On the Mennonite-Métis Borderland: Environment, Colonialism, and Settlement in Manitoba

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> It is impossible for me to write the land. This land that I love, this wide, wide prairie, this horizon, this sky, this great blue overhead, big enough to contain every dream, every longing.... How I loved you, how I love you, how you keep me alive. This stolen land, Metis land, Cree land, buffalo land. When did I first understand this, the dark underside of property, colonization, ownership, the shady dealings that brought us here, to this earthly paradise?
>
> - Di Brandt[1]

In a well-known visit to the Mennonite East Reserve in August 1877, Governor General Lord Dufferin invited the Mennonites to unite with what he depicted as the Dominion of Canada's "war waged against the brute forces of nature." Dufferin promised that to unite with Canada in this "war of ambition" would not threaten Mennonite convictions and practices because "the only other nationality" enrolled is one equally "engaged in advancing the standards of civilization westwards," namely the United States. Dufferin

reassured the Mennonites that joining the "community of interests, objects, and aspirations" formed by those dominating nature to advance civilization would preserve their religious way of life.[2]

The visit and speech impacted the Mennonites. According to the *Manitoba Free Press*, "Notwithstanding the proverbial stoical character of the average Mennonite, much emotion was evoked" bringing "many of them – men as well as women… to tears."[3] Likewise the Mennonites impressed Lord Dufferin. Over a month later, Dufferin summarized his visit to Manitoba and highlighted the Mennonites as immigrants par excellence.[4] Not only had they transformed what was once an "absolutely bare, desolate and untenanted" prairie into one teeming with "European comfort" and "scientific agriculture," but they also represented the liberating influence of the Imperial government in England. Dufferin was pleased that the "principles of parliamentary government… work smoothly and harmoniously" over Mennonite migration and settlement.[5] The mutual admiration and regard intimates that Dufferin's narrative is a significant interpretive framework for Mennonite experiences of acquiring and possessing Canadian land.

Dufferin's visit was mentioned in several memoirs and diaries, but *Aeltester* Gerhard Wiebe's reflection on Dufferin's speech most clearly revealed its place in the Mennonite ecological imagination.[6] In the preface to his memoir, Wiebe wrote that Dufferin "concluded his speech by assuring us that it would go well with us if we remained the people we profess to be…namely, peaceful agricultural people."[7] Ironically, Wiebe articulated Mennonite self-identification as a "peaceful" people in terms of a relation to land that was conducive to Dufferin's environmental imagination of a war against nature.

The point of departure for this essay is that all relations to place are political relations.[8] Political violence, uneven distribution of risks and benefits, and inequitable power are manifested in environmental conditions and the way in which human agency over those conditions is assigned. Wiebe's vision for Mennonite identity in general as well as Manitoba Mennonite land-use and settlement practices in particular needs to be understood in light of Mennonite perceptions of the Indigenous people who wanted the land that was given to Mennonites. These ideas illuminate a settler colonialism that preconditions Mennonite identity as a peaceful agricultural people on the Canadian prairies and an underlying political and social structure that makes possible their vision of being the "quiet in the land."[9] It builds on Ryan Eyford's argument that "immigration colonization reserves were an integral part of the

creation of a new liberal colonial order in the Canadian Northwest."[10] Mennonite relations to place, both as they were established upon arrival and later adapted to adjusting environmental and political conditions, are implicated in the legacy of Canadian colonialism.

Reckoning with how Mennonites in Manitoba are entangled in this legacy involves more than mapping out the land promised to Métis that was then allocated for Mennonite reserves. Typical maps showing the Métis land grant reserves set aside by the province's Lieutenant Governors Archibald and Morris follow the township survey system; however, Métis demands for land did not use the same measuring system. Gerhard Ens and Joe Sawchuk point out that Archibald's choices were based on selections made by the Métis in parish meetings that were published as spontaneous demands in *Le Metis*.[11] These demands used local place names to demarcate these lands, which included land that was ultimately part of the Mennonite East Reserve.[12] Allocating all of the land requested in the spontaneous demands for Métis families would have exceeded the 1.4 million acres land grant promised in the Manitoba Act. This legal stricture, however, needs to be interpreted in light of the government's preference for non-Indigenous settlers; the processes of securing land for Métis children and heads of family was marred by an 1876 Order-in-Council which outlined the government's "dissatisfaction which has been caused in Manitoba by the locking up of large and valuable tracts of land for distribution among Half-Breeds, thus seriously retarding the settlement of the country, cannot recommend the setting apart of further tracts of land for such purpose."[13]

The situation was the same in the West Reserve. The 1878 petition made by the Métis of Cypress Hills includes land east of the Pembina River that was included in the Mennonite West Reserve.[14] The 1878 petition was not favorably received by government officials. As Michel Hogue demonstrates, following Douglas Sprague's work, the government's "failure to act on Metis demands… was part of a deliberate policy of delay."[15] Thus, the colonial context in which to interpret Mennonite relations to land – as indicated in Lord Dufferin's and Gerhard Wiebe's reflections – is that Mennonites were given land in the same place and time that Métis petitions and spontaneous demands for that land were denied. Mennonites were able to secure their collective future at a time of significant transformation because of government obstructions to Métis attempts to secure their own collective future at that very moment. In short, Mennonites received land Métis communities

wanted. From this starting point, it becomes easier to see that Mennonite relations to place and environmental history in Manitoba are inextricably tied to Métis dispossession.

To tie these two histories together, this article briefly addresses two subjects. First, to show that Mennonite and Métis histories are not parallel or "worlds apart," it argues that Manitoba Mennonites knew they were migrating from Russia to land in which Métis had significant presence and authority. To do so it draws on Mennonite sources to demonstrate that Mennonites were not only aware of prior Métis presence but also that they saw the Métis as having an historic authority, including over land-use practices. Such cognizance implicates Mennonites in turning Canada's landscape into sites of control.[16] Without acknowledging that this participation in colonialism conditions Mennonite relations to Manitoba land, environmental histories will reiterate conceits of ignorance that cover over and maintain current modes of dispossession.[17] From a Mennonite ethicist's perspective, narratives of ignorance not only disengages agency and responsibility that other Mennonite theologians and ethicists disavow,[18] they also leave the processes of power and distribution in the hands of the state such that state activities are the primary ways in which change will happen.

Second, this paper outlines the narrative Mennonites had of the 1885 Northwest Resistance in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, the central means of communication among newly arrived Mennonites from Russia in North America and also to those still in Imperial Russia. I argue that this narrative indicates a particular concern for maintaining Dominion law and order; the idea that the Mennonites should stand for Indigenous rights or Métis sovereignty was not part of this narrative.

In the 1970s Mennonite sociologists and historian began to reckon with Métis history. Leo Driedger argued that Mennonite settlement depended on the policies of Canadian colonialism, which calls for contemporary ethical consideration.[19] Lawrence Klippenstein outlined both the ambivalent perspective Mennonite delegates had in 1873 as well as the Métis willingness to host them.[20] Other accounts of the 1870s migration that mentioned Métis settlement in Southern Manitoba often described parallel communities along the river; they were neighbours with whom Mennonites never intersected.[21] Some mention Métis history as colour commentary for the context of Mennonite settlement. Frank H. Epp, for example, describes the Dominion's interest in using Mennonites to change the physical and political landscape as a result of their conflict with Manitoba Métis.[22]

The primary documents generated by the Mennonite delegates and immigrants from the 1870s do acknowledge the Métis presence and its significance. Delegate Paul Tschetter, for example, wrote in his diary on June 9, 1873: "The half-breed Indians live on this land and it belongs to them."[23] Tschetter's opinion of the land's owners was ambivalent. During the first exploration of the country outside of Winnipeg he says, "The people are lazy farmers of mixed Indian blood and are more cattlemen than agriculture."[24] The delegates later visited a Métis settlement whose inhabitants, according to Tschetter, reluctantly lodged them because their tents did not arrive before nightfall.[25]

Jacob Shantz describes the Métis' history and character in his 1873 immigration pamphlet, *Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba*.[26] He outlines the history of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company to say that the "half-breeds have become, as it were, a distinct race of people" who are "a civilized class of people." He later writes, the "reader might wonder why the Half-breeds rose in rebellion a few years ago, if they are civilized and satisfied." Shantz explains that Métis grievances included the desire for consultation prior to the arrival of government surveyors and recognition of the right over land they already occupied. Both Métis prior occupation and legal right to land, including "one hundred and forty acres" owed to "every man, woman, and child," was part of the information disseminated to immigrants such as the Mennonites.[27]

There are stories about Mennonite/Métis interactions scattered in diaries and journals. Often the surveyors and guides leading Mennonites to their land were Métis.[28] There is the infamous Dominion Day Brawl, when Mennonite delegates were holed up in a hotel surrounded by angry Métis men.[29] Klaas Peters, one of the delegates, recalls in his memoirs that *Aeltester* Gerhard Wiebe took the side of the Métis men, reproaching their Canadian host, William Hespeler for his driver's "inconsiderate behavior" toward the Métis, which sparked the confrontation, and threatened to abandon Manitoba altogether for causing the situation.[30] Another delegate, David Klassen, however, previously preferred the land closer to the Riding Mountains but the incident influenced him to settle closer to available protection.[31]

Another significant story is from Erdmann Penner, a prominent businessman who was a successful farmer in Russia with entrepreneurial inclinations. Penner was not especially interested in moving to Manitoba to find a plot of land to settle. After arriving in Winnipeg, he was unimpressed with what would become the East

Reserve and wanted to return to Russia. His wife convinced him to stay at least until the Mennonites were settled in, so they lived in a rented house amidst unpacked boxes. During that time Penner travelled incessantly looking for a different place to live: the Dakotas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ontario, and whatever place he thought likely. He later operated stores in Tannenau, Niverville, Gretna, Reinland, Altona, Pilot Mound, Clearwater, and Plum Coulee. Penner was mobile and not dependent on his homestead, perhaps because he was initially wary of settling in the "wilderness" of southern Manitoba where he could not leave his family "among the buffaloes and Indians."[32] After they finally settled in Manitoba, Penner's first foray into business was working with flatboat men purchasing goods in St. Paul to sell to the Mennonites. These flatboat men were "mostly half-breeds, among them a cook."[33]

According to Penner's daughter, the two summers spent with the Métis flatboat men "was the making of my father. He found his true self and he loved it." They were "strong virile he-men, who took a back seat to no one even if they were workmen and laboured for someone else."[34] The Métis cook, wrote Penner, would prepare a hearty dinner and they would "sing and smoke and dance the Red River jig after a long hard day's work."[35] But after two summers Penner heard that the railway was coming and he gave up working with Métis freighters to be ready for the railroad.[36]

Mennonite settler descriptions of encounters with Métis come from other sources than diaries and memoirs. Shelisa Klassen notes a number of such narratives in both Mennonite and French Canadian newspapers.[37] Then, too, occasional municipal directives give occasion to Mennonite-Métis encounters. In one such a directive from 1877, settlers, including Mennonites, are asked to consider Métis guidance. On October 22, 1877 – prior to the Municipality Act of 1880 – a set of municipal instructions was sent to all villages on West Reserve regarding fire regulations. The English summary of the regulation written in the Rosenort fonds reads, "English and Halfbreeds will fine anyone burning straw."[38] A rough paraphrase transcribed from the German elaborates: "Halfbreeds and English have complained about prairie fires and have said that they will fine the person who sets one between $50-$500."[39] The West Reserve *Oberschultz* (District Mayor) Isaak Mueller exhorted Mennonites to heed the warning. Environmental historian Stephen Pyne observes that prairie fires in Manitoba "were as fundamental as seasonal thunderstorms" and affected regional practices of "hunting, trapping, trekking, and burning;"

after the arrival of agricultural newcomers, harvests could be added to activities threatened by these fires, meaning that "fire codes seeking to regulate burning were among the earliest laws passed."[40] Pyne argues that the warning may also indicate a broader settler indifference to prairie fires, believing they would cease to be a problem as settlements matured and expanded.[41]

Though the Manitoba Statutes established the power of a Provincial Fire Commissioner in 1876, it does not appear that anyone was appointed. Instead, local brigades were authorized to fine anyone caught setting prairie fires and allowed them to keep half of the money collected.[42] It would appear that Mennonites recognized not only the provincial authority of Métis people such as Premier Norquay and MLA James McKay, who accompanied Lord Dufferin, but also the regional, on-the-ground authority of local Métis communities over their own land-use practices.

Not only did early Mennonite memoirs and government directives indicate an awareness of the Métis presence on the prairies, but so did letters and articles in their own newspapers. The *Mennonitische Rundschau*, for example, included an update of the historic 1885 Northwest Resistance in present-day Saskatchewan in every issue from the rebellion's inception through to the trial, execution, and burial of the rebellion's main protagonist, Louis Riel, between April and December of that year. In 1885, the *Rundschau* was still under its first editor, John F. Harms, and content selection was based on what was submitted.

Most contributors were Mennonites sending in local news items, but the *Rundschau* also had access to wire services for news items and so it included articles from other newspapers and periodicals. [43] Harms had a variety of sources and access to different news outlets. The updates throughout 1885 were from Battleford, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Quebec, St. Paul, London, Batoche, Chippewayan Mission, Regina, and Toronto. The *Rundschau* contains a lot of information and it is hard to say exactly what Harms' selection process was; nevertheless, the different pieces form a general narrative for the *Rundschau* readers.

That narrative is decidedly pro-government and ambivalent to the Métis. The newspaper, for example, offers no rationale or account for the cause of the 1885 events. Instead, the reports detail those killed by "Indians" and the forts besieged and threatened by "Riel and his mob of rebels."[44] The cumulative effect of the entries is a sense of chaos and disorder.[45] During Riel's trial, the *Rundschau* printed a comment made by controversial Chief Justice Lewis Wallbridge – a known crony of John A. Macdonald – that the

trial would incite "petty jealousies" between French and British interests.[46] The same issue includes a gloss from the content of Quebec newspaper *le Canadien*, which requests that Riel be generously treated. Riel's defense is mentioned a few times in succeeding issues, in the context of upsetting French Canadians against Ontario.

After Riel's execution, the *Rundschau* printed the report from Regina that included Riel's own written words. He says that he will be executed for helping relieve the injustices due to his countrymen. The same issue of the *Rundschau* has a transcription from *The Globe*, which the transcriber calls the "liberal 'Globe' the main English Canadian newspaper."[47] The piece criticizes Macdonald for causing the rebellion and fuelling the "smoldering sparks of racial hatred."[48] The primary concern is that Macdonald had misused his power and made Canada look bad. Riel's burial is the last related news article published in 1885.[49]

The Riel Rebellion comes up again in 1887 and 1888 under the next editor, Maximillian Matuskiwiz. In July 1887, there is news from Winnipeg that Indian Agents have been accused of inhumane behavior and bribery:, indicating that the federal government was not as benevolent toward "Indians" as one might be led to think:

> Until the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion in the Northwest, the Canadian government enjoyed a reputation of benevolence toward the Indians under their protection. One used to compare the Dominion of Canada to the federal government, to the disadvantage of the latter, in fact. But recent revelations indicate the opposite, and Indian Agents are accused on all sides of immorality and corruption. These accusations are expected to exert a disturbing influence on Dominion policy whether or not they can be proven.[50]

This revelation is put in the context of the Riel Rebellion and pontificates that it will disrupt Dominion politics whether the accusations are true or not. The main concern is about disorder leading to rebellion.

In July 1888, a message from Winnipeg suggests that the "half-blood Indians from Batoche" have declared Gabriel Dumont – a significant leader among Métis people and part of their provisional government – their leader and have threatened the government.[51] The message is followed by assurances from Ottawa that it is aware of "the attitude of the half-blood Indians." It notes that the Métis were calm and satisfied that they would receive "support in the spring" and were "now… busy with the fruits of their crops."[52] Significantly, Riel and Métis people are mentioned only when there

are rumors of war and uprising, that is, when the federal government's law and order might be disturbed.

It is hard to say precisely what effect the *Rundschau's* narrative had on Mennonite readers; however, it is interesting to note that it came during the time when Mennonite settlers were developing their own interest in legal rights to land. The 1885 rebellion came just as the Mennonites' vaunted village system started deteriorating because of the changing nature of Mennonite relations to land. Though initially, long standing custom and practices of faith in communal sharing conditioned Mennonite connection to land, it was not long before the primary bonds to land became more individualized. Dominion law, rather than community practices of faith, provide the legitimacy and security of these bonds. Geographer John Warkentin has argued that during the 1880s Mennonite settlers became anxious over land possession, which commitments to nucleated agricultural settlements and equitable distribution of variable land did not assuage.[53] Even though Dominion homestead regulations were amended so that homesteaders could reside in a village instead of directly on their land, entries for quarter-sections were still filled by individuals. Unlike in Russia, communal agreements bore no legal authority, and individuals did not lay claim to private property, so there was no option for leaving the village to farm alone. The homestead law system laid out in the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 was inflexibly oriented to land surveys rather than land quality; a second homestead entry was not possible until 1883 even when arable land was accessible in various random places. Again, this was different in Russia, where both the amount and quality of land was considered in the equitable distribution to individual farmers.[54] According to Warkentin, the Canadian government's legal prescription of individual homesteads was necessary for those interested in commercial farming and land acquisition. But it also related to any Mennonites who were unsure about the ability of their religiously informed social organization to negotiate an economic future in a new land. Thus by the 1880s some Mennonites chose to secure their ties to land through Canadian property laws.

The result, writes Warkentin, was a "psychological change".[55] Mennonites figured out how to efficiently dominate the brute forces of nature but "lost the feeling of affinity with the soil that characterizes the European peasant."[56] And yet, because block settlements made possible an "affinity with the soil," such emotional connections with the land also need to be interpreted as po-

litical relations.[57] The social conditions that made such affinity amenable were also part of the colonial project.

Mennonites were ambivalent about Métis presence and authority during the initial years in which they struggled to adapt their way of life to a new land. Whatever the reception history of the *Rundschau* may be, it can be said that part of the narrative of adaptation at the time cast Métis in the role of rebellion, the function of which both delegitimizes Métis claims to land and strengthens Mennonite attachment through Canada's political control of the land.

Conclusion

Mennonites have exhibited complex interrelationships with land that have been shaped by nature at least as much as by communitarian values, hence the call for environmental histories of Mennonites.[58] Because all ecological relations are political, the meaning of nature is interpreted according to the experiences of the oppressed and dispossessed. Mennonites have had deliberate, self-conscious relationships with land that, as Royden Loewen rightly suggests, should not be judged solely or primarily according to resource management, ecological interference, or environmental harm. Rather, Mennonite environmental imaginations and relationships with land should be judged by the extent to which they both "take responsibility for how their perception of 'the environment' participates in political control of ecological systems," as well as take "responsibility for the historical politics that produce their ecological imaginary and the contemporary social practices that it supports."[59] In other words, the romantic idea of being "close to the soil," and how that pertains to both faith and agriculture needs to be interpreted within the context of Canadian colonialism rather than within ecological or theological ideals concerning human relations with nature and how those relations might inform land-use practices.

Mennonite relations to land in Manitoba were formed not only through settlement patterns and agricultural efficiency, but also by securing their ties to land through the legitimacy of Dominion claims to land.[60] One way these ties were secured was through the narration of what was referred to as the Riel Rebellion. It is one of the ironies of Canadian democracy that it increased the religious freedom enjoyed by immigrants like the Mennonites by diminishing Indigenous sovereignty. To put it in Dufferin's terms, the

struggle against the forces of nature worked smoothly and harmoniously with the principles of parliamentary government, namely those of settler colonialism. In this equation the Mennonites' religiously facilitated land-based identity was competitive with indigenous relations with land. Mennonite agrarian lifeways in general, and their agricultural practices in particular, should be interpreted within the history of their environment, but the meaning of that environment in Manitoba must be located in Métis history. In other words, an environmental history of Mennonite settlement cannot be separated from the colonial history of Canada. Two central questions for an environmental history of Mennonites should therefore be: "In what ways has colonialism formed our perception of the land?" and, "How might land-use practices take responsibility for the historical politics this perception underwrites?"[61]

Notes

1 Di Brandt, *So this is the world & here I am in it* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2007), 1-2.

2 *Manitoba Free Press*, August 25, 1877, 1. See also Harriot Georgina Blackwood Dufferin, *My Canadian Journal 1872-8* (London: John Murray, 1891), 884; and, William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony,* 2nd ed. (Winnipeg: CMBC, 1986), 104-106.

3 *Manitoba Free Press*, August 25, 1877, 1.

4 See Lady Dufferin's Journal, 332ff. "The Mennonites are most desirable emigrants."

5 Quoted in E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons ltd., 1955), 79.

6 See Helen Penner Hiebert, "Erdmann Penner Family", *Settlers of the East Reserve: Moving in, Moving out, Staying*, eds. Adolf Ens, Ernest N. Braun, and Henry N. Fast (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2009), 221-246; William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony,* 2nd ed. (Winnipeg: CMBC, 1986), 95ff; John Dyck, *Oberschulze Jakob Peters: 1813-1884: Manitoba Pioneer Leader* (Steinbach, MB: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 1990), 87ff.

7 Gerhard Wiebe, *Causes and History of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia to America*, trans. by Helen Janzen (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1989 [1900]), 2.

8 As Willis Jenkins puts it, "…white power flows through ecological relations." *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious Creativity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 201.

9 The metaphor of settler colonialism as an underlying structure follows Patrick Wolfe's theorization of settler colonialism, which states, "Invasion is a structure, not an event" (388). The processes of settler colonialism are therefore not relegated to the past. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* vol 8/4 (2006): 387-409.

[10] Ryan Eyford, *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 9.

[11] Gerhard Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to Twenty first Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 140-144.

[12] See figure 2 map in Gerhard Ens, "A Tale of Two Reserves," Paper presented at Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society's EastMenn Committee Annual Local History Lectures, Steinbach, MB, May 14, 2016.

[13] 1876 Order in Council quoted in Ens and Sawchuk, 136.

[14] Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 118-126. See map used by Lawrie Barkwell and made by Cameron Stewart and Jim Jerome form the Manitoba Metis Federation at http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/12533.Bios%20Petition%20Cypress%20Hills%20Metis2.pdf

[15] Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 140. See also D.N. Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988)

[16] Some Mennonites have taken this implication seriously and begun to respond to the call for decolonization see Steve Heinrichs, ed., *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 2013). Pleading ignorance is an important part of maintaining control societies insofar as it "excuses Settler participation in the creation of the society of control, since the benefit is the establishment of 'peace and order.'" Adam J. Barker, "The Contemporary Reality of Canadian Imperialism: Settler Colonialism and the Hybrid Colonial State," *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (2009): 325-351 (346).

[17] A trope in some nature writing is "becoming native" to a place. Environmentalists inspired by Wallace Stegner's *Wolf Willow* (New York: Viking Press, 1962) decry the destruction of Indigenous lifeways and take it upon themselves to claim possession of land as its true protectors. The constitutive element of this imagination is claiming ignorance, as it allows the writer to say, "the final curtain has fallen, no handprints of any human perpetrator can be found, criminal action requires no reprimand." Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner," *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 31.

[18] See for example, Chris K. Huebner, *A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge, and Identity* (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2006); and, J. Alexander Sider and Isaac S. Villegas, *Presence: Giving and Receiving God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011).

[19] Leo Driedger, "Native Rebellion and Mennonite Invasion: An Examination of Two Canadian River Valleys," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46 (1972): 290-300.

[20] Lawrence Klippenstein, "Manitoba Metis and Mennonite Immigrants: First Contacts," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 48 (1974): 476-488.

[21] Abe Warkentin, *Reflection on our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the R.M. of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach, MB: Derksen Printers Ltd., 1971), 22. John H. Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (Steinbach, MB: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 2000), 39-40. Francis, *Utopia*, 75.

[22] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 188. Elsewhere Epp wrote on Indige-

nous issues and had a proposed manuscript entitled, "Native Canadians: Portrait of a People in Conflict." See Frank H Epp fonds in the Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

[23] J. M. Hofer (ed. and trans.), "The Diary of Paul Tschetter, 1873 II," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 5 (1931), 198-220. Quote from 204.

[24] "Diary of Paul Tschetter," 203. An unpublished letter written by another delegate, John F. Funk, to his wife while he was on board a Red River Steamer on June 27, 1873 claims that the inhabitants of Manitoba "are nearly all half-breeds, Indians, a poor shiftless race of people, and I can not [sic] recommend it as a good place for settlement." Quoted in Francis, *Utopia*, 42.

[25] Both Driedger and Klippenstein mention Tschetter's opinion of his Métis hosts. For more detailed accounts and descriptions of delegates' perspective on Indigenous peoples in general and Métis in particular see Klippenstein, "Manitoba Metis and Mennonite Immigrants," 476-488.

[26] J.Y. Shantz, *Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, 1873). See Clarence Hiebert, *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need: A Scrapbook about Mennonite Immigrants from Russia 1870-1885* (Winnipeg: Faith and Life, 1974), 30ff.

[27] See Hiebert, *Brothers in Deed*, 32-33. Shantz is presumably referring to scrip, which was actually worth either 160 or 240 acres or dollars. It is unclear what "one hundred and forty," though perhaps he is referring to the townships that were organized into 140 acre lots and supposed to be distributed across 10,000 recipients for a total of 1.4 million acres as promised in the Manitoba Act.

[28] Roger Goulet, a Métis surveyor who opposed Riel, located the Mennonites on the East Reserve. Donovan Giesbrecht, "Metis, Mennonites and the 'Unsettled Prairie,' 1874-1896," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 19 (2001), 103-111. For more on Goulet, see Gerhard Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 138; and Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 192-198.

[29] "The White Horse Plains Outrage," *Manitoba Free Press* July 5, 1874, 4. "The War of the Races Revived," *Manitoba Free Press*, July 5 1874, 5. "La panique de la Prairie du Cheval Blanc," *Le Metis* July 2, 1873, 12. Public Archives of Canada (PAC) *Shortt Papers*, M.G. 30 D45, Vol. 57, Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris, Fort Garry, to the Department of Agriculture, July 7, 1873. See also Henry J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith: The Background in Europe and Development in Canada of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba* (Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), 54-56. For a detailed account of the event from the perspectives of the delegates see Klippenstein, "Manitoba Metis and Mennonite Immigrants," 476-488.

[30] Klaas Peters, *The Bergthaler Mennonites*, trans. by Margaret Loewen Reimer (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1988 [1890]), 15.

[31] Jac. U. Klassen, "The Family Register of David and Aganetha Klassen (1813-1969), manuscript revised, 2; Quoted in Klippenstein, "Manitoba Metis and Mennonite Immigrants," 486. Henry Gerbrandt speculates that the Mennonites were relieved at the efficacy of Canadian law enforcement to pacify the situation. He argues that the skirmish helped "cement" the relationship between the Mennonites and Manitoba: "Not only was the soil

good but so also were its authorities." Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, 56. This event, Gerbrandt surmises, was one of several that helped bind the Mennonites and government officials together, which engendered the decision to accept the privileges offered to them in Ottawa just three weeks later. The incident was pivotal for Mennonite immigration to land that had been previously owned by "Métis and Indians." Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, 55.

[32] Helen Penner Hiebert, "The Erdmann Penner Family," *Settlers of the East Reserve,* eds. Adolf Ens, Ernest N. Braun, and Henry N. Fast (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2009), 232.

[33] Ibid., 233.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 234.

[36] For the role of the railway in Métis dispossession and establishing Canadian sovereignty, see D.N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).

[37] Shelisa Klassen, "'Recruits and Comrades" in a "War of Ambition": Mennonite Immigrants in Late 19th Century Manitoba Newspapers," Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2016.

[38] Manitoba Historical Society of Canada, Rosenort fonds, vol. 1099-26, October 22, 1877.

[39] The Municipal instructions in German: "*die Halbbrueten und Engelander haben sich beschwert Ueber das Steggbrennen und haben gesagt wenn sie einem bekommen werden der Feuer anlaegt derjenige von 50 bis 500 Dollar bezahlen soll. Also wird ernstlich gewarnt dieses zu lassen. Dieses alles haben die Aemter bekannt zu machen*." Ibid.

[40] Stephen J. Pyne, *Awful Splendour: A Fire History of Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 280-281.

[41] "Fires more resembled the threat from wolves or marauding Natives. All parties understood this. They recognized that, as settlement spread, free-burning flame would recede, like wetlands drained and ploughed. This perception essentially correct, was a major reason for the seeming indifference of the population. They assumed that the solution to fire was to quicken settlement." Pyne, *Awful Splendour*, 282.

[42] Manitoba Statutes, *Act to Appoint a Fire Commissioner*, 39 Vic c 5 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1876), 47-50. *Fires Prevention Act*, indicates that an "informer shall be entitled to receive one-half the amount of fine imposed." Manitoba Statutes, 35 Vic c 20 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1872), 47. This is upheld in the 1878 amendment to the Act, see Manitoba Statutes, *Act to Prevent the Extension of Prairie Fires* 41 Vic c 28 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1878), 112-114.

[43] Bert Friesen, "MR Editors: The First Four Set the Pattern," *Mennonite Historian* 17 no. 2 (1991): 5-6.

[44] Mennonite Brethren Archives, File no.12666.00 vol. 5-7 reel 2, *Mennonitische Rundschau* (hereafter *MR*) April 15, 1885, 4.

[45] A central methodological aspect of settler colonialism is casting Indigenous people as disturbers of the peace or causing disorder. As settlers internalize this mentality they assume that "disorder" means "an existence outside of carefully controlled imperial power structures." Barker, "Canadian Imperialism," 345.

[46] *MR*, May 27, 1885, 4.
[47] *MR*, November 25, 1885, 3.
[48] Ibid.
[49] *MR*, December 23, 1885, 3.
[50] Mennonite Brethren Archives vol 8-11 Reel 3 *MR*, July 6, 1887, 3. The original note in German states: "*Bis zum Ausbruch der Riel-Rebellion im Nordwesten genoss die canadische Regierung den Ruf der Menschlichkeit gegen die unter ihrem Schutz stehenden Indianer. Man pflegte Vergleiche zwischen ihr und der Bundesregierung, und zwar zu Ungunsten der Letzteren, anzustellen. Neuere Enthüllungen zeigen jedoch das Gegentheil und die britischen Indianeragenten warden allenthalben der Unsittlichkeit und Bestechlichkeit bezichtigt. Diese Anklagen werden voraussichtlich einen störenden Einfluss auf die Politik der Dominion ausüben, gleichviel ob sie bewiesen werden können oder nicht*."
[51] *MR*, July 18, 1888, 3. The original German states: "Winnipeg, Man., 10. *Juli. Die Halbblut-Indianer von Batchoe, der Schauplatz der frueheren Rebellion, haben ein Manifest erlassen, in dem sie Dumont als ihren Fuehrer verkuendigen und Drohungen gegen die Regierung aussprechen, wenn sie ihnen nicht ihr Recht gewaehre. Diejenigen, welche an der Rebellion teilgenommen haben, verlangten Rueckerstattung ihres Eigentums*."
[52] *MR*, July 18, 1888, 3. The original German states: "Ottawa, Ont., 13. *Juli. White, der Befehlshaber der Northwest Mounted Police versichert, dass keine beunruhigenden Nachrichten ueber die Haltung der Halbblut-Indianer des Nordwestens eingelaufen seien. Die Metis haetten im Fruehjahr Unterstuetzungen erhalten, waeren aber jetzt mit dem Einheimsen ihrer Ernten beschaeftigt. Sie seien ganz zufrieden und ruhig*."
[53] See Warkentin, *Mennonite Settlements*, 137-145. Warkentin reports that there was discontent in both reserves. He asserts that the desire for land accumulation was present very soon after migration, and it was commonly perceived that the way to get more land and use it efficiently was through homesteading. The desire for more land was made possible by technological developments, but the cost of these implements –and the damage they incurred from driving out to commonly-held fields far from the village (143) – and the subsequent acquisition of land, got farmers into debt. Thus, there was the anxiety of the real possibility that the land could be taken over by mortgage companies (138). As anxiety levels rose, so too did open animosity over land use (140) and equal distribution (143), which motivated more individuals to legally possess their land. If a farmer happened to own the best land, he wanted it for himself – even using force to keep others off his land (143). Some churches tried to prevent the movement from village to homestead by excommunicating any who did so. One group appealed to the Department of the Interior to refuse sale of property without the consent of two-thirds of the village (139).
[54] John Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements in Southern Manitoba," *Geographical Review* 49, no. 3 (1959): 345 n10.
[55] Ibid., 144.
[56] Ibid., 143.
[57] Reserves were necessary for colonialism because it was an efficient way to transmute land into private property. Eyford, *White Settler Reserve*, 51.

Segregation and other spatial practices were always inchoate colonialism, a "necessary evil" to achieve "extensive western colonization" (Ibid., 62).

[58] Royden Loewen, "The Quiet on the Land: The Environment in Mennonite Historiography," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (2005): 151-164.

[59] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 203.

[60] Adam Barker demonstrates that settler ties to land were and remain mediated by a history of oppression that continues to disrupt Indigenous ties to land. Thus, ongoing Indigenous "claims to land and self-determination continue to undermine the legitimacy of Canadian authority and hegemony" (325). Following Anthony Hall, settlers experience these claims as a "crisis of legitimacy." See Barker, "Canadian Imperialism," 325-351.

[61] Thanks to Iain Gillis, Jasmin Hirschberg, Matthieu Martin, and Kim Misfeldt for their consultation and translation of the *Rundschau*.