kind of a time period." Steve is "now embarrassed" about this period in his life when he reflects upon the extent "a leader-type guy -- not a follower," had succumbed to the peer pressure to use drugs.

If the period of drug abuse was a brief and experimental "loop" in the life course for most subjects, it was also a perilous one for others. Williams Lake had its share of drug-related deaths, often from overdoses, or car accidents as a result of narcotic impairment, which like suicides were not always officially reported as such. Mike Edson reported, "There were many people that overdosed from drugs." A male in the Class of '73 remembers "twelve kids killed" in the "one or two years after graduation": "Four kids I was hanging around with, two of them are dead because of drugs." One woman was quite close to some of the "junkies" who died: "I watched them shoot peanut butter and shoot wine when they didn't have their junk -- until they died. And they still weren't out of school when they died. They never made it through." Two of her relatives were among these casualties. Such deaths resulting from substance abuse forced some individuals to address their own addictions. Marnie Williams never did like alcohol. Joseph St. Michelle, on the other hand, had been drinking since the age of thirteen because of easy access to alcohol through older alcoholic brothers. When he got home after

school, "there was alcohol on the table." Joseph, in fact, shirked most friendships including romantic ones with girls because most of his friends "didn't drink as much as I did. . . . My girlfriend was pretty much the bottle." Joseph only addressed his alcoholism at age twenty-one after alcohol-related deaths among friends and family on his reserve. Bob Riley rethought his drug abuse pattern at age nineteen when he lost a close friend to drugs. Several other subjects cited the death of a popular youth as a "traumatic" event in the lives of many youth in the community. Although it was never reported in the papers as an overdose, the death was "one significant" event in the lives of youth. As one woman reported, it "had a big effect on us all . . . I think a lot of us had a good hard look at ourselves."

Subjects' narratives indicate both historical continuity and evolution in the patterns of youths' leisure time activities between 1945 and 1975. In the first decade after the end of the Second World War, most young people in and around the Laketown cherished what limited indoor community recreational facilities were available. Outside Williams Lake, recreation occurred mostly within the sphere of family and close neighbours. Youth in the Laketown learned to complement adult-organized activities with informal and spontaneous outdoor ones, such as walking, swimming, softball, skating and hockey. It was generally understood youth would participate in whatever activity "was going" and participants appeared to know each other well. In this regard, the diminutive community even appeared to function almost as extended family. And yet, when one considers the gendered and racialised nature of youths' leisure time and spaces in this time period, it is also true any complete homogeneity and social intimacy among young people in this area was perhaps as illusory as it was real.

By the mid-1960s, youth on the whole were not only far more numerous but they were

even more culturally and in turn spatially dispersed in and around the Laketown. Teens still skated at the large local outdoor rink (outside War Memorial arena), only they did so more infrequently and certainly not as in the 1940s when it appeared all girls skated. Some still rode horses, but proportionately less so than a generation before, and some not at all. Teens still swam, but not always locally: one group frequented the Kozuki family dock on North Lakeside, for example, while others went to the South Lakeside beach or accessed various other lakes in the region by car. A notable exception to this pattern of leisure habits is the salience of hockey as a leisure form in this community. That aside, the idea, if not the social reality of all teens sharing in a single activity, playing badminton or basketball in a single facility such as the school basement, or the Elks Hall, or of "everyone" getting together and having a "big baseball game" had vanished. Allowing for Aboriginal and Indo-Canadian youths' own recreational pursuits (which have largely remained outside the scope of this study), the true diversity in youths' leisure habits is obviously more complex than has been suggested.

The overall decline of youth participation in adult-organized activities after the early teens parallels the fall-off in Boy Scouts and Girl Guides membership across Canada after the early 1960s. Perhaps such activities were perceived as too authoritarian. Perhaps they had lost relevancy in the face of the rising influence of the peer group between 1950 and 1965.⁶⁶ In any case adults in the Laketown, like their Canadian counterparts, also lost sight of the need to demand from teenagers that they work alongside adults in order to make social contributions of mutual benefit to young and old in their community.⁶⁷ As we have seen in Chapter 4, the War Memorial Arena enterprise of the late 1940s succeeded as a community project precisely

⁶⁶Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 103, 109.

⁶⁷This is part of Reginald A. Libby and Donald C. Posterski's argument. *The Emerging Generation*, 197-8, passim.

because it met the practical needs and interests of the whole community including its young people. Two decades later, another community project perceived by adults to be of benefit to Laketown youth failed in this regard.

An attempt to have a Teen Town in a rundown building called the Youth Centre was rejected by many young people in Williams Lake. The rationale for a site in 1970 was undoubtedly unchanged from that of 1945 or 1960 at which times a "centre" for youth had also been discussed. In 1960, for instance, at least one adult perceived such a centre would strike a "blow" upon juvenile delinquency: "It could well empty all the corner dives now being occupied by village and area boys and girls."⁶⁸ Realistically, a youth centre alone could not reverse what had recently become a new national trend in juvenile delinquency, but it was an attempt in the right direction.⁶⁹ In 1970, such a Centre was made available for local youth as a result of the joint effort of the Rotary Club, and local businesses including a sawmill which donated materials and service. Sensible adults understood the efficiency of having various youth-oriented clubs such as the Sea Cadets, Junior Wardens, 4-H Clubs, and the Air Cadets share the facility. Even the Navy League of Canada saw fit to extend a special loan (its "first" attempt to lend money for "fixed assets") to its local branch in order to help finance the centre.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, the fact that the Centre was located on the flats down by the lake outlet, and too far from town contributed to its unpopularity among certain teens, but probably less so than the fact that such youth also felt "too cool to have anything to do with it." Carol Davis was a youth who had smelled only adult attempts to limit her from adult temptations and

⁶⁸Tribune, 19 October 1960, 1.

⁶⁹See note 17.

⁷⁰Tribune, 28 January 7; 22 February 1970, 5.

so steered clear: "I'm sorry [laughter], like somebody else has control!"

A distinct feature of growing up in and around the Laketown is that many youth sought much of their own leisure in the natural landscape surrounding the Laketown. Despite the dangerous possibilities inherent in some outdoor activities, parents of the first generation generally granted their male children considerable temporal and spatial freedom. By the late 1960s, girls had made great gains in this respect. Raylene Erickson grew up being able to go anywhere and with "no fear." Lynn Blackford's mother "never worried about us." At fourteen, Lynn often walked several kilometres with her younger siblings to a local lake: "We never got harassed. Now I'm terrified for my kids to walk home from school after dark." At the time, Brenda reflected, most youth just never thought about the consequences. Parents, said Cal Reid, accepted inherent risk. If his parents worried about him going back on the Williams Lake ice after he went through it one winter, they never projected those fears upon him.

Having grown up in the out-of-doors throughout the childhood and early teen years, subjects' perceptions of the natural environment seemed to change in the mid- to late-teens although this was quite likely not the case among first generation females. Of the many subjects, including girls, who maintained hunting, fishing, camping, hiking or other out-door pursuits into adolescence, most also began to prize the wild spaces for the isolation they afforded from adults. For these individuals, hinterland settings became mere backdrops for their all-important form of peer socialization, the "party" which had become more egalitarian in its gender constituency. Getting "set up for the weekend" became a weekday preoccupation and topic of conversation for more than one teenager. Alcohol and illegal drugs were not only widely used, but became necessary and often dangerous lubricants in the best parties. The widespread use of motor vehicles expanded the geographic range of males and females who

together frequented not only country dances, but lakeside and gravel pit parties.

But drugs, alcohol and vehicles were dangerous combinations. Randy Aston was drunk at the wheel when he broke his neck in a car accident and suffered serious permanent physical impairment. Several subjects who habitually used mind- and mood-altering drugs but who didn't perish during the precipitous "little loop in life" cast their own adolescence, particularly the late teens, as more or less, "a blur." At least three had trouble with alcohol into adulthood. As one "hockey player" recalled, "Alcohol became a problem for three or four of my friends — for me too until I met my wife. That's what got me out of it."

If, as their children testify, parents overlooked or downplayed the physical dangers facing their children in the natural environment even into the teens, parents on the whole appeared to assume a similar approach towards the social dangers inherent in teenage life after the mid-1960s. Not all youth engaged in risky behaviour or even had the opportunity to do so. Some subjects faced parental restrictions upon their leisure time. Lynn Blacksmith, for example, went out to movies "a few times with my girlfriends, otherwise, "parents chaperoned." Others such as Wendy Lorimar and William Sangha had bemoaned the fact they had remained outside the constellation of popular forms of teenage socialization such as the "party," "cruising," or simply "hanging" in a coffee shop. How many youth actually resisted or were in some other way cut off from activities popularized as "far-out" by the "in-crowd" of youth remains unknown. Brenda Langford had strict parents — but was also "afraid" to ever get drunk, or "stoned," and thus "out of control." Throughout her adolescence, Marnie Williams seldom socialized in town and only left her Soda Creek reserve to go into town in order to go to school, or go shopping with her "granny," or if she was lucky and family members "had the money," she joined them in a trip to the Star-Lite drive-in theatre. One senses that of the

subjects who did have opportunities to party and drink, few exhibited Howard Underwood's resolve to resist what for many had become a teen norm -- but neither were they as active as he was on any given day of the week. "I wasn't pulled," Howard claimed, "I didn't feel that Friday night I had to be with the boys knocking back a beer somewhere."

Chapter 7

Jobs and Thoughts of Jobs: In and Out of the Labour Market¹

As we have seen in Chapter 4, learning to labour, mediated by such variables as gender, class, and family circumstances, first took root in the settings of one's home and property. Work skills and attitudes honed from an early age through gendered domestic and casual labour often proved useful in part- and even full-time employment. Tasks including household duties, gardening, cutting the grass, fencing, baling, and maintaining livestock sometimes required strength, but more often demanded physical and mental stamina, deftness, quick judgement, and initiative. "Unskilled" labour, a deceptively simple term, usually involved skills mastered only through experience. Rural youth were expected to have a measure of "savvy" in this regard. Norman Flit discovered this on his first day on a new job when his employer, a non-Aboriginal rancher, assigned the teen work involving a team of horses assuming, mistakenly, any "Indian" would "naturally" be experienced with such things.

After the Second World War, young people around the Laketown, especially boys, usually took up part-time jobs while enrolled in school, not because of a household's financial need, but in order to participate in a growing teenage consumer market. By the mid-1960s both genders sought part-time earnings and both shared mostly self-indulgent and immediate

¹A revised and condensed version of this paper, "You Would Have Had Your Pick": Youth, Gender and Jobs in Williams Lake, British Columbia, 1945-1975," is found in Ruth W. Sandwell, ed. Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999). This particular chapter title is inspired by another, "Jobs and Ideas of Jobs" in August de Belmont Hollingshead's classic sociological study of youth in a mid-western American town in the early 1940s, an analysis of class stratification in Elmtown's youth employment. See Elmtown's Youth (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1949), and the updated and revised edition, Elmtown's Youth and Elmtown Revisited, 1975.

motives for doing so. But an expanding and transforming local economy failed to widen either part- or full-time employment opportunities for females to the extent it did for males.² Most girls of both generations grew into and through adulthood spending far less time in the paid labour force than men. Some second generation girls did land jobs, including non-traditional ones offering good pay, but as a rule their employment was shortened by commitments to homemaking and motherwork.

First Generation Females

If adolescent boys were truly as oblivious to girls' participation in the labour market at the time of the Second World War as they now sometimes seem to be as adults, the same is not true for most first generation females. Billy Allen, in his mid-teens in 1945, didn't recall the extent of part- or full-time work performed by girls aged fifteen and older at the time and laughed, "I don't know, Jesus Christ, that's fifty years ago!" A more reflective male observer, however, recently noted that throughout the region at the time, young uneducated women seeking employment had been "almost completely relegated into domestic help or slinging hash in a restaurant," adding, "and you know what that pay amounts to."³

Unlike Billy Allen, women such as Harriet Wilson and Katie Jean Kurtz easily recall females' limited participation in part-time and full-time work in the region. Girls and women

²On the point, see for example, Chad Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy, and Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," as well as Rebecca Coulter, "The Working Young of Edmonton, 1921-1931," in Joy Parr ed., Childhood! and Family in Canadian History (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982); Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study," Histoire sociale/Social History 6 (1983): 81-109; Bettina Bradbury, "Gender at Work at Home: Family Decisions, the Labour Market, and Girls' Contributions to the Family Economy," in Gregory S. Kealey and Greg Patmore, Canadian and Australian Labour History (Sydney: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and the Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1990). A remarkable exception is found in Paris, Ontario. See Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

³See Chilco Choate, Unfriendly Neighbours (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1993), 128-9. On gendered work, see for example, Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: The Lives of Girls and Women, 1919-1939 (Markham, Ont.: 1988) and Bradbury, "Gender at Work at Home."

were almost invisible in most sectors of the workforce.⁴ Marginalization began in the mid-teens. According to Harriet, “Some of them [girls] worked after school – but not too many. It was mainly boys that worked after school.” Katie-Jean reconstructed the context more vigorously:

When I was young, boys had a great number more opportunities than girls – there’s no doubt about it. My brother left home at sixteen and earned a man’s salary. . . . When I was a child, my parents wanted, felt that I should be a secretary. That would be an excellent job for a woman – that would mean I wouldn’t have to go out and scrub floors.

Katie-Jean’s individualism even at choosing and pursuing a part-time job was circumscribed by her parents, particularly her father. At age fourteen, fifteen, Katie Jean assisted in the family business but never did any paid work, not even babysitting: “I think my parents felt I was too young to do that anyway, to go out by myself at night into somebody else’s house.” Katie-Jean’s experience illuminates the simple but important point that “family life” is actually experienced differently by each individual member of the family. Further, it illustrates that parental fear of what might befall an unaccompanied female is one critical underpinning of the gendered division of labour within a patriarchal system.

Village girls who worked part-time were usually spatially confined to indoor work within the community. Waitressing, working in “the drug store,” “the grocery store,” or “Mackenzie’s department store,” the telephone office, and of course, child minding crop up repeatedly as the limited options for part-time work open to teenage girls in Williams Lake from the end of the Second World War through the mid-1950s. In the grade nine and ten class

⁴Females in Division 8, “Cariboo” are conspicuously under-represented in almost all categories of persons “gainfully occupied” aged fourteen years or older. Distribution of occupations in a population aged fourteen or over, 17,061 males and 14,196 females: in “Agriculture”: 10,412 males, 163 females; “Manufacturing”: 607 males, 32 females; “Trade and Finance”: 1,153 males, 137 females; “Transportation and Communication”: 605 males, 39 females, etc. Exceptions are “Personal”: 336 males and 895 females; and “Professional”: 305 males and 414 females. Canada Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census of Canada, 1941, 316-17.

of 1949-50, a few girls worked outside school hours in the post office or in a family-run business. With the seemingly interminable poultry slaughter a few years behind her, Evelyn became “janitress” of a local school in the early 1950s, and one of few girls in her class with part-time work. Her daily after-school and Saturday tasks included sweeping the school’s floor, filling ink wells, checking the water supply, and cleaning brushes, boards, windows, and outhouse. The school board paid her forty dollars monthly, income which was completely discretionary and mostly spent upon school clothes.

Girls also worked outside the community. Some (“it was mainly girls”), ventured south to the Okanagan Valley to work summers as fruit pickers. Others with the right family connections hired out part-time as domestic servants at ranches and lodges. Given their bush camp experience and contacts in the country predating their move to Williams Lake, Emily Potter and her sister each landed work and room and board at two separate lodges in the South Cariboo. Then in their mid-teens, most, but not all of their tasks were those typically assigned girls and women,

At _____ Lodge there was a dining room, there were cabins that people rented during the summer, there was horses for trail riding. There was hunting and fishing and that sort of thing. One week we’d be in the kitchen helping the cook, and in the dining room and the next week we’d be out doing the cabins [or], taking people on a trail ride. You greeted the guests. You were treated by the owners like you were part of the family and they just took you under their wing.

Girls who failed to graduate high school and attempted to proceed directly into full-time employment in the village generally encountered the same limited array of low remuneration jobs. Wilme Ruth Baxter recalled their options at the end of the war:

I know some of the girls I went to school with, say in grade nine, a few dropped out and took full-time jobs then. They worked in the store, the drug store, the grocery store – and they just chose to do that. They didn’t want to carry on with school, I suppose . . . they could probably baby-sit. And I think maybe some worked in the hospital, cooking

in the kitchen.

Not only were there few eating establishments in the tiny village, but frequently vacancies were filled by “older ladies.” Marriage, of course, sometimes immersed young women deep into the joint-venture of a family-owned business demanding her share or more of work. Many girls who did leave the area to pursue work, or post-secondary education such as Normal School, or nurse’s training, usually failed to return to Williams Lake.

Whether they graduated or not, girls raised in the country often turned to domestic service at ranches or lumber camps. Such work, at least in the eyes of the Canadian Youth Commission, constituted “one of the most satisfying occupations” for women.⁵ As no province and only one state, Wisconsin, had instituted a minimum wage for domestic labour by the end of the war, any advantage was certainly not financial.⁶ In the context of women’s declining participation in the post-war Reconstruction labour force the work prepared girls, physically and emotionally, for their impending long-term roles as “stay-at-home,” “fulfilled women.”⁷ Millie Jacobs left St. Joseph’s Indian Residential School at age fifteen to begin full-time work “housekeeping” back in her Alkali Lake community: “I was working that summer and then I didn’t go back to school. My dad said, ‘If you’re not going back to school, you’re going out working, you can’t stay home doing nothing,’ so I’ve been working since then.” Although

⁵In 1945, The Canadian Youth Commission identified “rural youth” and “young women” as two groups of youth sure to encounter “special problems” in securing employment. Of the latter group, the Commission concluded, “If households were again to employ 24% of all woman wage-earners [as domestic servants], it is imperative that steps be taken immediately to make the vocation as attractive as are the other occupations open to women.” See Canadian Youth Commission, Youth and Jobs in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945), 181.

⁶Ibid., 182.

⁷See Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchenson, and Naomi Black, “The ‘Bren Gun Girl’ and the Housewife Heroine,” in Canadian Women: A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1988); as well as Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” Canadian Historical Review 72 (December 1991): 471-504.

Harriett Wilson's family possessed the financial means to support her post-secondary schooling had she chosen that route, Harriett finished her grade X year, left school and also went back to the country, never looking back. As an adult, she reminisced with regret, confessing: "I was in a big hurry to get out to the ranch."

Some women of the first generation aspired to teaching, secretarial, and nursing work, the triad of "feminine professions" then considered appropriate for Canadian women. Katie Jean Kurtz harboured dreams of becoming an "agriculturalist," but became a teacher. In 1954, armed with little more than a high school diploma, a year of senior matriculation, another of Normal School, and memories of her two short years in Williams Lake ("Oh, I was just dying to get back!"), Katie Jean accepted a teaching position at Chezacut, "way out in the boonies" of

Table 3. Monthly Salaries in Quesnel, Prince George and Smithers, 1951.

Selected Occupations	Average Salary or hourly wage	Male Employee	Female Employee
Junior Clerk		235.00	176.00
General Clerk		328.00	216.00
Senior Clerk		425.00	248.00
Junior Clerk Typist	196.00		
Junior Stenographer	181.00		
Secretary	262.00		
Telephone Operator	195.00		
Civil Engineer	633.00		
Light Truck Driver	1.65 (290.40)*		
Heavy Equipment Operator	2.23 (392.48)*		
Auto Mechanic	2.00 (353.00)*		
Carpenter	2.29 (403.04)*		
Labourer	1.57 (276.32)*		

* Indicates calculated monthly salary based on a 44 hour week. Source: British Columbia Bureau of Economics and Statistics, "Monthly Salary Rates in Selected Occupations, Northern Area Centres," Fifth Annual Salary and Wage Rate Survey in British Columbia (Victoria: Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, 1957), Part IV, 28.

the Chilcotin. She dismissed parental warnings that the place was too wild and isolated and that she “was biting off a lot for a twenty year-old who hadn’t been away from home yet, and who had always been carefully loved.”

Certainly, in the 1920s and 1930s ambivalence and necessity permitted the province with clear conscience to construct some rural schools as a “man’s school” and then send young women into pitiful teaching and working conditions. In these years, the British Columbia government recognized the “rural school problem,” but studiously avoided costly structural changes to the rural school system, thus failing to tackle the roots of the problem. What they offered to lonely single female teachers in isolated areas, some in precarious situations, was Lottie Bowron’s “pastoral care.”⁸ Katie Jean Kurtz encountered conditions comparable to those Mary Williams endured three decades earlier in Mud River thirty kilometres southwest of Prince George: a lonely teacherage two miles from the nearest neighbour, the need to haul water to the school, and chronic student absenteeism.⁹ Katie Jean, who was intimately familiar with the “rural school problem” in British Columbia, noted that little had changed since the 1920s and 1930s, “except we didn’t have that horrible paternalistic pressure put on from parents that I read about.”¹⁰

Wilme Ruth Baxter secured more job experience during the high school years and spent more years in full-time employment than most Laketown females her age, but never

⁸J. Donald Wilson, “I am ready to be of assistance when I can”: Lottie Bowron and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia,” in Alison Prentice and Marjorie Theobald, eds., Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

⁹Thomas Fleming and Carolyn Smyly, “The Diary of Mary Williams: A Cameo of Rural Schooling in British Columbia, 1922-1924,” in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, & J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers & Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, Ltd., 1995).

¹⁰J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, “May the Lord Have Mercy on You”: The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s,” in BC Studies 79 (Autumn 1988). For a good collection of other previously-published articles on female rural teachers as well as the “rural problem,” see Barman *et. al.*, Children, Teachers & Schools.

fulfilled her occupational dream. Wilme began part-time clerical work after school and Saturdays and eventually was offered full-time work which she declined as she “still wanted to carry on in school.” She was a good student and became one of a handful of local grade twelve graduates near the end of the Second World War. She had “always wanted to be a teacher” but “knew” her parents couldn’t afford the cost of her post-secondary education outside the village. Instead, she utilized clerical skills she had developed in part-time work, and proceeded into full-time employment, including banking until the late 1940s when she married in her early twenties.

First Generation Males

Unlike the situation in the resource extraction and processing communities of Trail and Port Alberni, British Columbia, which resorted to female employment when confronted with wartime male labour shortages, Williams Lake offered more part-time and full-time employment for boys than for girls during the Second World War.¹¹ Billy and his brother both worked in local stores while going to school, and as Billy recalled most teen males had “some kind of little job” after school. Circumstances changed for some boys after 1945. “A lot of jobs opened up as soon as everybody come home from the war,” Billy recalled, “but there was a lot of guys – kids – put out of work.” His own brother, for instance, had begun a mechanic’s apprenticeship just before the end of the war and received his licence in 1948 only to find it was “men who came out of the army who got the job he worked four years figuring he was going to get.”

¹¹See Elsie G. Turnbull, “Women at Cominco during the Second World War,” in Latham and Pazdro, Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women’s Work in British Columbia (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984); Susanne Klausen, “The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991” Labour/Le Travail (Spring 1998). In contrast, Elmtown males took advantage of an “expanding labour market” near the town in the fall of 1941. A new war plant attracted thousands of men, not women and definitely bolstered the confidence of “out-of-school” males. Hollingshead, Elmtown Revisited, 1975, 270-1.

Despite this post-war labour adjustment, an abundance of full-time jobs awaited adolescent males from the mid-1940s through the 1950s. Cariboo ranches, “stripped bare of able-bodied men” during the Second World War, remained starved for farm labour in the late forties because the pay was poor.¹² Since the 1930s, boys older than fifteen had found work alongside men at one of the many portable bushmills dotting the countryside. Writing about employment prospects for males in Clinton, Kamloops, or Williams Lake as they existed in the early 1950s, Chilco Choate noted that whether they originated in hunting camps, fishing lodges, dude ranches or logging camps, “jobs for men were so plentiful that sometimes we had to hide to avoid jobs we didn’t like.”¹³ In short, by virtue of their gender, young males were likely to move around the countryside far more freely than girls in order to take up unskilled labour, a norm reflected in the gender imbalance of the over age fourteen sector of “Cariboo” and “Chilcotin” census subdivisions, particularly outside organized settlements.¹⁴ This gendered spatial pattern parallels adolescent mobility in Edmonton in the 1920s.¹⁵

Job opportunities at two busy mines at Wells, near Barkerville, had for years etched that community upon the mental maps of many young males in and around Williams Lake. Even in

¹²Todd & Eldon Lee, *From California to North 52: Cariboo Experiences* (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1994), 120.

¹³Choate, *Unfriendly Neighbours*, 128.

¹⁴The 1941 male-female ratio for the “farm population” of subdivision 8d, “Cariboo” which included Williams Lake, was relatively balanced. The farm population 1,238 consisted of 151 males and 149 females under age fourteen, but 582 males and 356 females aged fourteen or older. However, in subdivision 8c, “Chilcotin,” out of a farm population of 457, 64 males and 47 females were under fourteen, 215 males and 131 females over fourteen. *Census of Canada, 1941*, Table 51, pp. 56-7. In 1951, the male-female ratio of subdivision 8c was almost balanced at 52% and 48% respectively, though less so in “Indian reservations” (53% and 47%) and especially not in “unorganized” areas (59% and 41%). *Census of Canada, 1951, Population*, 7-45.

¹⁵Teenage girls in the 1920s around Edmonton entered the city looking for work in domestic, clerical and manufacturing sectors (but sometimes found only prostitution), while boys ranged further afield pursuing agricultural and resource industry opportunities. Rebecca Coulter, “The Working Young of Edmonton, 1921-1931,” in Joy Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990). Census data on work is available for Census Division 8, but not for tiny villages such as Williams Lake at this time.

the late 1930s there was “no unemployment” in this boom-town. In fact, at least four subjects in this sample had fathers who had worked in Wells at one point or another to support a family. Three males of the first generation lived there for a time, two as working teens. Andrew Rainier was one of them. The fifteen-year old ended a long struggle with schoolwork by quitting school in 1937: “I didn’t pass grade five in school because there was this belief that [you] get out and earn bucks.” Andrew recalled that year as the best of his adolescence as he did nothing that winter but play recreational hockey and work at “odd jobs around town.” He began playing the sport the next winter, but because he had purchased a car, a rare practice for a sixteen-year old, he turned to full-time work at Wells. There he became enmeshed in the ruthless nexus of piece-work, cutting pit-props used to shore up mine tunnels. The lumber had to be perfect. He was only paid for half of the timber as the rest was culled: “But they’d take all of them and use them. There’s not much you could do about it, you had to have a job . . . they’d get somebody else to do it.”

Given the availability of work, his own frustration with school, and the necessity of having to take up full-time work to support himself and his widowed mother, fifteen year old Dusty Shaw also abandoned school in June of 1950 and began full-time work in a sawmill. After two attempts, he had finally completed grade nine. Like Andrew, his work was seasonal, interrupted by hockey: “Once hockey started I wouldn’t do too many jobs except piling wood.” That fall, he began to receive good wages, ninety cents an hour, in return for heavy physical labour “packing slabs and piling lumber” at a bushmill outside the village. Smaller pine and spruce was ignored or “mashed” down by logging outfits in their ruthless harvest of the big fir timber:

It was all fir timber. And this timber down through the valley here, there was some

mighty big old butts on that stuff, flared butts, and when the guys sawed off a slab, I'm telling you, you'd have a job getting that to the slab pile -- and nobody helped.

By the age of seventeen, Dusty had worked full-time at a total of four different bushmill operations and begun to work in the bush "driving truck" for better wages.

In this sample of subjects, gender usually counted more than "race" as far as employment was concerned. After Millie Jacobs left the residential school, she landed the same low-status domestic servant job in the country held by some non-Aboriginal country girls.¹⁶ On the other hand, when fifteen-year old Norman Flit was expelled from the same school in the early 1950s he rotated between his grandmother's and parents' households for about a year and did little work to earn his keep. Once he sought employment, Norman, like Dusty, encountered plenty of opportunities for "unskilled" labourers: "Oh, if you could work, you could get a job anywhere. You didn't have to have, really, any skill." Norman spent a year gaining experience in various types of work as a ranch-hand, cutting and packing out railway ties, skidding logs by horse, and at a small sawmill at Deep Creek. In his late teens, he finally began a promising permanent job on a Pacific Great Eastern Railway section crew comprised mostly of Aboriginal and immigrant men working the line from Glendale north to Marguerite. Many skills were learned on the job as the non-Aboriginal foreman taught him "everything he knew about the railroad." Norman claimed that until he began to lose control over his life to alcohol, he "could outdo anybody" and was entrusted with more responsibility and sometimes leadership of the crew.

¹⁶Jean Barman elucidates how residential schools not only failed their assimilationist agenda, but prepared Aboriginal peoples for a world of social inequality and low-status jobs. See her "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," in Barman *et. al.* Children, Teachers & Schools. Her earlier work describes how schools mirrored contemporary ideology regarding fitting (low-status) work for Aboriginal peoples. Eventually, "the very possible success of assimilation very rapidly became of itself an undesirable outcome." Jean Barman, "Separate and Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School, 1884-1920," in Barman, *et. al.*, Children, Teachers & Schools, 353.

Second Generation Females

In 1960, at a time when the ideology of women's proper role as homemaker and "housewife" was firmly rooted in the minds of North Americans, Laketown girl, Mazel McHugh, apparently changed her mind ("That is a woman's prerogative") about being a teacher, in order to follow the "unusual trade of linotype operator" at the office of the Williams Lake Tribune.¹⁷ Mazel and a few high school girls in their mid-teens had been employed part-time by the paper, on a tedious bi-weekly task of folding the newspaper by hand. Mazel apparently became "intrigued by the intricate linotype" while at work: "It was a big thrill when one of the men operators let her tap the delicate keyboard and make a line of type."¹⁸ Before her eighteenth birthday, at a time when "most young women" in Williams Lake were still "following careers in the usual feminine professions such as nursing, teaching and secretarial work," she became a linotype operator. She was "quick and adept," and loved the job, but as one reporter cautioned,

Mazel has found it is not a job for anyone who wants to be dainty and feminine for she is often covered with black ink. Her machine must have a daily, weekly, and a monthly cleanup to keep it in good condition; her fingernails must be short and of course the most practical clothing is dark jeans and sweater but Mazel can see the bright side of this too. "I save on clothes and appreciate [sic] getting into finery in the evenings." [...] On Thursday mornings she reverts to a woman's job and sweeps up the shop floor which is covered with lead and string.¹⁹

The general issue of women encroaching upon men's jobs was treated with a mixture of seriousness and levity in the local press. In early January of 1960, another piece in the Tribune

¹⁷Williams Lake Tribune, 13 January 1960, 4. For a passionate and sustained indictment of how American women had fallen victim to the perfect housewife myth, see Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York: Dell, 1963). The Canadian context is presented in Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams."

¹⁸Tribune, 13 January 1960, 4.

¹⁹Ibid.

disseminated a New York male writer's views of contemporary advances made by women. After asserting that differentiated clothing foisted upon females hampered the female and her movements, the American went on to caution male readership, "Watch out for women! In our modern civilization, some of them make far better men than we men do. And men, hold on to your trousers, or you may end up wearing skirts!"²⁰

Laketown men, it turns out, were in no danger of wearing the skirts. Certainly, girls of this generation had a more extensive range of part-time jobs as store clerks, hotel clerks, and waiters, while a few broke into a range of jobs generally unavailable to the previous generation such as pumping gas and flagging on highway construction crews. But the overall distribution of part- and full-time jobs and their lower levels of remuneration resembled an older pattern. In 1961, 536 male wage earners in the village earned an average of \$3,910 while 258 female wage earners earned an average of \$2,401.²¹ In one sample of ninety-six subjects, or roughly forty percent of the high school graduating class of 1973, millwork, logging, driving truck and ranching was cited twenty-three times by forty-two men and only six times by fifty-four women as occupations held at one time or another "since school." Conversely, retail clerk, cook, waiting on tables, secretary, receptionist, bookkeeping and bankclerk were cited a total of six times by the men and seventy times by the women.²²

If society blocked girls from some forms of employment, some parents discouraged or denied daughters from engaging in paid work altogether. Part-time employment in one's

²⁰Tribune, 6 January 1960, 2.

²¹British Columbia, The Cariboo-Chilcotin Region: A British Columbia Regional Economic Study (Victoria: Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, Economics and Statistics Branch), 103.

²²Cougar 1973-1993: Memory Lane. Booklet of completed questionnaires compiled by Class of '73 Reunion Committee. A few of the ninety-six respondents were cohorts, but not graduates of this class which had enrolled 240 students. See Appendix II.

youth, like household chores, obviously honed work skills and inculcated industrious habits of mind valuable to a life's work. In some families, however, gender, social class, and family circumstances combined to preclude an adolescent girl's part-time employment. Lynn Blacksmith, Wendy Lorimar, and Sandy Butchart, baby-boomer girls "born at the right time" into the generation that was going to have it all, passed through much, or all of their adolescence with housework and motherwork but without part-time work and the satisfaction and benefit of earning one's own discretionary income. Lynn only broke the pattern when she married and set up her own household at age twenty-one. Wendy gained respite from most domestic labour when, at age seventeen, she rejoined her mother living elsewhere in the province. Sandy Butchart escaped domestic work late in her teens when she moved into town. In a fourth family, neither Brenda Langford nor her sister did much work for pay while going to school as their parents "never believed in kids working when they were going to school, you know, focus on your education . . . you've got lots of time, you've got the rest of your life to work." Their parents asserted the primacy of school over paid part-time labours, but refused to shorten the girls' line of chores on their rural property.

Other girls, unfettered by parents, or duties to their household, assumed part-time traditional jobs such as chambermaiding and waitressing, or took up employment opportunities that were also available to boys at the time. In the early 1970s, Carol Davis, was working "forty-four hours a week, going to school full-time" in a retail job considered part-time. Carol "pulled the seven-days-a-week routine working from September through to the following April" with only a handful of holidays scheduled off. Cindy McEwan, the high school "jock" worked at the Tastee-Freeze, "part-time, mainly weekends" while going to school and then late in high school, worked a summer pumping gas. This was an "excellent" job with a

“wonderful boss,” paying “way above minimum wage”: “There was another girl and I that worked and we didn’t work the night-shift, because he didn’t let girls work the night shift.” In the early 1970s, Raylene Erickson and a girlfriend earned good wages during a summer as flaggers on highway construction crews near Prince George. Marnie Williams, like Joseph St. Michelle, secured outdoor summer employment painting and haying (“You name it we did it”) on her reserve, although unlike Joseph she endured childminding in her teens (“I got tired of looking after the kids”).

Some girls without intentions of post-secondary schooling or marriage and seeking full-time employment prepared for the fact they faced fewer and less lucrative work options than boys by resorting to the “vocational” route in school. They did so in order to gain, as Brenda Langford put it, “some skills” coming out of school thereby safeguarding against a “dead-end” in the life-course. Brenda considers she had little to offer an employer when she graduated other than intelligence, “personality,” a “willingness to work hard,” and an ability to type “maybe forty words a minute.” Sandy Butchart tried out different jobs after graduation: clerk in a department store, BC Tel operator, cashier at a small retailer, and hotel desk clerk before returning to school in order to train as a bookkeeper.

Non-traditional employment usually proved a temporary diversion in a girl’s life course. The mill, bush, or highway work sites threw teens into close association with adult workers which weakened or even severed their ties to adolescent culture. Teens who dropped out of high school in Elmtown, USA, in the 1940s in order to take up full-time work purportedly ceased, at least functionally, being adolescents. By joining the occupational structure of Elmtown, they severed ties to youth organizations, school and its extra-curricular activities and were accorded adult status one to five years before peers who finished high

school.²³ Raylene Erickson and her friend spent many evenings after work drinking with members of their highway construction crew, a much older social group. Raylene returned to high school that September while her friend married one of the truck drivers and settled to have children one after the other.

As the case of Carol Davis illustrates, girls were also dissuaded from such jobs. Following her graduation, Carol Davis went on from her “seven-day-a-week” routine in retail while in high school to three traditional jobs including two in retail. She married and raised children. For a time, however, she had worked as an apprentice sawfiler in the Laketown. Although she had also earned a pilot’s license in her teens, she had long given up on a career in aviation. This was only partly due to her own sense of commitment to a serious relationship that was leading to marriage as her father, a pilot himself, had discouraged her from the occupation. Only a “cage around the cockpit,” he had warned, would keep her safe from men in the bush.

Second Generation Males

Nothing much changed between 1945 and 1975 regarding the goal of a boy going to school while holding down a part-time job, except that males of the second generation typically expected to stay in school longer than their counterparts and had more discretionary income in their pockets which financed personal interests. Labour shortages in the region among loggers, millworkers, qualified cooks and waitresses, remained gendered.²⁴ Myriad part-time employment opportunities awaited males who usually entered and left the job market at will while some still hid from jobs they didn’t like. In a remark echoing Chilco Choate’s

²³Hollingshead, Elmtown’s Youth, 389-90.

²⁴“Cariboo is booming,” Tribune, 8 September 1965, 7.

description of job prospects in the early 1950s, Steve Teller noted that in the early to mid-1970s, “jobs were so easy to come by in the seventies in Williams Lake for a [male] teenager, if you were personable enough.” In fact, if Steve and his friends wanted to spend a Saturday out at “the lake,” for instance, they avoided the Tastee Freeze restaurant where the trades people went for morning coffee. Men came in hunting for casual part-time labour paying minimum wage and “you never had the heart to refuse.” In fact, when Steve walked off a disagreeable job at the Lignum planer mill half-way through his first day, the mill actually contacted him at home a month later to enquire if he would like to come back to work.

Adolescent boys worked part-time at gas stations and car dealerships, at machine, plumbing and electrical shops, in family businesses, and at well-paying jobs in grocery stores such as Overwaitea and SuperValu, or in the local sawmills. Adolescents sometimes resented paid work in a family business because of cloying familiarity or the inability to satisfactorily negotiate one’s hours. From grade seven through grade twelve, Randy Aston worked every evening after school until eleven o’clock helping in the family’s janitorial business and struggled to find times to complete homework. His parents paid him only a dollar an hour for his work yet he always had a considerable sum of discretionary income which raised his popularity among peers. The work was relentless, however, and Randy grew especially frustrated whenever friends passed by store windows some evenings and teased him as he worked. As in the case of Axel Vickers, long hours working as a family stifled his interest in the family unit, but unlike Axel, also contributed to his drifting away into some of the more harmful aspects of youth culture:

I think the main reason mom and dad lost me was probably the work. . . . When you’re with somebody all the time, getting together on a Sunday isn’t a big thing. Going fishing is not an important thing . . . you want to get away from them, go and do

something else, 'cause you're with them every night. It was work. It was work [emphasis in original].

While teens such as Dusty Shaw had contributed financially to the family economy, among the second generation, income was usually not only discretionary, but it provided for much of a teen's leisure, participation in popular, if not consumer culture, as well as savings for future purposes. Working-class kids who at the time had absolutely no interest in any sort of post-secondary schooling learned to value money from an early age ("Like my dad always told me: you got two friends in the world, one's your mother, the other's a dollar in your pocket"), but directed part-time earnings into the consumption of immediate goods and services. Generally, boys earned more disposable income than girls, but in most cases, both genders "blew" earnings from part-time work and even full-time work upon such things as fast food, music, movie tickets, clothing, dates, drugs and alcohol, and cars. Although comparatively fewer girls purchased and maintained their own cars, the case of Raylene Erickson amplifies teens' desire for unrestrained freedom. Raylene worked from age fifteen part-time and through school vacations with the "whole purpose" of financing a car and almost endless partying. In grade twelve, Mike Edson worked at two mills and was also employed in his father's business. That work financed "partying." Both endeavours seriously cut into time Mike should have allotted school homework and his grades suffered badly. Much of Mike's labour was of a casual nature and he was in and out of a job almost when he pleased:

I always had a job of some sort. Or sometimes I bummed around for a bit and sold drugs or did the odd jobs. Jobs here were quite easy to come by, I was never really without money.

Another Laketown subject, in fact, took drug dealing far more seriously, and as a teen, made a considerable sum of "easy money" selling "hash, MDA, Acid, Windowpane, Microdot" but

little income was saved.

Only one quarter of this generation, three males and two females, appeared to save in earnest as teens in order to subsidize impending marriage or post-secondary education. In fact, saving for university was one of Dick Uldorf's "main objectives" as a teen: "You better believe it . . . you were planning on going somewhere, the world doesn't end in Williams Lake -- it might begin here."

By the mid-1960s, sawmills and their culture dominated the Laketown imposing themselves squarely upon the work horizons of many boys. After Lignum's construction in 1948, young men worked out of town, in the Likely area for instance, where the company was expanding its bush mill operation. Bush work, however, was unsatisfactory. Throughout the 1950s, a "very high percentage of employees" were single or married men separated from their families in bush camps, work was seasonal and layoffs "frequent."²⁵ With the "dramatic" shift to stationary mills within or near town limits in the late 1960s, many small independent bush mills closed down. In 1967, for example, only seventy-four sawmills operated in the region, a third of the number (224) operating in 1960.²⁶ Half a dozen large permanent sawmills operated adjacent to or even within town limits.²⁷ Besides Lignum's there was All Fir (later Merrill-Wagner), Pinette and Therrien (later Weldwood), West Fraser and Jacobson Brothers, mills together employing between a thousand and twelve hundred men.²⁸

²⁵Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, 22.

²⁶Ibid., 33.

²⁷In 1960, there were nine planer mills in the Laketown. The Story of Williams Lake, 15.

²⁸See Mary McRoberts, "Corporate Structures and Local Economies: The Case of the Williams Lake District Lumber Industry," in Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. VI: 154-171. McRoberts identifies interviewees, some of whom were directly involved in the sawmill industry in the Williams Lake area. In 1967, Lignum's had almost 3 million or almost half of the 6.8 million cubic feet of wood yield quota in the Williams Lake "unit." Quota yields of remaining mills, in

As men's work coalesced in Williams Lake, the ubiquitous smoke and fly-ash from bark-burners, and the incessant whine and scream of the big saws became inescapable reminders to many boys of their future full-time work. Sawmill work offered excellent wage and benefits packages on a permanent, year-round basis within walking distance of home.²⁹ Before that eventuality, however, working "cleanup at the mill," keeping the machinery and conveyor belts free of wood chips, or shovelling piles of woodscraps out from under conveyor belts, became the archetypal part-time job among boys going to school in the 1960s and 1970s. Local supermarkets offered equally lucrative but far fewer job opportunities. Thus "working cleanup" was often the "first good-paying" after-school or Saturday work for boys -- and some even worked graveyard shifts before staggering into the high school.³⁰ Mike Edson estimated that "probably twenty percent of the guys" in his grade eleven at Columneetza Senior Secondary in the early 1970s worked "cleanup" at a mill. In fact, eight of the thirteen second generation males worked at a sawmill at some point in their adolescence. Nine of forty-two men and four of fifty-four women in Class of 1973 reunion sample cited millwork as an occupation held since school.³¹ Dick Uldorf and his brothers worked in the sawmills while going to high school or university: "We all did time in the sawmills, basically, you make the most money in the sawmills." His sisters who also had to finance their post-secondary education all "ended up with waitressing jobs."

descending order of size are: Merrill & Wagner: 1.7 million; Jacobson Brothers: .967 million; followed by other smaller quota-holders. See Cariboo-Chilcotin Region, Appendix C., 108.

²⁹Although Lignum unionized in 1951, most other mills did not but offered workers union-level wages and benefits to keep unions out.

³⁰A few such students were in my classes at Columneetza Senior Secondary in the 1987-88 school year.

³¹Cougar 1973-1993: Memory Lane. The generic nature of their responses makes it difficult to distinguish the exact nature of their employment in a mill.

Working “cleanup” at a mill was usually an easy route into the ranks of a mill’s permanent employees when a teen graduated, or quit school. It wasn’t just the perceived opportunity costs of post-secondary education (lost income, tuition or life away from home), that kept many boys from aiming for post-secondary education, or even graduating from high school. The lure of “big bucks” fast and the ease with which they could move in and out of the sawmill labour market (or work in the bush, mine or on highway construction) meant that many boys overlooked other sorts of jobs. Cal Reid was emphatic on this point:

You have to understand in the early seventies you could get a job anywhere. You could go into the mill and make 15,000 dollars – that was a lot of money. There were too many opportunities . . . the grocery stores, Finning [Tractor]. You didn’t have to have university in those days [emphasis in original].

Furthermore, a “lot” of men without post-secondary education had done well for themselves as they “have big bucks today.” In Williams Lake, and across North America, educators who cautioned their charges with the “stay in school” mantra could not have foreseen the long-term benefit of seniority as many young employees who worked themselves “into the system” before other employees remained well-paid, and insulated from the layoffs of the 1980s.³²

The common understanding in the Laketown of sawmill work being so plentiful “you could quit one job at coffee time and have another one by noon,” was something a few teen males discovered was not always true. Some failed to get on the infamous “green chain” (stacking lumber), a strenuous, monotonous entry-level job with high rates of worker turnover. A variety of reasons explained why a boy failed to find work at a local mill, among these the cyclical nature of hiring reflecting the ebb and flow of bush activity and the commonplace

³²“Many” high school graduates across the United States also reported peers who left school often have a higher income in low-level jobs than recent high school graduates as a result of more time and experience on the job. See Francis A.J. Ianni, The Search for Structure: A Report on American Youth Today (New York: Free Press, 1989), 143.

tendency in industry to hire the relatives of employees whenever possible.³³ According to Joseph St. Michelle, few if any Aboriginal students worked cleanup. He himself never succeeded in working at a mill even after graduation and resorted to employment “at home” on the reserve on such tasks as fencing, cutting firewood, slash-burning, and, after age fourteen, the capture and illegal sale of salmon or “Chilcotin Turkey.” Two subjects from working-class families recall entry into a mill was further complicated by reputation. In one case, when two brothers hit sixteen, “a working age” in many families, both failed to land a job in the mills despite repeated attempts because of the family’s tainted name in town. The recourse for these two out-of-school brothers in the early 1970s was the same as those facing out-of-work boys two or three decades earlier: ranch work. In Lynn Blacksmith’s neighbourhood alone, four boys quit school in grade nine to go to work not at a sawmill, but at a Chilcotin ranch.

When Bob Riley searched for full-time work at age fifteen to replace school (he also failed to land a job in the mills until his late teens), he called his brother’s employer, lied about his age and was offered a job as a “catskinner,” a skidder operator. Bob’s memory of his first winter in the bush is expressed with the rough eloquence, if not the hyperbole of the sort heard in males’ ranch work narratives or among Paul Willis’ British working-class “lads”:³⁴

So I shot off, I got a pair of runners . . . I was a busboy, I didn’t have overalls or work boots or anything like that. It was five below. . . . So he [employer] walked up to me and he looked at me and goes, ‘so you can drive a cat [skidder] up a tree, eh?’ — you know, I couldn’t drive a sharp stick up a dead dog’s ass! And he goes, well you’re running that Six over there, better get at her . . . I didn’t even know where the key was, I didn’t even know how to start it. . . . Well, I’ll tell you at the end of the day, I was fucked! I could barely walk man . . . my hands were bleeding, just about tore a fingernail off, my ankles were all beaten to shit ‘cause I was wearing running shoes, my

³³This was certainly true of both Wilroy and Noranda Mines in Manitouwadge, Northern Ontario, in the same years.

³⁴Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).

shirt was torn . . . ³⁵

Like other boys who had quit high school (“there was lots of us”), Bob gained valuable work skills (certainly a more complicated set than he might learn on a sawmill green chain), in a single season on the job, including how to run a loader, fall and buck trees, set choker cables, and file saws:

By the end of it, I was a loaderman, a buckerman, a skidderman, I could drive a cat. I could even build a half-assed road, skidder trails . . . all that winter . . . Money was a big thing. I was just trying to absorb everything I could at that age. Why didn’t I stay in school and absorb like this, though? Oh, it was definitely more interesting and this is what I wanted to do.

Adolescent males who secured sawmill work witnessed social cleavages in the community reflected in the workplace. Mike Edson and William Sangha recall little social cohesion among the males on the green chain. According to Mike, boys worked alongside members of three distinct male groups: “long-term East Indians or some other immigrants”; between the months of April and September, college and university students; and invariably, as Mike put it, “young guys needing enough money” for the “next partying.” Mike worked and socialized with this last group of working men: “Basically, the entertainment’s -- [it’s] expected, you go out and get pissed up on Friday or maybe Saturday or something. That was what the entertainment seemed to be prevalent for most people that I knew.” Indo-Canadian William Sangha, one of those university students, recast the typology of male culture in the sawmill:

I consciously remember in the sawmills there was a culture of the sawmill: the Indo-Canadians did certain work and the white guys did the other work -- although the white guys may have also done the same work that the Indo-Canadians were doing . . . but as the promotions came up, it seems to me, the white guys got those more. In the lunchroom, the Indo-Canadians sat at one end of the lunchroom, the white guys sat at

³⁵A skidder operator working alone was constantly scrambling through slash in order to secure choker cables to logs.

the other end. And I sat by myself . . . because I didn't really fit with either of them, right? What am I going to talk to them about? The Indian guys are all talking Punjabi and eating Indian food, talking about the things that interest them -- I'm not interested in that. And the white guys are all talking about what they talk about: who got drunk on the weekend -- and I'm not interested in that, so I just take my novel and read.

Indo- and non-Indo-Canadians both understood Indo-Canadians working in the mills faced limited job mobility. They knew that while "East Indian" men generally had little difficulty landing millwork, their employment would remain of "the labouring kind." Relative to white workers, their promotions would be slow in coming even as they overcame the initial language barrier. Still, they faced antagonism from some non-Indo-Canadian employees:

T: Where did the South Asian men first go when they came to Williams Lake?

Andy Rainier (retired from a mill): I can tell you where the hell I wish they'd gone! Eventually, millwork specifically, not forestry generally, became as William Sangha described it, the "lifeblood" of the Indo-Canadian community, in fact "exclusively the only employment available to [Indo-Canadian] males in this town [emphasis in original]."

Although "race" helped structure sawmill work and culture, gender determined employment on mill "production" lines. Mill employers, families, and the general community accepted part- or full-time work on the production line as almost exclusively the domain of males over the age of sixteen, although, as we have seen, there were painful exceptions to that reality. Men, said Brenda Langford, "could just go to the mills and just 'poof', land a job" in a mill in the late 1960s and early 1970s. From the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, roughly a quarter to one third of grade XII girls opted for the non-academic secondary stream emphasizing clerical skills in an effort to avoid what Brenda referred to as a "dead-end" in the

life course.³⁶ Meanwhile, non-Aboriginal, Indo-Canadian and sometimes Aboriginal youth could quit school before grade twelve and immediately land a much better paying job on production than females with “Commercial” skills earned in the office overlooking the lumberyard.

Visible evidence of gendered workspaces at the mill, besides the absence of women on production lines, were lunchrooms “plastered” with “girlie” pictures. Such displays contravened the rules of office spaces, but were widely perceived as appropriate to places where working men gathered. Sexuality was also discussed much more explicitly in such lunchrooms. Mike Edson, for example, recalls he sat silent most lunch breaks listening to an “old guy” tell “old tales,” many of these of a “very sexually lewd” nature.

In 1973, Lignum began to hire women for the production line. Mike Edson recalls training the new women hired at another mill, Merrill Wagner, around the same time, girls in their late teens although “a couple were older.” Whatever had changed in the ideology of women’s work, this new development in the labour market also made economic sense as evidence suggests women exhibited at least as much dexterity as men in certain sawmill jobs.³⁷ Before moving to Williams Lake and helping out in the family’s janitorial business, for instance, Randy Aston’s mother had worked capably alongside her husband at their bushmill operation. Randy recalled her as “quite a lady”: “I can still see her coming into the yard with the skidder’s front wheels off the ground!” According to Dusty Shaw, a subject intimately familiar with sawmills:

³⁶In 1967-1968, 27 or 38% of 71 Grade XI girls and 13 or 26% of 51 Grade XII girls were enrolled in subjects that offered them clerical skills. By 1973-1974, at least the proportions had dropped: 21 or 15% of 136 Grade XI girls and 29 or 23% of 142 Grade XII girls were still enrolled in the program. See Appendix II.

³⁷For example, Susanne Klausen, “Plywood Girls”, as well as Inez Ruth Hills, “Mill Supervisor,” in Terry Wetherby, ed., Conversations: Working Women Talk About Doing A “Man’s Job” (Millbrae, Cal.: Les Femmes, 1977).



III. 38. "The first girls hired at the mill. Susan Walters, Jean Deline, Ruth Kehler, Marion Payne, Jean Deline (?) [sic] and Lana Squinas (first girl hired) - Nov. 1973." Courtesy of Lignum Ltd., Vancouver.



III. 39. "_____ in appropriate setting". Courtesy of Lignum Ltd., Vancouver. A female worker at Lignum responded to the picture in 1995: "Oh, that's about normal, that's still at the mill if you go . . . like the millwright's lunchroom, they've got them plastered all over. They just came down at the warehouse because they renovated the warehouse and made it look like an office now, so all the girlie pictures are down."

The employers are starting to find out that the girls were turning out better on certain jobs than what the boys are. So they were starting to pick them up in certain jobs . . . running sorters . . . running the trim saws, pushing buttons, you know, they just stand there and . . .

Twenty years later, according to one female employee at Lignum's, despite evidence in this and other communities that women can run trim saws, grade lumber, or assemble wood veneers as well as men, the new hiring practice proved to be more of a failed experiment than any real turning point for women, at least at Lignum's. As of 1997, there were only about two dozen women working on "production" in Williams Lake sawmills. Lignum no longer sought new women "to work in the mill" and there was only one woman left working on production.³⁸

Yet, as the following case illustrates, women who were not able to bear up to the most physical demands of the sawmill could perform some of its other tasks at least as well as men. From the age of fifteen, Raylene Erickson worked long hours chambermaiding and washing dishes while going to high school. She put in afternoon shifts as a waitress until two o'clock in the morning at one restaurant, and for a time, continued to work at another restaurant until morning even before her school day began. After graduation, Raylene learned a small mill-owner outside the Laketown already employed a female lumber grader. Her father had raised her to be "independent" and so she enquired about an opening at the mill. Raylene was offered a job if she was willing to "start on the bottom piling lumber."

In 1974, Raylene, then seventeen, accepted the job in the small bush mill labouring on the "green chain" which experienced males attest is strenuous and repetitive work and beyond the capabilities of some males. Unafraid to tackle work, she put up with the backbreaking labour all for the sake of "the pay, the pay [emphasis in original]," until finally she had to be

³⁸Telephone interview with Brian Symmes, President IWA, Local 1-425, Williams Lake, 28 April 1997.

taken off the job. Try as she might on one occasion, she failed to dislodge a 24-foot long “cant” (a limbed tree) from its route into a burner: “I just couldn’t handle it, physically couldn’t handle it, I wasn’t strong enough.” Yet Raylene’s abilities and work ethic was such that her male employer placed her in another job running a trim saw where she worked successfully for a year. Working conditions on this job were also likely to deter women or men:

This was an outside mill, it was not covered. In the wintertime, it’s thirty-five below, it doesn’t matter, you work, right? No heat of any kind and you’re out on a deck, ten feet in the air. . . . And a steel deck, so it’s cold [emphasis in original] out there, lots of times really cold. And lots of times, it would get too cold to work because the solenoids would freeze in the saws . . . and it’s too dangerous, it would just blow up the solenoid. So [the owner] would say, you don’t have to come tomorrow unless you want to come and shovel piles off. So [the other woman] and I would – for full pay – didn’t want to miss days.

Although successful in her new role in the workplace, Raylene married at age nineteen, and left the job shortly thereafter to raise a family. She later re-entered the workforce, but never to this sort of employment.

Adolescent Employment in the Life Course.

Several preliminary conclusions may be drawn concerning adolescent employment in and around Williams Lake between 1945 and 1975. First, the paid work experiences of adolescents of both generations were often antecedents to adult work in the mills, bush, on ranches, in machine and specialty retail shops or in households. David Tomiyasi’s life provides but one example. His long involvement in the electrical trade began at an early age when he collected and tinkered with “all kinds of electrical things.” David assisted in the electrification process of the family house and business in the late 1940s at which point he really became keen about electrical work. In the mid-1950s, it “never occurred” to him to pursue, as his friends did, the “big money” in “labouring kinds of jobs” in the local mills.

Instead, David began part-time, after-school work at an electrical supply business, earning money which sustained him in his post-secondary education. He eventually retired from the same company.³⁹ Of course, adolescent work did not always determine adult employment. William Sangha and Dick Uldorf's professions, for example, are unrelated to the work that subsidized their journey into their "higher-status" jobs.⁴⁰ But skills learned in one's youth are useful today. Dick still enjoys working informally around machinery; as he says, "You don't get intimidated by a few bolts."

Second, following the pattern of gendered unpaid work, many boys worked their way into part-time and later full-time outdoor jobs requiring physical strength, the ability to work with and around machinery or both while exposing them to some form of physical danger. Whether they cut pitprops or hauled slabs of big fir timber in the 1940s and 1950s, or pitched hay, hauled heavy cables in the bush, or "worked the high steel" on Lower Mainland bridges in the 1970s, subjects soon discovered peers admired strong co-workers and that their employers also prized "an ounce of keenness," a mix often worth "a whole library of certificates."⁴¹ Strength and skill being equal, a "little git-up" distinguished the most marketable workers. In the 1940s, individuals such as Wesley Smith responded by attempting to hone reputations as "hard workers":

I always wanted to be a number one workman, wherever I worked and I always was, wherever I worked, I always had a good name . . . because that's all I had to depend on, really. See that was earning my livelihood.

³⁹As an aside, David caused the closure of the Williams Lake School one winter day when, as a student, he disabled its heating system. Not only was he working part-time for the company called in to do the repairs, but the company actually sent David in to do the job: "And it really made me look good because I was able to fix it really quick!"

⁴⁰Higher-status jobs usually involve work with the "head" rather than with "hands." See the classic study of the meaning of "blue-collar" work, Richard Sennett & Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

⁴¹Willis, *Learning to Labour*, 183.

Two decades later, Mike Edson was not alone in endeavouring to appear “hard-working” among working men in a sawmill, trying to be “impressive . . . it’s a useful thing. You want to be a man or something.”

Third, boys of both generations grew up to encounter comparatively more numerous and lucrative job opportunities in and around Williams Lake than did girls and expecting to redirect their labour away from their parents’ households and into the labour market sooner than their sisters. An expanding and diversifying Laketown’s economy failed to translate into equal employment opportunities for girls and women. The primacy of gender over race in determining employment, at least in highly-remunerative resource industry jobs meant males more so than females had the potential to become financially independent from parents at an earlier age and able to finance their own households.

While most second generation males not only eschewed expanding post-secondary education options (and some even secondary graduation) and entered full-time millwork, bushwork, or driving truck, a few did seize the opportunity to work every summer at a local sawmill and were usually better able than females to shoulder most or all of the costs of their post-secondary education. In other words, males “driven” to enter a career or profession endured the “hard,” “dirty,” “noisy” nature of work in sawmills as a means to financing that end. “Money,” William Sangha confessed, was the “only reason” for taking a sawmill job. He made over seven dollars an hour in the summer of 1977, “piling boards,” labour he found “demeaning” and “really hard” for a “slender guy”:

I found the work just boring. It used to drive me nuts! [emphasis in original]. Hard, physical work, dirty, loud. . . . Basically, the bottom line is that I had a job waiting for me the day I came out of university. I used to write to them from university [each winter] and they’d say, ‘You show up, you’ve got a job.’ And I really thank them to this day. I piled boards for four months a summer.

Most females were not even offered this option. This inequity placed a further burden upon families with daughters considering any form of post-secondary education while exacerbating low participation rates in post-secondary education.⁴² Girls such as Brenda Langford pursued limited post-secondary training and then used clerical skills, as well as “personality” and a “willingness to work hard,” to secure traditional, lower-paying jobs including those in a mill office. That office work, at least in “male-dominated” resource-based companies like the Williams Lake sawmills, turned out to be, in one woman’s view, “dead-end” work for most women:

I don’t think in that age, women expected to make as much money as men. Nobody – and it’s still that way in a lot of cases and mine included. Doing the job that I do [in the office], if I were a man, I’d make more money. And I mean, I’m a realist about this, because I know what the guy I’m working with makes. I have the same responsibilities. He’s been there much longer than I have which is one of the reasons he makes more money, but he makes such a significant [amount] more than I do that I know part of the reason is the mindset of the company [emphasis in original]. . . . They consider women as support people. . . the company doesn’t feel that you’ve taken on the responsibility although you have.

Fourth, the few girls who resisted the hegemony of a gendered labour market and assumed non-traditional work roles did so for relatively short periods of time. As in late nineteenth-century Montreal, gender was “at work” in the Laketown circumscribing women’s work.⁴³ Although girls such as Carol Davis and Raylene Erickson participated in shifting community norms, marriage and child rearing roles usually punctuated and sometimes ended women’s full-time employment. In the mid-1950s, Camille Summerland noted, the girls she

⁴²Conversation with Dr. Ken Coates concerning the unfortunate nature of the secondary to post-secondary schooling transition in northern Canadian communities in general including Whitehorse, Yukon. September, 1995, University of Northern British Columbia.

⁴³For example, Bradbury, “Gender at Work at Home.”

had grown up with married soon after graduation, if they graduated at all, and then bowed to the notion, as did she, that “the man went out and got the money.” Doreen Keeley married at age eighteen in 1958. A year later she temporarily gave up a promising financial career in order to relocate elsewhere in British Columbia with her husband, a manual labourer. Those normative expectations echoed down through a generation of adolescents. Cindy McEwan saved purposefully for her post-secondary education, left the Laketown to complete a post-secondary diploma, and then postponed her own career in order to move with her husband to another community where he had been offered a job earning income in excess of hers.⁴⁴

Cindy’s work narrative elucidates the idea that girls internalized and helped reproduce the ideology of gendered work:

I can remember thinking when I was younger, “God I’m glad I wasn’t a guy because I wouldn’t want to go out and work every day [emphasis in original] of my life.’ I’d want to do more things that I enjoyed doing. Going to work every single day – I would have hated being a guy.

Asked to address the general availability of work in the community during the 1960s and 1970s, Cindy’s recollection was framed by the abundance of work then available to boys and men. Work was plentiful. Her own husband, for example, had earned “big bucks for three years working weekends while going to school”:

C: Oh, you could get a job anywhere in Williams Lake in those days as a student! [emphatic] Anywhere! I mean you would have had your pick.

T: Did the mills hire girls?

C: I don’t think it was done in those days, I don’t think so.

⁴⁴One year after graduation, 11% of males and 33% of females in a rural community in Central Alberta cited “affiliation” needs as important factors in their vocational and migration intentions. Life stories of the senior class of 1989 indicated many graduates began to lead “far different lives” than they had anticipated. Carolyn Louise Germaine Smith, “Trying Their Wings: Aspirations, Attributions and Vocational Decision-Making Among Rural High School Graduates” (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1992), 1-2; 87.

Fifth, working class teens employed full-time in the mills without any desire to attend college or university sometimes grew painfully aware of the “dead-end” nature of their own jobs. Ennui associated with repetitive tasks is most conspicuous in the sawmill narratives.

Mike Edson learned to endure the work for a few years before finally abandoning it:

I thought it was a hell-on-earth kind of place to work . . . I managed to adjust to it in later years, but I was not impressed with that aspect of work In retrospect, I guess I didn't see much of a future, career-wise, I just thought it was sawmill work, you know something you do, go home.

His brother who stuck to the drudgery today despises millwork, finding it unfulfilling even as it “pays the bills.” When Bob Riley finally landed a sawmill job, he clung to the work as an investment in his future, even as new technology changed the workplace and dashed his dreams,

I went there [in the sawmill] seventeen years ago in the hopes of getting an apprenticeship, either to be a heavy duty mechanic, an electrician, a millwright, even a sawfiler. By the time I got enough years, ten years in seniority to actually bid [on] one of these jobs, they'd eliminated the jobs.

The Riley household appears to be a classic study in embourgeoisement. The grade nine dropout and the son of a sawmill worker was making sure his own offspring would finish school. As in other families buoyed by working-class sorts of jobs but yielding middle-class incomes (his spouse holds a part-time clerical job), the Riley children were driven almost daily to a range of organized activities and lessons of the sort traditionally associated with middle class families.⁴⁵ The Rileys hope to undermine the reproductionist and class deterministic nature of capitalism. In other words, if, given the state of the forestry industry in British Columbia, Bob can maintain his position in the mill, their family income and resolve seem

⁴⁵See John R. Seeley, R. Alexander Sim, and Elizabeth W. Loosely, Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life (N.Y.: John Wiley, [1956] 1963).

sufficient to break a historical labour cycle in the family:

I say to them, like you miss one class, you skip a class, I'm kicking your ass -- I've never spanked any of them. . . . They're going to get an education, they're not going to do what I do. I'm stuck where I am forever. I don't have enough of an education to get out of what I'm in. I have a great job -- don't get me wrong. I make 50,000 dollars a year, five weeks paid holidays, paid medical, dental. What more could a guy ask for? What more could a guy ask for -- I'd like to be a lawyer, I'd like to be a doctor, I'd like to be an airline pilot. . .

The final observation of adolescent employment is that most second-generation subjects who earned money as teens displayed little reciprocal pecuniary responsibility to the family that had reared and often still supported them. This appears to be an important and defining feature of Canadian adolescence in the mid- to late-twentieth-century. Some working teens, of course, contributed fiscally as they purchased their own clothing and even paid nominal sums to a parent for "room and board." A few other teens saved for their post-secondary schooling thereby contributing indirectly to the family economy by alleviating parents of an important financial burden. However, most teens with part- and even full-time waged employment enjoyed the ideal adolescence of the 1960s, a stage in the life course mixing dimensions of adulthood and childhood as defined in the mid-twentieth-century. Both girls and boys directed incomes towards not only the consumerism aimed at their generation, but at a burgeoning set of adult pleasures and privileges virtually forbidden, even unknown, a generation earlier. Some youths' almost single-minded desire for social emancipation was enabled not only by the post-war economy, but by parents who were themselves enjoying the new social freedoms of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Consciously, and sometimes through negligence, these parents extended greater social, including spatial and temporal autonomy to their offspring. Thus, their children followed in the wake of youth who in the 1960s began to attain "psychological adulthood" well before they developed a sense of commitment to

conventional occupational and family life.⁴⁶

Although the same case might be made with many other subjects, especially males, Raylene Erickson's teenage employment history serves to illustrate the point. Between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, Raylene was not only enrolled in high school, but usually also worked "part-time" in excess of a forty-hour week. The wages she received over two years in a sawmill beginning at age seventeen might easily have made her economically independent of her parent's household. As neither family nor society nor Raylene seriously expected, or hoped, an adolescent would choose such a route, she continued to live in her parents' home, and began to contribute a small portion of her full-time earnings for "board" to her parent's household ("Mom would still make our lunches, do our wash . . ."). Like many other teens in the early 1970s, males or females, most of her part- and full-time disposable income purchased virtually unbridled freedom and self-gratification, in her case, financing the ownership and operation of a car, as well as parties, drugs and liquor. At age nineteen Raylene married and left the family to set up her own household.

Examples taken from working lives in and around the Laketown suggest the age division between "adolescence" and "adulthood" is at best a legal one. Unlike the situation in Elmtown, USA, young peoples' entry into full-time work constituted an unsatisfactory boundary between the two stages in the life course.⁴⁷ At seventeen, Lynn Blacksmith, "unemployed," assumed more responsibilities than most adult mothers, but indulged in few of their privileges. Well before adulthood, Raylene Erickson had purchased most of its pleasures, but aside from her confinement by work hours, endured few of its responsibilities.

⁴⁶Kenneth Keniston, "Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth," cited in Kett, Rites of Passage, 269-270.

⁴⁷Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, 389-90.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In 1974, Janet Bailey turned eighteen, finished high school and fled the Laketown. Although Janet could hardly wait to “see the world,” her mother had also encouraged that flight having told her frequently “to experience other things” than “this town.” As an adult, Janet linked her adolescent search for adventure to her desire to escape from a context she associated with struggle. Few who meet this confident and energetic woman today would guess she had ever suffered from any sense of inferiority in her life. Yet poor scholastic performance throughout her elementary and high school years had apparently contributed to her chronic lack of self-esteem. As she put it, “I was really embarrassed most of my life.” She “couldn’t wait to leave this town, this little mill town. . . . I vowed when I left here I would probably never ever come back.”

Janet Bailey spent two decades away from her birthplace before she returned “to make my home here.” As she explained, “I came back because my roots were here and I needed to be back here . . . and that’s when I did all my growing I guess and my realizing the kind of person I am today is because of how I grew up.” Upon her return, she undertook a personal exploration of her family history through talks with parents and visits to the local museum. Only as an adult did she begin to understand how “really connected” she was to this area of British Columbia. Not only had one of her great-grandfathers owned a large ranch in the area, but she had “strong” Aboriginal heritage. As a teen, she had known all this, of course, but

“didn’t think about it, didn’t care about it . . . as a teenager, it’s irrelevant. I mean as a teenager, all I could think about is me, me, me.”

Individuals feel different levels of “topophilia,” or emotional attachment to this particular area of British Columbia.¹ If, like Prince George, Williams Lake has come to be perceived as a more “liveable” place, and for some, even an escape from larger urban centres, it is still not uncommon to hear residents proclaim they will likely leave the area once their children have left home, perhaps to go away to school. Certainly, this has become a visible pattern among Indo-Canadian families as parents join their grown children in urbanized southwestern British Columbia.² Fondness for Williams Lake and images of a wild Chilcotin prompted Katie Jean Kurtz’s return as a young teacher and years later as an elderly artist. Several years of military service in another province merely honed Cole Woleford’s sense of and preference for the distinctiveness of life in this area. He had grown up on a ranch, where “you can go out and howl at the moon if you [desire] without having to worry about the neighbours. . . . I don’t think it ever entered my mind to go and live in a city.” For Doddie Dunsmuir, or Cindy McEwan, love of place was subsumed by economic (a job) as well as gender concerns (a husband’s job). The need to live near their families later prompted Cindy and her husband, but not Doddie, to return to the area. In Wendy Lorimar’s case, any sense of topophilia was greatly diminished by several years of stifling family commitments to a younger brother and overbearing father. She prefers not to discuss Williams Lake even with her husband who remains curious about that period in her life course: “I found dad so strict and

¹Yi-fu Tuan, Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes and values (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

²A similar process was taking place among Portuguese-Canadian families in Vancouver in the 1980s as parents left East Vancouver neighbourhoods to locate with, or near their adult offspring in Lower Mainland municipalities such as Richmond and Surrey.

so hard that I don't talk about it." Considering her teenage "wildness," Raylene Erickson's own rootedness to her birthplace is striking. She recalled that as a married nineteen year old, she had even feared her husband "would want me to travel, want to move." Two decades had not weakened her resolve: "I'll never leave here, this area."

What was distinctive about having grown up in and around Williams Lake, British Columbia, as opposed to any other community in English-speaking Canada? Many of the oral narratives of adolescence in this area including the foregoing ones are ordinary in the sense that they might have been drawn from other places across Canada. Gendered "unskilled" domestic labour assigned in and around many Canadian homes, for example, cooking, housecleaning, gardening, canning, childminding, and in rural areas, wood splitting, haying, fencing and livestock management prepared Canadian children to accept work in general as a necessary feature of one's life. Canadian and immigrant parents alike understood proficiency at gendered domestic labour as vital to the smooth functioning if not survival of a household, and often made it a necessary component of an offspring's informal education.

Much of what distinguished adolescence in this area may be attributed to the area's physical, social and economic place in interior British Columbia. In the mid-1940s, young people (but not Aboriginal youth) in the Cariboo-Chilcotin faced expanding opportunities for secondary schooling. The opening of Rosary Hall in 1944, school consolidation in 1946, the establishment of Superior schools, bussing, and by 1952, a high school dormitory in Williams Lake began to overcome some of the educational problems posed by population sparsity and geographic distances in the vast region. Whether they boarded or commuted weekdays into the Laketown, country youth were separated from at least some of their weekday labour on the home ranch and put in touch with more urban forms of teenage culture. Allowing for those

individuals who had failed a grade, the merger of regional youth in the high school meant they became part of age-graded classrooms arranged by subject specialty. Many lasting friendships between country and "town" teens were in fact formed on the school site. Individuals might gain membership in a high school club or team. Or, they could experience a "downtown" coffee shop, a movie at the Alston or Star-Lite Drive-In, perhaps a date, and in the mid-1960s, television. In this sense, it is tempting to conclude the school and Laketown acted as homogenizing crucibles of culture.

By the late 1960s, however, the merger of regional youth along with natural population growth, and demographic change including the integration of first Aboriginal and then Indo-Canadian youth had also encouraged diversity, even social divisiveness, among young people in those crucibles. The relative intimacy noted among adolescents in the village school had begun to erode five years following the end of the Second World War. By the time the Class of '73 entered grade eight in 1968, most as thirteen year olds, they entered a high school comprised of many of the elements, as Joseph Kett has put it, of a "cosmos" or a "fairly complete city."³ The urban metaphor is an appropriate one. Some of the social diversity of a city was evident in the early 1970s at Williams Lake Junior and Columneetza Senior Secondary Schools. Population growth had spurred different social classes, interest groups and activities in the schools as well as growing anonymity and alienation. Demographic change had stirred prejudice and racism. A dominant theme in the culture of youth around 1970 is the manner in which many teens began to gravitate to distinct cliques both within and outside the school. Thus youth were part of a wider society that circumscribed such groupings as the "Indians,"

³Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the present, (New York, Basic Books, 1977), 252.

“East Indians,” “cowboys,” “hockey players,” or the “greaseballs” from Glendale. If “Indian” young people sequestered at the local residential school had been rendered more or less invisible before 1960, after their integration they were overlooked by non-Aboriginal young people now seated next to them. An even wider cultural gulf separated Canadian and Indo-Canadian.

Between 1945 and 1975, adolescents in and around the Laketown may have in fact led more active, diversified and organized leisure lives than their counterparts in much larger urban centres across North America.⁴ As we have seen, however, adult-led activities began to be perceived at least by the second generation as something other than leisure. For three decades following the end of the Second World War, with the exception of Indo-Canadian youth who arrived in the Laketown in the late 1960s, young people grew into and through their teen years with at least periodic forays into the natural landscape growing up “with the country” as had youngsters on the American frontier a century or so earlier. Youth living in the Laketown itself were never far from the natural environment. The local lake, river, or the hillsides overlooking the valley remained available even to those without the use of a horse, bicycle, or motor vehicle. Access to that landscape, however, was more problematic and less likely for girls than boys, particularly in the first decade after the war.

The escalating use of the motor vehicle began to disperse youth much further into the countryside. In 1973, fifteen year old Rick Hansen was a Laketown kid with three “obsessions”: fishing, hunting, and sports.” In fact, Rick’s life-altering spinal cord injury was the result of being thrown out of the back of a pickup truck (driven by a drinking driver), as he

⁴See the report of two large national studies of 3,000 American teenagers, Elizabeth Douvan and Joseph Adelson, The Adolescent Experience (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), 311-312.

returned home with another teen from an unsupervised weekend fishing trip in the western Chilcotin.⁵ By the early 1970s, teens' perceptions and use of the out-of-doors had changed. If the natural landscape was at times still perceived and utilized in traditional fishing and hunting pursuits, after one's mid-teens, natural settings also began to double as a haven for unsupervised socialization with peers. Not only had many girls closed the gender gap with boys insofar as their spatial and temporal restrictions upon their leisure time but mixed-gender groupings including the "party" constituted, arguably, the most enticing form of peer socialization.

In 1968, the year most subjects of the Class of '73 entered their teens they could hardly remain immune to wider mass culture and the messages conveyed to youth via magazines, radio, television, film, and music and through individuals with whom they came face-to-face. In the 1940s and 1950s, young people in more isolated or wilderness contexts socialized in the out-of-doors but usually within the sphere of family. Before they were old enough to drive a vehicle, their pastimes included visits with friends and neighbours, or staying indoors and playing a musical instrument, a game or listening to the radio with parents and siblings. For some like Axel Vickers, CBC radio became "pretty solid fare," and as his parents subscribed to magazines such as Liberty, Life, and the Saturday Evening Post, so did reading.⁶ Within Williams Lake itself, youth might have "had the gang over" to their house, but they also often interacted with peers outside the home and preoccupied themselves with swimming and softball games, or on long winter nights, with basketball, badminton, skating and hockey.

⁵Rick Hansen and Jim Taylor, Rick Hansen, Man in Motion (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987), 9.

⁶Such reprieves from rural labour are examined in Mary Kinear, "Do you want your daughter to marry a farmer?": Women's Work on the Farm, 1922, Canadian Papers in Rural History VI (Gananoque, Ont.: Langdale Press, 1988), especially, 146-47.

Second generation subjects in and around the Laketown also remember indulging in such things, but much more infrequently. Music was important to at least some of the first generation (“we all had our records”), but collectively, the older generation do not impart, or expand upon its role in their lives as do some of the “boomers.” Steve Teller’s narrative summed up the vitality of music – although it also illustrates that a youth’s publicly expressed tastes sometimes hide more private ones:

Music was a big, big, part of my life as a teenager . . . I had a stereo. My friends had stereos . . . there’s no question – it enhanced the experience when you smoked pot listening to stereo. . . . In the drug era, you couldn’t help it. If you didn’t like Led Zepplin and Black Sabbath and those kinds of bands, you still listened to them. But my albums that I would have bought would have been more towards Fleetwood Mac . . .

Baby-boomers across Canada are a distinctive generation insofar as most straddle the divide between the era of radio and that of television. Many had listened to radio in the pre-TV era, but unlike the older generation, others had seldom done so. Getting a television, however, a medium which immediately put them in touch with North American culture, was recalled as a watershed event in their lives. The Osborne teens reached a “deal” with their parents in the mid-1960s: the family would get a television if everyone “pitched in” a portion of its cost. Thereafter, said Myles, it became “a mad race” on Sunday nights to get from the ranch into town by eight o’clock to catch the Ed Sullivan Show which was immediately followed by Bonanza. The Anderson teens had seldom listened to radio on their home ranch. Pete couldn’t recall reading a newspaper “until I was into high school.” But “when TV came along, then the six o’clock news was the big thing. We would have it on even while we were eating.” It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in 1974, the local library reported local adult membership had increased 117 percent and juvenile membership only thirty-three percent since

1970 and that compared to "most" libraries, adult readership outnumbered the "juvenile" one.⁷

Regarding change in work patterns between 1945 and 1975, young people continued to acquire a variety of work skills within informal family labour settings, although by the mid-1960s, comparatively more individuals grew up with parents who saw little need for such emphasis. The overall diminution of gendered household labour noted between the two generations was less likely to apply to girls in rural or as Lynn Blacksmith's life attests, less affluent households. Between 1945 and 1975, boys remained more likely than girls to participate in the part-time labour market and to be remunerated at higher levels. They could potentially gain economic independence from parents at an earlier age than girls. Whereas two first generation subjects (both males) left school to support themselves or a single parent, working males and females of the second generation who lived at home while working invariably felt little pecuniary responsibility to provide for the family that had nurtured them. At best, some began to turn over nominal sums for "board" beginning at either age sixteen or upon leaving high school. Few saved purposefully for their future.

Many subjects eschewed the long term investment value of not only an advanced, but even a high school education. Among males who had demonstrated academic competence, burgeoning economic opportunities in the local area rendered post-secondary education, in their view, as unnecessary. Those individuals posting poor grades saw even high school completion as irrelevant. Given the dearth of jobs paying "big bucks" for women, however, what accounts for the ambivalence some female subjects felt toward high school, or their reluctance to excel and seek a professional career? Women's traditional economic marginalization in western capitalism including their ambivalence in the 1970s towards the

⁷Williams Lake Tribune, 22 January 1974, 3.

housewife occupation role are significant explanatory factors.⁸ However, oral narratives suggest negative responses to schooling, by males as well as females, must also be viewed in the context of popular culture.⁹ Cindy McEwan, Sandy Butchart, Raylene Erickson, Carol Davis, as well as Steve Teller, Mike Edson, and Cal Reid (in short, subjects with varying academic records of performance) all recalled what appeared to be a non-academic ethos among many seniors at Columneetza Secondary. However “slack” some teachers may have appeared, however permissive the school’s attendance policy or “unchallenging” the curriculum, there is little doubt that print and non-print forms of “mass media” as well alcohol and drug abuse and allegiance to the peer group also contributed to that tone.

A few subjects, some now parents themselves, also suggested parents had defaulted on their apparent obligation to “push” a teen through school in those “dangerous” years. From the age of fifteen, one subject was allowed by his single parent father to live, mostly unsupervised, in a detached building outside the family home. Sandy Butchart recalled, “My parents were never there, never there. . . . I guess they brought us up the best they knew.” Sandy was reluctant to allow her own teens the sorts of freedoms many of her generation had enjoyed. She floundered when her fifteen year old son asked her if he could go to a teen party, but ultimately relented. “It took all of my gumption to drive him,” said Sandy, adding perhaps naively, “. . . he didn’t drink anything.” Raylene Erickson who had hitch-hiked to Vancouver with a girlfriend in grade nine projected memories of her teen recklessness upon her thirteen

⁸The occupation “housewife” ranked 52nd in a total of 93 occupations insofar as “prestige,” with 51 occupations of 93 having less prestige. That rank rose or fell depending upon the husband’s perceived occupational prestige status. Margrit Eichler, “The Prestige of the Occupation Housewife,” in Patricia Marchak, ed., *The Working Sexes*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia, June 1977), cited in Monique Proulx, *Women and Work: Five Million Women, A Study of the Canadian Housewife* (Ottawa: Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1978), 8-9.

⁹See Paul Farber, Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., and Gunilla Holm, eds., *Schooling in the Light of Popular Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

year old son. She feared his social, not natural, environment. She permitted him unsupervised camping trips which she perceived as preferable to allowing him to wander around Boitanio Mall for an afternoon by himself.

Newspaper reports and oral testimonies of the past both reflect Williams Lake's transformation from a tiny isolated village in Central British Columbia to a more urban Canadian community. In the 1930s and 1940s, the infrequent articles in the Williams Lake Tribune that do refer to youth or their activities usually capture them as gendered and racialised individuals within the arms of church and school. They are seldom delinquent. In the late 1950s, there are comparatively many more reports on youth and their myriad, often gendered, adult-organized activities. They give teas, play hockey, skate in Ice Carnivals, and participate in Scouts, Guides, Stampede and Queen of the Lake events. Occasionally, E.H. Bone, the probation officer, makes reference to such things as transients in the area, the need for a regional correction centre, and the necessity of adults providing "love, patience, and understanding," the "invisible handrails" which steer young people toward maturity.¹⁰

By 1970, however, young people are far more likely to be portrayed by adults with a measure of dismay and alarm. The shift is especially startling when papers from the 1950s are juxtaposed against those in 1970. In the latter case, youth are reported charged with assault, even punching a police officer, or causing property damage. They are constructed as dirty and eviscerated junkies. A student convicted of trafficking drugs at Columneetza is expelled. Other juveniles, including two from Terrace, are part of large "drug roundup" in the area. In other words, Williams Lake around 1970 seems undifferentiated from other Canadian communities insofar as adults lamented what they perceived as youths' growing rebellion

¹⁰For example, Tribune, 13 April 1960, 2.

against authority and an impending breakdown in social reproduction.¹¹ By 1974, town officials were publicly alarmed by the “rash of vandalism” that apparently gripped the town: “We’re going to get these kids. . . . We’re going to nail them to the wall.” Some youth came from “respectable” homes. In one case, the father of a juvenile defendant charged with breaking and entering at a local business was “a substantial citizen,” and his mother a local teacher who had received a Citizen of the Year Award.¹²

Various subjects claim that in the 1940s and 1950s, adults in Williams Lake not only knew young people by name and family, but seemed unafraid to confront them. Neighbours considered it their business to chastise troublesome children or report them to their parents while certain proprietors wouldn’t hesitate to step outside a local business to berate tardy youth “late for school.” In describing the elaborate Hallowe’en pranks devised by youth in the mid-1950s (some of these aimed squarely at those adults who had reprimanded them), Sid Marquette emphasized that “there was never any damage.” Over the course of several years in the mid-1950s, Sid’s multi-aged “gang” had relocated outhouses, a section of wooden sidewalk in the village, lifted a car onto the roof of a local business, and pelted Tom Beames, the high school principal, with eggs as he opened his door one Hallowe’en night. Such pranks supposedly never involved “paint” or malicious and lasting destruction. Cal Reid, twenty years his junior, detailed his own undertakings in the early 1970s. He cast himself as, at the time, nothing more than a “mischievous” teen. Yet something seems to have changed in the nature of fun since the 1950s:

¹¹Peter Gzowski, “How Do You Keep Them Down On The Farm When They’ve Said F*** You?” Saturday Night (May 1969), 29-31, cited in Owrarn, Born at the Right Time, 195.

¹²Tribune, 20 August 1974, 5.

I don't think we did any damage . . . stealing gas, stole cigarettes, took cash left in the Tourist Booth. . . . [but] We never did anything bad [emphasis in original]. We didn't break into homes. We didn't damage anything . . . we weren't angels. . .

Rick Hansen was involved in similar escapades even after he recovered from his accident:

Another night when we didn't have enough gas or money to go fishing the next day, one of the guys suggested we siphon some from the cars on a used-car lot. They'd do it. I'd be the lookout. As it turned out, I had the good job. I just got moved along by a security guard who wondered why I was parked by myself at midnight with the lights out. Brad and the other guy were chased by police, complete with tracking dogs and flashlights, and had to hide under the railway trestle for four hours until it was safe to sneak home. Juvenile delinquent? No, just bored and scared.¹³

Harry Hendrick has argued that children in the western industrialized world have in the broadest sense not only been perceived by adults as threats to, and victims of, the social order, but that ageist institutional preoccupation over the latent power of young peoples' bodies and minds has in turn shaped society itself. Historians of childhood and youth, also fixated by social policy toward the young, generally overlooked the actual perspective of ordinary young people as well as the continuity between youth and parent cultures.¹⁴ As I have endeavoured to exemplify, a history of childhood or youth should embody the experiences of young people themselves. At the same time, it must not overlook how their expectations intersected with the will and power of elders bent on their subordination — but a subordination aimed, in a Foucauldian sense, not only at domination, but also at individual betterment.

Whatever the current scientific undertaking of the mapping of the entire human genome uncovers of the many “natural” facts concerning humans' genetic predispositions

¹³Hansen, *Man in Motion*, 41.

¹⁴Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare, England, 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994); “The History of Childhood and Youth,” *Social History* 9,1 (January 1984): 87-96.

towards disease or behaviour, growing up will remain a human experience overladen by the complexities of social location, socialization with peers and adults, and as this thesis has demonstrated, the particulars of time and place.¹⁵ Given the size and nature of this sample which omits the experience of “special needs” and gay and lesbian youth, I suggest the reality of the adolescent experience in and around Williams Lake, British Columbia, was diverse in ways that only begin to find expression through subjects such as Norman Flit, Harriett Wilson, Cal Reid or Lynn Blacksmith. In the case of both first and second generation subjects, differently situated young people not only continued to take their own paths into adulthood as Harvey J. Graff has suggested, but each generation also journeyed over new terrain.¹⁶ To the extent that the landscape facing subjects was socially and not biologically constructed, its architects were not only adults, but young people themselves.

Although this dissertation is primarily concerned with documenting the experience of youth in and around Williams Lake, it uncovers a change in age relations between 1945 and 1975. One’s family remained a critical variable in shaping youth’s values, beliefs, and expectations throughout the period, but family life (especially when fractured by death, separation, alcoholism and neglect), could not entirely counter the rising influence of friends, the hegemony of popular culture nor the idea that risk-taking became for some individuals a necessary element of adolescent experimentation and identity-formation.¹⁷ Keeping in mind

¹⁵Matt Ridley, Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters (New York: HarperCollins, 2000); Thomas H. Murray, Mark A. Rothstein, and Robert F. Murray, Jr., The Human Genome Project and the Future of Health (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁶Harvey J. Graff, Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), Chapter 6.

¹⁷See Reginald W. Bibby and Donald C. Posterski, The Emerging Generation: An Inside Look at Canada’s Teenagers (Toronto: Irwin, 1985), 101-3; Canadian Youth Foundation, Canada’s Youth, Ready for today: A Comprehensive Survey of 15-24 Year Olds (Ottawa: Canadian Youth Foundation, 1987), 18-21. A more regional and up-to-date picture of adolescent practices, values and beliefs is provided by McCreary Society, Adolescent Health Survey of

the exceptions noted in this study, youth in and around the Laketown, as elsewhere across North America, gained greater temporal and spatial independence from adults in this period and became much more confident expressing and asserting their desires. In the mid-1930s, instrumental adults such as School Inspector W. G. Gamble, trumpeted the need for schools in communities such as Williams Lake not only for the purposes of instruction of the young, but as a "social centre," or agency of moral uplift which would leaven the "rabid social element" in rural districts.¹⁸ By the 1970s, many adults in such places must have suspected high schools now contained, if they did not in fact spawn, the very element others before them had strived to contain.

Youths' relative liberation from adult control was not animated by their agency alone, but abetted by a generation including parents who had themselves begun to taste new freedoms two decades or so before them. This view might seem to support Lloyd de Mause's psychogenic theory of historical change, namely that "the central force for change in history" was the evolution of the parent-child relationship. According to de Mause, each successive generation was better able to empathize with their offspring and thus attend to their needs as a result of having been children themselves. Thus, the modern family was progressively less, and not more, restrictive as Phillippe Aries had suggested.¹⁹ De Mause's monolithic theory, however, failed to accord much importance to change in the material conditions of life. In the case of Williams Lake, technological, cultural, and economic change (not the least of which was a vigorous resource-based economy), also enabled some parents to forego traditional time

British Columbia, 1992. For a psychiatric explanation of the relevance even necessity of risk-taking in adolescence, see Lynn E. Ponton, The Romance of Risk: Why Teenagers do the Things They Do. New York: Basic Books, 1997).

¹⁸Report of W.G. Gamble, Annual Report of the Public Schools of British Columbia (Victoria, 1935-36), H 41-4.

¹⁹Lloyd de Mause, ed., The History of Childhood (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 3, 5-6.

and energy demands made of children and begin to indulge their offspring's desire for spatial and temporal freedom.

By the time the Class of '73 left Columneetza Senior Secondary, any sense of political idealism expressed in opposition to "the Bomb," "the Establishment," or the Vietnam War that had to a degree defined youth in the 1960s was being replaced by youth's growing sense of personal entitlement, although neither characteristic ever satisfactorily defined a majority of Canadian youth.²⁰ In 1970, noted teacher Marie Sharpe, addressed one hundred and thirty-one students at their Columneetza graduation ceremony. When she implored them to tackle world problems and affairs as youth were "eager to be directed into constructive activities," she apparently only succeeded in drawing "a few frowns" from some graduates.²¹

In 1970, however, secondary students cast their eyes northward across Canada's border and protested the Amchitka nuclear tests. On Wednesday, 3 November, a grade nine girls gym class staged a noon-hour sit-in in the Williams Lake Junior Secondary cafeteria. A little later one hundred students left the school for another sit-in at People's Park. After collecting seventeen dollars from downtown shoppers, the students telegraphed Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau who responded with praise for their efforts. Not to be outdone by juniors, two hundred senior students left Columneetza the following week and marched to the town hall in order to meet with Mayor Herb Gardner. Finding him absent, the students thronged Oliver Street chanting slogans and singing "protest songs," and within minutes had blocked Oliver and Third, a downtown intersection. Fifteen minutes later police persuaded them to move on

²⁰See for example, Myrna Kostash, Long Way From Home. The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co, 1980; Doug Owsram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and for the U.S.A., Kenneth Keniston, Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968).

²¹Williams Lake Tribune, 30 June, 1970, 20.

peacefully to People's Park. Four student delegates engaged in a long distance telephone call with Paul St. Pierre, Member of Parliament for Coast-Chilcotin, who endorsed their protest. By afternoon, "most" students had returned to classes.²² We will never know the extent to which such actions defined a moment of political consciousness or simply constituted respite from school. David Zirmhelt, one of the three "educated cowboys" protesting an educational issue in the Cariboo-Chilcotin was politically active as a student at the University of British Columbia and later as provincial Cabinet Minister. If other individuals at least kept themselves abreast of national and international affairs, in this study no subject did so with the zeal demonstrated by William Sangha who spent hours at home and in the high school library poring over magazines such as Time and Macleans:

I knew Canada . . . [emphatic] I told people who the prime minister of Canada was, what was going on in the Parliament of Canada, you know, who was Howie Morenz, Montreal Canadien in the Hall of Fame. . . . I knew all three verses of O Canada. Canada was a part of who I [was].

If the first generation grew into adulthood in a post-war era now overgeneralized as the era of youth conformity, what term beside "baby-boomer" can satisfactorily capture an era marked by "rebellion," perhaps idealism, but ultimately epitomized by "doing your own thing?" Can a more appropriate non-demographic term in fact can be found for the boomers? In acting out their desires and seeking out independent theatres wherein young people not adults set the limits of behaviour, the most "visible" youth in and around the Laketown constructed a public image of a generation characterized less by idealism than a growing individualism if not nihilism. But that image shrouds other youth, among them people like William Sangha, Marnie Williams and Lynn Blacksmith. At this historical juncture, it seems

²²"Walkout Staged," Ten Penny Freedom, Columneetza Senior Secondary student newspaper. 19 November, 1971, 8, 11.

safe to conclude that the era between 1960 and the early 1970s was not a time all constituents of the “pig in the python” generation will recall with easy nostalgia. Nor was it, as Doug Owram wished to remember it, a time in which “all things seemed possible.”²³ Only after many more portraits of young people including Aboriginal, immigrant, and “other” youth are assembled on the Canadian canvas can any synthesis of the history of youth in this country begin to mirror reality.

²³Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 354.

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General Notes:

Interviews. These constitute the main source of information. Interviews with forty-three subjects were mostly conducted over the course of five week-long trips, as well as one three-week trip to Williams Lake between the summer of 1995 and fall of 1996. Four other interviews were completed in March, 2000. Only three interviews were conducted by telephone. Informal interviews and conversations were also undertaken with other individuals who were resident in Williams Lake in the historical period under study, some of whom qualified, but are not included as subjects, as well as others including parents, teachers, two lawyers, a former police officer, a youth worker, the President of International Woodworkers of America, local I-425. Subjects' narratives were taped and transcribed.

Newspapers. The Williams Lake Tribune. Seventeen years were examined (1931-33, 1943-46, 1949, 1954-55, 1960, 1965-67, 1970, 1973-74). Publisher Gary Crosina made post-1960 copies available at the Tribune office in Williams Lake. Pre-1960 copies were found in the Legislative Library in Victoria. Tribune Casual Country (annual supplement to the Williams Lake Tribune), was useful in contextualizing the Williams Lake Stampede). Another newspaper, The Williams Lake Times, ran between 1964 and 1966 when it folded. Clippings of the latter are available in the Williams Lake Library archives.

British Columbia. Annual Reports of the Public Schools of British Columbia, 1871-1975. Victoria. Reports of School Inspectors. Appendices II and III was compiled from annual secondary enrollment figures.

British Columbia Archives. Few sources are cited. The collection of historical photographs for Williams Lake is limited regarding relevant photographs (ie. of youth). A particularly interesting find is "Aboriginal Princess Greeting Princess Margaret, Williams Lake, [1958] 1957," BCARS Photograph #H-05839. "Vertical File" on Williams Lake contains a few files on schools. The GR 461, Teachers Bureau, contains photos of some schools before the historical period under study. I was interested in gaining access to diaries and journals, but there appear to be few for this area, especially after 1945. A useful guide is Patrick Dunae, The School Record: A Guide To Government Archives Relating to Public Education in British Columbia, 1852-1946. Victoria, B.C.: British Columbia Archives and Records Service, 1992.

Photographs. Many were kindly lent to me by subjects, laser-copied and returned. Others are reproduced courtesy of Lignum Ltd. (Vancouver), The Williams Lake Tribune, School

Annuals, Sisters of Child Jesus (S.E.J.), Archives, Mother House, North Vancouver, as well as Beautiful British Columbia magazine. Except for those provided by subjects, illustrations are shown together with their sources

School Annuals. Select years for three secondary schools. Various titles include, The Souvenir, first edition published by Williams Lake High School in 1953; '55 Lake High, Laker '57, Laker '59, The Laker '65, Williams Lake Junior Secondary School Annual, 1973-74; and Cougar '73; as well as Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary annual, 1973-74.

Williams Lake Library Archives. Small room holds various newspaper clippings, many biographical, and undated, of local residents including Hazel Huckvale, Inez Crosina, Tommy Hodgson, Murray Hume ("I thank God every day that I came to the Cariboo"), and Herb Gardner ("Outstanding Citizen") etc. Includes some maps of northern interior of B.C., 1904; Pre-emptor's maps of Quesnel and Lillooet areas in the 1930s; Insurance Plan Maps for Williams Lake, 1951; Sportsman's Guide and Road Map of B.C., 1952; road maps, as well as large maps of Williams Lake.

Maps. Various 1:50,000 including Williams Lake 93B/1 East 1:50,000. British Columbia. Surveys and Mapping Branch, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, 1958; as well as 150 Mile House 93A/4 1:50,000, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 1969. "Tiny Village of Williams Lake, 1934." RCAF Aerial Photograph. University of British Columbia: Department of Geography Map Library.

Museum of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Main floor offers local exhibits on Stampede including Stampede Queens. Useful manuscripts include "Who's to be Queen of the Stampede?", "The History of Squaw Hall" (n.a., n.d.). Some history is on file. According to curator, Diana French, archives located downstairs at the time consisted mostly of unsorted sources in boxes. I was told none were relevant to my study and so was denied access to those sources.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is my intention that subjects have a good idea of the nature of my study before the interview. I will ask subjects if they wish to share biographical materials including photographs with me during the interview. The following questions are intended only as a guide indicating the sorts of questions I am interested in. I allow plenty of room for interviewees to depart from the confines of the questions in order to discuss aspects of their growing up years that they deem important. I also vary the order of questions if it seems to contribute to a more natural flow of narrative.

The questions I ask are clustered around eight (8) themes. I skip some questions if they are inappropriate, or answers have already been indicated to me. Depending upon the interview, I may add other questions because, a) interviewee's responses may suggest other questions to me, b) I want to clarify or seek expansion of a statement, or c) I want to present the question in a different way because it is not being understood by the subject.

QUESTIONS:

1. Biographical Data:

- a) Place and Date of Birth?
- b) (if appropriate) Date of your move to Williams Lake? Reasons for move?
- c) Where exactly did you live as a teen?
- d) Who lived in your house? (immediate family/grandparents/boarders/students)
- e) Parent(s)' work/ethnic origin/education level?
- f) Religious affiliation while a teen?
- g) Brothers/sisters and ages?
- h) Sketch your Formal Education and Occupational History.
- i) Did you maintain a diary/journal as a child or youth?
- j) Other autobiographical aspects of your life you consider important to know about from the outset?

2. House and Neighbourhood:

- a) What did Williams Lake look like when you were thirteen years of age? By the time you were eighteen? Provide as much detail as you like.
- b) Describe the neighbourhood/countryside in which you spent your teens? How densely populated was it?
- c) Describe your property. How large was it? Describe your house (appliances? radio? television? telephone) Was it a typical house? Did you have a garden?
- d) Describe some of the kids in that neighbourhood and their family backgrounds.
- e) Generally, how did you fit into the neighbourhood and its youth?
- f) What was the geographic range/boundaries of your daily activities?
Were these typical for a girl/boy then? Compare with today.
- g) What changes occurred in your neighbourhood (physical, type of neighbours, etc.), while you lived there between the ages of 12 and 18?
- h) Given your understanding of the nature of my study, are there important characteristics of your house, property, neighbourhood or Williams Lake you feel we have not addressed?

3. Paid and Unpaid Work:

Unpaid Work:

- a) Detail the work you performed around the house, property (ranch), neighbourhood as a child and your age at the time. How important was this work to your household? Compare your work experience with that of other boys and girls. Was the nature and amount of your work as a child typical for someone your age in/around Williams Lake?
- b) Detail the work you performed around the house, property, neighbourhood and elsewhere as a youth and age at time.
- c) What work did your teenaged brothers and sisters do?
- d) How typical was your adolescent work experience?

Paid Work:

- e) Tell me about any work you were paid for, including work outside Williams Lake. How old were you? What paid work did your sisters/brothers do?
- f) Describe your workplaces, boss or employer, and tasks.
- g) In each instance, how much were you paid? What did you do with the money? Did you ever receive non-monetary "pay"?
- h) As a youth, how did you feel about the work you did?
- i) Was the nature and amount of your work typical for someone your age in/around Williams Lake?
- j) In your opinion, what has changed, and what has remained the same as far as the nature and amount of work young people in Williams Lake performed between 1945-55 and work performed between 1965-75? Could you explain with an example or two?

4. School

- a) What elementary/secondary school did you attend? Describe each briefly.
- b) Which subjects did you like best/do best in (especially in secondary school)?
- c) Describe your favourite/least favoured teachers. Why?
- d) Do you remember any particular messages, mottos or views expressed by a particular teacher or teachers?
- e) What sorts of extra-curricular activities were available to teens and which ones did you participate in? How else did you spend your lunch and after-school hours?
- f) How relevant was school to your life and interests at that time? Do you remember any things you learned in school that you used at home, on the property, or that influenced you at home? And what knowledge from "home" did you bring into the school? How did teachers respond to this?
- g) What comments did your parents make about schooling? How involved was your mother and father in your schooling?
- h) What stands out as positive/negative school experiences?
- i) What kind of student were you? What was more important to you at the time, school, or the work world?
- j) What kind(s) of work did you plan to pursue upon leaving school? What steps did you or your family take in preparation? Was post-secondary schooling in your plans? How easy/difficult was it for a young person to attend college/university?
- k) In this question, I ask you to summarize your schooling and add your views on that experience in any way you like. For example, what were your views on schooling at the time? What things about schools, teachers or pupils at the time did you like in particular or else wish could have changed? What subjects/issues do you wish you had/had not taught?

5. Family Life

- a) How well off was your family compared to other families in this area?
- b) Who were some of the more affluent families in town or area? What determined level of social status in this community at the time?
- c) Tell me about your mother and father not only as "parents", but people, including their interests and pastimes. What work did they do and at what hours?
- d) If there was a "boss" of the household, who was it?
- e) What were their ideas on how to raise teens? Were your friends raised in the same way?
- f) How much freedom were you given as a teen?
- g) Did you ever give your mother/father cause for concern? Explain.
- h) What kind of influence did your mother/father have on you?
- i) Were you raised/treated just like your other brothers/sisters?
- j) What kind of relationship did you have with your siblings?
- k) What did you do as a family?
 - Any particular traditions?
 - How often did you attend church?
 - How important was church and spirituality to you in your teens?
 - What sorts of things did you discuss as a family?
 - Did you leave the Williams Lake area much?
- l) What expectations did mother/father hold for your future?
- m) When did you leave home? How did this affect your family/household?

6. Relationships with Peers

- a) What sorts of friends did you have as a teen? Tell me about one or two friends as well as their ethnic and family backgrounds. Did you maintain friendships (platonic) with members of the opposite sex?
- b) Did you belong to a neighbourhood group or gang (excluding sports clubs)? Could you describe any youth gangs of the time?
- c) How did kids of various social and ethnic backgrounds get along?
- d) How did boys and girls regard each other and get along?
- e) Did you date? If so, at what age? Describe a typical date. What did "going out" with a boy/girl in Williams Lake mean at the time? What sorts of things were there to do in Williams Lake on a date?

7. Interests, Use of Leisure Time and Popular Culture

- a) Tell me about any special interests you had (hobbies and pastimes in or out of the house). Did you read for pleasure as a teen? What subjects? What special skills did you develop in your teens? Do you have/use these?
- b) How much time was spent listening to radio/watching T.V.? Your favourite programs? Your parents'?
- c) What things did you hope for as a child, and later as a teen? Any fears?
- d) Where did you go or what did you do after school on weeknights? On weekends? (movies, diner, etc.) What restrictions did you face?
- e) How much money (allowance/pay) did you have? What did you purchase?
- f) Were you a member of a church group? (Scouts, Guides, or 4-H)
- g) Did you take part in any organized community sports or clubs? (Scouts, Guides, 4-H, hockey, badminton, baseball, chess club, etc.)
- h) What outdoor activities did you take part in (begin with winter season)? (skating, skiing, hiking, hunting, fishing, going to cabin, etc.)
- i) What social events were particularly important in Williams Lake and area? How important was the Williams Lake Stampede to you?

- j) Did you get a driver's licence? How often did you drive?
- k) What age (for example, 13, 16, or 18) stands out as a particularly important teenage year for you and why? Which was the best/worst teen year and why?
- l) If you had to sum it up, what kind of teenager were you?
- m) (1933 subjects): Were there any changes in what you or other teens saw, said, or did in the first ten years after the Second World War?
- n) (1953 subjects): Were there any changes in what you or other teens saw, said, or did in the ten years following 1953? In your opinion, was Williams Lake affected/unaffected by the "sixties"? Comment.
- o) In your opinion, what was it that was unique/special about growing up in or around Williams Lake? (they may compare to Vancouver or any other place). Are you glad you grew up here? What would you have changed?

8. Summary

1. Before we end the interview, I want to get your thoughts on two questions which are of particular concern to me but which may be very difficult to answer. First, we often hear people in their elderly years say, that "things were different when I was growing up" or "it wasn't like that when I was a kid" and other similar statements suggesting change has occurred. In your opinion, and given your experience in Williams Lake, what was different about being a teen in 1945-55 compared to being a teen in 1965-75? In your opinion, what stayed the same or changed little?
2. This second question may also be very difficult to answer. When you were growing up how much thinking did you do about Canada, or being "Canadian" as opposed to being a resident of Williams Lake or the Cariboo or Chilcotin (or being First Nations, South Asian, etc.)?

APPENDIX II

Enrollment by School and Grade, 1923-1974, Williams Lake

<u>Year</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>#/Attend</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>XI</u>	<u>XII</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1923-24	Williams Lk. School	20/13.50	10	10		5	2				First year of breakdown by grade as well as 5 IV and 8 Vs as well as 7 IV, 11 V and 6 VIs as well as 10 V and 7 VIs as well as 8 V and 5 VIs as well as 6 V and 6 VIs as well as 5 V and 8 VIs
1924-25		30/21.46	17	13	4	3					
1925-26		27/23.00	16	11	5	3	2				
1926-27		24/20.88	12	12	6	4	1				
1927-28		21/20.44	12	9	5	4					
1928-29		28/23.25	17	11	9	5	1				
1929-30	Superior School	25/22.47	12	13		17	7	1			First year designated Superior as well as 10 IV, 10 V and 7 VIs
		32/29.22	17	15	5						
1930-31		30/29.32	15	15		12	12	6			as well as 20 Vs and 11 VIs
		37/36.10	16	21	6						
1931-32		25/18.96	12	13		5	13	7			as well as 8 Vs and 22 'VIs
		39/38.31	19	20	9						
1932-33		20/18.43	12	8		10	1	9			Gr. VII-X taught by same teacher
		10/8.82	5	5	10						
1933-34		25/19.76	16	9			8	3	14		First Year Grade XI offered
		25/22.57			13	12					
1934-35		24/17.11	11	13		10	7		7		
		20/17.03	9	11	10	10					

<u>Year</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>#/Attend</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>XI</u>	<u>XII</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1935-36		22/17.48 27/18.13	11 14	11 13		12 15	9	9	2	2	2 First Year Grade XII offered
1936-37		15/14.14 23/22.17	9 13	6 10		4 9		10 6	7	2	
1937-38		14/12.85 23/19.77	6 13	8 10		13 4		6 8	3	3	
1938-39		13/11.46 34/29.75	6 18	7 16	10 VI	13 11		3 3	6	1	
1939-40		16/13.63 31/27.44	8 19	8 12	12 VI	8 11		6 3	3	4	
1940-41		17/15.54 18/15.02	10 10	7 8		9 9		11 6			
1941-42		22/18.68 32/27.70	11 22	11 10	8 VI	16 8		10 6	6		
1942-43		22/16.96 30/20.88	11 20	11 10	6 VI	13 11		6 9	3	4	
1943-44		24/21.77 30/24.92	12 20	12 10	12 VI	10 8		12 5	4	3	
1944-45		18/15.08 28/24.42	7 20	11 8		14 6		8 8	10	4	4
1945-46	Sr.H-Elem. 65/					18	12	5	9	8	13 AR ceases breakdown by teacher/ average daily attendance/gender
1946-47	Elem-Sr.H. 66/					13	18	12	7	9	7
1947-48	Elem-Sr.H. 65/					20	12	16	11	3	3

<u>Year</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>#/Attend</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>XI</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1948-49	Elem-Sr.H.	80/			17	21	13	17	9	3	
1949-50	Elem-Sr.H.	85/			25	11	21	10	10	8	Considerable consolidaion
1950-51	Elem-Sr.H.	102/			26	21	16	21	9	9	
1951-52	Elem-Sr.H.	124/			39	22	28	16	12	7	
1952-53	Jr.Sr.High	173/			38	34	38	31	20	12	High School Dormitory: 32 students
1953-54	Jr.Sr.High	244/			60	39	60	46	27	12	
1954-55	Jr.Sr.High	287/250.39	143	144	58	61	51	57	40	20	
1955-56	Jr.Sr.High	370/301.12	185	185	71	65	97	60	45	32	
1956-57	Jr.Sr.High	407/323.02	203	204	82	81	85	86	44	29	
1957-58	Jr.Sr.High	378/314.42	184	194	77	74	82	60	58	27	
1958-59	Jr.Sr.High	413/341.81	215	198	116	75	88	66	33	35	New High School opens
1959-60	Jr.Sr.High	441/381.55	227	214	112	100	86	79	43	21	Gymnasium opens at WLJS
1960-61	Jr.Sr.High	535/473.50	280	255	120	116	105	85	65	44	
1961-62	Jr.Sr.High	494/432.98	255	239		136	152	86	72	48	Grade VII to Elementary School
1962-63	Jr.Sr.Sec.	540/	282	258		115	165	125	81	54	
1963-64	Jr.Sr.Sec.	633/	335	298		151	153	135	101	76	First Year of "Occupational": (17)
1964-65	Jr.Sr.Sec.	669/	337	332		163	183	127	105	73	Occupational: (18)
1965-66	W.L.Sec.	748/				183	206	145	112	72	Occupational: (30)

<u>Year</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>Occup</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>XI</u>	<u>XII</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1966-67	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	379 531	193 259	186 272	23 12	254	232	162	128	89	Grade X until 1973 Plus 1 OIII pupil
1967-68	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	444 566	219 285	225 281	24 20	264	247	197	139	100	O unlisted Plus 1 OIII pupil
1968-69	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	563 533	272 266	291 267	17 8	276	232	229	192	142	O unlisted
1969-70	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	663 659	336 365	327 294	16 8	347	279	254	209	200	
1970-71	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	702 691	362 350	340 341	5	339	341	275	212	215	Last Year of Occup
1971-72	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	825 753	404 376	421 377		404	349	349	254	222	100 Mile Sec; 27 O
1972-73	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S.	853 815	412 399	441 416		433	382	325	288	240	100 Mile Sec; 31 O
1973-74	Columneetza S.S. Williams Lake J.S. Anne Stevenson J.S.	574 778 469	296 379 239	278 399 230		282 184	287 134	209 151	299	275	First year XI and XII 100 Mile Sec; 31 O ASJS opens Peter Skene Ogden S.S opens at 100 Mile

Source: Compiled from Annual Reports of the Public Schools of British Columbia.

APPENDIX III

Enrollment by Programme, Grades XI and XII, Columneetza Senior Secondary, Williams Lake.

Year	Grade XI -- Selected Studies					Total	Grade XII -- Selected Studies					Total
	Academic- Technical	Commerce	Industrial	Community Services	Combined Studies		Academic- Technical	Commerce	Industrial	Community Services	Combined Studies	
1967-68 M	39	5	24			68	46		11			57
F	34	27		10		71	28	13		10		51
Total	73	32	24	10		139	74	13	11	10		108
1968-69 M	38	5	45			88	43	6	21			70
F	54	38		12		104	30	34		8		72
Total	92	43	45	12		192	73	40	21	8		142
1969-70 M	62	5	42	1		110	56	7	45			108
F	52	35		12		99	49	34		9		92
Total	114	40	42	13		209	105	41	45	9		200
1970-71 M	68	2	38	1		109	62	2	46			110
F	55	43		5		103	56	38		11		105
Total	123	45	38	6		212	118	40	46	11		215
1971-72 M	84		46			130	81	1	22			104
F	63	60		1		124	69	44		5		118
Total	147	60	46	1		254	150	45	22	5		222
	Arts&Scien											
1972-73 M	104		33			137	92	1	22			115
F	113	35		3		151	73	49		3		125
Total	217	35	33	3		288	165	50	22	3		240

APPENDIX III (continued)

Enrollment by Programme, Grades XI and XII, Columneetza Senior Secondary, Williams Lake.

Year	Arts & Sciences	Commerce	Industrial	Community Services	Combined Studies	Total	Arts & Sciences	Commerce	Industrial	Community Services	Combined Studies	Total
1973-74 M	45		29		89	163	71	1	24		37	133
F	42	21	2	4	67	136	49	29		7	57	142
<u>Total</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>299</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>275</u>
Total Males	440	17	257	2	89	805	451	18	191	0	37	697
Total Females	413	259	2	47	67	788	354	241	0	53	57	705
Total	853	276	259	49	156	1593	805	259	191	53	94	1402

Compiled from Annual Reports of the Public Schools of British Columbia, beginning June, 1968, first year such breakdown in available.

APPENDIX IV
SUBJECTS WANTED FOR STUDY

GROWING UP IN WILLIAMS LAKE, 1945-75

WERE YOU A TEENAGER LIVING IN WILLIAMS LAKE OR WITHIN 15 MILES OF TOWN LIMITS BETWEEN 1945 and 1975?

History is not often written from the point of view of children and youth. You may be interested in volunteering for a history which examines what it was like to be a youth in Williams Lake in each of the two time periods, 1945-1955 and 1965-1975. Selected subjects will be interviewed about their everyday lives in the family, at school and work, and among peers.

Particulars:

1. Ideally, subjects were born in either the year 1933 or 1953, or within a year of these dates.
2. Subjects may have been born outside Williams Lake, or Canada. The only stipulation is they spent at least a few of their teenage years in or around Williams Lake.
3. If you can't or don't wish to be a subject, perhaps you know people who are potential subjects. Perhaps you have old photographs or you have or know of written materials discussing youth or any of their activities in the home, at school, at work, and among peers. Written sources would include letters, diaries, journals, any literature - including old pamphlets and letters home to parents - on local sports clubs and youth organizations such as Guides, Scouts, church groups, etc. It would also include newspaper and magazine articles which circulated in Williams Lake at the time. Any items which can assist in reconstructing a way of life gone by will be appreciated.
4. Subjects will not be paid.

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. If you can assist in this study in any way please contact me at the address below or phone me (collect) at (604) 224-8724.

Tony Arruda
Educational Studies
2125 Main Mall
University of British Columbia, V6T 1Z4

APPENDIX V

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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EXPLANATION OF STUDY AND STATEMENT OF CONSENT

Thesis: "Rural Youth in Transition: Growing up in Williams Lake, British Columbia, 1945-75"

Researcher: Mr. Tony F. Arruda (604) 224-8724
[Supervisor: Dr. Neil Sutherland (604) 822-5286]

Purpose of the Study: I understand the purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of young people growing up in and around Williams Lake, British Columbia, between 1945 and 1975. The thesis compares and contrasts adolescent experiences in the period, 1945-55, with those of the period, 1965-75.

Procedures: I have been told by the researcher that I will be interviewed about my own growing up experiences, particularly aspects of family life, my schooling, work, play and leisure time, as well as relationships with my peers. If I wish, I may share with him any manuscript materials (diaries, letters, journals, etc.), photographs, or any other materials that I feel may assist him. I may also withhold any information, refuse to answer any interview question -- or terminate the interview at any time, and for personal reasons.

Particulars: I agree to volunteer my time and effort toward this study for which I will not receive monetary payment. I agree to one interview which will last at least one and one-half hours. The interview will go no longer than this unless I extend it freely and willingly or suggest meeting another time. I can ask any questions I choose so that I might understand the proposed study and its procedures. I can refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I can review, revise, or withdraw any statements I may make at any time.

Consent and Confidentiality: Please initial either 'a' or 'b':

- a. _____ All audio-tapes and notes made will be kept strictly anonymous by the researcher. I have been told by him that he alone will hold the audio-tapes and any notes arising out of the interview. My name will never appear anywhere in the thesis, nor in any future work arising out of this interview. The data gathered may be used in the future, but only by the researcher himself and only under identical conditions of confidentiality. (I may strike out and initial this last sentence if I wish) _____ (initial here)

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b. _____ I recognize the importance of this work and wish to contribute to a greater understanding of the history of childhood and adolescence in rural areas undergoing transformation. Therefore, I wish to permit any audio-tape(s) of the interview to be used in the following manner: (initial only the statement(s) you give consent to)

- i) _____ use of my interview and name in the thesis
- ii) _____ use of my name and interview in future works of this kind.
- iii) _____ use of name, interview tapes and transcript as part of any library, or Oral History Collection, either existing, or created in the future, for the purposes of other researchers.
- iv) _____ (specify any restriction)

Written Consent: I understand University of British Columbia Policy requires my written consent if I am to be interviewed by the researcher. This consent form has been explained to me fully. I have received my own signed copy.

I _____, therefore, do hereby consent to volunteer as a subject in the historical project named above.

(Date) _____

(Signed) _____

(Print Name) _____

(Telephone) _____

(Address) _____

