

Blossoms and Borders:  
Cultivating Apples and a Modern Countryside in the Pacific Northwest,  
1890-2001

by

Jason Patrick Bennett  
B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1993  
M.A., Simon Fraser University, 1996

A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of History

© Jason Patrick Bennett, 2008  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by  
photocopying or other means, without the permission of the author.

Blossoms and Borders:  
Cultivating Apples and a Modern Countryside in the Pacific Northwest,  
1890-2001

by

Jason Patrick Bennett  
B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1993  
M.A., Simon Fraser University, 1996

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Patricia E. Roy, Supervisor  
(Department of History)

Dr. John Lutz, Departmental Member  
(Department of History)

Dr. Lorne Hammond, Departmental Member  
(Department of History)

Dr. Larry McCann, Outside Member  
(Department of Geography)

Dr. Ruth Sandwell, External Examiner  
(Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – University of Toronto)

**Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Patricia E. Roy, Supervisor  
(Department of History)

Dr. John Lutz, Departmental Member  
(Department of History)

Dr. Lorne Hammond, Departmental Member  
(Department of History)

Dr. Larry McCann, Outside Member  
(Department of Geography)

Dr. Ruth Sandwell, External Examiner  
(Ontario Institute for Studies in Education - University of Toronto)

**ABSTRACT**

At the turn of the twentieth century, apples served as a catalyst for far-reaching social and environmental change in the North American West. As people debated the future of North American society as a rural or urban civilization, rural advocates found their answer in horticulture. Steadfast in their conviction that urban environments were corrupt, immoral, and disordered, people on both sides of the international boundary engaged in a boisterous promotional campaign that culminated with the creation of an orcharding landscape that spanned British Columbia, Washington State, and Oregon. Consequently, countless communities found new purpose or came into existence organized around the cultivation of apples and other assorted fruits. Fully aware of negative stereotypes that depicted farming as backwards and unfulfilling, horticulturists argued that fruit farming would lead to the creation of a modern countryside. Guided by scientific agriculture, refined and intelligent settlers would transform rural life by uniting in partnership with “Dame Nature,” leading to

bountiful harvests as nature was finished to its “intended end.” As a result, the orcharding landscape would organize an alternative modernity that stood in juxtaposition to the urban-industrial axis of development. Despite their location in different political projects, fruit farmers on either side of the International Boundary bore striking affinities that were affirmed and reinforced through publications, associations, exhibitions, and educational initiatives, underlining the significance of the border as a vantage to appreciate divisions as well as continuities. While the creation of a modern countryside was sustained by high hopes, growers did not anticipate that nature’s bounty would in many instances stand as a curse rather than a blessing. Through two world wars, growers wrestled with the changing contours of rural life, particularly as it related to rural growth. While orcharding endured, its original conception as the nucleus of a progressive and middle class rural society did not.

## *Table of Contents*

Title Page	i
Supervisor Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Illustrations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
1 The Call of Eden: Environmental Transformation in the Pacific Northwest	31
2 Fruitful Empires: The Contours of Anglo-Canadian and American Colonization	64
3 “A new interest in this oldest of arts and youngest of sciences”: Agriculture and Children’s Education in the Modern Countryside	110
4 Staging a Modern Paradise: Exhibits and the Display of Nature, Progress, & Consumption	151
5 “From shiftless fruit tramps to a respected seasonal reservoir of people”: Migratory Labour, Science, and Community Identity	195
6 Bounty Unbound: Shifting Ideals and Excessive Nature in the Modern Countryside	246
7 “A Dream of A.D. 2000 – What We Have Missed”: Horticulture in the New Millennium	282
Conclusion	315
Bibliography	326

## *List of Illustrations*

Figure 1: Map of the Pacific Northwest	xi
Figure 2: Blossoms in the Okanagan – Occidental Fruit, circa 1950	2
Figure 3: A promotional pamphlet, circa 1910	74
Figure 4: The young woman frames the bounty of the land	76
Figure 5: Five girls in two orchards	82
Figure 6: Well-built bungalows and clean orchards	86
Figure 7: Womanly blossoms in Colville, Washington	88
Figure 8: Refined and modern; an orchardist automobile	89
Figure 9: Teachers and gardens	124
Figure 10: Carloads of fruit, circa 1911	152
Figure 11: Regional competition at Spokane	161
Figure 12: The beauty of order	175
Figure 13: Skookum apple label, circa 1930s	188
Figure 14: Big box, big promotion	191
Figure 15: Lending a hand with prolific nature, 1912	204
Figure 16: A Critical Transient	239
Figure 17: Running water allows for a clean shave	241
Figure 18: Enjoying some quality time	241
Figure 19: Regatta in the Orchard City	252
Figure 20: A Young Dwarf Orchard	307

## *Acknowledgements*

Writing is both a solitary endeavour and a collective process. Even when shut downstairs late at night searching for words, I was never alone in my thoughts. The History Department at the University of Victoria was a fantastic intellectual and social environment, and made for a rewarding and memorable graduate experience. Thanks to Eric Sager, Peter Baskerville, and Brian Dippie for fostering inquiry, debate, and curiosity in their respective capacities. During my time at UVic as a graduate student and sessional, the History Department staff was cordial, patient, and forgiving as I navigated administrative hurdles – thank you to Karen McIvor and Karen Hickton.

In fostering my intellectual development, Lorne Hammond played a prominent role in providing for an extensive and stimulating examination of environmental history, both as a field supervisor and as a committee member. It is a rare talent that can effortlessly balance an extensive knowledge of synthesizer music and technology beside the ins and outs of environmental historiography – thank you Lorne. A deep debt of gratitude must be extended to my supervisor, Patricia Roy. If not for her instrumental advocacy and support, this project may never have begun. Similarly, her understanding and patience in shepherding my work through its development in Victoria and Ottawa is deeply appreciated. I have benefited enormously from her keen eye and intellectual guidance – thank you Pat. I also profited from the enthusiasm and intellectual prodding of my remaining committee members, John Lutz, Larry McCann, and Ruth Sandwell – thank you all.

Financial support played a crucial role in supporting my research endeavours. I must thank the Department of History for their support in the form of a departmental fellowship at the beginning of my studies, as well as the University of Victoria for a Doctoral Fellowship. Similarly, I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for supporting my work with a Doctoral Fellowship. The support of the British Columbia Heritage Trust is also appreciated. Additionally, I am thankful for the Donald J. Sterling Research Fellowship from the Oregon Historical Society which allowed me to visit Portland for further research.

In the course of my work, I relied upon a number of dedicated and passionate professionals who made my journey through the Pacific Northwest rewarding and memorable. I would like to extend a heart-felt thanks to the staff of the Kelowna Public Archives, Michael Siebol at the Yakima Valley Museum, the staff of the Southern Oregon Historical Society in Medford, and Richard Engeman and all the staff at the Oregon Historical Society. Thanks also to the staff at the British Columbia Archives in Victoria, the Washington State Archives in Olympia and Ellensburg, and the Oregon State Archives in Salem. Finally, thank you to the staff at Library and Archives Canada, the Agricultural Library at the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food as well as the National Archives and Records Administration in Maryland, Virginia and Seattle, Washington.

Before completing my work, my family relocated to Ottawa where I had the privilege of joining the staff at Library and Archives Canada as a government records archivist. Juggling academic and archival work was challenging, but the professional support of colleagues at crucial points during the final stages of this process was invaluable. I wish to thank my friends at LAC for their continuing interest and support. And I would like to extend

a special thanks to Jay Gilbert, Geneviève Allard, and Nick Nguyen who were instrumental in providing me the time to focus on completing this project.

As much as research and writing occurs in isolation, it is never done far from friends and family. Dennis Pilon and Dann Hoxsey remained unflappable through the course of my work, opening their home to my forays into Toronto and most recently, Victoria. Kevin Demers also made the graduate experience in Victoria rewarding and never complained about hearing academic stories time and again. In Ottawa, Jim Opp and John Walsh made Carleton University a great place to work and discuss my research. My mother and stepfather, Annalies and Peter Neumann, always remained engaged with tracking my progress and offered endless encouragement. My father, Spook Bennett, was equally keen in receiving updates about my work and was deeply supportive at every stage. My two brothers, Jeremy and Jamie, also helped me along the way. I also owe a great deal to my grandparents – Mike and Mimi Prietchuk, Marie and Gordon Bennett – whose unyielding support for education made a lasting impression on me, and whose decision to move to the Okanagan after the Second World War forms the beginning of my personal story in the Valley.

Just as there are two sides to every coin, so too are there two sides to my young family. My wife's extended family has been keenly passionate about my studies, and over the years, the interest and words of support offered by Don and Paulette Evans, as well as from my brothers- and sisters-in-law, made my scholastic endeavours more enjoyable. Although under the age of four, my two daughters, Gillian and Gwen, offered their own brand of youthful encouragement, and on more than one occasion turned paper clips into toys and chapter drafts into colouring paper. And of course, not enough thanks can be given to Jen Evans, who not only tackled countless afternoons and evenings with me missing in action

stuck in the basement, but who also endured childbirth and the unspeakable challenges of late nights and early mornings, to say nothing of the daily frenetic pace of life chasing after two girls and balancing her own academic career. Her intellectual inquisitiveness and emotional support shaped my work in immeasurable ways, and she shared in my affection for fruit from the first time we stood together early one morning in a backyard Okanagan orchard, eating from the tree.

Thank you, Jen.

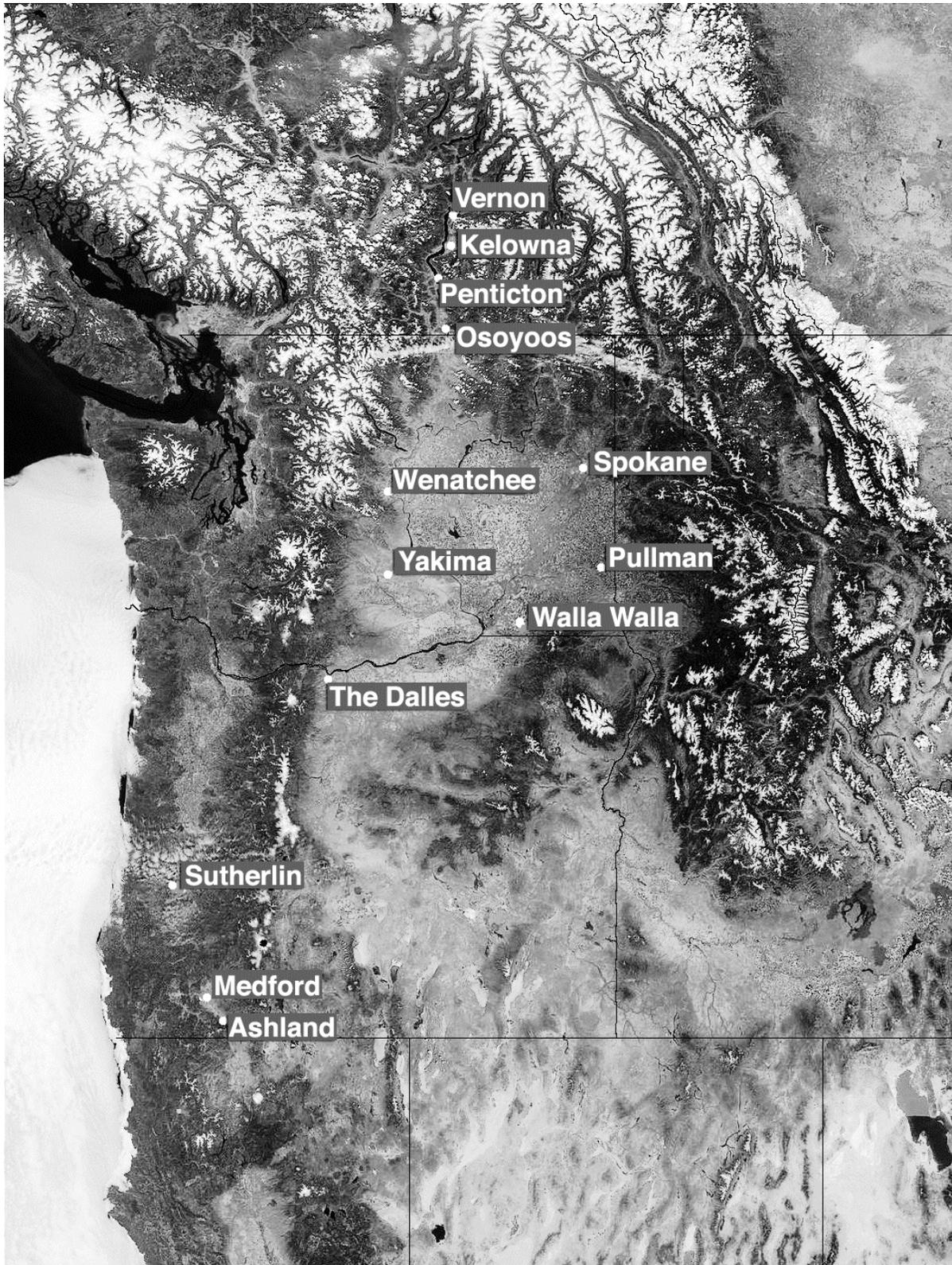


Figure 1: Map of the Pacific Northwest. Original Image National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Reprinted with Permission.

## *Introduction*

Show me your garden, and I shall tell you what you are.  
~Alfred Austin (1835-1913)

There were plenty of orchards to see on our family's road trips to Spokane. Of course, to three children the drive from Kelowna could be a long one, but the promise of what lay at the end – the chance to buy real *Milky Way* chocolate bars and the latest *Star Wars* toys before they were available in Canada – was usually enough to offer a momentary reprieve from the monotony of an all-too familiar landscape until we finally crossed the border. The first leg of the journey featured a horizon of mountains stretching up from the eastern shore of Okanagan Lake as our highway to the west passed by hills of neatly-rowed trees and the occasional roadside stand with hand-painted placards advertising the prices for seasonal fruit. South of Penticton, the highway snaked by Skaha Lake with fruit farms visible in the distance. But when Osoyoos Lake came into view, we gained our second wind. Once we finally arrived at the port of entry, we prepared ourselves for the moment of crossing into Washington state and a different country. What made the border particularly thrilling was the fact that by simply moving past the customs booth, the same landscape and roadway became “different.” However, the view from the car was so similar – the land, the orchards, the lake – that road signs displaying speeds in miles per hour instead of kilometres provided the necessary reassurance that we had in fact entered into something new.

Growing up in the heart of the Okanagan Valley invariably reinforced the sense of difference and continuity that defined my earliest border experiences. The spring's canopy of

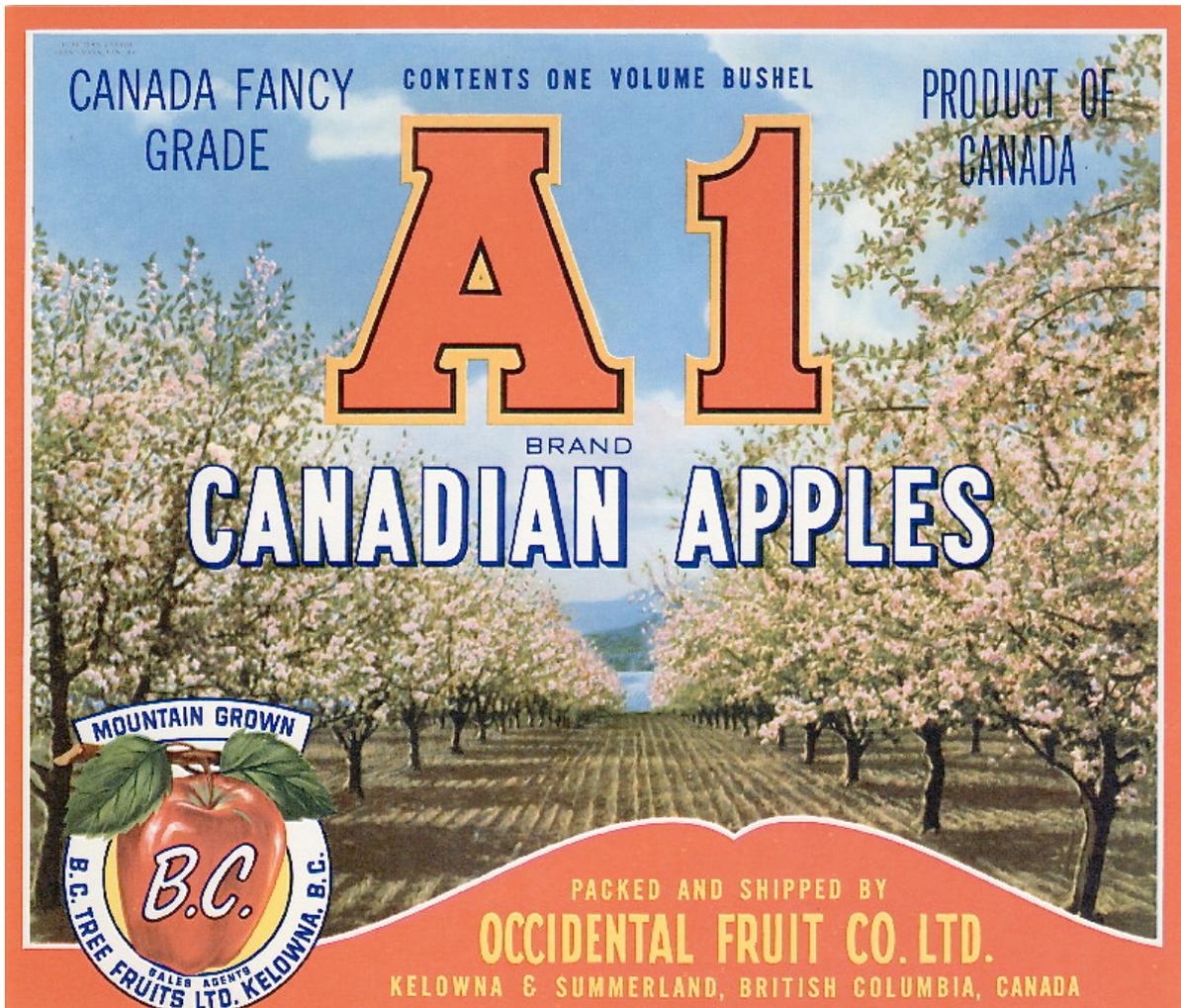


Figure 2: Blossoms in the Okanagan – Occidental Fruit, circa 1950.

pink and white blossoms was always captivating, but by autumn, appeals by growers for government assistance in light of depressed prices and razor-thin returns tempered the romance of life among the trees. Nevertheless, Kelowna was fiercely proud of its claim to the fruit industry, and the numerous orchards that lined the road to my house confirmed its legitimacy. Naturally, I believed that rival claims of importance from places like Vernon to be mere jealousies, but I was nevertheless conscious of the fact that fruit farming and its associated sights and sounds extended far beyond my own locale. When not travelling to Spokane, news about Washington state's fruit industry reminded us that orchardists grew

apples “down there,” although accusations of dumping fruit in Canadian markets at bottom-barrel prices invariably cast them in a less-than-favourable light.

Apples were not the only fruit grown in the Okanagan, but they were by far the most common. Popularized in tourist postcards depicting an orchardist hauling a giant McIntosh under the caption “They grow them big here,” photo-enhanced apples provided a colourful metaphor of the region’s reliance on the fruit. Generally, Kelowna-area growers largely shunned soft fruits such as peaches, apricots, and cherries in favour of a more hardy and bruise-resistant crop, validating the truth of such larger-than-life mementos. Indeed, the prominence of orcharding left an indelible mark upon the land, creating in turn an almost timeless quality to its practice. The early spring pruning, the blossoms, the anticipation, and finally the rusty-red wooden bins filled with apples provided a familiar confirmation of the passing seasons. As a symbol, the ubiquitous apple found its way into everything from hockey club jerseys to beachside concession stands. Consequently, as the Okanagan’s horticultural character increasingly gave way to suburban housing and commercial development, there was a seeming unnaturalness to a process where cement foundations could displace shaded groves. But as I delved deeper into the history of fruit farming, it became increasingly clear that the line between natural and unnatural was not entirely firm since the orcharding landscape was itself a development marked by cement canals, wooden aqueducts, and carefully rowed saplings. Even more importantly, it became clear that concluding my analysis at the international boundary was, much like the border itself, arbitrary. From the vantage of the land, its settlement, and ultimately the ideas and people that gave it form, the story of the garden transcended political frontiers. Like my childhood

crossings, I became increasingly convinced that as much as the border marked a meaningful division, it also provided a vantage to appreciate the continuities as well.

Amidst historical images of prairie homesteaders, West Coast bushwackers, and Inland hard-rock miners, the dawn of the twentieth century bore witness to a dramatic alteration of social and natural landscapes in the North American West with the large-scale establishment of horticulture. Lured by government officials, boosters, fellow settlers, and the land itself, middle-class newcomers to southern Oregon, eastern Washington, and southern British Columbia aspired to create a modern countryside free from the excesses of urban-industrial development. Unlike cereal agriculture, fruit farming was extolled as the rightful domain of industrious “white” men possessing keen intelligence and cultured refinement. In tending their orchards, farmers on both sides of the border demonstrated their commitment to modernity by practicing scientific agriculture, a method that promised progressive citizenship and generous harvests. Despite the impact of competing nation-building projects, the orcharding landscape fostered a trans-border identity that sprang to life in bureaucratic directives, scientific bulletins, academic addresses, and orchardist associations by offering Americans and Canadians in the region a shared colonial and ecological language to measure their heady successes as well as their ultimate failures.

This dissertation is, in its most basic form, a history of blossoms and borders. It takes as its starting point that landscapes are the product of human interventions, whether in the form of farms or crossing posts, and that as a consequence, “any landscape, rightly seen, reveals social values.”<sup>1</sup> In this regard, the dissertation is not a comprehensive economic history of the apple growing industry. Readers seeking systematic accounts of financial

---

<sup>1</sup> Roderick Nash, “The State of Environmental History,” in *The State of American History*, ed. Herbert J. Bass (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 250.

investments in orchard and orchard infrastructure, a statistical analysis of production, or a detailed explanation of organized marketing problems must look elsewhere. My interest lies in addressing what might be called the “irrational” aspects of horticulture, elements that are typically overlooked within the aforementioned approaches. To that end, I am concerned primarily with examining the cultural and ecological relationships that ultimately gave form to a trans-border horticultural community. The orcharding landscape, in essence, gave coherence and collective expression to a series of ideas, attitudes, and values forged in the context of colonization and sweeping social, economic, and technological changes within North American society. At the same time, I am also concerned with how “the reshaped environment presents a new set of possibilities for cultural reproduction, thus setting up a new cycle of mutual determination” or transformation between the cultural and ecological.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, if borders represent a liminal experience that is neither wholly of one side or the other, then my theoretical approach could be appropriately described as forming a link with existing scholarship, while providing a unique context to appreciate them anew. Grounded in an interdisciplinary framework that draws on insights from borderlands studies, cultural geography, environmental history, post-colonial studies, and agricultural history, my dissertation illustrates the myriad ways in which people promoted or resisted the creation of an orcharding landscape, and the cultural and ecological consequences that flowed from that process.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, North Americans were increasingly preoccupied with defining another kind of border – the line between urban and rural society. And like many demarcations, its application was often easier in theory than in practice.

---

<sup>2</sup> William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 13.

Increasing immigration, capitalist innovations, emerging industries, and new technologies in communication and transportation typified an era of modernity marked by “great business enterprises, great corporations, great rivalries.”<sup>3</sup> Against this dynamic backdrop, the looming question on both sides of the rural/urban axis was which side would lay claim to progress and steer the future development of the continent both in terms of its social organization and values. While the answer seems patently clear today, governments and citizens on both sides of the international border stood at an intellectual crossroads as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

Commentators in both countries shared an affinity in their public dialogue about the potential pitfalls of unbridled progress. They linked industry with overcrowded cities, class strife, and social instability while they emphasized the city’s association with moral failings and temptations. Some believed that urban life could be improved with a plethora of initiatives ranging from landscape design to sanitation.<sup>4</sup> To others, such superficial efforts failed to address the fundamental problem that true human progress could not be achieved as long as people remained alienated from the natural world. The solution, simply put, was to re-establish a connection with nature in the form of an alternative modernity that would lead human society away from the pitfalls of urban-industrial progress.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, horticulture emerged as a unique opportunity to embrace both the natural wonder of the world and the rational management of nature’s resources by transforming vast stretches of territory into what settlers self-consciously described as an empire. Defined by an abiding faith in the rise of science and

---

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Historical Society (OHS), Scrapbook 131, 1 February 1903, Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, 84.

<sup>4</sup> Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Schribner, 1999) and Irving D. Fisher, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Planning Movement in the United States* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986).

technology to accomplish these goals, fruit farming tapped directly into the reformation spirit of the Progressive Era in combating the excesses of industrialization and corporate domination. Central to the character of the orcharding landscape was the belief that the ascendancy of nature and science in peaceful union, carefully managed by progressive farmers, assured the purity of race and the absence of labour strife.

Similarly, rural advocates were only too familiar with the deficiencies of the country – the lack of amenities, the relative isolation, and the poor agricultural practices that rendered rural life deficient. Consequently, by fusing the benefits of nature with the advances of scientific knowledge, orchardists believed that their vocation formed the foundation of a new progressive civilization. Thus, the establishment of fruit farming in the Pacific Northwest was nothing less than the creation of a new rural society, one that not only promised to be a meaningful alternative to urban life, but one that also sought to transform the countryside into a wellspring of human advancement.

My dissertation explores the interrelationship of fruit farming, science, and nature in a comparative analysis of Canadian and American experiences. By doing so, I hope to expand our frame of reference and gain insight into how these promoters and settlers imagined themselves and their relations to their natural surroundings both locally and across “the Boundary.” To this end, the 1846 agreement between Britain and the United States to extend the border along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel and through the disputed Oregon country both ignored the territorial realities of several First Nations with profound consequences and subsequently fostered an isolationist tendency in American and Canadian historiography. In short, the convenience of the border in framing national stories has obscured cross-border influences

and linked histories. The establishment of fruit farming communities throughout the region is one such “linked history” that demands further attention.

In his appraisal of western borders, Richard White argues that “the geographical boundaries of the American West were not naturally determined; they were politically determined” by human will and conflict and essentially formed “arbitrary lines drawn on a map.”<sup>5</sup> Over time, their effect can be routinized, almost naturalized, but when viewed from the vantage of other peoples or the land itself, boundaries like the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel can also appear random, illogical, and permeable since “so identical is the landscape on either side that historians who reprint photographs of boundary surveyors at work must take care not to reverse the negatives.”<sup>6</sup> Even a seemingly innocuous term like the “Pacific Northwest” is in fact a political statement that creates a geographical context firmly invested within an American orientation. From a Canadian perspective, the name might logically be applied to the region of British Columbia north of the 54<sup>th</sup> parallel rather than the area below the 49<sup>th</sup>. Nevertheless, in the spirit of its original 19<sup>th</sup> century use, Pacific Northwest will be used in reference to the region of horticultural settlements stretching from Vernon in southern British Columbia to Medford in southern Oregon.

Traditionally, nationalist narratives have, to a greater or lesser degree, implicitly embraced a binary opposition that obscured powerful linkages. This is not to say that historical scholarship has remained static. In the United States, Frederick Jackson Turner’s enduring frontier thesis as the cornerstone of traditional Western history has long been challenged by the New Western Historians who favour place over process, change over

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard White, *“It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”*: A History of the American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 3.

<sup>6</sup> John Herd Thompson, “Forward” in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essay on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), xi.

stability, and diversity over uniformity.<sup>7</sup> In the place of the hardy white male pioneer or the violence-prone gunslinger, New Western historians have drawn attention to the Mexican farmer, the African-American soldier, and the varying roles of women within the colonial project.<sup>8</sup> In Canada, the traditional focus on orderly progress from Native to fur trader and finally English agrarian settler with the aid of the surveyor, the railway gang, and the Mountie has similarly been diversified with particularly strong contributions about farm women, Asian immigrants, and African-American pioneers, and especially, First Nations peoples.<sup>9</sup> These influences have also found their way into more regionally-focused treatments of British Columbia and the American Pacific Northwest where traditional narratives of colonization have been complicated with a more textured consideration of its uneven impact upon social, economic, and political development.<sup>10</sup>

The relatively recent emergence of interest in the borderlands of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel provides a needed corrective to the “intellectual isolation and national exceptionalism that has marked work on the U.S. and Canadian Wests.”<sup>11</sup> Although still nascent compared to the American-Mexican literature, recent examples of northern scholarship include Robert Lecker’s *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations*, Sterling Evans’ *The*

---

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick et al., eds., *Trails: Towards a New Western History* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Susan Rhoades Neel, “A place of extremes: Nature, history, and the American West,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 1994 25(4): 488-505; Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Carter, et al., eds., *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West Through Women’s History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); Catherine Cavanaugh & Jeremy Mouat, eds., *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996); Catherine A. Cavanaugh & Randi R. Warne, eds., *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women’s History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000); Lorry Felske and Beverly Rasporich, eds., *Challenging Frontiers: The Canadian West* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004). The historiography on First Nations is extensive but one recent example that has particular relevance for this study is Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* Third Edition (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, “Forward,” xiii.

*Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests*, and Sheila McManus' *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands*.<sup>12</sup> Like other borderland studies, this dissertation will add an interdisciplinary understanding of the region's transboundary history of interactions by offering a case study examination of horticulture. To this end, I am not interested arguing that borders do not matter, but rather, in exploring the ways they do matter.<sup>13</sup> As Victor Konrad suggests, "borderlands exist when shared characteristics set a region apart from the countries that contain it, and residents share more with each other than with members of their respective national cultures...reveal[ing] the ways in which the nation-states blend into each other."<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, this dissertation contributes to existing scholarship by illustrating that the historical construction of political boundaries also entailed what Sheila McManus identified as a parallel fashioning of social boundaries. In the Pacific Northwest, the border marked a political division that was manifested socially between natives and settlers, white and non-white women and men, farmer and labourer. Indeed, these internal boundaries, particularly as they set the progressive orchardist apart, at times mattered more than national boundaries due to a common connection to the orcharding landscape.

In this regard, my work is also influenced by the insights of post-structuralists and cultural geographers who have emphasized the instrumental role of colonial landscapes in

---

<sup>12</sup> Victor Konrad, ed., *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1991) and Sterling Evans, ed., *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> As Richard White warns, the debate is more than the binary decision to keep/discard national and international boundaries since "the real choice is not finding the single historical scale that reflects the world in which we live now, but instead understanding the multiple scales upon which...lives have been lived and how such scales have merged and intersected." Richard White, "The Nationalization of Nature," *Journal of American History* 86 (3) 1999: 976-83.

<sup>14</sup> Victor Konrad, "Common Edges: An Introduction to the Borderlands Anthology," in Lecker, ed., *Borderlands*, viii.

sustaining and perpetuating social hierarchies. As James Duncan argued, landscapes “act as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored.”<sup>15</sup> Other authors have also observed how landscapes establish “a framework for understanding the world,” and are thus enabling as well as constraining in terms of what is judged natural or unnatural, desirable or undesirable.<sup>16</sup> For example, through its incorporation into the orcharding landscape, nature required scientific intelligence and cultural sensitivity from the farmer for its proper cultivation, creating a set of conditions that colonists believed only the “white race” could fulfill. This was particularly relevant for First Nations, the original inhabitants of the land, and Asian immigrants who, by virtue of refashioned nature, were alienated from the land in terms of use and identity. Although environmental contingencies shaped new cultural possibilities for these groups in the orcharding landscape, their marginal position was reinforced by the exclusivity of horticulture. And when non-whites moved towards farming, they threatened not only economic competition, but also community identity.

But the effect of this was not limited to non-whites. As Sheila McManus observed, “being white was not a sufficient precondition; one also had to adhere to particular gender and class norms.”<sup>17</sup> To this end, rural modernity also entailed a re-engineering of rural people. The rigorous demands of scientific agriculture required a new kind of rural citizen which invariably formed another boundary between the labourer and the orchardist, the latter of whom demonstrated his modern pedigree with scientific bulletins and faithful application

---

<sup>15</sup> James S. Duncan, *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan, “Introduction” in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text & Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London: Routledge, 1992), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Sheila McManus, “‘The line which separates’: Race, Gender, and the Alberta-Montana Borderlands, 1862-1892” (Ph.D. diss., York University, 2001), 18.

of progressive agricultural practices. Interestingly, this process of rural renewal also formed a boundary between the earliest orchardist pioneers and more recent arrivals who were more versed in “urban ways.” However, this was not a simple process of urbanites replacing rural residents or of an urban-inspired rationality displacing local knowledge. The lines between rural and urban, consent and resistance were more fluid as other boundaries – geographical, generational – came into play. This convergence of race and class had profound implications for other rural people such as resident and migrant labourers who met community hostility despite their essential role in the agricultural economy. At the same time, the limits of the orcharding landscape were by no means fixed, but were “subject to negotiation, challenge and transformation,” leading to resistance and change in the evolution of the land and its people.<sup>18</sup>

A closer appreciation of landscape is also important for showing the appeal of and responses to horticulture in the region. Margaret Ormsby penned the earliest writings on community development and fruit farming in British Columbia beginning in 1931.<sup>19</sup> Over her distinguished career, she helped professionalize academic interest in the province’s history, and advanced understanding of its political and economic development. Following Ormsby’s efforts, subsequent treatments tended to emphasize the role of shrewd and calculating boosters who capitalized on a middle class longing for country living and hungry for big profits. For example, Paul Koroscil’s examination of community and development in southern British Columbia concludes that the “booster mentality” was the primary engine of

---

<sup>18</sup> Barnes and Duncan, “Introduction,” 8.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Anchoretta Ormsby, “A Study of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.” M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1931. Ormsby’s pivotal work remains her 1958 work *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1958).

change, leading to the rapid and widespread proliferation of orchards through real estate competition and promises of fantastic wealth for prospective settlers.<sup>20</sup> In his evaluation of Arcadia Orchards near Spokane, John Fahey similarly argues that “regional propagandists” in the form of real estate agents conducted sophisticated sales campaigns that used settler yearnings as “grist for sales campaigns.”<sup>21</sup>

More recently, in his analysis of “visions of agriculture” in British Columbia, David Demeritt moves past a purely commercial explanation to highlight the cultural associations and context surrounding horticulture’s expansion as it coalesced in an arcadian vision with its picturesque and spiritual appreciation of nature.<sup>22</sup> This perspective is an important contribution, but his suggestion that the arcadian vision was generally unaffected by capital and technology, and slipped into obscurity due to its fundamentally anachronistic qualities, is incomplete. Ultimately, he fails to consider how these impulses were rearticulated and reinvented through an orcharding landscape rationalized by scientific insight.

I contend that matters of cultural production and receptivity must be re-examined to fully appreciate the attraction and belief in fruit farming as a settlement process and vocation. In an era of fluctuating boundaries, horticulture appealed to settlers and prospective immigrants through its explicit amalgamation of science and nature in sustaining social, economic, and ecological order. More concretely, this appeal lay in the formulation of a middle-class society of culturally and intellectually sophisticated horticulturalists that embodied partnership with nature and the blending of art and science as an expression of modern life. Thus, to be a horticulturalist in this era was more than the narrow act of growing

---

<sup>20</sup> Paul Koroscil, “Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914,” *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5, (1986), 95. Pacific Northwest examples include John Fahey, “Selling the Watered West: Arcadia Orchards,” *Pacific Historical Review* 1993: 455-474.

<sup>21</sup> Fahey, “Selling the Watered West: Arcadia Orchards,” 455-474.

<sup>22</sup> David Demeritt, “Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 108 (Winter) 1995-96: 29-59.

fruit to achieve great wealth or the wish to escape into a pastoral ideal; it also entailed the creation of a new discursive and material landscape forged through the synthesis of nature and rationality.

While race and class had a role in fashioning the orcharding landscape and its attendant boundaries, gender was also a factor. As one community made clear, horticulture's provision of a natural home to "industrious men, beautiful women, and merry children" reveals the centrality of the nuclear family and its prescribed gender roles to the rural project. Feminist theorists have made extensive and convincing arguments about the centrality of gender to the colonial project and how "particular ways of thinking about space and place are tied up with, both directly and indirectly, particular social constructions of gender relations."<sup>23</sup> As a social system, the orcharding landscape legitimized gender roles prescribed by an Anglo-American middle class that appeared increasingly threatened by urbanization and industrialization. The image of industrious farmers tending feminized orchards was a definitive illustration of fruit farming's naturalistic orientation, as was that of cultured women inculcating their children with a superior rural morality. However, a changing environment brought about new demands on men's and women's roles and elicited a range of responses as orcharding families attempted to reconcile their aspirations with a new regime of nature.

Likewise, my dissertation contributes to the historiography concerning conventional depictions of masculinity and western development. Specifically, the act of raising fruit presented men with an alternative masculine archetype hitherto neglected in examinations of a gendered West. At the risk of simplification, historians have explicitly or implicitly

---

<sup>23</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, place and gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 2; quoted in McManus, "'The line which separates,'" 16.

contrasted a masculine “violence” with a feminine “domesticity.” In her ground-breaking book *The Land Before Her*, Annette Kolodny compares men’s violent fantasies in conquering virgin wilderness with women’s dreams of home and community in a cultivated garden.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Glenda Riley echoes a similar theme, arguing in *Women and Nature* that women “created a docile West that could, and should, be gentled” because of a European heritage that “encouraged women to save and protect their families, cultures, and surroundings” in contrast to men’s conditioning to “exploit western lands.”<sup>25</sup> Of course, from an environmental and social perspective, domestication can be just as disruptive and violent as a more overt process of conquering, but my concern is to argue that men were also architects and proponents of a “gentled” West through the vocation of fruit farming.<sup>26</sup> Alongside images of rugged cowboys and manly sportsmen, one must also see visions of intelligent farmers tending their blossoming trees as they transformed the landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

Of course, the process of transformation entailed not only actions, but reactions. In treating nature as an independent actor of historical change, my work contributes to the field of environmental history. Partly due to its distinctive regional characteristics and history, the Pacific Northwest offers fertile ground for innovative studies although the existing scholarship does not exploit the full potential of an environmental approach that in theory transcends political boundaries. Thus, Richard White uses an environmental approach in his community study of Island County, Washington in *Land Use, Environment, and Social*

---

<sup>24</sup> Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

<sup>25</sup> Glenda Riley, *Women and Nature: Saving the “Wild” West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1999), pp. 191 & xiii.

<sup>26</sup> For a compelling textual examination of agricultural domestication and violence, consult Frieda Knobloch, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

*Change*, while William Robbins expands his focus to tell the history of Oregon's development in *Landscapes of Promise*.<sup>27</sup> Dale D. Goble and Paul W. Hirt go one step further with a regional study of environmental change in their edited volume *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*.<sup>28</sup> Diverse in their treatment of subjects ranging from salmon to steel smelters, the latter two volumes nonetheless obscure the scope of environmental change by ending their analysis at the international boundary. This dissertation contributes to environmental history through its trans-boundary focus, thereby validating the discipline's latent argument that the environment can provide a meaningful context to appreciate the scale of human-nature interaction.

As a field of inquiry, agricultural history has been well represented in Canadian and American historiography, particularly because of agriculture's instrumental role in the social and economic development of the North American West. Due to its prominent historical role and the proximity of nature through cultivation, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the earliest environmental histories focused on agriculture. Reflecting this early convergence, the contributions of Donald Worster have been cited as examples of agricultural history, New Western history, and environmental history. A prolific writer, Worster's major works include *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* and *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and Growth in the American West*.<sup>29</sup> In his analysis Worster correctly draws attention to the logic of capitalism as a driving force in the agricultural transformation and ecological degradation of the American West. As a result, Worster describes the Dust Bowl "as the inevitable

---

<sup>27</sup> Richard White, *Land use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980) & William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1880-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Dale D. Goble & Paul W. Hirt, *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) & *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and Growth in the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

outcome of a culture that deliberately, self-consciously, set itself the task of dominating and exploiting the land for all it was worth.”<sup>30</sup> In blaming farmers’ disinclination to adapt to drought, he asserts that it is “nature that gives, and nature that takes away, especially when the land has been pushed beyond its safe limits.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the story of agriculture and the environment follows the arc of growing farmer demands on the land followed by a “rejection” of those demands with environmental ruin and loss.

A focus on horticulture, however, illustrates the need to revise assumptions about farmer attitudes, their view of nature, and the challenges that they consequently faced. In the Pacific Northwest, fruit farmers strove to foster a relationship with nature that differed from the examples of industrial-fuelled exploitation they saw around them. I argue that, contrary to some perspectives, horticulture was a self-conscious form of environmental accommodation, and that the eventual abuses were not merely the result of capitalist exploitation but flowed from an ancient valorization of bounty as an inherent good. The ultimate testament to this difference was the belief that rather than obliterating nature through urban-industrial expansion, orchardists, particularly horticulturalists armed with scientific knowledge, extended the influence of the natural world, added to it, and created a new landscape through the cultivation of fruit.

Until recently, this perspective has not enjoyed much favour among environmental historians who valorized the protection of “pristine nature” as the true demonstration of environmental consciousness. However, the recent debate stemming from William Cronon’s “The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” offered an alternative.

---

<sup>30</sup> Worster, *Dust Bowl*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Other academics, such as James Malin, have contested Worster’s view, particularly in regards to stable ecosystems and farmer culpability. See James C. Malin, *History & Ecology: Studies of the Grassland* ed. Robert P. Swierenga (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

In calling for a rethinking of wilderness or “untamed nature,” Cronon argues that its utility as a heuristic device is flawed and that “we mistake ourselves when we suppose that wilderness can be the solution to our culture’s problematic relationships with the nonhuman world.” As a fundamentally cultural concept with roots in the Romantic tradition, wilderness promotes a false natural/artificial dualism that distances us from considering the nature in other places. “The tree in the garden,” writes Cronon, “is in reality no less other, no less worthy of our wonder and respect, than the tree in an ancient forest...both trees stand apart from us; both share our common world.” In setting aside wilderness, Cronon concludes, “instead, we need to embrace the full continuum of a natural landscape that is also cultural.”<sup>32</sup>

In building upon Cronon’s concept of “second nature” or changed environments, Mark Fiege provides a useful conceptual model with his discussion of “hybrid landscapes” in *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West*.<sup>33</sup> Neither wholly natural nor unnatural, creations like an agricultural landscape in Idaho’s irrigated districts “are precisely the kinds of environments from which we can learn the most about our connections to nature” for it is in such places that “we most directly confront the reality of our deeply tangled and problematic relationship to the natural world that we inhabit.”<sup>34</sup> Fiege’s notion of hybridity is equally applicable to the orcharding landscape examined in this study, and helps underscore the futility of facile and ultimately idealistic dichotomies of natural/unnatural environments. However, this is not to suggest that orchardist views or

---

<sup>32</sup> William Cronon, “The Trouble With Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in William Cronon ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, & Co., 1995), 69-90.

<sup>33</sup> The concept of “hybridity” has significant antecedents. In his 1959 landmark work, Leo Marx examines the cultural power of the pastoral ideal in literature and American life and the resultant tension between nature and technology in contemporary America. However, his focus on “contradiction” suggests a form of irrevocability that “hybrid” does not. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>34</sup> Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 10.

actions were always benign but rather to recognize that, in their own way, orchardists acted on beliefs that were not exclusively by-products of the capitalist economy, and that the results of their labours were not wholly corrupted perversions of nature.

In a similar vein, Worster's implicit anthropomorphization of vengeful nature punishing misguided farmers follows a familiar environmental trope of people facing jarring change and accommodation through the rubric of dearth. And while fruit farmers certainly experienced their share of diminished or failed crops, they just as often confronted problems when harvests exceeded their expectations. Indeed, the environmental challenges faced by orchardists highlight the need to shift our focus away from dearth to consider the problems posed by bounty. In fact, this ancient concept of bounty – nature's validation of the inherent "goodness" of human effort through plentiful crops – influenced their views and actions towards the natural world. Through the lens of bounty, we see that fruit farmers did not or could not see their relationship as destructive – the fruitful land seemed to validate their faith in scientific agriculture and their belief that they were spurring nature to its intended end. What orchardists ultimately realized is that if scientific agriculture perfected nature, it neglected to conduct a parallel perfection of the economic system within which the farmer operated.

My dissertation also moves beyond a historical assessment that casts rural experience as "anti-modern" shot through with modernist "contradictions." Indeed, the tensions between "modernism" and "anti-modernism" are usually explored in the context of this period as an urban/rural binary. At times an amorphous concept, modernity most typically traces its origins to the Enlightenment, and represents the belief in progress, absolute truth, technocentrism, and the rational standardization of knowledge and production. In other cases,

it has been described as a “cultural condition” where progress is characterized by instability and change.<sup>35</sup> Within historical writing, the movement towards modernity has been expressed most definitively in the “transition” from a rural-based society to an urban-based one, from farm to factory. The corollary of this perspective is the implicit characterization of rural life as a “pre-modern” phase on the road to urban modernity. By extension, the movement from the city to the country is cast as an “anti-modern” action steeped in hopeless idealism and a naïve avoidance of modern life.

The depiction of rural life as anti-modern in rural historiography is well-entrenched. In *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America*, David Danbom argues that back-to-the-land initiatives were products of “romantic agrarians” that populated America’s cities and were essentially anti-modern vehicles to criticize “a capitalistic, technologically oriented, urban-industrial society.” Similarly, the Country Life Movement included people with a similar outlook, but who ultimately accepted the inevitable urbanization of society and thus worked to ensure through targeted reforms that rural life “could continue to serve the social and economic needs of an urban nation.”<sup>36</sup> Danbom makes a similar argument when he observes that improvement in rural education through “efficiency” was essentially an urban creation. Thus, “reformers hoped that the changes they proposed would lead to the creation of an efficient agriculture which would adequately supplement the larger, increasingly urban and industrial society.”<sup>37</sup> Most problematic is his suggestion that “untrained, undertrained, and incompetent teachers” were authentically “rural” while better training programs and

---

<sup>35</sup> Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> David B. Danbom, “Romantic Agrarianism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Agricultural History* 65 (4) 1991: 1-12. See also David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 168-184

<sup>37</sup> David B. Danbom, “Rural Education Reform and the Country Life Movement, 1900-1920,” *Agricultural History* 53 (2) 1979: 462-474.

better-trained teachers were intrinsically “urban.” Ultimately, Danbom fails to interrogate rural claims of modernity on their own terms and so perpetuates the captivity of rural life to an urbancentric teleology.

In his study of modernity and late Victorian culture, Keith Walden argues that “in the decades around the turn of the century it was hard to escape indications of profound change” representing modernity, “indications that emanated most strongly from the cities, but did not stop at urban boundaries.”<sup>38</sup> But if change is the ultimate benchmark of modernity, it is little wonder that rural advocates proudly laid claim to it when they declared that in the space of a decade, “thousands of acres...of what was formerly a barren waste, have been transformed into thriving fruit raising communities by means of irrigation.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, Walden’s assertion that “becoming modern, as a deliberate goal, was not something most people considered consciously with any consistency” does not adequately capture the self-conscious efforts of government officials, engineers, researchers, educational reformers, and horticulturalists to create a countryside that was thoroughly modern in its orientation and outlook.

At the same time, there is an emerging field of rural scholarship where, as Ruth Sandwell argues, “that curious intellectual slight-of-hand that has allowed ‘modern’ to stand in contrast to ‘rural’ is breaking down.” She quotes Barbara Ching and Gerald Creed who drew attention to the hierarchies implicit in the urban/rural binary that lead to a “systematic devaluation of the rustic as a source of identity.” While rural alternatives to urban-based modernity continue to be devalued by what Sandwell calls the “obsessive modern gaze of the

---

<sup>38</sup> Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 333.

<sup>39</sup> Washington State Archives – Ellensburg (WSA-E), CE32/1-1, State Department of Agriculture, Reports, 1891-1922,

city,” she agrees that there continues to be meaning and purpose in diverse rural identities.<sup>40</sup> Her own edited volume *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* illustrates through treatments of dryland farming, cougars, aboriginal women, and community formation that “rural is emerging as a place whose meaning and significance is both variable and negotiated on geographically – and historically – specific terms.”<sup>41</sup> Through an examination of the orcharding landscape, this dissertation will contribute to a re-evaluation of the historical assumptions that underlie our understanding of modernity and the rural/urban axis.

In his environmental study *Creating a Modern Countryside: Liberalism and Land Resettlement in British Columbia*, James Murton advances this thesis in demonstrating that the colonial resettlement of British Columbia was a process intimately bound up in the shift from classical liberalism to the emergence of a “new liberalism” that attempted to reconcile the tension between the individual and society inherent in its classic incarnation. Guided by science and rational management, new liberals “wanted to order and control [nature]” in pursuit of an alternative modernity.<sup>42</sup> Through his work, Murton provides a compelling examination of the liberal state's interest in remaking nature to sustain a modern countryside in British Columbia, and the state's ultimate shortcomings in achieving those objectives in light of a changed environment. However, in arguing that “the BC government's attempt to manage the province's rural environment began with the challenge posed by the return of the veterans of the First World War,” Murton postdates a process with roots that extended into

---

<sup>40</sup> Barabara Ching and Gerald Creed, eds., *Knowing Your Place: Rural Identities and Cultural Hierarchy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), quoted in Ruth Sandwell, “Introduction,” in *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Sandwell, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>42</sup> James Murton, *Creating a Modern Countryside: Liberalism and Land Resettlement in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

the nineteenth century. During this prewar period, state support for horticultural priorities was vital in facilitating the development of a modern countryside. Additionally, these efforts received impetus from the advocacy and critical work of farmers themselves in making rural life modern. Indeed, the end of the Great War did not so much give birth to this process, but rather provided additional impetus to an on-going process in light of returning soldiers and fears about reintegration in the shadow of revolution and worker militancy. For while veterans resettled on state-sponsored land projects in places such as Oliver, many more returned to orcharding communities throughout the Pacific Northwest to continue the work of rural modernism that they began before the conflict. Even through the profound challenges of the Great Depression, growers persisted in their cause of creating a modern countryside, albeit one that increasingly interpreted progress through restraining, rather than facilitating, rural growth. However, with the re-emergent demands of a command economy during the Second World War, orchardist faith in the cause of rural modernism was restored, only to shift again in the post-war period.

Once attention is directed to fruit farming and rural life in general, the need to reappraise assumptions about modernity becomes apparent. Reflections of paradise were traded and sold in an imperial market system that was firmly grounded in the modern project. In many arid locales, fruit farms required such modern technology as integrated irrigation systems, not to mention the steam and rail that made them accessible to the outside world. Similarly, the rustic and seemingly anti-modern appeal of idyllic days tending fruit contrasted with the modern demands of inspection, precise packing, labeling, and marketing, to say nothing of the vast institutional infrastructure that provided bulletins and timely direction. Clearly, orchardists did not reject the trappings of science and commerce outright,

but instead injected themselves into a central debate about what form modern ideals would take. In this way, the appeal of fruit farming was not just an “anti-modern” reaction to industrialization, but an attempt by people of rural sympathies to propose a different vision of modernism that competed with the unbridled industrial model that is often taken as the ultimate and sole expression of modernism. Ultimately, this articulation of an alternative modernity animated the process of environmental change and self-identification among settlers.

The question of whether or not orchardists ever fully adopted the modern principles they expounded in local associations or received from scientific experts and government officials is another matter. Like a latter-day fall from grace, the image of the humble farmer transformed into the semi-rural businessman ensnared in the tentacles of urban logic is a powerful motif in historical studies such as Richard Hofstadter’s *The Age of Reform*.<sup>43</sup> Whether dealing with new social exigencies as the result of war or responding to environmental challenges, orchardists grappled continually with the form and content of modernity in their daily lives. Thus, they never fully embodied the outlook or actions of the shrewd capitalists outlined by Hofstadter and others.<sup>44</sup>

The constituent elements of the orcharding landscape, both material and discursive, were manifold and varied in scale, and in many ways that complexity is reflected in the range of sources used in this study. From the outset, I hoped to maintain a balance in devoting equal attention to horticulture in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, but once the actual research began, I realized that the difficulty in locating equivalent source material in

---

<sup>43</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 1960).

<sup>44</sup> Ian Macpherson and John Herd Thompson, “The Business of Agriculture: Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of ‘Business Methods,’ 1880-1950,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992): 475-496.

all instances rendered this objective impossible. In the case of Oregon, the discovery that the state archive did not possess a great deal of agricultural or horticultural material for the period under investigation was particularly disappointing. Consequently, within a chapter, particular regions in my study may receive more attention than others. However, by virtue of my trans-boundary approach, the continuities in the orcharding landscape can permit meaningful extrapolation.

All levels of government played a role in the creation and perpetuation of the fruit industry so I conducted research in both national capitals as well as the provincial/state capitals of British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. Where possible, I examined municipal records as well. I also consulted local community archives in Kelowna, Yakima, and Medford. These sources generally related to government action in the field of agriculture or horticulture, and ranged from published annual reports of relevant departments or agencies to archival records consisting primarily of departmental correspondence. However, I also consulted government records pertaining to labour relations, education, Indian affairs, exhibitions, and irrigation. Using these sources allowed for the analysis of government objectives or goals, their self-assessments in meeting stated objectives, and the identification of potential obstacles. Additionally, archival sources pertaining to government agents in the fulfillment of their duties allowed for an appraisal of front-line impressions and observations and gave glimpses into attitudes and concerns of the general public.

In local community archives in Kelowna, Yakima, and Medford and in a few cases, state archives, I read personal papers, diaries, and transcribed oral interviews, which proved particularly useful for understanding the orchardists' experiences. Judicious use of other published materials, such as local newspapers, allowed for the consideration of community

ideals, particularly in terms of editorials and letters selected for publication. The horticultural publications that circulated in the region offered similar insights. Chief among them, the Oregon-based publication *Better Fruit* had the greatest coverage for the years under examination and was particularly valuable because it had readers in both the United States and Canada and covered events throughout the trans-boundary region. Overall, the voices of orchardists are over-represented in these materials, whereas First Nations, non-white immigrant groups, and migrant labourers are under-represented. Consequently, where possible I incorporated secondary sources that contained transcribed oral interviews or written testimonials to better situate these constituencies historically.

The last major body of sources for my work were promotional pamphlets that date from the height of immigration into the region between the years 1905 and 1920. The richest repository for these sources was the Library of Congress, although some promotional pamphlets were also found at local, state, and provincial archives. Narrowly defined, these brochures were advertising tools designed to facilitate a commercial transaction – the purchase of orchard plots. But they were also tools of colonization; discursive representations of an ideal and exclusive society; declarations of a buoyant confidence in science and nature; and expressions of an alternative modernity.

I begin with an examination of a region in transition from a landscape of Native identity to one that was increasingly fractured within the colonization process in “The Call of Eden: Environmental Transformation in the Pacific Northwest.” Fur traders, missionaries, and settlers embarked upon the creation of new landscapes and boundaries that, despite their differences, also shared a common ecological actor – the domesticated apple tree. The tree itself, in its simplest form, was an agent of cultural and ecological change, but also illustrated

the role of environmental accommodation and its latent potential for a more radical redefinition of the land.

Chapter 2, “Fruitful Empires: The Contours of Anglo-Canadian and American Colonization,” analyzes the linkages between imperialism, nature, and science in the dramatic emergence of a new landscape – the orcharding landscape. Fuelled by dramatic social and technological changes as well as wide-ranging debates about the future of North American society, horticulture emerged as a reinvigorated agent of change. Combining new and old, ancient and modern, horticulture represented the articulation of an alternative modernity where rural life would no longer remain the foil for urban-industrial progress. Sustained by a vast array of institutional, financial, and intellectual resources, fruit farming was nothing less than the creation of a new rural society that valorized a partnership between farmer and nature through the insights of agricultural science. Unlike the endless appetite of industrial production and the excesses of urban life, fruit farming expanded nature’s domain with the planting of a blossoming empire while providing for a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world. The sense of order that lay at the heart of the orcharding landscape was also reflected in organization of human affairs, where affluent and intelligent farmers held sway over an elite rural society that was thoroughly modern in composition and outlook. Consequently, horticulture was a vehicle for white, middle class hegemony that marginalized a host of peoples, including the original pioneers.

In using the concept “middle class,” there is necessarily a degree of flexibility in terms of who constituted members of this socio-economic group. Like Gordon Darroch in his examination of an expanding “middling” rural population in nineteenth century Ontario, I

take middle class to include those that possessed property, family, and “respectability.”<sup>45</sup> By aspiring to bypass what one fruit community described as “the raw, crude, ‘country town’ stage entirely,” settlers sought to create and perpetuate a rural middle class sharing common values and comparable levels of wealth. Still, significant variations in fortune and influence existed among community members, which strained the social harmony that orchardists aspired to maintain. Additionally, the different backgrounds and experiences of settlers problematized a common understanding of middle class identity. Nevertheless, the general desire to establish fruit farming districts comprised of financially prosperous white settlers sharing similar cultural tastes form the general basis behind the usage of middle class.

Motivated by confidence and insecurity, rural reformers postulated that the modern countryside required an educational system attuned to this new reality. Chapter 3, “‘A new interest in this oldest of arts and youngest of sciences’: Agriculture and Children’s Education in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest,” addresses the impact of the education reform movement of the time and the ensuing debate about the place of the rural life within it. These efforts culminated with government-financed programs for agricultural education. Despite the different format of these programs in both countries, their common agricultural-centric curricula not only schooled children in agrarian practices and views of nature, but they also linked scientific farming with rural citizenship.

Chapter 4, “Staging a Modern Paradise: Exhibits and the Display of Nature, Progress, & Consumption,” examines horticultural exhibitions as allegorical representations of the orcharding landscape and its ideals. Fruit fairs affirmed a trans-boundary identity that, if only momentarily, diminished the intellectual impact of national borders. With ribbons and perfect

---

<sup>45</sup> Gordon Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario,” *Canadian Historical Review* 79 (4) 1998: 621-659.

specimens of fruit, growers demonstrated the perfectibility of nature for orchardist and non-orchardist alike. Indeed, the educational attributes of the exhibition were another confirmation of horticulture's modern pedigree. In time, the form of the exhibition shifted, but its links to progress remained although the image of a greater rural community suffered in the process because in the long run, the obsession with perfection obscured rather than illuminated nature's role in the orchard.

To be sure, the orcharding landscape was made, but contrary to the idealized vision, farmers were not the sole actors in the drama of rural modernity. Chapter 5, "From shiftless fruit tramps to a respected seasonal reservoir of people': Migratory Labour, Science, and Community Identity" shifts attention to a constituency that was discursively, socially, and economically marginalized in the modern countryside – transient agricultural workers. Undoubtedly, migrants played a vital role in the rural economy in getting nature's bounty from tree to market. However, consistently cast as outsiders, they were a source of community anger and anxiety about health and order. Social scientists and government agencies studied transients but a proposed solution, eliminating them by arranging the efficient procurement and regulation of workers ultimately failed due to their unavoidable centrality to the social and economic of re-engineering the modern countryside.

Chapter 6, "Bounty Unbound: Shifting Ideals and Excessive Nature in the Modern Countryside," traces the impact of social, economic, and ecological change upon the contours of the orcharding landscape. Particular attention is devoted to the continued sustainability of rural modernity as a vision for the human-nature relationship. Farmer unrest, economic instability, and environmental excess conspired to force yet another shift in the landscape,

but the exigencies of both world wars offered a tantalizing but fleeting possibility that the modern countryside, as the basis for growing and dynamic rural society, would endure.

The final chapter, “‘A Dream of A.D. 2000 – What We Have Missed’: Horticulture in the New Millennium,” argues that the undeniable urban-centric orientation of the Pacific Northwest by the end of the twentieth century highlighted in simple terms the failure of orchardists and like-minded proponents to maintain and expand rural society. The reasons for this outcome, however, are more complex. From the measurement of science and technology, orchardists continued to embrace the mantra of innovation as a hallmark of their industry, experimenting with different apple varieties, storage methods, and tree sizes. At the same time, the transition to an urban-based society proved too profound and too far-reaching to be reversed by thousands of families who set out by ship, train, and wagon to grow fruit. But in doing so, these same people created a landscape where blossoms were just as much about the future as they were about the past.

# 1

## *The Call of Eden: Environmental Transformation in the Pacific Northwest*

To venture into the wilderness, one must see it, not as it is, but as it will be.  
~ Carl L. Becker (1873-1945)

On his voyage along the Pacific Coast under the British flag in 1792, Captain George Vancouver marveled at the “luxuriant landscapes” of the Northwest and argued that “through the industry of man” the region would become “the most lovely country that can be imagined; whilst the labour of the inhabitants would be amply rewarded, in the bounties which nature seems ready to bestow on cultivation.”<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, when Vancouver made his enthusiastic observations, he looked past the immediate environment fashioned by First Nations to focus upon a colonized future of what the “luxuriant landscapes” might become. Over one hundred years later, boosters and settlers fulfilled his vision of nature’s bounty by forging a landscape rich with fruit, and in doing so, articulated a new vision for the land and the rural society it sustained.

The colonization of the Pacific Northwest was, at heart, a process of reimagining the land and its meaning for the people that lived on it. In this regard, Vancouver’s prescient assessment of the area can only be properly understood by situating it within the context of Anglo-American imperialism and the ultimate use of agriculture as an instrument of colonization. Of course, alternative images of the land sustained First Nations peoples long

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 52.

before the appearance of Europeans. With an economy based on using the region's plentiful natural resources through harvesting and trade, Plateau peoples forged a landscape that reflected and reinforced Native identity.

As with any historical process, the transformation of the Pacific Northwest by Anglo-American colonizers was uneven and fraught with tensions. Dramatized by naming and mapping, colonization entailed a redefinition of the land's meaning and purpose. European trade brought undeniable wealth to First Nations as they incorporated European goods and practices into daily life. Later, building on indigenous practices and knowledge, First Nations peoples also embraced animal husbandry and agriculture. However, these benefits also carried a steep price for Plateau peoples as a succession of diseases ravaged the area, leaving them vulnerable to the growing impact of colonization that spanned the international boundary. The peoples of the Plateau region would witness more change with the advent of commercial fruit farming in the early twentieth century.

Contrary to Vancouver's implicit assertion that the luxuriant landscapes of his imagination were the natural and logical culmination of human effort, the land always held multiple possibilities that were promoted and contested by the different peoples that lived in it. The landscape created by First Nations reflected the dynamism of indigenous society through the patterns of seasonal resource use and cultural exchange inscribed into the land itself. With the establishment of a permanent Anglo-American presence, the meaning of the landscape shifted once again as profit, Christianity, and agrarian bounty became part of the region's lexicon. Even with the division of the region by the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel in 1846, the experiences of fur traders, missionaries, settlers, and First Nations provided a vantage from which to appreciate the continuities that spanned the international border. Beginning in the

nineteenth century, fur traders provided a common language for viewing the land, as did missionary activity and the proliferation of their mission settlements among First Nations. By mid-century, ranching provided another common bond, as did the active participation of aboriginal peoples in these endeavours.

Similarly, despite their undeniable differences in outlook or concern, these actors were bound together by a common ecological actor – the orchard. Planted at fur posts to promote self-sufficiency and later among missions for agricultural instruction, the fruit tree became a vehicle for ecological and cultural change rather than a passive outgrowth of colonization. By planting orchards and celebrating their pleasing attributes, Anglo-Americans drew on a rich cultural history that provided a further catalyst for the imperial mission. Through human persistence, technological innovation, and environmental accommodation, the creation of an orcharding landscape brought the Pacific Northwest to the cusp of greater change at the dawn of a new century.

Like Captain Vancouver, Anglo-American colonizers were not reshaping a blank environmental slate, but a region long shaped by First Nations.<sup>2</sup> Stretching from the southern interior of British Columbia through eastern Washington and down into western Oregon, the Plateau area is generally a mountainous and arid region drained by several significant river systems including the Fraser, Columbia, Snake, Klamath, and Rogue.<sup>3</sup> Indigenous peoples identified as part of the Plateau cultural area include the Okanagan, Spokane, Nez Perce, Yakama, Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla and Klamath. Comprised of two major linguistic families, Salishan and Penutian, these nations share broad cultural characteristics that were

---

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of explorers, science, and changing images of the West, consult James P. Ronda, “Dreams and discoveries: Exploring the American West, 1760-1815,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 1989 46(1): 145-162; Daniel Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Mary C. Wright, “The Woman’s Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 24 (1) 2003: 1.

reinforced by a common environmental experience and validated through social and economic ties.

Marked by dry grasslands and open forests, the Plateau region is intersected by the Ponderosa Pine, Interior Douglas Fir, and Bunchgrass zones and sustains a variety of ecosystems.<sup>4</sup> Defined by low moisture due to the rain shadow cast by the Coast, Cascade, and Columbia mountain ranges, the region can vary from forests at the upper elevations to extensive grasslands at the lower elevations of its numerous valleys. Over millennia, the Plateau peoples created and sustained a “humanized landscape” through activities orientated around a hunting and gathering economy. The most pronounced evidence of cultural influence upon the land was the use of fire as “a natural component of the native ecosystem.”<sup>5</sup> Fire removed sagebrush in favour of perennial grasses, especially the bunchgrass variety, while also fostering the growth of selected food plants. Native peoples used fire to provide grazing areas that attracted elk, deer, and other game as well as to promote increased production of herbs, roots, and various berries.<sup>6</sup>

Collectively, most nations of the Plateau region were organized into locally-autonomous bands comprised of several villages. Men’s responsibilities included hunting for deer and elk whose meat was dried to sustain families during the winter months and fishing along the region’s major rivers and tributaries. Preferred fishing sites became important trading hubs, lending them heightened importance to the economy and intertribal relations.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Del Meidinger and Jim Pojar, eds., *Ecosystems of British Columbia* (Victoria: Ministry of Forests, 1991), 125-166.

<sup>5</sup> Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Alan G. Marshall, “Unusual Gardens: The Nez Perce and Wild Horticulture,” in Dale D. Goble & Paul W. Hirt, eds. *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999): 173-187.

<sup>7</sup> For a closer examination of fishing and Plateau peoples see Andrew H. Fisher, “They mean to be Indian always: The origins of Columbia River Indian Identity, 1860-1885,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 2001 32(4): 468-492 and Joseph E. Taylor, “Burning the candle at both ends: Historicizing overfishing in Oregon’s

During the growing season, women focused on the important task of harvesting vegetables, berries, and roots to supplement their diet.<sup>8</sup> And long before they became an object of discord among Greek goddesses or were featured in the Song of Solomon, wild crabapples provided another source of sustenance to First Nations.<sup>9</sup>

Collectively, Plateau society fashioned a landscape that bore the imprint of their cultural identity and needs. Due to their favourable geographic position, Plateau peoples engaged in a vigorous trade of foodstuffs and natural resources with Pacific Coast groups to the west and Plains peoples to the east. To this end, each band held domain over traditional territories that they protected from other bands and rival nations. At the same time, traditional hunting or fishing rights were offset against the existence of vast commonages that facilitated seasonal migrations within the territory of a particular nation, connecting different areas and so providing a wider framework to appreciate the land. Mobility was especially important since large numbers of people dispersed and moved about during the summer months, returning to their home villages in early autumn. Also, within a given band network, individuals and families frequently moved between different groups, further breaking down the bonds of private control.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike First Nations on the Prairies and along the Pacific Coast, the Plateau peoples experienced trade with Europeans later than most. Consequently, they felt the impact of the

---

Nineteenth Century Salmon Fisheries,” *Environmental History* January 1999: 54-79.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Dale D. Goble & Paul W. Hirt, eds. *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999)

<sup>9</sup> David Dendy and Kathleen M. Kyle, *A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association 1889-1989* (Kelowna; BCFG, 1990), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Carstens, *The Queen's People*; Goble & Hirt, eds. *Northwest Lands*.

economy in redefining Native landscapes over a shorter period of time.<sup>11</sup> To the east, Plains Indians engaged in trade as Spanish, French, and British traders pressed westward. On the Plateau, the Nez Perce were one of the groups most directly influenced by this trade with the introduction to the horse in the 1730s. Further west, coastal nations established trading relations with Europeans beginning with the Spanish and British in the 1770s. By the early 1800s, however, Europeans became an increasingly common sight to Plateau peoples in the wake of Alexander Mackenzie's overland journey on behalf of his British patrons, followed by the American Corp of Discovery led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.<sup>12</sup> Beginning in 1810 wooden outposts like the North West Company's Spokane House near present-day Spokane punctuated the contours of Native territory. The following year, a party from the Pacific Fur Company's post at Astoria trekked inland and established Fort Okanogan at the junction of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers. Ever vigilant for desirable locations to pre-empt competitors and monopolize fur-bearing watersheds, the North West Company built a fortified post at the mouth of the Walla Walla River known as Fort Nez Perce.

As rival companies fought to define the landscape in proprietary terms, diplomatic machinations added another dimension to the region's meaning. Mindful of maintaining peaceful relations after the War of 1812, the American and British governments concluded a treaty of joint occupation in recognition of their mutual strategic and economic interests in the region in 1818. The subsequent sale of the Pacific Fur Company to the North West Company eliminated a competitor and an explicit American alternative to British control of

---

<sup>11</sup> J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* Third Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 174.

<sup>12</sup> Carlos A. Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 53-79.

the trade. Competition between the remaining companies continued until a merger in 1821 left the HBC as the sole company in the region. In the space of ten years, places like Fort Okanogan had passed through three owners and the HBC greatly expanded its presence across the Plateau.

While the Plateau's streams provided rich sources of fur, its strategic importance lay with its well-established overland trails used by First Nations that linked Oregon to the Fraser River and other vital waterways. Once it was dominant in the region, the HBC expanded their use and further integrated the region through the fur trade economy. One such example was a brigade trail which followed an overland route from Fort Okanogan through the Okanogan Valley and past Fort Kamloops in the north before reaching the forks of the Thompson and Fraser rivers. From there, trade goods were sold and furs returned along the same route before continuing west along the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver. Despite these changes and their reservations about participation in the trade, Plateau peoples found prosperity until greater changes swept the region.<sup>13</sup>

Explorers and fur traders, as much as they focused on the abundance of animal resources, were also captivated by visions of more traditional landscapes that lay just beneath the surface of their imagination. Through their colourful prose, they betrayed a belief that the fur economy and its participants were fundamentally transitory and celebrated a natural environment awaiting transformation. In evaluating the land, they looked past the immediacy of the forests to a future of cultivated fields and pleasing cottages. Ross Cox, who traversed the Columbia River in 1811 to take up duties at Astoria as clerk of the Pacific Fur Company, wrote that Oregon's Willamette Valley possessed "a rich and luxuriant soil, which yields an

---

<sup>13</sup> Relations between Plateau peoples and fur traders were shaped by a complex array of issues, including competing notions of masculinity. For further analysis, see Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

abundance of fruits and roots.” Alexander Ross, making a similar journey, echoed that the area held the capacity “to ripen every kind of grain in a short time.”<sup>14</sup> Such statements were more than objective observations, they were cultural declarations about the form and meaning of the land. Abundant resources required intelligent use, and the fullness of civilization would remain in a suspended state if nature’s wonders were left in the hands of those unable to see its latent possibilities. In a refrain that colonists repeated before the widespread adoption of horticulture, only intelligent partnership could unlock the fertility of the landscape.

After a period of relative stability and affluence for Plateau peoples, within a few decades trade with Europeans created “a demographic, cultural, and ecological divide,” setting the stage for further change. One of the most devastating changes was disease. Although smallpox had ravaged coastal populations in the 1780s, malaria made a greater inland impact beginning in the 1830s. The accounts of contemporary observers, such as the clergyman Samuel Parker who travelled the Columbia in 1835, graphically describe the shores “strewn with unburied dead” where “whole and large villages were depopulated; and some entire tribes have disappeared.” Anthropologist Robert Boyd calculated that the native population of the Pacific Northwest fell from an estimated figure of 300,000 in 1770 to 60,000 by the 1860s, an 80 percent decline. On the Plateau, estimates point to a decline from 26,000 to 6,000 during the same period, while the number in the Cowlitz, Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue Rivers dropped from about 41,000 to approximately 2,000.<sup>15</sup>

The demographic crisis that swept the region coincided another series of changes with the arrival of missionaries in the 1830s at the height of the Second Great Awakening, a

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, “Burning the candle at both ends,” 54-79.

period of religious revival and social activism. While several denominations eventually engaged First Nations, two organizations made an early impact on the future evolution of the region. Comprised of Methodist-Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational members, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was a Boston-based group of missionaries that began to take an interest in Oregon country after tales of Natives seeking Christian teachings circulated in church publications. Keen to build on their experience in Liberia and Hawaii, the ABCFM selected Jason Lee, born in Upper Canada, to establish a mission to promote Christianity and “civilized” ways among First Nations. Lee’s party arrived at Fort Vancouver in 1834, and with the help of Chief Factor John McLoughlin, settled in the Willamette Valley at Mission Bottom. So he could devote his energies proselytizing to the local Native population by being freed of the growing demands of maintaining the settlement, Lee organized the passage of more farmers and tradespeople who formed the nucleus of an agrarian community outside the fur trade economy. Later, the ABCFM sent Samuel Parker to establish missions among the Plateau peoples at Tshimakain and Waiilatpu, near present-day Spokane and Walla Walla, respectively. Dr. Marcus Whitman joined Parker’s party, and subsequently established the Whitman Mission among the Cayuse at Waiilatpu. Ostensibly devoted to spreading Christianity among the Cayuse, Whitman was also a catalyst for spreading agriculture, with profound implications for the future contours of the region and its original inhabitants.<sup>16</sup>

As much as the far west attracted Protestant interest, the Catholic Oblates took an equally passionate view of missionary work among First Nations. Although they had established St. James parish at Fort Vancouver in 1832, the Catholics had had limited

---

<sup>16</sup> For additional information on this period, please see Cameron Addis, “Religion and Manifest Destiny on the Columbia Plateau, 1809-1895,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25 (2) 2005: 221-258.

progress but were keen to mirror the missionizing efforts of the Protestants. By 1841, the growing reputation within the church of the order of priests known as the Oblates prompted Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal to enlist their help in carrying out missionary work in North America. Founded as the Missionaries of Provence in 1814 by the French priest Charles-Joseph-Eugene de Mazenod, they were reorganized as a church-sanctioned congregation by Pope Leo XII in 1826 and renamed the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Strongly anti-materialist, the Oblates dedicated their order to help the poor and downtrodden while spreading Catholic teachings.<sup>17</sup> However, not until Bishop Augustin Blanchet of Walla Walla asked de Mazenod for assistance did five Oblates journey to the Oregon Territory in 1846. At the invitation of Yakama chiefs, Oblates such as Louis Joseph D'Herbomez and Charles Pandosy established several missions over the next few years among the Yakama people to spread word of the Gospel, including Saint Joseph Mission on Ahtanum Creek in the Yakima Valley.

Like the Protestant missionaries, the Oblates embraced mixed farming both in a bid to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency and as a conduit for Christianizing First Nations through the promotion of animal husbandry and agricultural techniques. To this end, the missionaries established the first formal garden with the assistance of the Yakama people using irrigation from the waters of Ahtanum Creek. Although not agriculturalists by the measure of Europeans and other First Nations, their use of fire as a means of cultivation and the care exercised in harvesting roots and berries suggests that agriculture was not a wholly new concept to the Plateau people.<sup>18</sup> But as much as the Oblates worked at the invitation of the Yakamas, the mission was also the nucleus of a growing European presence foreshadowing

---

<sup>17</sup> Duane David Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1985), 38.

<sup>18</sup> Marshall, "Unusual Gardens: The Nez Perce and Wild Horticulture," 173-187.

the impending conflict over land use which assumed new urgency as settlers streamed into Oregon country through the 1840s.

Amidst the changes wrought by their quest for pelts and souls, the fur traders and missionaries who bound the region together were also responsible for a less visible but no less significant harbinger of environmental change. Evoking Christian imagery and domesticating impulses, their planting of fruit trees at their forts and missions became a vital precursor to the successful propagation of fruit trees throughout the region. Undeniably a potentially valuable foodstuff, fruit represented more than mere survival, for the orchard was as much a cultural symbol of divine faith and Anglo-American sophistication as a convenient food source. But more importantly, the seemingly innocuous acts of these latter-day Johnny Appleseeds also planted the seeds of greater change and a common destiny for the trans-boundary region.

Decades later, early pioneers of the fruit industry such as Dr. James Robert Cardwell waxed eloquently that “the introduction of the first cultivated fruits in the country in 1824 by employees of the Hudson [’s] Bay Company is a pretty story with a touch of romance.” With rich parallels to the love and temptation of the original garden, Cardwell related how the modern industry was born from a flirtatious London dinner involving young men bound for the Oregon Territory. Several variations of the story exist – did it involve a single woman at the dinner party, or all of them? Were the seeds from their dessert apples served that evening? Were they amorous forget-me-nots proffered with hopeful intent, or were they given with dutiful appeals to bring British civilization to the far-flung reaches of Empire? Regardless of the version, the men were entrusted with the seeds by their feminine dinner guests, and upon arriving at Fort Vancouver, “the young gentlemen gave the seeds to the

company's gardener, James Bruce, who planted them in the spring of 1825," giving rise to the local orchard there.<sup>19</sup> Although the precise details of the actual event are unknown, the linkages that Cardwell forged between fruit, romance, and colonization are telling both in the memorialization of horticulture and its perceived attributes. Interestingly, the gentility and affection contained in the episode evokes an appealing innocence to fruit cultivation in the Pacific Northwest. Although the trees were grown at the fort, a symbol and structure that embodies colonial authority and power, fruit added the crucial element of cultured civilization in keeping with the sensibilities of latter-day horticulturalists.

Over the years, other sensitive visitors and commentators noticed the impact of fruit trees. Upon a visit to Fort Vancouver, Narcissa Whitman wrote to her mother about her admiration of the fort's garden as well as the broader significance of fruit, declaring "What a delightful place it is, what a contrast to the rough barren plains through which we had so recently...every part is very neat and tastefully arranged."<sup>20</sup> As a kind of cultural oasis, orchards offered a sense of familiarity and control in an unfamiliar terrain. In a similar fashion, missions also offered weary travelers an array of comforting sights with plantings of fruit-bearing trees. Convinced of the need for an orchard, Narcissa Whitman set out a sizable orchard and garden at the Whitman Mission in the late-1830s from seedlings she collected at Fort Vancouver. Oblates also established orchards at several missions throughout the region, providing a vital foundation for the propagation of fruit trees and a common cultural legacy for the region. Indeed, while forts and missions invariably played an important function in anchoring nascent agricultural settlements, they also heralded a spiritual and ecological transformation with the planting of trees.

---

<sup>19</sup> James Robert Cardwell, *A brief history of horticulture in Oregon* (Portland: [Oregon State Horticultural Society], 1906).

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Cardwell, *A brief history of horticulture in Oregon*,. 4.

For settlers and observers alike in the mid-nineteenth century, horticulture provided a rich cultural language marked by godly blessings and pastoral perfection for Anglo-American imperialism, casting it as a powerful emblem of progress deeply intertwined with nature and beauty. In an 1858 opening lecture at Freeman Place Chapel, Ralph Waldo Emerson declared, “the privilege of the countryman is the culture of the land, the laying out of grounds and gardens, the orchard and the forest.” Due to its long history as a fruit “coeval with man,” apples enjoyed a special place in the annals of human progress. Framed by the American sun and the “glowing halls” of the orchard, the annual sight of “ornamental harvests” across the country left little doubt in Emerson’s mind that “the apple is our national fruit.”<sup>21</sup> In his 1862 essay on the history of horticulture, Henry David Thoreau remarked on “how closely the history of the Apple-tree is connected with that of man.” Given its long cultivation, Thoreau claimed it was “the most civilized of all trees” and “the noblest of fruits.” Referring to Western advancement and the ecology of colonization, Thoreau argued “our Western emigrant is still marching steadily towards the setting sun with the seeds of the apple in his pocket...for when man migrates he carries with him not only his birds, quadrupeds, insects, vegetables, and his very sword, but his orchard also.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, fruit trees provided a food in isolated forts or missions and were also the vanguard of social and ecological succession with profound consequences for the West and its indigenous inhabitants.

Despite enthusiasm for the region’s potential, skeptics threatened to usurp dreams of cultivated fields and happy inhabitants. Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts vigorously questioned the desirability of the Northwest. For Webster, the primary stumbling blocks were

---

<sup>21</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Country Life,” *The Atlantic*, November 1904.

<sup>22</sup> Henry David Thoreau, “Wild Apples: The History of the Apple Tree,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 1862.

not Native rights but the region's natural environment and its perceived hostility to American civilization. "What do we want with the vast, worthless area," Webster asked rhetorically, "this region of savages and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts, or the endless mountain ranges, impenetrable, and covered to their base with eternal snow?" In a final act of defiance, the Senator declared, "I will never vote one cent from the Public Treasury to place the Pacific Coast one inch nearer to Boston than it is now."<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, through the 1840s, settlers continued to pursue their own orchard plantings on their new farms, especially in coastal areas.<sup>24</sup> Without diminishing the obstacles and setbacks pioneering families inevitably faced trekking along "the world's longest graveyard," settlers sought to replicate familiar sights since "nothing more thoroughly and painfully accentuated their isolated condition than the absence of fruit trees on their newly-made farms."<sup>25</sup> For enterprising settlers like Henderson Luelling, the sale of fruit trees to other homesteaders promised a lucrative return. Alongside settler families with oxen-pulled wagon trains of foodstuffs and scant personal effects, Luelling brought over seven hundred small grafted trees and shrubs in his crammed wagon from his nursery in Indiana. Luelling settled near Milwaukee, Oregon and in 1848 established a nursery with business partner William Meek. Two years later, Seth and John Lewelling (different spelling) joined their brother in Oregon and brought additional seed and grafts for an expanded nursery. With two

---

<sup>23</sup> Oregon Historical Society (OHS), Scrapbook 60, "Alaska is compared to Oregon lands; Delegate cites old mistaken estimates of great fruit and wheat belts," 21 January 1914.

<sup>24</sup> D.V. Fisher, "History of Fruit Growing in the BC Interior," *Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (1978) 42: 68-72.

<sup>25</sup> J.R. Cardwell, "Early Horticultural Days in Oregon," *Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society First Annual Report* (1909)

additional branch nurseries, the brothers sold thousands of grafts throughout the Northwest, helping lay the foundation for a nascent but largely localized fruit industry.<sup>26</sup>

The proliferation of apple and other fruit trees echoed Thoreau's image of the West "humanized" or colonized by the cultural preferences and practices of Anglo-American settlers. Indeed, the initial development of home orchards west of the Cascades and the Plateau region represented the creation of an agrarian landscape that gave tangible and pleasing form to the abstract implications of imperialism and environmental change. Part comfort and part practical, fruit trees softened what many pioneers saw as a stark environment, and through this aesthetic laid the foundation for a profound ecological transformation. In a letter to her father in Ohio from the Oregon Territory, Thirsa Ann Wilson observed that by 1858 "there is considerable attention paid to fruit growing there is several nurseries in this part of the valley but no bearing orchards yet but there is some very fine bearing orchards down in vicinity Salem and Oregon City."<sup>27</sup> Sharing news of Oregon's prolific farming life with a friend back east, Albion Francis boasted that in addition to grafting three thousand fruit trees with his father, "we have a nice young orchard of fruit trees we have 300 apple tree they are very thrifty in this country they grow 6 feet in one year and peach trees 7 feet...Apple will bear at two years of age [and] almost all kinds bear at three years of age."<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, settlers demonstrated that if the Pacific Northwest could not be brought physically closer to Boston, as Senator Webster declared, they would nevertheless bridge the cultural and ecological distance by forging a new landscape comparable to the farms and orchards of New England, both in terms of its crops and the social relations it organized and sustained.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cardwell, "Early Horticultural Days in Oregon," 24.

<sup>27</sup> OHS, MSS 251, Thirsa Ann Wilson (Kincaid), 6 June 1858

<sup>28</sup> OHS, MSS 1500 Albion L. Francis, 27 April 1856

Among the changes that confronted Plateau peoples, a stark symbol of the altered landscape was the appearance of new social and political boundaries. After hints of potential conflict, British and American authorities finally settled on the 49th parallel to divide their respective holdings in 1846. Two years later, the nominally independent and self-governing Oregon Territory became a formal territory of the United States with a fully developed government. As a consequence, the application of American Indian policy became the domain of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. Spurred by declining fur resources and the logistics of maintaining a British-sanctioned monopoly in an area now part of the United States, the Hudson's Bay Company made Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island the new headquarters for its western operations.<sup>29</sup> In doing so, the Company brought a new focus to the unorganized territory of New Caledonia to the north. More political changes arrived in 1853 when the Oregon Territory itself was reorganized with the creation of the Washington Territory north of the lower Columbia River. At the same time, new fortifications and old fur posts also dramatized a new social reality for the region's First Nations peoples. In the place of fur traders and their co-operative relations with Plateau peoples, United States Army troops militarized the region with new fortifications like Fort Dalles in 1849. Among old fur trading posts, Fort Nez Perce was reborn as the army's Fort Walla Walla in 1858.

More broadly, the imposition of the international boundary had other ramifications for the future of the region. In simple terms, it was a direct affront to Native agency and their free movement, particularly those whose territory was intersected by the border, such as the Okanagans. Admittedly, the imposition of a foreign survey line did not suddenly end the passage of First Nations, although in time crossing the border became an increasingly

---

<sup>29</sup> Although its focus moved north, the Company was allowed to operate in the Oregon Territory, and did not formally close Fort Vancouver until 1860.

mediated experience that affected unfettered movement and definitions of identity as it pertained to tribal affiliations and federal definitions of “Indian” in each country.<sup>30</sup> More broadly, the border represented a conflict over whose image of the landscape would prevail, and what set of values would be reflected in its use. With the Anglo-American law, settlement, and private property, First Nations’ land was becoming increasingly alienated. Beset by disease and conflict, Plateau peoples resisted the growth of colonial hegemony over the land. At the same time, the environment provided its own constraints against unfettered manipulation of the natural world. Thus, the reconstruction of the landscape would assume different guises before orchards bloomed across the region.

As Britain and the United States sought to impose order on the region with the establishment of a final border, events on the ground conspired against such aims. The growing presence of overland colonists drawn by the promise of bountiful homesteads inevitably clashed with First Nations seeking to protect their traditional territories. It is perhaps not surprising that a number of the most violent clashes erupted in the same locales that would be transformed into the most prolific fruit growing districts of the Pacific Northwest. In theory, such clashes ignored constitutional practices which dictated that Native title to land could only be extinguished through a formal treaty process. Nevertheless, when settler violence threatened to overwhelm legislative requirements, governments merely exploited the vulnerable position of Natives to achieve agreement.<sup>31</sup> In the Walla Walla Valley, the Cayuse were one of several Native groups buffeted by outbreaks of disease and

---

<sup>30</sup> For a more contemporary examination of the international boundary and its impact of First Nations identity in British Columbia and Washington State, see Bruce Granville Miller, “Conceptual and Practical Boundaries: West Coast Indians/First Nations on the Border of Contagion in the Post-9/11 Era,” in Sterling Evans (ed.), *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006): 49-66.

<sup>31</sup> Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 84.

settler encroachment. By 1847, relations deteriorated further when a small group of Cayuse warriors attacked the mission established on their territory by the Whitmans, killing them and fourteen others. Ultimately, deadly outbursts of violence such as the Whitman Massacre became notorious symbols used by the colonizers to further dispossess and marginalize Native populations. News of the attack spurred the U.S. Congress to take specific steps to assert control over the area, beginning with the creation of the Territorial Government of Oregon in 1848. Combined with the growing presence of the U.S. Army and territorial militias, the Cayuse struggled with a depleted population and lost territory.

Over the succeeding years, tensions continued to grow, straining relations between Native and non-Native communities. The changing situation did not go unchallenged by the aboriginal population, especially as increasing numbers of colonists encroached on traditional territories vital to native self-sufficiency and identity. Nevertheless, weakened from the devastating impact of disease and battles with the U.S. Army, most First Nations peoples were left with few options. By 1852, migrating California miners in search of new gold fields, combined with growing numbers of settlers crossing over the Oregon Trail to establish homesteads, solidified the American consensus that native opposition to settler encroachment had to be neutralized and earlier pre-emptions of native land protected.

Harassed by vigilante parties that destroyed Indian settlements and disrupted their economic well-being, Native peoples of the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue valleys were forced to relocate to the Grande Ronde and Siletz reservations in relatively short succession.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, fourteen Indian bands, including the Yakama, Umatilla, Cayuse, and Walla Walla tribes ceded over six million acres to the U.S. government under the 1855 Treaty of Yakima. The promise by the territorial government to keep white settlers out of existing tribal lands,

---

<sup>32</sup> Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 85.

however, was soon violated, sparking further violence among the affected tribes.

Chief Kamiakin was one leader who rallied to protect Yakama territory. The ensuing clashes with U.S. forces in October 1855 ultimately entangled St. Joseph's Mission, and the Oblates were forced to evacuate as the Yakamas retreated in advance of U.S. Army forces. During a search of the mission, troops discovered gunpowder buried in the mission garden and a letter dictated by Chief Kamiakin to Father Pandosy criticizing the Army's treatment of the Yakama people. Already suspicious of the allegiance of Catholic missionaries, enraged soldiers sacked and burned the mission as retribution. Chief Kamiakin continued to lead his people in several skirmishes, but the intervention of the U.S. Army made any prospect of long-term success untenable. In 1858, Kamiakin fled across the border into the Kootenay Valley while Pandosy, who subsequently worked with the Jesuits among the Colville Indians, was sent to the Oblates' new headquarters on Vancouver Island. Ultimately, the Yakamas found little recourse but to settle on their treaty-sanctioned reservation. After Congress ratified the original treaty in 1859, the movement of settlers into eastern Washington gradually increased.

In British North America, a similar pattern of colonial encroachment and Native marginalization occurred. Initially, the British contented themselves with trading operations at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island, but the with discovery of gold on the mainland along the Fraser River in 1858, the arrival of a few hundred American fortune-seekers soon mushroomed into thousands of miners as word spread to California. The fur trade which had provided a modicum of equality between both parties, soon gave way to outright competition for resources between whites and natives.<sup>33</sup> Just as in the Oregon Territory, large companies

---

<sup>33</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact & Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977), 95-96.

of miners challenged Native land use and clashed violently with First Nations, thereby giving colonial authorities another pretext to challenge Native control. Outbursts of violence, as in the Okanagan Valley when some travelling miners destroyed an unattended winter village and massacred an entire party of unarmed Natives underlined the escalating tensions that threatened to become full-blown warfare.<sup>34</sup>

Fearful of future American claims, the British created the colony of British Columbia as the formal extension of their imperial directives by summer's end. While the exercise of British authority on the mainland was extended slowly and in reaction to perceived threats to Native peoples, the overall concern was maintaining order and by extension enhancing British control. Ever mindful of attracting proper "Gentlemen to this kingdom" to check American influence, the colonial government provided patronage appointments to British men of appropriate rank and education in the 1860s, many of whom had been military officers and some of whom had private means.<sup>35</sup> Early settlers in the Okanagan Valley like F.G. Vernon and Cornelius O'Keefe used valuable political connections and pro-settler sentiments to pre-empt thousands of acres of land. A range of advantageous public positions, ranging from Justice of the Peace to Commissioner of Land and Works in the provincial cabinet, further reinforced these connections.

Like the fur trade, the circulation of cattle accentuated historical and ecological linkages across the boundary.<sup>36</sup> With miners and their booming towns providing an insatiable appetite for all manner of foodstuffs, astute landowners in the Plateau region used the

---

<sup>34</sup> Herman Francis Reinhart, *The Golden Frontier: The Recollection of Herman Francis Reinhart 1851-1869*, ed. D.B. Junis, Jr. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 127.

<sup>35</sup> Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1981), 32-47.

<sup>36</sup> The history of ranching is a particularly rich field of historical inquiry in both the United States and Canada. For a selection of works that utilize a cross-border perspective, consult Sarah Carter, Simon M. Evans, and Bill Yeos, *Cowboys, Ranchers, and the Cattle Business: Cross-border Perspectives on Ranching History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1999).

plentiful bunchgrass to raise cattle for nearby markets. Settlers knew of the suitability of the Plateau for raising animals from the success of Plateau peoples in raising large herds of horses since being introduced to them in the 1770s.<sup>37</sup> By the 1850s, the First Nations used the skills acquired through raising horses to raising the livestock introduced by overland settlers and missionaries. Linked to the gold fields via an old brigade trail, pioneer settlers from the Rogue River Valley to the Okanagan Valley raised vast herds of cattle which they drove overland to sell in the lucrative mining economy. Ranching was a particularly appealing vocation in the Okanagan Valley among well-to-do British settlers since “most well-bred Britons much preferred [it] to cereal agriculture” since it combined “the excitement of the frontier, the romance of the West, and the comforts of civilized society.”<sup>38</sup>

Raising cattle to sell to the gold miners was also attractive south of the border and among the First Nations. In the Washington Territory, early Okanogan settlers such as Hiram Francis Smith shared in the financial and cultural enthusiasm of raising cattle for the Cariboo gold rush, echoing the rise of Oregon cattle barons in the 1840s who, when news of the overland trail spread, eagerly exploited it to tap into new markets. Likewise, Plateau peoples did not overlook such opportunities by selling from their own herds or wintering cattle for white dealers in exchange for trade goods.<sup>39</sup> The prospect of ranching set off a new wave of massive pre-emptions, particularly north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, which challenged the ability of First Nations to maintain their own herds. However, the capacity of Plateau peoples such as

---

<sup>37</sup> Taylor, “Burning the candle at both ends,” 60.

<sup>38</sup> Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants*, 87.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Brent, “Indian Lore,” *Okanagan Historical Society* 30 (1966): 108. In the Okanagan as in other parts of the Plateau, First Nations peoples became skilled cowboys as part of their cattle trade, and often served as an early and vital labour source for white ranchers. For a closer examination, see Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman : University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

the Okanagans to resist these encroachments was further undermined by the ravages of disease with a new outbreak of smallpox in 1862.<sup>40</sup>

Understandably, the cattle drivers who travelled through the Plateau from western Oregon to the Cariboo gold fields were interested in the region's ability to sustain their cattle as they moved in the summer or overwintered en-route. But like latter-day explorers, men passing through the region also saw the potential of luxuriant landscapes. Writing to an Oregon newspaper in 1860, Joel Palmer painted a captivating vignette of southern British Columbia and forecast the development of "extensive agricultural districts east of the mountains, which have hitherto been considered by many as barren wastes. The valley of the Okinakane itself is capable of sustaining a population equal to two countries, producing all the fruits and vegetables usual in that latitude."<sup>41</sup> In outlining the attractiveness of the region for development into a vast agrarian society, Palmer foretold approvingly of the passing of his own livelihood in favour of his own luxuriant landscape of blossoming change.

From Vancouver Island, the Oblates were also drawn to the arid valleys of the southern British Columbia. After continued violence compelled the Catholic Church to abandon missionary work among the Yakamas temporarily, the Oblates sent Father Pandosy to establish a new mission in the Okanagan Valley. Catholics had been in the valley since 1839, although the Jesuits abandoned a small mission near present-day Vernon after only two years.<sup>42</sup> Given previous incidents of European violence, the deeply suspicious Okanagans opposed Pandosy's passage through the valley until Thérèse, a member of his party and a

---

<sup>40</sup> Carstens, *The Queen's People*, 76.

<sup>41</sup> Ken Mather, "During Colonial Times," *Bunchgrass and Beef: Bunchgrass Ecosystems and the early Cattle Industry in the Thompson Okanagan* <<http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/thomp-ok/article-LL/pre-history-beef.html>> (3 September 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Although short-lived, Okanagan oral tradition credits the Jesuits with introducing the first cattle to the area, as well as gardening. Carstens, *The Queen's People*, 48-49.

relative of an Okanagan chief, intervened.<sup>43</sup> Approximately six miles from the future site of Kelowna, Pandosy established in 1859 the Immaculate Conception Mission on the banks of the Rivière L'Anse au Sable, later known as Mission Creek. As at St. Joseph's Mission, Pandosy promoted mixed farming and the Okanagans took an increasing interest in agriculture. Pandosy soon added a familiar form of cultured order to the settlement by planting seedlings brought from St. Mary's Mission in the Fraser Valley. The fledging orchard, like the small white settlement that grew up around the mission, hinted at wider changes that would sweep the Valley.

As in the United States, the constitutional obligation to extinguish native title to land by treaty did not hinder the creation of a new landscape. In 1864, British Columbia authorities explicitly rejected any past acknowledgement of native title to traditional lands that stemmed from an earlier round of treaty making on Vancouver Island in the 1850s. Writing from his Okanagan ranch, local magistrate J.C. Haynes complained that “much too large” Indian reserves were interfering with pre-emptions. His complaints found a sympathetic ear with the new Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Joseph Trutch, who argued that the current reserves were “unprofitable to the public interests” and subsequently oversaw reserve reductions across the province.<sup>44</sup>

When British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871, responsibility for Native affairs became a federal responsibility and the province's disavowal of native title continued. As a result, the province offered reserve land and financial incentives to First Nations outside the treaty process to facilitate the growth of settler society. Consequently, privileged

---

<sup>43</sup> The wife of Cyprian Lawrence, a guide with Pandosy's party, Thérèse reminded her uncle that should any of the Europeans be harmed, including her husband, “the chief would have to provide for her as was required of a kinsmen.” Surtees, *Kelowna*, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 56-57.

emigrants began to lay claim to land around important streams and lakefront property, revealing the “close relationship throughout British Columbia, especially in the southern interior, between the establishment of reserves for Indians and the acquisition of land by settlers.”<sup>45</sup> While provincial legislation dealt minimally with Indian land rights, it made no mention of crucial water rights, with the effect that “lack of access to water and winter pasturage gradually restricted the Indians’ use of their territorial lands.”<sup>46</sup>

In subsequent decades, government interest in redefining the landscape continued unabated. In 1877, settlers and politicians denounced Gilbert M. Sproat, lead commissioner for the Indian Reserve Commission (IRC), a body charged with settling reserve boundaries in consultation with First Nations and their self-professed needs. In the southern interior, Okanagan peoples sought adequate land to sustain their growing interest in agriculture and their substantial cattle herds. The proposed reserve boundaries and livestock commonages that grew from these consultations immediately drew a hostile reaction.<sup>47</sup> An original settler in the southern interior, Member of Parliament F.J. Barnard railed in the House of Commons that Sproat “seemed to think that all he had to do was give the Indians whatever land they fancied.” Such criticism left Sproat unmoved and convinced him that such actions were “the angry utterance of men steeped in prejudice.” Mounting political pressure forced Sproat to resign in 1880, prompting one Victoria businessman to confide to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald “it was high time that G.M. Sproat was brought to book and put in his proper place.” In the face of what he called the “reckless extravagance” of the IRC, Premier William Smithe approved the reduction of most reserves, echoing a practice also followed in

---

<sup>45</sup> Carstens, *The Queen’s People*, 67.

<sup>46</sup> Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites,” 123.

<sup>47</sup> Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites,” 140

Washington and Oregon.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, F.G. Vernon, as Commissioner of Lands and Works, wrote in August 1888 that Sproat's commonages were in effect wasteful and should be opened to settlement immediately. Consequently, settler pre-emptions began with provincial approval as early as 1887 under the rubric of maximizing settler access and minimizing Native land use.<sup>49</sup>

Through the 1860s, home orchards that dotted southern Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, and western valleys in Washington and Oregon confirmed for pioneers and visitors that the Pacific Northwest was indeed bountiful. In the era before rail, farms within easy distance of expanding centres such as Portland or Victoria found a ready market for their crops. Evidence of the impact of fruit farming in social relations and environmental change abounded, prompting Reverend F.W. Gookin to observe, "Everybody, young and old, rich and poor, saint and sinner, is engaged in picking, drying, packing or shipping of fruit."<sup>50</sup> Local newspapers such as Jacksonville's *Oregon Sentinel* reflected the growing influence of this changing landscape with news of harvest quality and value even though the market was exclusively local before railways provided the means to ship the crop further afield.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century the stage was set for a dramatic transformation of the semi-arid valleys east of the Cascade mountain range.<sup>52</sup> As the gold rush faded, large landowners in the trans-boundary area who had found it lucrative to raise cattle for booming mining towns watched their profits shrink. In the search for an alternative, some began to sell off parcels of land for "fruit ranching." The contours of

---

<sup>48</sup> This account draws on Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1790* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977), 196-200.

<sup>49</sup> Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites," 141.

<sup>50</sup> As one example, in 1886 land was detached from the Colville reservation near Spokane, and the "surplus" immediately thrown open to settlement. Wallace D. Farnham, "The Development of an Oregon county, 1852-1890, Mines, Farms and a Railroad," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXV, no. 1 (Feb., 1956), 44.

<sup>51</sup> *Oregon Sentinel*, 2 September 1863.

<sup>52</sup> D.V. Fisher, "History of Fruit Growing," 68-72.

an orcharding landscape slowly took shape and built on the examples of missionaries and progressive settlers, linking the region in a trans-border cultural and ecological process. Pandosy's success in raising fruit in the Okanagan was duplicated among the Yakamas when St. Joseph's Mission reopened in 1867 and became the site of the area's first apple orchard.<sup>53</sup> During the same period, orchards began to appear around Kamloops and the future sites of Kelowna and Penticton, some with stock from Father Pandosy's orchard.<sup>54</sup> Within view of Osoyoos Lake, Hiram Francis Smith expanded his Washington interests beyond his original stake in cattle to plant twelve hundred fruit trees brought in from St. Mary's Mission near Fort Hope in 1862.<sup>55</sup> By the end of the 1860s, Smith's thirty-acre "fruit ranch" included apples, peaches, pears, and grapes watered by the region's first irrigation ditch.<sup>56</sup> In Oregon, fruit farming continued to spread, moving south from the Willamette Valley to the Rogue River where steady waves of immigrants and their initial plantings were followed by the growth of smaller orchards from Ashland to Brownsboro and the Dardanelles by the close of the decade.<sup>57</sup>

First Nations peoples also contributed to the modest but significant proliferation of orchards. Beginning informally in the vicinity of fur trading posts and later under the influence of missionaries and government agents eager to "civilize," Indians planted their own orchards on reservations.<sup>58</sup> Although these plantings were not initially made for market sale, horticulture highlighted another aspect of Native perseverance and interest in

---

<sup>53</sup> "She's a caretaker to history," *Yakima Herald-Republic*, 2 April 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Dendy and Kyle, *A Fruitful Century*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. D.V. Fisher, "History of Fruit Growing," 68-72.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Autabee, "The Okanogan Project," Bureau of Reclamation History Program (Denver, Colorado), 1996.

<sup>57</sup> Kay Atwood, *Blossoms & Branches; a gathering of Rogue Valley orchard memories* (Medford, Oregon: Gandee Printing Center Inc., 1980), 2.

<sup>58</sup> W.B. Anderson, *Report of Officers, Entomology Branch, Ottawa* (1927) quoted in Paul W. Riegert, *From Arsenic to DDT: A History of Entomology in Western Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 184.

agriculture. While these examples of First Nations horticulture never enjoyed widespread support or interest among the wider settler population, they nevertheless highlighted another avenue of environmental and social change for the Plateau region.

By the 1890s, growing interest in horticulture combined with broader economic and technological changes in creating an orcharding landscape. In British Columbia, British aristocrats in the persons of the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen placed an indelible print upon fruit ranching, sealing its association for Anglo-Canadians with noble privilege and gentlemanly sophistication. Arriving from Britain for a cross-Canada tour in 1889, the Earl and Countess were eager to acquire a colonial estate to demonstrate their commitment to their colonial brethren. On the eve of their return to the Mother Country, the Aberdeens acquired property a few miles from Father Pandosy's settlement on the advice of an early land promoter and trusted family financial advisor, George G. MacKay.<sup>59</sup> Blending the Old World with the New, they christened their new ranch Guisachan after Lady Aberdeen's childhood home in the hills at Glen Affric, in Scotland.

Understandably, members of the Valley's ranching elite rejoiced that a family possessing the Aberdeens' pedigree found their region compatible with the demands of the British aristocracy. In addition to their unassailable social credentials, Lord Aberdeen became the governor-general of Canada in 1893, while that year Lady Aberdeen's extensive philanthropy led to the establishment of the National Council of Women, followed by the Victorian Order of Nurses in 1897.<sup>60</sup> Despite the obvious benefit the Aberdeens' purchase

---

<sup>59</sup> Paul M. Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914" *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5 (1986), 78; see also Marjorie Harper, "A Gullible Pioneer? Lord Aberdeen and the Development of Fruit Farming in the Okanagan Valley 1890-1921" *British Journal of Canadian Studies* I, 2 (1986), 256-281.

<sup>60</sup> R.M. Middleton, ed. *The Journal of Lady Aberdeen: The Okanagan Valley in the Nineties* (Victoria: Morriss Publishing, 1986), 14.

bestowed upon the Okanagan, their decision to establish a residence was no doubt facilitated by the reputation and genteel atmosphere of these early ranchers and their extensive connections with well-placed families and fanciers in the Old Country.<sup>61</sup> The mutual concerns of status, vocation, and environmental change found ample expression in Lady Aberdeen's journal. Writing in October 1895 that "settlers of a good class" including the "nephew of General Sir D. Lyson" and the "grandson of Gladstone's rector at Hawarden" had recently settled in the area, she rejoiced, "we ought to get in time a really little high class community here."<sup>62</sup> Their own contribution to elegant society found its embodiment not in the genteel ranching that preceded their arrival, but in the ancient practice of raising fruit. Both at Guishican and later at their Coldstream ranch in Vernon, the Aberdeens planted vast acreages of fruit that quickly became a must-see destination for visitors to the Valley. Their activities took the early example of Father Pandosy's modest Mission orchard to a completely different level. In a few short years, land promoters who followed in Lady Aberdeen's would do the same.

Settlers in Washington and Oregon bore witness to a similar transformation. Beginning in 1886, replete with high hopes and high culture, Dr. Joseph Pogue and horticulturist H.C. Richardson embarked upon an irrigation scheme in eastern Washington consisting of four miles of ditch to deliver much-needed water for fruit cultivation. By 1893, Pogue had sixty acres of maturing trees and earthen furrows. His operation was so successful that it generated sustained interest from neighbours who were intrigued by the possibilities of

---

<sup>61</sup> Jane Sproule, "The Polarization of Okanagan Farming Communities and the 1955 Picking House Workers' Strike" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1991), 43.

<sup>62</sup> J. T. Saywell, ed., *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960), 20 October 1895.

fruit farming.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Dr. James Robert Cardwell exemplified a less aristocratic but equally sophisticated dimension to horticulture. A dentist from Illinois who set out for Oregon in 1852, he lost his cargo of fruit trees and ornamental plants in the Snake River when his wagon overturned. Once settled in Corvallis, Cardwell practiced dentistry but focused increasingly on horticulture. By the 1880s, he had an eighty acre orchard of prunes, cherries, pears, and apples.<sup>64</sup> His professional status and sensitivity to romance highlighted a cultural sophistication attached to orcharding that distinguished it from traditional agriculture. Cardwell later wrote how “the sight of the trees in bloom, the waiting and watching for the first ripe fruit, the in-gathering of the fruit in the fall, and the storing of it away in bin and cellar for use in the winter around the ingleside” represented both beauty and pleasure.<sup>65</sup>

Although orcharding across the Plateau grew in fits and starts, seedlings and irrigated lots gradually took the place of large ranches and cattle by 1900. In all areas of the trans-boundary region, former ranchers in combination with newly arrived land promoters started imposing a new image on the landscape that was being transformed by railway development. As William Robbins explains, railroads “were vehicles for incorporating nature, for extending the awesome forces of the industrial world to distant and relatively unpopulated areas.”<sup>66</sup> In general, Anglo-American settlers saw railways as “an indispensable adjunct of civilization” that would connect the nascent horticultural settlements that dotted the Plateau.

---

<sup>63</sup> Robert Autabee, *The Okanogan Project* (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> James Robert Cardwell, *A brief history of horticulture in Oregon* (Portland: 1906), 18.

<sup>65</sup> Cardwell, *A brief history*, 16.

<sup>66</sup> Robbins *Landscapes of Promise*, 110.

By eliminating arduous overland journeys, rail travel drew prospective immigrants and made more land accessible for agrarian development.<sup>67</sup>

Initially haphazard and piecemeal, railroad construction reached a critical mass in the 1890s for many locales throughout the region and was an undeniable prerequisite for the massive growth of horticulture within the Plateau. In the early 1880s, the Oregon and California Railway ran its line through Bear Creek Valley and established a depot at the crossing near Bear Creek named Middle Ford. However, a railroad engineer popularized the name Medford, after his hometown of Medford, Massachusetts. The ultimate arrival of the railway in 1884 was a catalyst for additional growth. Unlike Medford, Yakima City existed before the railway. Founded in the late 1860s, it became the county seat in 1870. By the 1880s, residents eagerly followed the construction of the Northern Pacific through the Yakima Valley. However, a dispute over concessions prompted the Northern Pacific to establish a depot four miles to the north at North Yakima. To help their instant community, the railway offered to move any buildings from Yakima City to the depot, and in due course, approximately 70 buildings, including the courthouse, made the journey on log rollers. Across the boundary, work finally began in 1890 on the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway. Originally chartered in 1886, the route linked Vernon and Okanagan Landing to the mainline Canadian Pacific Railway to the north in 1892, the year in which Vernon was incorporated as a city. Because the railways gave growers access to larger, more distant markets, they expanded their holdings. Thus, in a very real sense, railroads shaped the evolving contours of the orcharding landscape.

As railways laid the foundation for the material development of horticulture, the contemporaneous establishment of horticultural associations facilitated its intellectual

---

<sup>67</sup> Robbins *Landscapes of Promise*, 110.

growth. Oregon fruit farmers came together in Portland in 1889 and founded the Oregon State Horticultural Society with Dr. James Cardwell as its first president. In British Columbia, fruit growers assembled in Vancouver and established the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association in the same year. Building on the work of local organizations, Washington state growers followed suit with their own state-level Horticultural Association in 1904. Often preceded by the creation of local agricultural societies, horticultural associations were a logical outgrowth of the desire among orchardists to address their specific needs and their interest in orcharding as something more than a hobby or as a small component of mixed farming operations. They also highlighted the development of a distinctive identity among fruit growers. Since many early members had other professions, these nascent associations ultimately held powerful implications for the future of rural identity and the development of an orcharding landscape that affected not only First Nations, but other settlers as well.

On the eve of a new century, the Pacific Northwest was poised for the widespread adoption of horticulture. But in contrast to the pleasing images of bountiful nature evoked by Anglo-American traders and pioneers, colonization was an uneven and contested process for the region's peoples and ecology. Attracted to the benefits of exchange with the seafaring and overland traders, the Plateau peoples successfully incorporated European practices and techniques into their economies. However, trade also carried risks, particularly in regards to biological vectors such as smallpox and measles which devastated Native communities. Missionaries added another wrinkle to the European-Native relations, whose arrival coincided with disease outbreaks. Nevertheless, Plateau peoples incorporated agricultural and animal husbandry practices espoused by missionaries, complicating but not removing the

colonial rationale for their dispossession once settlers began arriving in large numbers by the middle of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the massive influx of miners into the region and the rise of cattle barons with their vast herds also provided flashpoints of conflict that further undermined Native control and self-sufficiency.

While each of these colonial actors possessed their own vision of the land's purpose and utility, their individual actions provided a set of common experiences that spanned national differences, and the discrete divisions fostered by the establishment of the international boundary along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel in 1846. Fur traders dotted the region with their fortifications, and the path of trade goods through the Plateau linked Europeans and First Nations peoples in a common economic and social endeavour. Similarly, missionaries such as the Oblates operated extensively in both the Oregon Territory and British Columbia, providing First Nations such as the Yakama and Okanagan a similar spiritual framework and set of teachings complemented by agricultural instruction. Elite ranchers, along with Plateau peoples, amassed sizable herds of cattle that were driven over old Native and fur trading pathways to the Cariboo gold fields of the north.

Similarly, the disparate activities pursued in each case were linked by a thin but common thread of experience in the form of fruit trees. Whether at fur trade fortifications, missionary outposts, or pioneer farms, the planting of orchards represented a mutual cultural affinity for horticulture that, in contrast to its gentle and pleasing countenance, served as a common tool of colonization that fulfilled Vancouver's pronouncement on cultivation and bounty. Likewise, the proliferation of fruit trees gave the region a shared ecological heritage. Seeds brought from Britain and planted at Fort Vancouver became the stock for the trees planted at the Whitman Mission and a potential source of stock for area farmers or passing

overland migrants. Across the boundary, Father Pandosy planted trees at the Immaculate Conception Mission from an Oblate mission in the Fraser Valley which may also have provided the stock for the first commercial fruit tree plantings in eastern Washington.

By the late nineteenth century, horticulture brought the luxuriant landscapes of the imperial imagination one step closer to fulfillment by providing a common language for the colonial transformation of the region. The arrival of railways was of vital importance to further growth of fruit farming as was the establishment of horticultural associations. And like the tale of romance that brought the first apple seeds to the region, middle class refinement continued to inform how orcharding was presented and imagined. Ultimately, these factors converged in the idyllic image of blossoming trees, linking not only the disparate experiences of fur traders, missionaries, and settlers, but animating a profound reorganization of the land and its peoples on both sides of the boundary.

## 2

### *Fruitful Empires: Horticulture and the Contours of Anglo-American Colonization*

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made  
By singing: -“Oh, how beautiful!” and sitting in the shade.  
~Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Pacific Northwest was no longer the isolated and hidden wilderness described by traders, missionaries, and pioneers a generation earlier. Capitalist innovations, technological advancements, and imperial aspirations had brought the region firmly into the Anglo-American orbit and set the stage for its continued social and environmental transformation. While the growth of urban centres in a resource-based economy was a powerful catalyst of change, the rural transformation was equally far-reaching in its impact and consequences, encompassing Biblical redemption, financial plenty, and personal fulfillment blessed by scientific insight.

Within the Anglo-American world, change and social dislocation fostered middle-class insecurities about working class militancy, racial mixing, and the decline of Christian civilization. These doubts fed into a larger argument about the future development of Canada and the United States as an urban or rural society, and in doing so, brought the seemingly remote valleys of the Plateau directly into focus. Steadfast in their conviction that nature's influence was the key to building a confident and ordered society, horticulturists and rural advocates argued that the path to social stability and future greatness did not lie in crowded cities or darkened mills but among blossoming trees nurtured by scientifically-minded

farmers in partnership with nature. By the turn of the century, thousands of settlers answered in kind as governments, boosters, and fellow orchardists engaged in a lively promotional campaign that transformed the landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

Expressed in a vibrant discourse captured in letters, guides, speeches, and brochures, rural sympathizers proposed nothing less than the rebirth of the countryside as the wellspring of human advancement. Critical to our understanding is how the environment was marshaled and altered to sustain the ideal of a natural empire home to “industrious men, beautiful women, and merry children.” Newcomers aspired to create a “modern countryside” where agricultural science ensured social and ecological stability. The creation of an orcharding landscape represented a “natural” partnership between masculine farmers and feminine nature characterized by personal health, racial purity, and moral soundness. In contrast to stereotypes of backward farmers and deficient rural districts, agricultural science assured the superiority of horticultural life through a naturalized order extending from the orchard to the wider community. As the architects and beneficiaries of this vision, orchardists strove to balance art and science through their daily work, much like their idealized vision which blended “rational farming” with a passion for nature’s bracing influences.

The orcharding landscape represented a vision of rural modernity that transcended national differences and international boundaries. While a common identification with horticulture never completely displaced national allegiances, it did offer a meaningful opportunity to soften its edges in light of a shared belief in the superiority of rural life and the benefits of fruit farming. More broadly, the rural imagination of Canadian and American settlers provided a common lexicon to express their fears of rural loss and their hopes for a

prosperous future and both looked to institutional and social development as a necessary prerequisite for rural renewal, progressive citizenship and generous harvests.

As historic stewards of the land, farmers saw scientific agriculture as an extension of their belief in producers' rights and individual responsibility, an opportunity to cultivate a new society that valorized land stewardship as the vanguard of human progress. In doing so, fruit farmers revealed a tangible link between planting fruit trees in isolated valleys and the broader currents of Anglo-American imperialism, eugenics, and industrialization. Put another way, when orchardists penned celebratory poems, condemned the moral and racial failings of urban life, or called for a dynamic rural citizenry to guide national development, they connected images of crimson apples directly to the form and content of modernity itself. Ironically, the same scientific advances that threatened their vision of nature provided the key to its salvation.

### *Hope and Anxiety*

The arrival of the twentieth century was, according to historian Hans Kohn, “generally greeted with smug optimism.”<sup>1</sup> Such confidence was not entirely misplaced. Over the previous century, change assumed a new frenzied pace. The ages of the telegraph, electricity, industrialization, steam, and the Gilded and Second Age of Imperialism provided multiple reference points to describe the rapidly evolving world. Horticulturalist James Cardwell expressed a common sentiment in saying “in a sense, the telegraph, telephone, railroads, and great ships have almost annihilated time and distance.”<sup>2</sup> As these innovations changed how people traveled, consumed, and imagined, they confirmed human ingenuity and the ascendancy of the Western world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hans Kohn, “A Turning Point,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30 (2) 1969: 283.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Historical Society (OHS), 1 February 1903, *Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, Scrapbook 131, 84.

If the various ages represented individual advances in technology, collectively they represented an era of progress for North American society. Particularly in the United States, the Progressive Era came to embody the belief that technological changes both enabled and necessitated changes in other spheres of life, whether economic, social, political, or environmental. Indeed, smug optimism was complemented by an equally palpable sense of anxiety. For many people, the new century was a turning point for North American society as the fundamentally rural character of Canada and the United States was on the cusp of being eclipsed by urban growth despite the massive expansion of agriculture in the North American West during the nineteenth century. Yet, along with expanded farms, regional metropolitan centres like Winnipeg and Chicago exerted an inexorable pull on the countryside and repositioned it as a resource hinterland to serve their needs.<sup>3</sup> While farmers recognized that cities acted as valuable markets, they were deeply suspicious of urban life and its seemingly insatiable appetite for rural sons or daughters and the growing political power of its elites. Rural people in both countries were far from passive in their responses as they came together in local associations or new organizations like the Grange to steer the future development from the use of new technologies on the farm to broader political reforms.<sup>4</sup>

Concurrently, urban-based social commentators began a public dialogue about the potential pitfalls of unbridled progress bound by the common thread of nature's role in

---

<sup>3</sup> Examples of the Metropolitan-Hinterland thesis include J.M.S. Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, & Identities in Canada before 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); and William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Established in 1867 by Oliver Hudson Kelley, the National Grange of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry was a secret fraternal organization that grew in popularity through the 1880s. Critical of railroads, merchants and banks, Grangers supported cooperatives and state regulation of the financial sector. Although it peaked as a political movement in the 1870s, it continued to organize granges and serve as a presence in rural affairs into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 154-156.

human life. The linking of industry with overcrowded cities, class strife and social instability gained increasing currency, as did the association of the city with moral failings and temptations.<sup>5</sup> The formation in 1910 of the Woodcraft Indians in the United States by Ernest Thompson Seton and of the Boy Scouts in Canada by Robert Baden-Powell and William Boyce served as a youth-orientated response to these fears.<sup>6</sup> The utility of outdoor recreation in maintaining a vibrant manhood and a healthy race in the face of “feminizing” society found favour with eugenicists worried about the price of urban civilization.<sup>7</sup>

While making campfires and playing rugby had their utility, the urban environment remained unaltered. To revitalize humanity, commentators pursued a number of strategies to reflect nature in human life such as including nature study and gardens in the schools. Corporations were sympathetic. The Canadian Pacific Railway, for example, surrounded its stations with vibrant displays of trimmed hedges and flowers while the National Cash Register Company experimented with designing worker tenements around gardens for “the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of the community.”<sup>8</sup> Notions of bringing nature to the city helped spur the extension of green space under the banner of the City Beautiful Movement and the innovative designs of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted who

---

<sup>5</sup> While work on these themes is quite extensive, a helpful starting point is George Altmeyer, “Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 11 (August 1976), 24.

<sup>6</sup> H. Allen Anderson, *The Chief: Ernest Thompson Seton and the Changing West* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986); John Henry Wadland, *Ernest Thompson Seton: Man in Nature and the Progressive Era* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> J.A. Mangan, ed. *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, and Society* (London: Cass, 1993); J.A. Mangan, ed. *Making European Masculinities: Sport, Europe, Gender* (London: Cass, 2000); Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). In addition to restoring middle class manhood, Colin Howell argues sport was used to stifle working class radicalism in *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Edwinna Von Baeyer, *Rhetoric and Roses: A History of Canadian Gardening, 1900-1930* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1984) and *Art, Nature and the Factory: An Account of a Welfare Movement, With A Few Remarks on the Art of the Landscape Gardener* (Dayton: National Cash Register Company, 1904)

refashioned urban design with New York's Central Park and Montreal's Mount Royal.<sup>9</sup> Sir Ebenezer Howard, founder of the British New Town Movement, called for the creation of garden cities whose curved lanes and trimmed hedges would infuse such a peaceable existence that class antagonisms between labor and the bourgeoisie would "naturally" dissipate.<sup>10</sup> Fellow Briton A.R. Sennett echoed Howard's belief in the intimate relationship between social harmony and nature, arguing "the farther we wander from the guidance of Dame Nature, the farther we are from perfection; the more we deviate from her ways, the more precarious our progress."<sup>11</sup> For at least twenty years, these ideas resonated among middle-class reformers and government officials, prompting members of the United States Senate and the Canadian House of Commons to examine the potential for Howard's ideas in the New World.<sup>12</sup> In both countries, interest in reformulating the relationship between nature and society was linked to the growing conservation movement and to support for more parks and protected areas in line with a popular belief in the regenerative powers of wilderness for its human visitors, an echo of John Muir's view that parks were useful "not only as fountains of timber...but as fountains of life."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Scribner, 1999) and Irving D. Fisher, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Planning Movement in the United States* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> Sir Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow, A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London, 1898), 46; quoted in Michael Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape* (London: Routledge Press, 1994), 160.

<sup>11</sup> A.R. Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice: Volume One* (London, 1905), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Adams, *Rural Planning and Development: A Study of Rural Conditions and Problems in Canada* (Ottawa: Commission of Conservation, 1917), 246. For an examination of the Commission, see Alan Artibise and Gilbert Stelter, "Conservation Planning and Urban Planning: The Canadian Commission of Conservation in Historical Perspective," in Roger Kain, ed., *Planning for Conservation* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981), 17-36.

<sup>13</sup> Canadian examples include Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999) and Tina Loo, "Making a Modern Wilderness: Conserving Wildlife in Twentieth-Century Canada" *Canadian Historical Review* 2001, 82 (1): 92-121. In the U.S. West, two important studies are Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist Experience in Western America* (New York: Knopf, 1957) and Anne Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscapes and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

Against this backdrop a renewed interest in the countryside began to take shape. The establishment of the Country Life Commission in 1908 by American President Theodore Roosevelt marked an opportunity to “change the movement from the country to the city back again to the farm.”<sup>14</sup> Evoking the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, one Oregon writer cast the fruit farmer as a progressive guarantor of American democracy but warned that because of “greed and money...America would degenerate as soon as it ceased to be an agricultural and horticultural nation.”<sup>15</sup> Canadian horticulturalist, public advocate, and editor Maxwell Smith agreed that “agriculture is the basic science upon which rests the superstructure of all our national wealth.” For Smith, the threat of urban growth upsetting the equilibrium between city and country was particularly alarming as “the highest form of civilization is reflected through the moral, physical, and intellectual standard of the rural population of any country, while city life promotes the vanity, frivolity, and the selfishly debasing indulgencies of human nature.” To further dramatize the stakes of debased indulgences, Smith tapped the reader’s gendered imperial imagination by arguing “the modern city typifies the traits of character manifest in savage, uncivilized tribes, who always neglected the land, lived in villages or communities and indulged their weaknesses for ornament and show, including the grotesque headdresses of women so manifest in the cities of the present day.”<sup>16</sup>

In an era when questions of rural or urban life generated public discussion and animated commentators and politicians, rural advocates argued that fundamental and far-reaching solutions were necessary. In this context of hope and anxiety, fruit farming emerged as one such solution. According to orchardist T.D. Mitchell, agriculture was “the oldest

---

<sup>14</sup> William Howard Taft to Liberty Hyde Bailey, 6 August 1910 from *Liberty Hyde Bailey: A Man for All Seasons* <<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/bailey/commission/index.html>> (2 September 2007)

<sup>15</sup> LC, Henry Dosch, “Horticulture in Oregon” (Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition Commission, 1906), 9.

<sup>16</sup> “Editorial,” *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen* December 1911.

pursuit in the world,” but “only in comparatively recent times” had it attained “the dignity of a profession” largely because the advent of science in farming required a “greater range of study and practice than is necessary in any other [profession].”<sup>17</sup> Infused with divine providence, the natural purity of the countryside and its close association with the natural environment would correct the errors of human society. Rather than tinkering with the aesthetics of urban space with parks and gardens, fruit farming represented a dramatic effort to “make rural civilization as effective and satisfying as other civilization.”<sup>18</sup>

### *Organizing the Modern Countryside*

United by a common vision that spanned the international boundary, individual settlers and promoters busied themselves with the unglamorous work necessary to make gardens bloom in the desert. Although the scale and pace of the tasks varied, it required the fashioning of an institutional and financial infrastructure to nurture the orcharding landscape. First and foremost, cattle needed to be displaced and land purchased from wealthy ranchers or speculators. The subsequent work of subdividing, developing, and selling orchard plots brought together common business interests at local boards of trade such as Yakima or creating them for the first time as in Kelowna.<sup>19</sup> Importantly, these boards helped forge the necessary consensus among business owners and prominent citizens to direct their energies to fruit promotion and development. While new rail lines provided transportation to bring settlers and to ship fruit, many locales across the Plateau required irrigation to make it possible to grow fruit. In areas such as the Okanagan, extensive development did not occur

---

<sup>17</sup> “Some Aspects of the Profession of Agriculture,” *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen* October 1911.

<sup>18</sup> Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Country-Life Movement in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Jason Patrick Bennett, “Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in turn-of-the-century British Columbia” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 9, 1998: 63-92

until large-scale investments were made in water storage and distribution systems after 1900.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to securing community support, fruit farmers benefited from the infrastructure provided by state and provincial governments. Local elites, who were often both boosters and politicians, often used their influence in Victoria, Olympia, or Salem to facilitate this. Their task was simplified because other politicians often shared the broad values of development and celebrated the growth of population and of industrial and agricultural production. Thus, the transformation of cattle ranges into fruited fields meshed ably with progressive political priorities. At the same time, politicians were sensitive to the wider concerns of society, particularly in view of the anxieties surrounding the vitality of rural life. Thus, the expansion of state institutions was a shared interest. Between 1889 and 1892, the creation of Boards of Horticulture in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia demonstrated political commitment to the establishment of fruit farming. In addition to performing an inspectorate function ranging from pest control to fruit quality, the boards heard grower complaints and concerns as they also fielded inquiries from potential settlers.<sup>21</sup>

Although deeds and finances were critical instruments in changing the land from a cattle frontier to a rural paradise, the printing press also transformed the prospective settler into progressive farmer. Buttressed by a vibrant publishing industry related to fruit farming, promoters advertised in local and regional newspapers, and opened sales offices in distant communities.<sup>22</sup> With future orchardists often thousands of miles away from potential fruit

---

<sup>20</sup> David Dendy, "The Worm in the Apple: Contesting the Codling Moth in British Columbia," in Ruth Sandwell, ed., *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 144.

<sup>21</sup> The boards faced the delicate task of advising prospective settlers who sought recommendations about the choicest settlements without stoking the jealousies of local boards of trade. Oregon State Archives (OSA) Horticultural Records, 1893-1921; 4-7-5-3, Correspondence, July 1908, Box 41

<sup>22</sup> *About the fruit and farming lands of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho* (1906); Edwin Dickerson, ed. *The Little Packer* (Yakima, Wash.: Quickprint, 1920); J.T. Bealby, *Fruit Ranching in British Columbia*

farms, a flurry of letters, speeches, manuals, and guides was vital in achieving population growth, a period that Canadian geographer Cole Harris characterized as “fruit-mad days” for the middle class.<sup>23</sup> The chief aim of the colourful promotional material was to make commercial fruit farming appear familiar by putting it in a language and cultural framework that celebrated rural values and rural living.

Stylized as windows onto distant landscapes and their fertile abundance, promotional pamphlets followed a similar format in their idealization of the orcharding landscape. Produced by local real estate promoters, boards of trade, and railway interests, guides ranged from a focus on a specific locality to a particular region and touched on a similar range of themes, including orchard homes, educational facilities, religious institutions, financial services, recreative possibilities, and crop returns. Not surprisingly, the main focus was on fruit farming and its various aspects, including packing, transportation, markets, and capital requirements. The actual cost of purchasing an orchard depended on several factors, including community reputation, proximity to transportation, and the condition of land provided for sale, ranging from uncleared to fully planted. Nevertheless, to take the year 1910 as an example, prices between Kelowna, Yakima, and Medford were broadly similar, ranging from \$150 to \$400 per acre for cleared and irrigated land, and \$500 or more per acre for fruit-bearing orchards.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the high initial investment in land, settlers who purchased undeveloped farms needed a separate income to tide them over the four or five years before their trees bore commercial quantities of fruit.

---

(London, 1911); J.S. Redmayne, *Fruit Farming on the “Dry Belt” of British Columbia: the Why and Wherefore* (London, 1912).

<sup>23</sup> R. Cole Harris and Elizabeth Phillips, eds. *Letters from Windermere 1912-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), x.

<sup>24</sup> Kelowna Centennial Museum (KCM), Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna, British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan” (Clarke & Stuart Co., Ltd., 1911), 5; OHS, Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Oregon: Rogue River Valley” (Medford Commercial Club, 1909), 53.



Figure 3: A promotional pamphlet, circa 1910. Oregon Historical Society, MSS 6000 – 18/5, “The Dalles, Oregon.”

Clearly, the cost of buying land was prohibitive to the average immigrant, but orchardists, who favoured a genteel society did not necessarily see this as a negative factor. Once the trees were bearing, prospective settlers were told they could produce from \$500 to \$2250 per acre, realizing for the average grower a net annual income of \$3000 to \$6000 or more.<sup>25</sup>

The vibrant photos framed by lyrical descriptions of fruit farming life in the promotional materials today seem little more than awkward marketing tools replete with exaggerated claims and excessive optimism. However, these initial impressions must be offset by an appreciation of their broader significance. As the son of one promoter reflected years later, “the emphasis was not so much on making money as finding a pleasant way of life.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, despite the powerful resonance of fantastic wealth, the cultural attributes of fruit growing undoubtedly also encouraged people to identify with it both as a vocation and as a new lifestyle in an exclusive and modern rural society that avoided modern excess and promised an alternative variant of modernism.

### *Imagining the Modern Countryside*

Dreams of Eden are a recurring motif in the history of North America. From the earliest period of European colonization, comparisons with the garden described in the Book of Genesis appeared in the accounts of government officials, missionaries, settlers, and entrepreneurs.<sup>27</sup> Predictably, promoters of fruit farming in the Pacific Northwest in the early 1900s tapped into this reservoir of religious experience. A British Columbia brochure

---

<sup>25</sup> KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna, British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan” (Clarke & Stuart Co., Ltd., 1911), 5; OHS, Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Oregon: Rogue River Valley” (Medford Commercial Club, 1909), 17.

<sup>26</sup> British Columbia Archives (BCA), Pooley family business and personal papers, 1896-1915, MSS 1584, A-1008, “W.R. Pooley,” 10.

<sup>27</sup> On the American frontier, H.N. Smith explored how the image of the West as “the garden of the world” guided settler aspirations and government policy. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), 175.

claimed that “instead of the ‘Lost Garden of Eden,’ as [BC] has been termed, it is a newly-found earthly paradise. Nature’s offering to the man who wants to really know life.”<sup>28</sup>

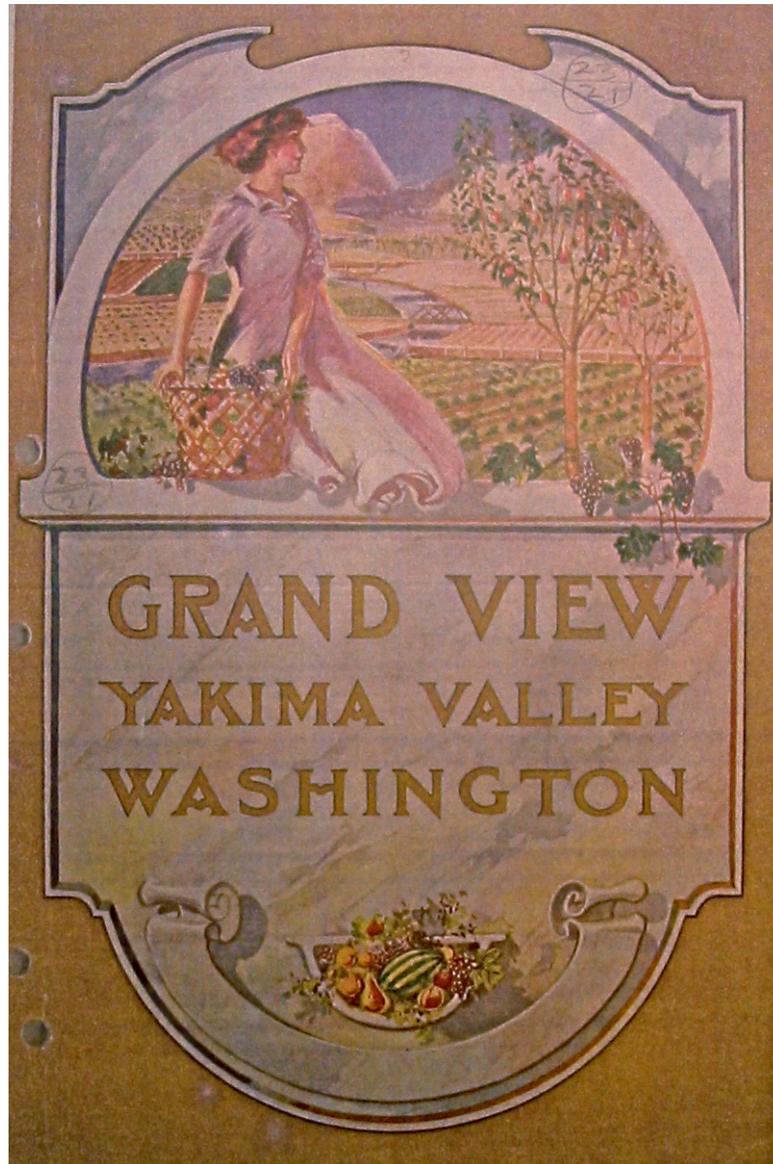


Figure 4: The young woman frames the bounty of the land. Oregon Historical Society, MSS 6000 – 23/5, “Grand View, Washington.”

Similarly, an American writer called fruit farming “a pleasant occupation, in a sense carrying one back to Eden.”<sup>29</sup> Describing the appeal of fruit farming in Oregon, another

<sup>28</sup> KCM, Central Okanagan Land, (1912?), 14.

<sup>29</sup> Library of Congress (LC), Medford Commercial Club, “Medford Oregon, Rogue River Valley” (Medford, 1909), 50.

author recited how the Creator had “laid out the Garden of Eden and planted trees for ornament as well as for fruit.” In a fortuitous parallel with current fruit promotion efforts, the author revealed how God intended Adam and Eve “to be horticulturalists” and that they “were happy as long as they remained in their country home. But in an evil hour,” he noted, “they left it, and ever since man has striven to place those who were given him to love and care for in a similar Garden of Eden.”<sup>30</sup> Whether directly or indirectly, allusions to Eden suggest divine approval of fruit farming and illustrate how horticulture could appeal to Christians inclined to commune with God and nature through their very vocation.

Promoters proclaimed that thanks to the Almighty’s blessings, prosperity was a natural outgrowth of the land’s productivity. Naturally, it was also a convenient method of elevating the potentially corruptive practice of selling land. Whether in Ashland, Oregon or Summerland, BC, or in the pages of *Harper’s Weekly* and *Western Life*, advertisers painted a veritable paradise replete with generous returns on fruit crops.<sup>31</sup> In an age of hucksterism and snake-oil salesmen, the testimonials strove to affirm their veracity with solemn pledges from Boards of Trade and governments to let “the facts speak for themselves,” often corroborated with detailed profit statements from packing houses and orchardists. Reservations about the selective nature of these figures did not deter governments, boosters, and settlers from generously appraising their environs.<sup>32</sup>

The presentation of orcharding in the press hinted at the relationship between a benevolent natural world and physical health. When medical science offered few

---

<sup>30</sup> LC, Henry Dosch, “Horticulture in Oregon” (Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition Commission, 1906), 2.

<sup>31</sup> OHS, Medford and Ashland Commercial Clubs, “Jackson County in the Famous Rogue River Valley: The Pear and Apple District”, 1910; BCA, Summerland Board of Trade, “Home of the Big Red Apple,” [1917]; John Kimberley Mumford, “Apple-Mad Oregon,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 23 February 1910; Marion MacRae, “Hood River,” *Western Life*, 30 January 1908; HM Williamson, “A fortune on ten acres,” *Pacific Monthly* [1903]; Okanogan Commercial Club, “Okanogan, Washington,” 1910.

<sup>32</sup> “Clarkston Man’s Idea of Hood River,” *Hood River Glacier*, 10 September 1908.

reassurances against sudden and fatal illnesses, claims of the healing virtues of rural life were attractive. Extolling the benefits of pure air and the absence of extremes of heat and cold, “and freedom from malaria,” a Canadian booster proclaimed British Columbia “a vast sanitarium” where settlers “invariably improve in health” while “insomnia and nervous afflictions find alleviation, the old and infirm are granted a renewed lease of life, and children thrive as in few other parts of the world.”<sup>33</sup> The wondrous effects of a healthful climate compelled a Washington state writer to boast “a more equable climate” did not exist than that at Wenatchee where its invigorating qualities impart a glow to the blood and a springiness to the step. There are no sudden changes with the revolving seasons.”<sup>34</sup> Not to be outdone, Oregon’s Jackson County Commissioners revealed, “to have good health, you must live where the climate is ideal...and to have a happy home, you must locate where Nature shows her finest handiwork,” and pointed to the “fine physical specimens” of county children as “living evidence of the natural advantages we enjoy.”<sup>35</sup> In addition to local boosters, state politicians such as Colorado Governor Alva Adams mused, “the climate and conditions that are best for apples are best for man. Anarchy never gathered fruit from its own apple tree.”<sup>36</sup>

The argument that fruit farming provided an ideal environment for cultivating a refined and healthy people invariably elicited ideas of social and racial order. With little doubt, the invitation to build strong, healthy communities suggested that fruit farming should be reserved for “superior” settlers to the exclusion of all others. Elaborating on the

---

<sup>33</sup> KCM, Grand Pacific Land Company, 1911; quoted in Jason Patrick Bennett, “‘Nature’s Garden and a Possible Utopia’: Farming for Fruit and Industrious Men in the Transboundary Pacific Northwest, 1895-1914,” in Sterling Evans, ed., *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 228. As a tangible expression of this association, the British Columbia anti-tuberculosis society selected Tranquille, near present-day Kamloops, as the site for a sanitarium due to the regions dry and mountainous climate.

<sup>34</sup> LC, Wenatchee Commercial Club, “Wenatchee, the Gateway to the Land of the Perfect Apples,” 1910.

<sup>35</sup> OHS, Jackson County Commissioners, “Where Nature Lavished Her Bounties,” 1924-5.

<sup>36</sup> LC, Proceedings and Papers (1910), 89.

relationship between environment and human development, one booster suggested that the climatic similarities between British Columbia and “the cradle of the greatest nations of the world” provided irrefutable proof that, like Europe, the province possessed “the climate best adapted to the development of the human race.”<sup>37</sup> In this manner, the rural imagination rationalized a racial superiority that excluded all of those deemed unworthy, whether First Nations, Asian, or African-American. In British Columbia, these concerns assumed explicit form, as when a Kelowna author rejoiced that the local population was “chiefly English and Canadians of British descent.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly, a Medford Oregon author asserted that the Rogue River Valley “is distinctly an American settlement...of the best class. There are no colonies of Japanese, Chinese, Hindoos or negroes to lower the standard of labor and of American civilization.”<sup>39</sup>

Such allusions to the character and profile of settlers were not mere asides, but were central to the purpose of the modern countryside. Indeed, Albert Henry George, the fourth Earl Grey and Governor-General of Canada and British Columbian orchardist, praised horticulture as “a most beautiful art” cultivated by “a refined and cultured class of people – the finest class on earth.”<sup>40</sup> The association between art and refinement was not accidental as Grey argued that with fruit farming “qualities of mind are necessary ... which are not so essential to success in wheat growing or ordinary mixed farming.”<sup>41</sup> Grey’s careful distinctions would not have gone unnoticed among practitioners of that higher art since many British Canadians held wheat farming in contempt for its association with the Ukrainians and

---

<sup>37</sup> KCM, Grand Pacific Land Company, “Kelowna, British Columbia,” (1911), 3.

<sup>38</sup> KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, (1918), 14.

<sup>39</sup> LC, Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Oregon, Rogue River Valley,” (1910), 41.

<sup>40</sup> KCM, “The Okanagan Valley Booklet,” 1905.

<sup>41</sup> KCM, Central Okanagan Land (1911), 3.

Poles settling on the Canadian prairies.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the *Rogue River Fruit Grower* intoned “fruit farming is gentlemen’s work,” for its success “requires a person of refined, cultivated taste,” with a scientific knowledge of soils, fertilizers, vegetables, insects, and climatic influences, as well as “a high degree of business capacity and training” equal to that required “to conduct a bank, a store or a factory.” The net result was that “it is the one line of agricultural work that cannot be done by ignorant foreigners nor by cultus Americans for it takes brains as well as muscle to care for an orchard.”<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, the sense of innate order anchored by the orcharding landscape justified the exclusion of non-white settlers since its basis lay in the “natural law” of the non-human environment. Thus, prejudice was elevated from the realm of ignorance to a belief in nature’s intended design as expressed in the rational husbandry of the land and the modern character of rural life, making “nature herself an accomplice in the crime of political inequality.”<sup>44</sup>

In addition to excluding racial “undesirables,” fruit farmers also demonstrated their modern credentials with their vision of class and order. Whether north or south of the boundary, depictions of fruit farming are strikingly similar in marginalizing labouring peoples from the celebration of orchard life explicitly and implicitly. The Kelowna Board of Trade, for example, assured an intending settler that “in this district he will acquire prosperity and wealth with the minimum of labour.”<sup>45</sup> In nearby Okanagan Centre, the Okanagan Valley Land Company acknowledged that “work is necessary” but in the end “it is light, pleasant,

---

<sup>42</sup> Canadian Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, specifically sought eastern Europeans to establish homesteads in the federally-administered Northwest Territories, that became the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905. Sifton believed these people were admirably suited to withstanding severe conditions in the West but his views angered those who favoured a British-based Canadian population.

<sup>43</sup> Editorial statement, *Rogue River Fruit Grower* 1 (5) May 1909.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 48.

<sup>45</sup> Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna, The Orchard City” (1907), 24.

clean, and interesting.”<sup>46</sup> Members of the Yakima Commercial Club emphasized that the eastern man would find in small fruit farms the “ideal conditions of rural life.” This suggested the appealing prospect of a self-reliant community with a minimal need of waged labourers. In linking diminished size with greater progress, The Dalles Business Men’s Association echoed, “that five acres [of orchard] intelligently tilled are more profitable than a larger tract which cannot be given the necessary attention.”<sup>47</sup> Nature’s productiveness in sustaining greater profits and manageable acreages was an ideal arrangement for achieving economic as well as social perfection.

Promotional literature further stressed the independence of orchardists by pointing to the contributions of household members to fill labour requirements. The Kelowna Board of Trade asserted, “a family can live on five acres, and ten acres will keep a man and family busy all year round.”<sup>48</sup> The Medford Commercial Club achieved a similar effect with a photograph of young girls gathered around a small ladder and filled boxes with the caption “picking cherries.”<sup>49</sup> With little doubt, appeals to Eden’s first family and reference to “beautiful women” demonstrated the appropriateness of fruit farming for the procreating nuclear family.

Allusions to wholesome communities of upstanding citizens also prefigured the family as the fundamental building block of a rural society. While men were certainly the primary audience of the promotional appeals, the vocation of fruit farming betrays a reassuringly feminine landscape. The author of one Oregon brochure speculated that as a

---

<sup>46</sup> Okanagan Valley Land Company, Ltd., “Okanagan Centre” (1908), 5.

<sup>47</sup> The Dalles Business Men’s Association, “The Dalles, Oregon: The Springtime of Western Development” (The Dalles: The Dalles Business Men’s Association, 1910), 23.

<sup>48</sup> Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna: The Orchard City of the Okanagan” (1908), 23.

<sup>49</sup> Medford Commercial Club, “Medford Oregon, Rogue River Valley” (Medford: Medford Commercial Club, 1909), 37.

man aged, “he feels a strong, overmastering desire to spend his later years and die in the country, on the bosom of the great mother of us all, generous, teeming earth.”<sup>50</sup> Not only did the metaphor of earth as a great mother sustaining the family through nourishment and a pleasant environment illustrate the feminized land, but so too did numerous photographs of young girls and women in white summer dresses standing among the neat rows of trees.<sup>51</sup> More than the markers of family or blissful escape, the young girls personify the womanly blossoming of the land. Similar photographs in other American and Canadian brochures implied a family-centric operation that maintained middle class status and appropriate gender roles by transforming the general drudgery of farm work into an appealing family activity while maintaining their middle class disdain for rough labour.

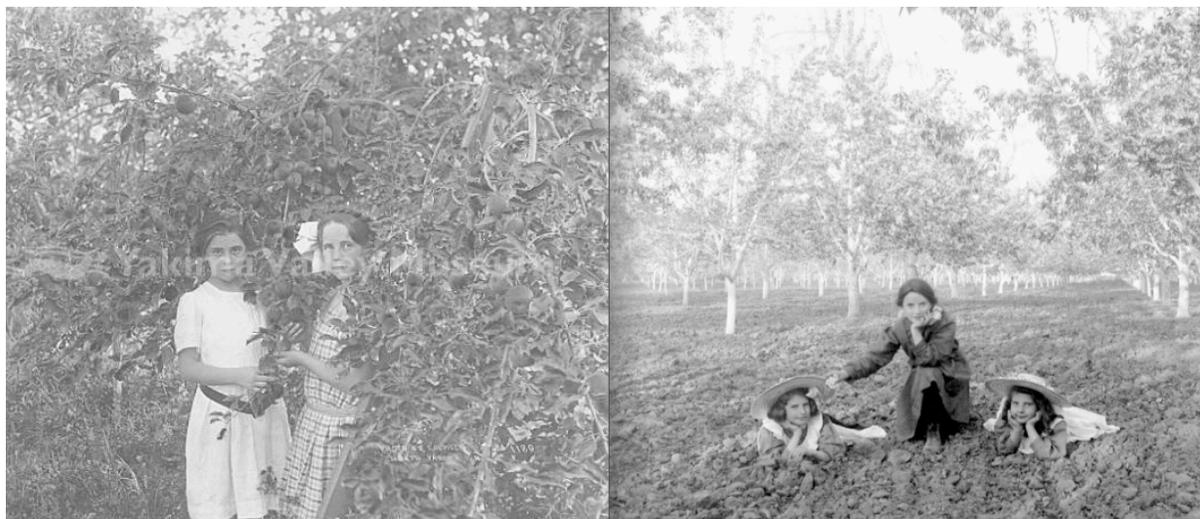


Figure 5: Five girls -- two in a Yakima orchard (left) in 1912, and three on a Kelowna orchard in 1909. Colville, “Two Girls and Apple Tree,” 1912, Yakima Valley Museum Collection [1991-126-009] / George H. Hudson, Library and Archives Canada, PA-029604.

<sup>50</sup> LC, Henry Dosch, “Horticulture in Oregon” (Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition Commission, 1906), 8.

<sup>51</sup> Among numerous examples, are OHS, Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Rogue River Valley, Southern Oregon,” 1912; Wenatchee Commercial Club, “Wenatchee, the Gateway to the Land of Perfect Apples,” 1911; The Dalles Businessmen’s Association, “The Dalles, Oregon,” 1910; Bureau of Statistics and Information, “Washington, Descriptive and Statistical Information,” 1922; Vernon Board of Trade, “Facts about Vernon, its resources and possibilities,” 1908.

Some brochures portrayed orchard work as the work of gentlemen. An orchard scene in one Kelowna pamphlet had smartly dressed men posing stoically on ladders by fruit-laden trees.<sup>52</sup> A Wenatchee pamphlet depicted a young man holding a rake, pausing as the camera captured the image of a two-year old peach orchard.<sup>53</sup> The sole reference to work in a Sunnyside brochure were two men doing winter spraying as a “precaution against pests” opposite a photo of two well-dressed men inspecting nine-year old Grimes Golden apple trees in late summer.<sup>54</sup> Viewed in isolation, these photographs confirmed the place of work in orchard life but obscured the prominence of rural labour. The hanging fruit surrounding the Kelowna pickers also drew attention to the productiveness and potential profits of orchards. By focusing on only one or two individuals at work, the American photographs hinted that the scenes featured farmers rather than farm help.

When labourers appear in the promotional literature, their contribution to rural society was defined narrowly according to grower priorities and concerns. In response to numerous inquiries about the costs of machinery, farm implements, groceries and stock, the Yakima Commercial Club declared that “the opportunities for wage workers are not greater here than in other communities” as if to reassure worried settlers that the local economy would not draw wage-earning undesirables. Of thirty-two pages, labour merited a single sentence announcing: “farm hands receive from \$20 to \$30 per month; day laborers, \$2 per day; carpenters, \$2.50 to \$3.50 per day.”<sup>55</sup> Among the numerous testimonials of handsome financial returns reported by Medford boosters, labour costs merely appeared under the

---

<sup>52</sup> Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan” (Vancouver BC: Clarke and Stuart Co., Ltd., 1912).

<sup>53</sup> Wenatchee Commercial Club, “Wenatchee, the Gateway to the Land of Perfect Apples in North Central Washington” (Wenatchee Commercial Club, 1910).

<sup>54</sup> “Sunnyside, Washington” (Portland: Franklin-Ward Company, 1911), 22.

<sup>55</sup> Yakima Commercial Club, “The Yakima Valley, Washington” (North Yakima: Yakima Commercial Club, 1905), 32.

general rubric of expenses that entailed everything from ladders to pest spray.<sup>56</sup> Not to be outdone, the Central Okanagan Land and Orchard Company summarized the costs of “cultivating, spraying, pruning, etc for 5 years” without indicating if these expenses included wages for temporary help.<sup>57</sup> Yet, the pages celebrating fruit growing in Kelowna, Yakima, or Medford made the impact of labour plainly visible – farm lots had to be surveyed and divided, seedlings planted and tended, canals dug and lined with concrete. Discussions of orchard costs and photographs of fruit pickers highlighted the intervention of rural labour.

Ultimately, a distinction must be made between the products of labour and the place of labour in the larger schema of orchard identity. Its relative position in the collective identity of these communities forms the starting place of analysis of the priorities of a new rural constituency dedicated to transforming the countryside into a middle class domain free from the racial and class strife unleashed by industrial and urban growth. Thus, the existence of non-agricultural industries was deftly handled to preserve the centrality of horticulture. Wenatchee promoters noted that “the mountains hold vast storehouses of mineral wealth, awaiting development,” presumably to be worked by someone other than local fruit farmers.<sup>58</sup> However, the prospect of non-agricultural development and its need for workers never trumped fruit-raising concerns. Medford supporters assured prospective farmers that the thirty mile distance between the copper mines and the city provided a natural buffer which “makes it possible to run the smelters” without affecting vegetation or “the purity of the air.” By extension, distance was also a social barrier between farmers and the “hundreds

---

<sup>56</sup> Medford Commercial Club, “Medford Oregon, Rogue River Valley” (Medford: Medford Commercial Club, 1910), 46-48.

<sup>57</sup> *Okanagan Valley Fruit Lands* (Central Okanagan Land and Orchard Company, 1907).

<sup>58</sup> Wenatchee Commercial Club, 9.

of men” of rough habits and coarse manners at the mine site.<sup>59</sup> Safely protected by nature, Medford still profited since the ore was shipped via its connection to major railways. Yakima promoters went one step further, noting that they had “few great manufacturing industries here. We have no shipping; no mines; no fisheries; few mills, few payrolls.” Instead, gardens, orchards, and happy homes were “the distinctive features of the Yakima country.”<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, discerning readers could deduce the need for waged workers in related industries such as the fruit canneries.<sup>61</sup> Although not explicitly addressed, promotional efforts highlighting the convenient services of local packinghouses implied the need for workers to sort, pack, and ship the fruit. Boosters did not focus on this presumably because it might stimulate anxieties about class strife or the horticultural orientation of the community despite the growers’ dependence on the packing houses.

Of course, what cannot be forgotten is that promotional brochures were crafted with a single over-riding purpose -- to sell real estate to an audience of potential farmers or investors in orchard lands. It is not surprising, then, that the concerns of this constituency predominate in the presentation of the material. “While there are opportunities for wage earners,” explained the Sunnyside Commercial Club, “some capital and equipment is necessary to settle on a piece of land and make a success.”<sup>62</sup> Simply put, landless or poor labourers were not a market for promoters seeking to sell farms. But in their broader capacity, these brochures communicated the organization and ideals of fruit communities in the Pacific Northwest by offering a specific “way of seeing” the land and those who might

---

<sup>59</sup> Medford Commercial Club, (1909), 59.

<sup>60</sup> Yakima Commercial Club, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Dalles Business Men’s Association, “The Dalles Oregon” (1910), 22.

<sup>62</sup> “Sunnyside, Washington” (Portland: Franklin-Ward Company, 1911), 48.

live on it. In this manner, the way in which labouring peoples appear reveals the aspirations of booster and orchardist alike in creating an ordered and privileged “rural civilization.”<sup>63</sup>



Figure 6: Well-built bungalows and clean orchards dramatized the prosperity of horticulture. Taken near Vernon, BC, 1910. Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, Library and Archives Canada, PA-020991.

In contrast to the barren wastes that defined the popular image of the Pacific Northwest fifty years earlier, the transformation of the region ushered by fruit farming recast it in a feminine guise that was clearly genteel and co-operative. Importantly, these characteristics led to the greatest benefit for farmers – a bountiful land ready to reward intelligent men with prolific harvests thanks to the prudent application of science. Just as people pointed to increased industrial production as a demonstration of progressive business

---

<sup>63</sup> The overlap between booster and orchardist was both metaphorical and literal. It was not uncommon for newly-arrived orchardists to “boost” their new environs, whether in letters to friends, participation at regional exhibitions, or attendance at regional horticultural conferences. Similarly, many prominent orchardists, such as T.W. Stirling of Kelowna, were both practicing farmers and real estate developers.

practices, so too did fruit farmers herald generous harvests as the ultimate validation of horticulture's modern credentials.

The apparent generosity of the environment stemmed from the active participation of the farmer since “she readily responds to the magic touch of the intelligent and painstaking husbandman.”<sup>64</sup> The rationale of working with, rather than against nature was vital to the horticultural vision of nature's bounty, especially in the face of the widely-held argument that “a man is unworthy of the name *horticulturist* if he is not willing to coöperate with Nature for the best results” since “unaided Nature does not reach the symmetry and beauty [that] a co-partnership between Nature's power and man's ingenuity can accomplish.”<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the palpable femininity of spring-time blossoms and maturing fruit allowed men to imagine the land as both mother and seductress, signifying the inherent appeal of orchard life. As one Walla Walla author celebrated, “Horticulture is the sweetheart, the bride, the summer dream, the poem, the honeymoon of agriculture.”<sup>66</sup> In full poetic flight, the Medford Commercial Club touched on the intimate and stimulating relationship with feminine nature: “as you gaze across this beautiful valley and view in the distance the pointed snow-capped peak of Mt. Pitt, while all about are row after row of sleek limbed, healthy apple and pear trees, the black loam of old Mother Earth breathing forth its primeval invitation to work, one unconsciously feels that here, indeed, is nature's garden and a possible Utopia.”<sup>67</sup>

Men's sexualized relationship with the land also appeared in prose, poetry, and song. The comments of Henry Dosch, secretary of the Oregon State Horticultural Commission are a revealing example. Waxing on the noble pursuit of horticulture, Dosch confessed that

---

<sup>64</sup> OHS, Ethan W. Allen, “Horticulture in Oregon,” 151.

<sup>65</sup> OSA, *Second Biennial Report, State Board of Horticulture*, 1893.

<sup>66</sup> BCA, William Lyman Denison, “Walla Walla county, Washington. Souvenir for Lewis and Clark fair, Portland Oregon” (Salem, OR: The Statesman Pub. Co., 1905).

<sup>67</sup> “Medford, Oregon, the Rogue River Valley, The Land of Plenty (Medford Commercial Club, [1909]).



Figure 7: Womanly blossoms in Colville, Washington. Colville, “Apple Orchard in Full Bloom,” 1910, Yakima Valley Museum Collection [1991-126-004].

The poet who watched and raved over the development of a beautiful girl baby into maiden and ultimate womanhood, will find its counterpart in an Oregon orchard. To stand and watch in early Spring the quickening of the tree, the gradual development of leaf and bud, and the gentle, timid opening of its bewitching blossoms, filling the air with intoxicating fragrance, and finally the fruitage of the magnificent apples and pears for which Oregon has become famous is a poem in itself.<sup>68</sup>

Whether in speeches or poetry, these displays were not a random arrangement of sexual metaphors, but explicitly dramatized the virtues of the industrious farmer and his responsibilities as caretaker of the feminized landscape. Similarly, with the family metaphor,

---

<sup>68</sup> LC, Medford Commercial Club, (1909), 50.

the social and sexual ordering of rural society could be portrayed as an organic and inevitable outgrowth of the natural world.<sup>69</sup>

In many ways this concept of “natural” order solidified the reputation of fruit farming as a new endeavour that promised a generous nature and represented a progressive way of life. Highlighting a contrast between urban and rural settings, commentators and settlers called orchard life a “new type of civilization” where one could “secretly laugh at the poor devils back home who are wearing out their brains and their nerves straining over desks and reading ticker tape.”<sup>70</sup> Another promoter credited the “gentle orchardists” of Wenatchee for transforming the arid land into an “ideal haven of peace, plenty, and prosperity – the highest example of modern civilization.”<sup>71</sup>



Figure 8: Refined modernism; an orchardist family in their apple-blessed automobile. *Better Fruit*, March 1912.

<sup>69</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 45.

<sup>70</sup> “Dollar is Lure to Valley of Rogue; Paradise,” *Oregonian*, 26 February 1914.

<sup>71</sup> LC, Wenatchee Commercial Club, “Wenatchee, the Gateway,” 1911.

In addressing the Washington State Horticultural Society, one speaker predicted that the proliferation of orchards “will furnish new conditions and build a new type of civilization.” Unlike the traditional agricultural district with large acreages and isolated farmsteads, “five acres of orchard will produce as much wealth as 160 acres of corn...[which] makes a dense population possible.” Surrounded by comforts and “modern conveniences,” this rural society “will have books, music, pictures and entertainments that equal those of the inhabitants of the city.”<sup>72</sup> The Hood River Commercial Club similarly declared that its valley had “drawn into its confines a remarkably high type of American citizenship. All of the culture, the education, the refinement, that can be found in our cities is in evidence throughout the [rural] community.”<sup>73</sup>

Rather than attempt to incorporate the country into the city as a means of bringing people closer to nature, horticulturalists, who perceived agriculture as the “basic science...of national wealth,” reversed this relationship. However, incorporating the desirable features of city life was only one way in which orchardists sought modernity as they also looked to a host of other markers to demonstrate their progressive mindset and agitate for change. Tellingly, the Medford Commercial Club observed that Rogue River Valley residents would not tolerate “the conditions under which Jefferson lived at Monticello or Washington at Mount Vernon.... Here one can surround himself with all the amenities of city life in his country home” including “the motor car, the telephone, and free rural delivery.”<sup>74</sup> The Sutherlin Commercial Club asserted that “a beautiful valley blossoming into orchards, ten acres of which will insure independence to the owner” would provide for “all the advantages

---

<sup>72</sup> “King Spitzenberg – Brewster Okanogan County Washington,” Brewster Commercial Club, 1909.

<sup>73</sup> OHS, Hood River Commercial Club, “Hood River, Oregon,” 1919.

<sup>74</sup> “Medford, Rogue River Valley, Southern Oregon,” Medford Commercial Club, 1912.

of country life without its drudgery, its lack of conveniences, its isolation.” Thus, the Club expected Sutherlin to “escape the raw, crude, ‘country town’ stage entirely.”<sup>75</sup> In enthusiastic prose, the Pull-for-Pullman Club proudly pointed to the “remarkable prosperity” of the farming community with cozy homes, proud schools, rural telephone service and the “scores...of handsome carriages, owned by the farmers.”<sup>76</sup> With its modern bungalows, sanitary school buildings, and pleasing mountain vistas, fruit farming transformed the very fabric of rural life, offering “all the city advantages in a country home.”<sup>77</sup> Not to be outdone, the Kelowna Board of Trade celebrated the area’s “modern conveniences” which included a rural telephone system and newly introduced free mail delivery “which very largely discount the disadvantages of residence in the country.” Combined with government-funded roads of “excellent character...for both ordinary use and for motoring,” horticulture stood as a progressive and desirable alternative to the perceived excesses of urban life.<sup>78</sup>

### *Agricultural Science and the Modern Countryside*

Notions of progress, citizenship, and co-operative prosperity found expression in the emerging discipline of agricultural science. Hailed as the defining feature of the modern countryside and especially fruit farming, it provided the necessary “applied theory” in extending Nature’s generosity in an ordered and mutually beneficial way. With a transportation system in place, agricultural science offered the chance to revitalize old orchards and extend nature’s efficiency in new holdings. As Medford promoters boasted,

---

<sup>75</sup> OHS, “Sutherlin Valley, Oregon; the Dominion of the King Spitzenburg” (Sutherlin Commercial Club & Sunset Magazine, 1910).

<sup>76</sup> “Pullman, Washington, the center of the most fertile regions” (Pull-for-Pullman Club, 1906).

<sup>77</sup> OHS Northwest Promotional Pamphlets, MSS 6000, Box 9, Hood River County, OR (1907-1992), “Jackson County in the Famous Rogue River Valley: The Pear and Apple District” (Medford & Ashland Commercial Club, circa 1910).

<sup>78</sup> KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna, the Orchard City of the Okanagan,” 1912.

“science and scientific methods have stepped in and taken the place of haphazard guessing, so that anyone making a mistake...would only have himself to blame.”<sup>79</sup>

Just as the promotion of fruit farming marked a trans-border and trans-Atlantic circulation of ideas and people, so too did the push to develop an agricultural infrastructure cross borders and seas. Imbued with the cult of science, the establishment of new agriculture departments and colleges in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Canada beginning in the mid-nineteenth century nurtured the rise of “rational agriculture” and its promise of enlightened management of the nature. The growing ranks of this new professional class found their work of increasing interest to state agencies keen to assemble a statistical portrait of rural life. As this relationship between scientist and state intensified, rural proponents urged their political leaders to ensure that agricultural research addressed a wider audience.

In the United States, scientific agriculture took firm root during the height of the Civil War in 1862 when Congress passed the *Morrill Land Grant Act*. The act’s sponsor, Justin Morrill, proposed to set aside thirty thousand acres of federal lands to create at least one college per state “to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts.”<sup>80</sup> The origins of the land-grant model date from 1851 when Professor Jonathan Turner suggested it to the Farmers’ Convention in Granville, Illinois. Lamenting the lack of higher education for the “industrial classes,” Turner envisioned the creation of an institution with ample lands for agricultural experiments and a broad curriculum open to all.<sup>81</sup> President Buchanan vetoed the bill in 1859 but President Lincoln signed it into law in July 1862.

---

<sup>79</sup> OHS, “Medford, Oregon, Rogue River Valley,” Medford Commercial Club, 1910.

<sup>80</sup> Morrill Land-Grant Act, 1862, 503; cited in Ray Herren and John Hillison, “Agricultural Education and the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions: The Rest of the Story,” *Journal of Agricultural Education* 37 (2) 1996: 26-32.

<sup>81</sup> Herren and Hillison, “Agricultural Education,” 29.

After the passage of the *Land Grant Act*, agricultural instruction and research made steady progress. In Oregon, the legislature chose Corvallis College “as the agricultural college of the state” in 1868. After Congress passed the Hatch Act in 1887 to provide annual grants for experimentation in the “principles and applications of agricultural science,” the Corvallis campus became the site of the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station the following year.<sup>82</sup> Shortly after claiming statehood in 1889, Washington moved to establish its own land-grant college, Experiment Station, and School of Science at Pullman under the respective acts.<sup>83</sup> In both states, the stations published bulletins and circulars on a range of horticultural topics, often at the instigation of local orchardists keen for advice and guidance.<sup>84</sup>

The initial absence of federal direction in Canada did not hamper provincial legislators in Victoria whose “Act Representing the University of British Columbia” passed in 1890 specifically provided for the study of agriculture. However, the act was visionary since the University of British Columbia did not open its doors until 1915 due to budgetary issues and wrangling over site selection, part of which depended on its suitability for agricultural experiments.<sup>85</sup> Despite difficulties, the different levels of government marshalled substantial resources to meet agrarian needs. In the case of southern British Columbia, the Canadian federal government took a significant step in establishing the Dominion

---

<sup>82</sup> Oregon State University, *100 Years of Progress: The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, 1888-1988* (Corvallis: OSU, 1990).

<sup>83</sup> George A. Frykham, *Creating the People's University: Washington State University, 1890-1990* (Pullman: WSU, 1990).

<sup>84</sup> For a compelling analysis of the convergence of science, the university, and the chemical industry in California, see Steven Stoll, “Insects and Institutions: University Science and the Fruit Business in California,” *Agricultural History* 69, 2 (Spring 1995): 216-239.

<sup>85</sup> Harry T. Logan, *Tuum Est: A History of the University of British Columbia* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1958), 3.

Experimental Farm at Summerland in 1915 to provide active and on-going advice on a range of horticultural issues for valley fruit farmers.

A logical outgrowth of the advisory role of the colleges and research stations was a growing consensus for a more systematic approach to extension work to “help farmers help themselves.” In Washington and Oregon, the passage of the Smith-Lever and Smith-Hughes acts between 1914 and 1917 accelerated the work of appointing district agricultural experts throughout the state to advise orchardists on up-to-date research findings and horticultural practices. At the University of British Columbia, the Department of Horticulture established in 1917 undertook active research and extension work in fruit farming although climatic differences and distance ultimately made the efforts of the Dominion Experimental Farm more applicable for Okanagan growers.

Spurred by government involvement, the growing ranks of agricultural scientists analyzed indigenous flora and fauna, successful fruit varieties, soil composition, orchard care and maintenance, and perhaps most critically, the study and management of numerous insects. Charged with aiding and supporting the thousands of agriculturalists, scientists strove to place in their hands the latest research findings and recommendations in the form of bulletins, lectures, pamphlets, personal correspondence, and even traveling public demonstrations from specially-designed train cars.<sup>86</sup>

Orchardists celebrated the institutional support provided by universities and governments as a validation of their modern vision for rural life and a buttress of their faith that the orcharding landscape was a superior and progressive alternative to the social and ecological costs of the industrial-urban axis. In contrast to the conventional image of detached professional researchers working in isolation from a deeply skeptical farming

---

<sup>86</sup> “Agricultural Colleges Work with Railroads in Northwest,” *Better Fruit* (November 1915,) p. 1.

population suspicious of “book learning,” orchardists regularly sought out professional advice, lobbied aggressively for institutional resources, and maintained close relations with an assortment of researchers and other rural advocates. On both sides of the border, one of the first acts of newly-settled pioneers like Kelowna orchardist T.L. Gillespie was to purchase all the books and government bulletins he could find.<sup>87</sup> To that end, agricultural departments and research stations sought current lists of active orchardists from horticultural associations to ensure that the latest research reached its intended audience directly, or through libraries typically maintained by the same associations.<sup>88</sup>

Relations between researchers and the general orcharding population were at times extremely close. At the University of British Columbia’s Department of Horticulture, the head professor was also secretary of the British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association, which brought him “into the closest possible touch with the producers and shippers of fruit in the Province.”<sup>89</sup> Similarly, prominent members of the Oregon State Horticultural Society such as Henry Dosch, who served at varying times as commissioner and inspector for the State Board of Horticulture as well as state commissioner to world fairs, illustrated the intimate contact of government officials with orchardists.<sup>90</sup>

Utilizing these connections, orchardists lobbied for the expansion of state institutions such as research stations. While localities proudly trumpeted the establishment of research offices to enhance their attractiveness, orchardists used them as a source of expertise and

---

<sup>87</sup> BCA, MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, “History of the K.L.O. Benches; Their Tragedies and Comedies,” 2.

<sup>88</sup> As an example, the Washington State Board of Horticulture asked all postmasters to send “a list of persons who are ‘ranchers’” or interested in fruit growing that receive mail at local offices. WSA-E, CE32/1-1, Department of Agriculture, *First Biennial Report of the State Board of Horticulture of the State of Washington for the Years 1891-92* (Olympia: O.C. White, State Printer, 1893), 24.

<sup>89</sup> “The University of British Columbia; briefly outlining some of the principal activities of the Faculty of Agriculture” *The Agricultural Journal*, January 1919

<sup>90</sup> OSA, Dept of Agriculture - Horticultural Records - 4/07/05/03 - Box 41-43 - Letter Press Box, Vol. 2, Letter, 27 October 1899.

demonstration of the countryside's modern orientation. Generally well-received advice on specific issues such as tree grafts, spray applications, fruit varieties, and soil fertility also demonstrated the benefits of a co-operative mentality from which all growers, regardless of acreage or community influence, could benefit.<sup>91</sup> And when government priorities might lead to a reorganization of agricultural resources, local orchardists such as those at Medford fought to maintain a horticultural expert in their community.<sup>92</sup>

### *Co-operation*

As a further demonstration of the countryside's modern orientation, the subject of co-operation found ample expression and support among orchardists as a consequence of their close relationship with the natural world. Promotional brochures most directly illustrated this connection with descriptions of local and regional horticultural associations as sources of orchard advice and marketing. The Medford Commercial Club, for example, noted that "three fruit growers' unions, located at Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass, have handled the bulk of Rogue River fruit crop." Pointing optimistically to the future, the Club observed "a movement is well under way to form one big union that will embrace all the Valley."<sup>93</sup> Dr. James Cardwell told the Oregon Horticultural Society that "individual effort stands for little nowadays" in the face of large corporations and organized capital. For Cardwell, the choice was clear – the spirit of the age was mutual action and fruit growers must "organize in an intelligent system of mutual, protective co-operation, find out the value of fruits, [and] demand a fair, living price and get it."<sup>94</sup> Cardwell's call for co-operation became a chorus as growers and others pressed for collective solutions in handling nature's bounty. Newspapers

---

<sup>91</sup> Kay Atwood, "Blossoms & Branches: A Gathering of Rogue Valley Orchard Memories" (Medford: Gandee Printing, 1980), 156.

<sup>92</sup> "O'Gara Again Detailed to Rogue River Valley," *Rogue River Fruit Grower*, September 1909.

<sup>93</sup> "Medford, Oregon: Rogue River Valley" (Medford Commercial Club, 1910).

<sup>94</sup> "Annual Address," *Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1903.

such as the *Rogue River Fruit Grower* pointed to the success of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange in support of co-operatives.. E.H. Shepard, editor of *Better Fruit* completely agreed when he wrote "in this age of large corporations and trusts, individuals must combine in order to hold their own and cope successfully with the balance of the business world."<sup>95</sup>

Government officials also eagerly encouraged co-operation. In British Columbia, the provincial government actively promoted the establishment of agricultural co-operatives by assisting eight local Okanagan organizations with loans and advice.<sup>96</sup> Agricultural scientists like Professor C.I. Lewis argued simply that co-operation "was essential to a permanent success in our Pacific Northwest."<sup>97</sup> Circulars, bulletins, and publications from government agencies also reinforced the appeal of co-operation. "Without co-operation in marketing," orchardist Collingwood Gray reminded his audience, "the producer is at the mercy of the middleman, but it is not only in marketing where co-operation is necessary, but in production itself."<sup>98</sup>

The benefits of co-operation became a common cause of American and Canadian fruit farmers in creating a modern countryside. Addressing his "Canadian cousins" at the 1912 annual meeting of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, the President of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, H.C. Atwell, stressed that co-operative work was one "of common interest to fruit growers on both sides of the international boundary."<sup>99</sup> To succeed, co-operation needed to foster grower confidence, impose penalties for outside sale, and

---

<sup>95</sup> "The Mission of a Fruit Growers' Union," *Better Fruit* 1 (2) August 1906.

<sup>96</sup> BCA, Department of Agriculture; Deputy Minister of Agriculture Records 1911-1919 Box 1, File 32; BCFGGA Report of the Executive and the Secretary, January 1914

<sup>97</sup> Editorial, *Better Fruit*, (11, 5), 1916.

<sup>98</sup> "A British Columbia Orchardists' Experiences," *The Agricultural Journal* 2 (3) 1917

<sup>99</sup> "The Fundamentals of Co-operation," *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen* March 1912.

maintain high standards and a central selling agency such as the one used by Hood River and Rogue River fruit growers.

Orchardists drew co-operative lessons from one another and maintained a semblance of unity and identification with their cross-border counterparts. J.C. Grant, Prairie Markets Commissioner, informed British Columbia fruit growers that whatever they might think about their practices, they had much to learn from Washington and Oregon orchardists in selling fruit to Canadian markets. Box for box, Grant argued, American apples were more uniform in grade and “more perfect in colour and seldom is an imperfect apple wrapped. There is no good reason why our packers could not exercise the same care.”<sup>100</sup> On the American side, the Okanogan Commercial Club admitted that “our Canadian cousins have in many respects been more keen to appreciate their part than we have ours,” noting that “in late years there has come to the British Okanogan a well-to-do population from the Eastern Provinces and from England.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the *Oregonian* informed its readers that British Columbia’s “Okanogan” Valley was “thriving and beautiful” as it praised Lord Aberdeen’s Coldstream ranch that would give the visitor “almost infinite pleasure.” The journalist reported driving “for miles through the finest gardens and orchards of apples and pears and peaches and cherries and hops that man could see.” In passing through Kelowna, “a hamlet of some thousand busy pioneers,” he marvelled at the local population of orchardists who had shipped “highly-flavoured fruits” by the carload to Britain. With the arrival of the railroad to all points in the valley, “the country is awake and new settlers are flocking [in]”

---

<sup>100</sup> “What Of Our Marketing Reputation? Information British Columbia Can Learn From The United States Fruitmen,” *The Agricultural Journal*, January 1919.

<sup>101</sup> “Okanogan, Washington,” Okanogan Commercial Club, 1910.

and the world will soon “realize that a new and wonderful country has been very quickly brought under the influence of progress and civilization.”<sup>102</sup>

By fostering an international camaraderie, the regional horticultural societies provided the foundation for a trans-boundary rural community. Through participation in cross-border organizations such as the Northwest Association of Fruit Growers, American and Canadian orchardists fraternized, discussed areas of mutual concern, and reinforced their common cause in creating a modern countryside. At the 1907 meeting of the Northwest Association, Oregon orchardist E.L. Smith outlined this trans-boundary allegiance as he initially declined re-nomination to the presidency but changed his mind when “delegates from British Columbia would hear of no other man for the position, and he was loudly and unanimously acclaimed its executive again.” The Hood River *Glacier* concluded that the orchardists thereby further cemented “the best of good fellowship [and] the close relations between the United States and Canadian fruit growers.”<sup>103</sup>

Although not specifically international in scope, provincial and state grower organizations helped reinforce the international linkages. At the invitation of the British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association, E.H. Shepard, a well-known Oregon orchardist and editor of *Better Fruit*, gave addresses in Canada outlining the common challenges in apple marketing, while Maxwell Smith, Dominion Fruit Inspector and editor of *Fruit Magazine*, spoke to Washington and Oregon growers about the mutual need for rural education

---

<sup>102</sup> “In the Beautiful, Fertile Okanogan Country; land of milk and honey now under ‘invasion’ by two railroads,” *The Oregonian*, 20 November 1905.

<sup>103</sup> “Meeting of Fruit Growers; Delegates return enthusiastic,” Hood River *Glacier*, 12 December 1907.

reform.<sup>104</sup> In other instances, visiting orchardists with more modest credentials reinforced the common rural aspirations that bound fellow horticulturists to one another.

### *Irrigation*

The celebrated partnership of farmer, science, and nature was also expressed in the earthen canals and cement flumes that watered the orchards of the modern countryside.<sup>105</sup> According to Daniel Headrick, such technological changes as irrigation “made imperialism happen.”<sup>106</sup> Among the most prolific advocates of irrigation in the late nineteenth century was William Smythe who is credited with persuading President Theodore Roosevelt to support the project on a national scale. Blending religious faith and scientific rationality, Smythe described irrigation as “a religious rite. Such a prayer for rain is intelligent, scientific, and worthy of man’s divinity.”<sup>107</sup> No longer a hapless victim of a nature, men could finally “put knowledge in the place of superstition” as the first step “in entering into partnership with God.”<sup>108</sup> Irrigation freed farmers from dependence upon the weather by providing them with the ability to water their crops with techniques rooted in the latest advances of farm management. Moreover, argued Smythe, irrigation fostered a co-operative spirit and close association between men as they came together out of environmental necessity. The American West would finally blossom into a long series of beautiful villages

---

<sup>104</sup> E.H. Shepard, “The 1912 Apple Market, Its Evils and Remedies” *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the BC Fruit-Growers' Association for the Year ending December 31st, 1912*, (Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1913), 32; Maxwell Smith, “Address,” *Proceedings and Papers of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1912), 55.

<sup>105</sup> The environmental history of irrigation is a salient example of the British exporting systems refined in India to other colonial possessions. For a detailed discussion of this relationship, see Daniel Headrick, *Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism 1850-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>106</sup> Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>107</sup> William Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1907), 331.

<sup>108</sup> Smythe, *The Conquest*, 331. In contrast to Smythe’s idealism, contemporary scholars often highlight the destructive environmental toll of irrigation and its abuse by powerful élites. A key text is Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*. The transformation of irrigation from a progressive and co-operative enterprise to a tool of agribusiness is documented in Donald J. Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the West, 1850-1931* (1984).

making it difficult “for the beholder to say where the town ends and the country begins.”<sup>109</sup>

Thus, irrigation promised an ordering of the natural environment through enlightened management and educated men intent on forging communities in connection with their natural surroundings, rather than against it.

Throughout the region, settlers and boosters organized irrigation schemes supported by co-operative organizations or private corporations. In both countries before the First World War settlers agitated for an expanded role of local and federal governments in constructing and maintaining irrigation projects with varying results due to prohibitive costs, engineering difficulties, and labour shortages. South of the border, both Democrats and Republicans fashioned pro-irrigation planks in their political platforms by 1900. This consensus allowed the passage of the National Reclamation Act of 1902 and the creation of the Reclamation Service charged with “reclaiming” arid lands for human use, a mission that dove-tailed with dreams of fruited valleys and the desire to “develop new systems of ethics and morals to lead us back from the material and spiritual into ways of gentleness and simple living.”<sup>110</sup>

The progressive air surrounding Smythe’s vision of scientific irrigation translated easily into the language and vision of horticulturists, especially since many fruit districts were the product of extensive irrigation systems. With early family farmers in Washington’s Yakima Valley and hopeful settlers in British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley, the quest for good water and good men went hand-in-hand. In the words of the Western Canadian

---

<sup>109</sup> Smythe, *The Conquest*, 46

<sup>110</sup> C.J. Blanchard, “Manless Land for Landless Man,” *Irrigation Age* 24 (1909), 231, quoted in W. Thomas White, “Main Street on the Irrigation Frontier: Sub-urban Community Building in the Yakima Valley, 1900-1910” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (1986), 99.

Irrigation Association, “Intelligent men no longer pray for rain – they pay for it.”<sup>111</sup> Evoking the time of the Pharaohs, the Wenatchee Commercial Club predicted, “as the Valley of the Nile under irrigation became the seat of the highest type of ancient civilization, so will the Valley of the Columbia under irrigation become...the most advanced modern civilization.”<sup>112</sup> Medford promoters proudly noted that from “small beginnings” on individual farms the irrigation movement has become “a systematic movement” aided by the U.S. Reclamation Service.<sup>113</sup> Ultimately, in the eyes of prominent horticulturists, this movement was vital to the future of the modern countryside since “without irrigation, scientific farming is impossible.”<sup>114</sup>

### *Creating a Modern Rural Citizen*

If a single feature was a dividing line between pioneer orchard farms along the coastal valleys of the Pacific Northwest and the recent explosion in fruit farming, it was the help of science in transforming the countryside into a source of modern order. As Professor E.A. Bryans reminded attendees at the 1901 meeting of the Northwest Fruitgrowers’ Association, experiment stations educated farmers in the best methods to ensure that farmers received every progressive advantage so the environment would respond in kind.<sup>115</sup> Orchardists eagerly took up the call, using existing or new horticultural associations to share latest research recommendations and act as an educational forum for such matters of interest as effective pruning or efficient apple packing methods. Echoing E.L. Smith’s sentiment,

---

<sup>111</sup> BCA, Western Canada Irrigation Association, Kelowna, 1912.

<sup>112</sup> LC, Wenatchee Commercial Club, “Wenatchee, the Gateway,” 31.

<sup>113</sup> Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Oregon, the Rogue River Valley, The Land of Plenty” (Medford Commercial Club, [1909]).

<sup>114</sup> Yakima Commercial Club, *The Yakima Valley, Washington* (North Yakima: Yakima Commercial Club, 1905), 3.

<sup>115</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 131, Professor E.A. Bryans, “The relation of the Experimental Station to the fruit industry,” Program of the 1901 Meeting of the Northwest Fruitgrowers’ Association.

farmers on both sides of the border sought through science to form a “partnership with nature in her wondrous methods” and show “the nobility of their calling.”<sup>116</sup>

In addition to finishing nature, advocates of fruit growing declared that the rural transformation of the Pacific Northwest required a parallel transformation of farmers. Responding to advice from a Minnesota wheat farmer to apply pesticides with brooms, one Rogue River orchardist declared the idea of a non-horticulturalist dispensing advice on fighting pear blight an “absurdity,” particularly when “the spray machine should be a broom!” With some fruit farms approaching 400 acres in size, “it would be a sight for the gods to see a crew of men out with brooms applying spray.” “When a modern orchardist sprays his trees,” the grower continued, “he does it with a large pump working under pressure...operated by a gasoline or steam engine” mounted on a wagon and pulled by a team of horses.<sup>117</sup> Such moments were more than occasions for ridicule, they also reinforced the association between horticulture and modernity.

Others were starker in assessing the changes that horticulture represented for rural life. Reflecting on the disinterest of his neighbours in applying “modern methods,” Dr. C.H. Chapman explained to a Horticultural Society audience that “in our neighbourhood, work is entirely out of fashion...you can not hire a man to prune or plant trees,” let alone spray them. Beholden to “a kind of reversed wisdom” where “everything it teaches is wrong and most of its precepts are idiotic,” old-time farmers were irredeemable, so “the sooner he dies the better for his land and his family.” In his place, “a fairly intelligent city man who has never milked a cow or held a plow” will be more successful because “he comes to the task without a load

---

<sup>116</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 131, address of E.L. Smith, president of the State Board of Horticulture, p. 31.

<sup>117</sup> “Wheat Raiser Gives Fool Advice to Fruit Growers,” *Rogue River Fruit Grower* 1 (5) May 1909.

of false beliefs and ruinous information.”<sup>118</sup> Among the orchard owners at Hood River, one grower counted former “lawyers, physicians, dentists, editors, chemists, engineers, insurance men, school teachers, machinists, carpenters, brick masons, stone cutters, printers, railroad men, college men, and men in nearly all lines of business.” The Medford Commercial Club thought this was highly desirable since “the city man often makes good where the man reared on the farm fails” because “the former knows and admits his lack of knowledge and studies under competent instructors” while “the latter thinks he knows it all, disdains advice and disregards warnings,” resulting in success for the former and failure for the latter.<sup>119</sup> The presence of such men muted long-standing complaints about “crowded professions” and validated faith in horticulture and the newfound attraction for rural communities. Like their American counterparts, British Columbia fruit farmers celebrated the rise of the modern countryside and pointed approvingly to their vibrant orchards as evidence of their progressive outlook compared to early pioneer plantings whose “very appearance...shouts out to you from every deformed limb of their twisted and gnarled trunks that they have been reared and cultivated by men destitute of the most elementary knowledge.”<sup>120</sup>

While the establishment of pioneer family orchards fifty years earlier was remembered fondly as an era of beauty, it was also a lesson on the necessity of science in the farm.<sup>121</sup> Without easy access to markets, the surplus from orchards was left to rot on the ground and neglected trees became pest-infested as co-operation between farmer and nature waned. With bruised fruit often a consequence of rough roads between the orchard and the depot, farmers favoured “every effort” to improve the roads and to build ones that would be

---

<sup>118</sup> “Apples in the Lewis River Valley,” *Proceeding of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1909), 41.

<sup>119</sup> *Medford, Rogue River Valley, Southern Oregon* (Medford Commercial Club, 1912).

<sup>120</sup> “Fruit Ranching in British Columbia,” *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen* January 1912.

<sup>121</sup> “Our Own Apple Show,” *Oregonian*, 27 November 1910.

permanent they would lead “to better development of the community and the general business of the community in every way.”<sup>122</sup> A.I. Mason, President of the Hood River Apple Growers’ Union, bluntly argued that if Congressmen “gave reasonable appropriations for building good roads that prolong life and make souls happier, instead of giving so much for the building of battleships to murder and destroy the human race...we would be hauling our farm produce over small macadam roads, at little cost, instead of plodding through mud axle deep at a heavy loss.” For Mason, good roads would “do more to improve rural conditions than any other progressive movement.”<sup>123</sup> In this way, roads emerged as a corollary of rural advancement and horticultural success.

Particularly gratifying for orchardists was the belief that their work contributed directly to the resurgence of rural life. In a reversal of the conventional tale of a shrinking countryside, Mason remarked “thousands of our best citizens are moving from the cities into the country to live.” This meant more than population growth; it also meant intellectual growth. “Their modern ideas of home-building,” he noted, are “having an elevating influence on other farmers.” Mason concluded, “today the highest honors a retired citizen can bestow upon his past life is to build an ideal home, on the farm, in which he may live the remainder of his days.”<sup>124</sup> Importantly, in popularizing these concepts, migrants ensured that their urban insights would become part of the fabric of rural life while enhancing its prestige as well.

Undoubtedly, fruit farming’s intellectual demands and cultural rewards confirmed that orchardists were a qualitatively different kind of agriculturalist as orchards transformed the farmer from a rustic to modern figure. This process sharpened internal boundaries that set apart different generations, forms of agriculture, and the all-important frontier between the

---

<sup>122</sup> “Editorial,” *Better Fruit* 6 (7) January 1912.

<sup>123</sup> “Improvement of Rural Conditions,” *Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1909), 62.

<sup>124</sup> “Improvement of Rural Conditions,” *Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1909), 62.

farm and city. Thus, in the same way that nature was finished “to its intended end,” so too would the people who comprised rural society. At the same time, the evocation of the urbanite as the ideal horticultural prototype seems contradictory, particularly in light of the denunciations of urban ills and temptations that informed orcharding identity. Indeed, other historians have explained the nature of rural change during this period by evoking a growing urban-industrial hegemony in which discussions of “rural efficiency” or “rural improvement” were primarily urban inventions to meet urban needs.<sup>125</sup> Such characterizations, however, rest upon a cast of stock characters from the out-of-touch “romantic” urbanite to the painfully practical, no-fuss farmer. In the end, the appealing clarity of such dichotomies belies the complexity lying behind farmer notions of rural progress and only frames “social and economic relations exclusively within the categories that urbanization, industrialization, and ‘progress’ provide.”<sup>126</sup>

Simply put, in advocating for modern conveniences and modern practices, urbanites-turned-orchardists were not merely imposing urban values on the land. Just as the movement of rural peoples into urban centres did not lead to “a rural takeover” of the city, so too was urban migration a mediated affair leading to the creation of a new “rural experience.” As orchardists ably demonstrated, roads and automobiles could serve rural ends and dramatize countryside life as a modern alternative to urban-industrial priorities. Consequently, the historiographical tendency to valorize an “authentic” countryside erroneously casts

---

<sup>125</sup> Although now an older body of work, David Danbom’s *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930* (Ames; Iowa State University Press, 1979) and “Romantic Agrarianism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Agricultural History* 65 (4) Fall 1991: 1-12, exemplify the perspective that rural reform was really a shill for an urban-centric agenda bordering on social control. This perspective continues to find adherents, as most recently illustrated by Linda Ambrose’s “‘Better Men and Happier Women’: The Agricultural Instruction Act, 1913-1924,” *Historical Studies in Education*, Fall 2004. Ambrose argues that urban-based rural reformers “spouted” idealistic rural myths and promoted a series of educational changes for rural schools that were greeted suspiciously by “practicing” farmers who recoiled at poetry, “book methods” and “higher education.”

<sup>126</sup> Sandwell, “Introduction,” in *Beyond the City Limits*, 4.

innovation as an urban phenomenon. In reality, the rural/urban portrait was more varied, particularly in terms of understanding – intellectually, socially, or physically – where the city ended and the country began. The irony, of course, was that in building a new rural civilization, horticulturalists were themselves conflicted. While evoking sharp differences – social, racial, or ecological – to distinguish their vision of modernity from its urban-industrial counterpart, horticulturalists also imagined a countryside that possessed the same innovations or conveniences as the city, thereby blunting the very differences that presumably made rural life different and more desirable. In a similar vein, they perceived the industrious farmer as refined, intelligent, and appreciative of his partnership with nature, but recognized urban dwellers were better equipped to assume the very qualities that set rural people apart. Such tensions continued to bedevil orchardists, both in terms of their self-image and their relationship to the natural world.

### *Conclusion*

At the turn of the twentieth century, the province of British Columbia in conjunction with Washington and Oregon states bore witness to a “fruit fever” that transformed the region’s environment and social milieu as governments, land developers and railway companies conducted aggressive promotions on both sides of the border. More systematic methods than the glowing prose of homebound letters about the land’s bounty were needed to help shape how future farmers should see and receive the prospect of raising fruit. Thus, the ubiquitous information booklets and press features linked orchard communities with prospective buyers further east or overseas. Not surprisingly, the image of the environment painted in these pages was of a land brimming with natural blessings, and as a consequence, personal bounty. Invested with overtones of a biblical paradise, the orcharding landscape

anchored an agricultural utopia that was extolled as the rightful domain of intelligent and sophisticated white men. Carefully arranged with images of symmetrical landscapes of sturdy trees, orchards reflected a harmonious and balanced bounty. Vital to the integrity of the modern countryside was the belief that a peaceful union of nature and science at the hands of progressive farmers assured social and racial harmony.

Critical to the maintenance of this new civilization was an extensive infrastructure of institutions and associations that provided opportunities for social discourse and the exchange of technical expertise. Economic competition and the enormous expenses faced by growers in getting their fruit to market fuelled the establishment of local co-operatives and Boards of Trade to pack and transport crops. Local community papers served a similar purpose with their discussions of fruit-related issues as did the many books and pamphlets devoted to fruit farming. To contend with changing practices and challenges, farmers embraced education and expert advice through research stations and extension services as the hallmark of “intelligent” orchardists. Horticultural associations and Chambers of Commerce quickly disseminated the findings of these experimental stations to fruit farmers. In keeping with horticulture’s appeal, these stations personified the role of science in the service of “finishing nature’s work.”

What cannot be forgotten is that agricultural science embodied not only the shared priorities of economic expansion and the morality of agricultural life, but also the ascendancy of a new relationship between human society and the non-human world based on belief in a “naturalized order.” This order excluded non-desirable immigrants and labourers and valorized feminized nature. Combined with the progressive conveniences of macadamized roads, rural mail delivery, and other elements, rural life had finally become “modern.”

However, modernizing the countryside also necessitated the creation of a new rural citizen whose necessary skills and outlook were ironically best captured in the persona of the urbanite. The blurring of the distinctions between urban and rural foreshadowed future tensions as the work of creating a modern countryside continued.

### 3

*“A new interest in this oldest of arts and youngest of sciences”:  
Agriculture and Children’s Education in the Modern Countryside*

Give the children an opportunity to make [a] garden.  
~Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858-1954)

By 1910, fruit farming had profoundly transformed the landscape of the North American West. In a decade, horticulture had spurred the colonization of the Inland Empire and unleashed the resources of governments in both countries to nurture and support it. That encouraged the industrious men and women of the Pacific Northwest to replace the unfinished countryside with symmetrical orchards and bountiful harvests representing the intersection of science and art as the basis for agriculture. Enthusiasm for fruit cultivation lent an air of confidence to rural advocates and their dream of a progressive future. At the heart of this vision was the conviction that creating the modern countryside would change the basis of rural life itself. Combining the latest amenities of urban living with the redemptive qualities of the natural world, rural modernism challenged traditional images of agriculture as backward, superstitious, and uncultured. And as thoughts invariably turned to the long-term prosperity of horticulture, the importance of children came into sharper relief. But rather than merely ensuring that their sons and daughters received basic educational opportunities, rural advocates increasingly focused on the need to transform children’s education as future farmers and citizens.

In many ways, educational reform expressed the confidence of a rural movement in its belief that children’s education must be revamped to incorporate the fundamental values

of agrarian society. Much like the quest for reproducible standards in the grading, distribution, and pricing of fruit, acquainting children with “rational agriculture” and its scientific insights encouraged the development of productive farmers and an altered environmental regime extending well beyond the family farm. Through classroom experiments and lessons, the environment emerged as a discrete, structured entity divined by scientific investigation and engineered by capitalist expansion. Fundamentally, scientifically attuned boys and girls embodied the dream of a technocratic elite and farming populace that a dynamic new citizenry would emerge to halt the inevitable march of urbanization and industry.<sup>1</sup> In the quest to recapture and reinvent rural life as the dominant social, economic, and cultural framework for North American society, children were put in the vanguard.

Despite their steadfast optimism in the superiority of rural modernism, proponents of rural life were also inspired by deep insecurities. Fearful that the rural foundation of the country was inexorably slipping away, they looked to education as an antidote to youthful disinterest in an agrarian future, as a means to combat the perception of a rural malaise, and to dramatize the intellectual, social, and ecological advantages of rural life. Put another way, education could instill in children awareness and pride in horticulture as a “modern” enterprise that offered them more in terms of personal fulfillment and advancement compared to crowded cities.

To implement that idea, Canadians and Americans championed a progressive system of agricultural education that embodied scientific agriculture and the supremacy of

---

<sup>1</sup> In this regard, I disagree with David Danbom’s characterization of rural education reform as vehicle to impose “educational standards [that] were urban” to create an “efficient agriculture” that mirrored federally-sponsored agricultural extension to better serve the interests of an “increasingly urban and industrial society.” Conversely, I argue that reform was as much about reshaping urban priorities as it was about responding to the needs of rural modernity. David B. Danbom, “Rural Education Reform and the Country Life Movement, 1900-1920,” *Agricultural History* 53 (2) 1979: 462-474.

agricultural life as the basis for a new relationship between human society and the natural world. In pursuing their goal, the two countries chose different paths that illustrated a central question – what was the place of farming in the modern countryside? In British Columbia, reformers sought to incorporate agricultural priorities into the standard academic education while south of the border, they addressed agriculture as vocational training. These contrasting approaches, while sharing comparable objectives, revealed a telling dilemma about horticulture’s lineage: was orcharding a learned and prestigious profession, or a practical and skilled vocation? Officials, farmers, and parents never came to a clear consensus, undercutting the radical potential of agricultural education as the centrepiece of a distinct and progressive rural project.

*A fertile ground: The origins of agricultural education*

Compulsory schooling in North America bore the imprint of agriculture’s history due to the continent’s overwhelming agrarian character before the twentieth century. Summer school closures and flexible attendance requirements were but two of the most visible concessions to the needs of farming families. However, with the advent of the modern countryside, the place and understanding of agriculture in broader society changed, and by extension, its place within formal education. Thus, for well-to-do settlers, probably no other decision weighed as heavily alongside the selection of an orchard site as the educational opportunities for their children.

The movement for agricultural education grew steadily towards the end of the nineteenth century due to the convergence of several factors, especially the growing professionalization of agricultural science. No longer the domain of well-intentioned but ignorant pioneer farmers, orcharding was reborn as a coherent agricultural practice infused

with the confidence and rationality of science advanced through agricultural colleges, government research stations, and research experts and conveyed through farmers' institutes, women's organizations, government offices, and editorial pages. In this context, it was not a giant leap for proponents to argue that scientific agriculture necessitated an educational system that reflected the modern reality of rural life.

Wider interest in rural work and nature provided an ideal context for nature-related topics in the curriculum. Across North America, urban landscape planning, the City Beautiful movement, "garden city" proposals, and an emphasis on personal gardening gained in popularity due to the pervading belief in "the curative power of natural scenery" on individual health and the body politic, two elements that would be expounded in school beautification and agricultural programs.<sup>2</sup> Against this backdrop, American nature study pioneers such as Liberty Hyde Bailey and Anna Botsford Comstock argued that nature lessons would cultivate "the perception and expression of truth...a love of the beautiful," and "a sense of companionship with life out of doors."<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by the growth of nature-based lessons in British elementary schools, James Wilson Robertson and Sir William Macdonald founded the Canadian-based Macdonald-Robertson progressive movement which advocated specialized training for teachers in gardening and the use of schoolyard gardens to make children more conscious of the benefits of rural life.<sup>4</sup> The expansion of programs to train teachers and the experimental station's sponsorship of agricultural work in schools accelerated the movement to include nature study

---

<sup>2</sup> Wilbur Jackman, *Nature Study for the Common Schools* (New York: Press, 1891)

<sup>3</sup> Anna Botsford Comstock, "What Nature-Study does for the child," in *Syllabus of lectures on nature study* (Ithaca, NY: Comstock Publishing, n.d.); see also J.F.M. Clark, "Bugs in the system: Insects, agricultural science and professional aspirations in Britain, 1890-1920" *Agricultural History* 75 (1) 2001: 83-114.

<sup>4</sup> According to Kristen Greene, Sir William Macdonald and James W. Robertson "sought to standardize autonomous districts and teachers, in order to preserve the rural lifestyle, in order to help Canada on her way to economic growth and social order in the face of immigration and urbanization." Kristen Jane Greene, "The Macdonald Robertson Movement, 1899-1909" (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2003).

in elementary schools.<sup>5</sup> Rural-minded reformers welcomed this validation of their belief that the curriculum left children ignorant of their immediate environment and of the outlook and goals of rural life.

Without diminishing the important contribution of Nature Study, progressive farmers and reformers felt that more work had to be done. Instruction in Nature Studies tended to vary from locality to locality. To be truly effective reformers argued that the course must be approached systematically, that there be uniformity in the training and skills imparted by teachers, and that its focus on fostering an aesthetic appreciation of nature through the care of gardens or study of animal life, while laudable, must also have *application* to the real work of farming to meet the needs of the progressive countryside.

Despite their enthusiasm and dedication to informal efforts in educational outreach, horticultural officials discovered a need to promote agricultural studies. In 1896, Oregon horticultural commissioner Henry Dosch instituted a contest for the best essay on fruit growing in the Pacific Northwest and offered a gold medal “to stimulate an interest in the education of fruit growing among younger people.” Yet, a chagrined Dosch had not received a single essay on the eve of the contest’s closing despite posting competition notices in well-read horticultural publications and in thirty-six county newspapers.<sup>6</sup> Forced to extend the contest and expand the number of eligible students, Dosch’s experience revealed that even among children in fruit-growing districts, the scholastic ground had to be prepared to promote enthusiasm for horticultural life.

---

<sup>5</sup> By 1880, numerous states pursued the expansion of their agricultural training for teachers, often as an extension of the agricultural research stations or colleges that were established to expand research in the agricultural sciences. For a brief overview, see Gary E. Moore, “The Status of Agricultural Education Prior to the Smith-Hughes Act” *Agricultural Education Magazine* 59 (8) 1987. The primary work is G.F. Ekstrom, *Historical Development of Agricultural Education in the United States Prior to 1917* Final Report. U.S. Department of and Welfare, 1969.

<sup>6</sup> Oregon Historical Society (OHS), “No Competition,” *Fruitage, For Men Only; The Exclusive Fruit Paper of America*, August 1896.

Students, however, formed only one side of the educational equation. Cornell University's Professor of Horticulture, Liberty H. Bailey, agreed with Oregon orchardists that to "give every child some idea of nature [so] that it may be happier," teachers needed to "know how to teach the things that children should learn."<sup>7</sup> Highlighting the interest of 23,000 New York teachers in receiving new leaflets explaining nature education, Bailey gained confidence that progress was within reach. The key, he offered, was training instructors in a "non-technical language" so they could effectively shape the intellectual and environmental outlook of their pupils.

Benefiting from the establishment and leadership of agricultural departments and programs at a growing number of universities, by 1905 roughly one third of the normal schools in the United States offered agricultural training. At the high school level, stimulated by the decision of the United States Congress in 1907 to authorize the use of federal funds to train high school teachers of agriculture, instruction expanded state-by-state. By 1912, more than 2,000 high schools across the country were offering courses in agriculture, whereas 16 years earlier there were none.<sup>8</sup> In British Columbia, formal instruction in agriculture as a high school subject remained the exception before 1914.<sup>9</sup> Exposure to agriculture as a subject was more informal, either as a unit of study or in terms of applied orchard work.

Due to limited progress, dissatisfaction continued to fester. Responding to both the pressures of the harvest and the desire to formalize a program of practical agricultural training, orchardists from Vernon to Medford established fruit packing schools to train boys

---

<sup>7</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 131, Oregon Horticultural Society Opening Address, 1901.

<sup>8</sup> D.J. Crosby, "Agriculture in public high schools," *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1912, Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture; quoted in Gary E. Moore, "The Status of Agricultural Education Prior to the Smith-Hughes Act," *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, 59 (8) February 1987.

<sup>9</sup> J.W. Gibson, "District Supervisors of Agricultural Instruction and their work in British Columbia," *Agricultural Gazette*, November 1916.

and girls.<sup>10</sup> In many ways, the fruit pack was a microcosm of the modern countryside – it required the skilful selection and consistent grading of fruit and a systematic and ordered pack to reduce damage during shipment and to appeal to consumers. Nature study courses might foster an important appreciation of humanity’s relationship with the natural world, but they fell short in addressing the other side of the modern countryside – the applied scientific or rational requirements of rural life.

As much as reformers were confident that a rural education should address modern realities they were also uncertain of the future of the countryside as the city threatened agriculture’s central place in society as well as its future population. Maxwell Smith, editor of *Fruit Magazine* in Vancouver B.C. and later federal Horticultural Agent in the province, railed against public education in Canada and the United States in his address to members of the Oregon State Horticultural Society in 1912. In a display of cross-border support and common cause, Smith declared that the system did not properly educate students about their rural environment, leading to “the deserting of the land, the spoiling of good farmers and the creation of poor preachers, lawyers, and doctors.” According to Smith, the future of upright young boys was at stake since skewed school programs meant they did “not get a fair idea of the desirability and the joys of the beauty of the study of Nature as he ought.”<sup>11</sup> The result was an army of unemployed men drifting from city to city, divorced from the land and the purifying benefits of agriculture as the backbone of the nation-state.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> OHS, “Will Open School for Apple Packers,” *Hood River Glacier*, 27 August 1908; “Fruit Packing School for Rogue River Valley,” *Rogue River Fruit Grower*, May 1909; “BCFGA Meeting,” *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen*, 4 (6) March 1912.

<sup>11</sup> LC, Proceedings and Papers of the Oregon State Horticultural Society (1912), 55.

<sup>12</sup> Although this period qualified as time of relative population expansion in the Pacific Northwest, rural reformers were undoubtedly aware of rural depopulation in eastern states and provinces. W.R. Young, Conscripton, “Rural depopulation and the farmers of Ontario, 1917-1919,” *Canadian Historical Review* 53 (3) 1972: 289-320.

American horticulturalists shared Smith's zeal. Kirkman Robinson, an orchardist from Wilderville, Oregon, argued that the fundamental aim of agricultural education was to create a love for agriculture. "Clearly in the majority of cases," he reasoned, "the abandonment of the farm would not take place if there were a greater love for agriculture." "It is not only bad for a race," he continued, "it is bad for a nation as well for its land to be deserted."<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, E.L. Smith, president of the Oregon State Board of Horticulture, told appreciative fellow horticulturists that too many rural boys were joining the crowded ranks of doctors, preachers, and lawyers, sacrificing their happiness and rural life in the process. "We must educate the boys," he stressed, "and let them feel that farm life is not mere drudgery, but a partnership with nature in her wondrous methods." The instrument of this new educational transformation was the creation of distinct agricultural schools by farmers and horticulturists "where every officer, from president to janitor, is permeated with the truth that agriculture is the noblest of all callings."<sup>14</sup> The association between horticulture and the flourishing of an ideal citizen archetype came easily to fruit farmers, and few opportunities were passed up to reiterate this relationship, such as the epigram that circulated among Oregon orchardists: "apple orchards are better nurseries of citizenship than the deck of battleships or military camps."<sup>15</sup> But before cultivating the responsibilities of the farmer-citizen, children had to be schooled in the language of the garden.

### *Legislating Agricultural Education*

Issues of science, civics, and nature intertwined in the aspirations of reforming children's education, and both Canadian and American advocates focused increasingly on the need for a systematic government program. During the divisive 1911 federal election over

<sup>13</sup> "Teaching Agriculture in the Country School," *Rogue River Fruit Grower* 1 (2) January 1909.

<sup>14</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 131, Annual Mid-Summer Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> *Proceedings and Papers of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1912), 89.

reciprocity with the United States, Conservative leader Robert Borden pledged to finance agricultural education as a concession to farmers over his anti-reciprocity stance.<sup>16</sup> After leading the Conservative Party to victory, Borden's government announced plans to address the issue at the beginning of 1913. Under pressure from critics and the greater advances Americans had made in incorporating Nature Study into their schools, the Conservatives introduced the *Agricultural Instruction Act*. Passed by Parliament in June that year, it created a ten year, ten million dollar fund to be used by the provinces for a broad range of educational initiatives related to fostering and supporting agriculture. Reformers and officials hoped that federal involvement would mean a more co-ordinated response to such issues as rural isolation and poverty and fulfillment of the government's desire to settle new immigrants on the land rather than in the nation's growing cities.

Echoing familiar themes, federal agricultural minister Martin Burrell, himself a fruit farmer and BC Board of Horticulture member, found in the rustic yeoman a symbol of "our national necessities, our national virtues, and our national strength."<sup>17</sup> Like his American counterparts, Burrell framed the farmer as the foundation of national identity and as a key to its continued survival, arguing that the *Agricultural Instruction Act* would help stem "the increase of urban as against rural population." In Burrell's estimation, the vitality of the rural life was directly related to the country's social and economic stability:

---

<sup>16</sup> Linda Ambrose, "'Better and Happier Men and Women': The Agricultural Instruction Act, 1913-1924," *Historical Studies in Education* 16 (Fall 2004.), 266. The Reciprocity Election of 1911 highlighted sharp differences between horticulturalists and other farmers. While farming people in general supported free trade with the United States and access to cheaper manufactured goods, orchardists in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia opposed the agreement, fearing that earlier ripening American fruit would gain first access to local Canadian markets. See Heath Macquarrie, "Robert Borden and the Election of 1911," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 25 (3) 1959: 271-286. Such opposition, however, did not preclude proposals for cross-border co-operation in the marketing of fruit. See Chapter Six, "Bounty Unbound," 260.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Burrell, House of Commons, *Debates*, 24 January 1913, 2148, quoted in David C. Jones, "'We cannot allow it to be run by those who do not understand education' Agricultural Schooling in the Twenties" *BC Studies* 39 (Autumn 1978): 30.

Congestion in cities is both an economic and a social menace. The swelling of urban population with a diminution in the ranks of the producers has its sequence [sic] in the added cost of living, in the increase of squalor, hunger and crime, and – in a country to which thousands of immigrants come – in the concentration of large masses of the foreign born, who, when unassimilated and unrelated to our national life, constitute both a political and social difficulty.<sup>18</sup>

In this context, the farmer stood not as an anti-modern icon, but as a progressive bulwark against the forces of disorder. Guided by agrarian dreams and a scientific future, the next generation of rural children would embrace an age-old intimacy with the natural world made new with research bulletins and exciting technologies.

In the United States too, pressure for further reform continued to animate political dynamics on Capitol Hill.<sup>19</sup> In response, Congress created the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education. After the commission recommended direct federal involvement, in 1917 Congress passed the *Smith-Hughes National Vocation Education Act*.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to Canada's *Agricultural Instruction Act*, it created a separate vocational school system at the state level, supported by federal grants and matching state funds. It was primarily directed at children “who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm.”<sup>21</sup> Ambitious in its scope and execution, the *Smith-Hughes Act* fed from the same belief that the interchange of science and agriculture required the training of a new generation fluent in its challenges and potential. Ultimately, the high expectations that followed the creation of the acts were punctuated both by meaningful successes and frustrating setbacks.

---

<sup>18</sup> Martin Burrell, House of Commons, *Debates*, 24 January 1913, 2148, quoted in Ambrose, ““Better and Happier Men and Women,”” 263.

<sup>19</sup> Failed or stalled efforts to secure additional federal funding for children's agricultural education included the Davis Bill of 1907 and the Page Bill of 1911. Several bills and amendments also foundered on political interests that pitted normal schools against land grant colleges as sites for agricultural teacher training. For example, the failed Burket Bill and the Dolliver-Davis Bill of 1908 provided funding for agricultural training at normal schools, potentially undermining the influence of land-grant institutions.

<sup>20</sup> The Act benefited directly from the work of President Wilson's *Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education* (1914), whose final report served as the basis for the 1917 act.

<sup>21</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Relative to Smith-Hughes and Smith-Lever Relationships in Agriculture*, December 1928, Washington DC.

*Institutionalizing Agricultural Education*

In a region brimming with arcadian visions, the Pacific Northwest on both sides of the border was a fertile ground for realizing the goals of agricultural education. In the spring of 1914, Okanagan Valley fruit growers underlined their support for an educational program to address the intellectual demands of horticultural life by urging the province to establish “Agricultural Schools...at suitable centres” as well as a course of study “for Public School classes.”<sup>22</sup> The provincial government responded by creating an Elementary Agricultural Education branch and in the summer of 1914 appointed as its director, John Wesley Gibson who had broad experience in rural education and the Macdonald-Robertson progressive movement. Born to a farming family in Ontario’s Carleton County, he began his career in 1902 by supervising school garden projects.<sup>23</sup> Returning to Queen’s to obtain a Master’s degree in biology and botany in 1908, he worked as Science Master at the Ottawa Normal School until he moved to B.C.

Gibson’s enthusiasm for agricultural education, like that for many of his like-minded contemporaries, reflected a belief not only in the importance of agriculture as an occupation, but also in its utility in “winning the interests of boys and girls towards rural pursuits before they get out of our schools and out of our reach.”<sup>24</sup> Gibson thought the rural pursuits were important for urban districts too since “for residential purposes cities are tolerable only as they are able to maintain those things that are essentially rural – fresh air and sunshine, trees,

---

<sup>22</sup> British Columbia Archives (BCA), GR 1477 British Columbia Department of Education B 2649 1914-1929 Miscellaneous, “Resolution Passed by the Vernon Ratepayers’ Assn.” March/April 1914.

<sup>23</sup> Belle Gibson, *Teacher Builder: The Life and Work of J.W. Gibson* (Victoria: Morris Printing, 1961), 17-19; cited in Jones, “Agricultural Schooling,” 30.

<sup>24</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031, Gibson to R.L. Ramsay, Assistant Agriculturalist, Department of Agriculture (BC), 11 January 1915.

grass, flowers, birds and space for gardens or for poultry and domestic animals.”<sup>25</sup> In its most ambitious form, agricultural education would unite country and city through mandatory rural science in public schools with optional agricultural instruction in high school. If there was a deficiency, it was that the current regime of Nature Study lacked a long-term focus, only hinted at the benefits of introducing children to their responsibilities as future agriculturalists, and as in Washington and Oregon, it lacked standardization and inspiration.<sup>26</sup>

Agricultural education had existed in earlier guises in the Pacific Northwest but the permissive nature of state laws governing instruction led to a patchwork of enforcement. And, as in Canada, this changed in the United States with the passage of federal legislation. In 1917, senators and representatives gathered in Olympia to secure federal funding under the Smith-Hughes Act. After a summer of negotiation to meet federal guidelines, Washington enthusiastically approved participation in the program marking its first venture into organized vocational education. To begin the process of instituting the objectives of Smith-Hughes, H.M. Skidmore assumed the mantle of state supervisor early in 1918. Like Gibson, Skidmore believed that agricultural education was an important step in increasing the production of foodstuffs and maintaining “a balance between the country and the city.” Citing the “apprehension felt in connection with the flow of country boys towards the town,” Skidmore argued that Smith-Hughes “is doubtless one of several things that will contribute toward the righting of these misadjustments.”<sup>27</sup> If the captains of industry were valorized by urbanites for leading the march of the modern age, critics found its antidote in a modern

---

<sup>25</sup> BCA, GR 0458 Department of Elementary Agricultural Education Records, Box 1, File 4, “Nature Study and Elementary Agricultural Education, British Columbia” January 1921.

<sup>26</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031, Gibson to T.W. Turner, 25 January 1915.

<sup>27</sup> Washington State Archives (WSA) (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1919-1920, HM Skidmore to AC Kellogg, 2 June 1920

countryside energized by intelligent families and helpful experts keen to carry the banner of rural modernism.

While Canadian and American experience highlighted a shared belief in the need to institutionalize agricultural education, it also betrayed differences. In British Columbia, Gibson envisioned a holistic approach to agricultural education so even “the more formal subjects of instruction -- Arithmetic, Composition, Reading, Drawing, etc, will find application therein [original emphasis].”<sup>28</sup> According to reformers, provincial involvement would provide a consistent and organized approach to the teaching of agriculture, ensuring that it served as the prism through which teachers and children understood themselves and the world around them.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to Gibson who sought to transform the traditional academic education through its systematic incorporation of agriculture, Skidmore and other American educators found salvation in specialized vocational training whereby interested students would be streamed into separate vocational schools and “bring out of the chaos a well-defined system” of nature-based education.<sup>30</sup> While the vocational approach stemmed directly from the funding requirements of the Smith-Hughes Act, it also corresponded with the beliefs of reformers like Skidmore that agriculture as a fully modern and skilled occupation required its own specialized training. Despite these advantages, Skidmore initially found that superintendents and teachers attempted “to warp Smith-Hughes work to fit the academic

---

<sup>28</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031, Gibson to R.L. Ramsay, Assistant Agriculturalist, Department of Agriculture (BC), 11 January 1915.

<sup>29</sup> Evidence of agriculture’s inclusion in children’s education is found in some British Columbia high school entrance exams circa 1907, where questions in nature study and arithmetic directly related to agriculture. Nevertheless, the institutionalization of agricultural education represented an unprecedented development that advocates hoped would ensure consistent and meaningful teaching of agricultural topics.

<sup>30</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, State Board – Annual Reports of State Director & State Supervisors, First Annual Report of the State Supervisor, Vocational Agricultural Education for the State of Washington to the Federal Agent for Vocational Agriculture, Western Division, June 30, 1918

system.”<sup>31</sup> Not to be dissuaded, Skidmore assured federal officials that attitudes would change as more and more people came to appreciate the “full significance of the movement.” Notwithstanding their common goal, the approaches of both Gibson and Skidmore highlighted a continuing dilemma about the true place of the farmer in rural society. Through success and failure, a clear consensus remained elusive.

With heady expectations, officials soon got down to the nitty-gritty of putting their long-espoused ideals into practice. From his office in Victoria, Gibson realized that nurturing children with agricultural knowledge required an equally talented cohort of teachers who were as comfortable digging in the dirt as with the periodic table of the elements. Evaluating the qualities of his ideal candidate, Gibson desired women and men “not only good in pedagogy but those who are in sympathy with the affairs of the country and are not simply making the country school a mere preliminary to getting a situation in the city.”<sup>32</sup> To help fulfill these goals, one of Gibson’s first acts was to organize summer schools in Victoria to introduce teachers, selected from rural districts throughout the province, to the field of rural science through in-class lectures and “hands on” experience.<sup>33</sup> As a subject, rural science sought to introduce children to a natural world composed of discrete, interlocking units that banished superstition and de-emphasized traditional creationist explanations. Broadly speaking, it united a range of subjects such as the study of seeds and soils, plant life, and animal life in the cause of grooming students for country life.<sup>34</sup> Building upon the earlier

---

<sup>31</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records, Box 1, Folder Annual Report, 1918-1919, Second Annual Report of the State Supervisor, Vocational Agricultural Education for the State of Washington, year ending June 30, 1919

<sup>32</sup> GR 173 Reel 6395, Gibson to Hopkins, 7 September 1917

<sup>33</sup> So confident was Gibson about the necessity of rural science that he recommended to an inspector that children interested in teaching be advised to take his courses since it was probable that “all teachers in the future will have to qualify in Rural Science,” although this did not come to pass. GR 173 Reel 6395, Gibson to Hopkins, 7 September 1917

<sup>34</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031, Gibson to P.C. Coates, 15 December 1915.

efforts in nature study, the school garden also assumed even greater importance for systematic instruction in rural modernism.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 9: Teachers gathered at the 1914 summer school in Victoria, British Columbia studying the combination of science and nature in garden plots. BC Department of Education, British Columbia Archives, D-07298.

In Washington State, Skidmore was equally sensitive to the questions of teacher training and program implementation. Not surprisingly, officials initially grappled with the serious shortage of properly qualified teachers of agriculture.<sup>36</sup> Looking to normal schools in communities such as Ellensburg, Skidmore mandated that teachers graduate from a standard collegiate course in agriculture or in home economics in order to qualify for their vocational certificate.<sup>37</sup> Skidmore also sought to standardize training and competency to ensure that agriculture was taught consistently and systematically across the state. Perhaps more

<sup>35</sup> BCA, GR 1446, Reel B2031, Inspector of Schools, Revelstoke to Gibson, 16 January 1915, asking for literature that may help advance the movement for beautifying the city which is already “on foot here.”

<sup>36</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, State Board – Annual Report to Federal Board for fiscal year ending June 30, 1919

<sup>37</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Folder Annual Report, 1918-1919, Second Annual Report of the State Supervisor, Vocational Agricultural Education for the State of Washington, year ending June 30, 1919

importantly, proper training was crucial in terms of transforming school culture. As an idea or philosophy, rural science declared boldly to teachers, students, and parents that in contrast to skylines of Seattle or Vancouver, the wooden sloughs and fruited lanes of their small communities were the true symbols of modernity and keys to human advancement.

In both countries, agricultural education promised ideas as well as action. The centrepiece of instruction was the school garden. Previously the gendered work of women, the gardens was now a “professional” space requiring formal instruction in determining soil composition, plant selection, and orderliness. Thus, the gardens reflected the larger beliefs in science and nature expressed from the research station to the local orchard. Teachers were encouraged to acquire this new expertise with the offer of bonuses whose amounts depended on their level of accreditation in Rural Science.<sup>38</sup>

After tackling teacher instruction, education officials turned to the systematic application and monitoring of agricultural instruction. Gibson brought British Columbia’s established corps of school inspectors together at his first Summer School in July 1915 to draft a uniform method of grading gardens to ensure that schools met the conditions for continued funding.<sup>39</sup> Recognizing that the school inspectors had many other tasks, Gibson also appointed specialized district supervisors of agricultural instruction to visit schools and act as a liaison with local agricultural interests. “Everything that makes for the betterment of rural conditions, socially as well as agriculturally,” he argued, “will claim the sympathetic attention of the district supervisor, and will have his encouragement and support.”<sup>40</sup> Between

---

<sup>38</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031. Teachers who had gardens and a diploma in Rural Science (having attended two years or sessions at Victoria Summer School) collected a \$30 annual bonus; teachers holding interim certificates (one session) received \$15; those without official qualification, but who successfully maintained school gardens obtained \$10.

<sup>39</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031 Gibson to A. Anstey, Inspector of Schools (Vernon, BC), 12 March 1915.

<sup>40</sup> BCA, GR 0458 Department of Elementary Agricultural Education Records, Box 1, File 5, “District Supervisors of Agricultural Instruction and their work in British Columbia,” November 1916.

1915 and 1923, fourteen supervisors worked in the Lower Mainland, Cariboo, Kootenays, Okanagan, and Vancouver Island.

More than statisticians, district supervisors were problem-solvers, teachers, ambassadors, supply coordinators, and grievance officers. Hired for their agricultural expertise, most were part of a new generation of specialists recently minted from agricultural programs at Canadian institutions such as the Ontario Agricultural College. Their own experiences as “professional” agriculturalists made them natural choices to carry out the objectives of Gibson’s bureau. Their participation was critical in helping formulate, implement, track, and report the progress of the program, creating an “information empire” of statistical knowledge that connected disparate localities with the agricultural priorities of Victoria and Ottawa.<sup>41</sup> In many ways, their work was the mirror of the agricultural scientist, tending growing children rather than fledgling orchards, but with the same goal of fostering modern agriculture in a modern countryside.

The work of the supervisors varied over the years. Formally, they were responsible for monitoring agricultural education, especially in classrooms and school gardens. Inspections were standardized with pre-printed reports for scores in several different categories. In the classroom, they queried teachers about the format of their lessons, the subjects discussed, and the correlation of agricultural or nature studies with other subjects such as arithmetic, spelling, reading, drawing, and composition. Out of doors, supervisors judged gardens on thirteen different criterion including the state of storage facilities and

---

<sup>41</sup> While provinces were given funds to direct the agricultural programs at their own discretion, the federal minister of Agriculture had to approve their plans. To help monitor the “success” of the Agricultural Instruction Act, the Dominion Department of Agriculture created an Office of Agricultural Instruction led by a Commissioner who gathered information from provincial colleagues.

garden tools, arrangement of plants in pots, and freedom from weeds and grass.<sup>42</sup> The supervisors' reports and the account of garden expenses from the school board were the basis for grants for the work.<sup>43</sup> District inspectors also liaised with local teachers and school trustees to ensure the availability of proper textbooks, seeds, plants, tools, and laboratory equipment. Outside the schools, supervisors promoted agricultural education with public lectures including lantern shows illustrating the virtues of rural advancement. Furthermore, Gibson's appointees discussed issues of local importance with farmer groups and boards of trade, and were an informal channel of communication between Victoria and the community.

In a similar vein, Skidmore fashioned institutional mechanisms to monitor compliance with educational goals and funding requirements. As in BC, Skidmore looked to district supervisors to monitor and shepherd agricultural education. The early supervisors' reports immediately did not paint a pleasant picture of coming challenges. In 1920, with thousands of young men returning from military duty, Skidmore hoped that many would complete their high school education but "unfortunately for agricultural education the bulk of this number have cast their lots by the bright lights, thus leaving the labor shortage on the farm with little relief." As a consequence, he predicted "spasmodic" progress for vocational education in agriculture "for a time" with little interest in short courses.<sup>44</sup>

While the inspectorate of vocational education was vital to satisfy state and federal governments with statistics and budgetary priorities, agricultural teachers were the vital link between state and community. Armed with new project books, planned instructional sheets, detailed records of class instruction and a demanding schedule of horticultural field trips and

---

<sup>42</sup> BCA, GR 1446 B2032 Inspector's Report on School Gardens, 1916.

<sup>43</sup> BCA, GR 1446 B2031 Gibson to Miss Emily Warren 29 March 1915.

<sup>44</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), State Board – Annual Reports – Third annual report of the State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for the State of Washington, Year ending June 30, 1920.

home visits, teachers impressed their Olympia superiors by how they took hold of community problems. Some instructors became so successful that they became for state officials a preferred “‘trouble shooter’ for farmers in their problems” and a gateway or “clearing house” for local consultations outside of school. The role of the agricultural teacher easily eclipsed the visibility and responsibilities of inspectors as they met parents to encourage support or visited potential students to entice their participation. Increased visibility invariably led to a more demanding schedule and expanded duties. In 1924 alone, approximately 40 teachers made 124 horticultural field trips with students, attended 79 meetings, fielded 83 horticulture-related phone inquires, and paid 218 other visits to assist farmers, not to mention the 2000 calls on students to supervise their farm practice.<sup>45</sup>

The curricula approved for young children, while emphasizing the project method of learning, were ultimately rooted in observing the interrelated elements of nature as well as those elements that threatened order both as an innate quality of the natural world and as applied by humanity. Dividing the themes of agricultural education into indoor and outdoor units, American and Canadian teachers took their protégés through a spectrum of seasonal studies. Thus, the valorization of the farmer skillfully managing his costs and pest infestations found its juvenile equivalent in the holistic elementary curriculum that placed agriculture as the focal point of learning and identity. When school began in September, students finished the season’s garden work, harvested the vegetables and fruit, cleared the garden, and prepared the ground for spring. As autumn approached, attention turned to classroom lessons on trees, weeds, and vegetation, complemented by a study of organisms including insects, birds, fish, domestic animals and pets. During the winter, instruction turned

---

<sup>45</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Washington State Board for Vocational Education, Annual Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 1924, WG Hummel Director

to the origin, classification, and composition of soils, water, air, and foodstuffs. The disappearance of snow in spring brought children outside again as they prepared the ground for gardening and elementary horticulture.<sup>46</sup> During the summer, students ideally continued to weed and water school gardens. Within these broad themes, children who lived on orchards found examples in their own immediate environment, thereby bringing the outlook and concerns of the fruit farming community into the classroom.

In the senior elementary grades, general lessons were buttressed with practical instruction under expanded themes such as soils and crops, animal husbandry, and horticultural management. For example, the tools of fruit farming, including pruning, grafting, packing, and irrigation, were demonstrated with visits to local orchards and experiment stations.<sup>47</sup> Lessons on pests and diseases featured the life course of the codling moth and the impact of apple blight including identifying infected trees and combating infestations. 4-H Clubs and other extra-curricular agricultural groups provided forums outside of class time to highlight the intersection of technical work, enjoyment, and socialization as the fabric of rural life.<sup>48</sup> Like the farmer receiving government advice on the most effective spray mixture or cover crop, children were instilled with an awareness of their local environs through expert direction that emphasized the ability to manage and control nature.

---

<sup>46</sup> BCA, GR 172 BC Dept of Ed; Teacher's Reports, 1915-1924, B6392-B6394; GR 173, BC, Dept of Education REEL B 6397; J.W. Gibson, "The training of teachers for agricultural instruction," *Agricultural Gazette*, October 1916

<sup>47</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Monthly Reports (October, 1921), Yakima High School to Department of Vocational Agriculture Report. Representing Heads, Heart, Hands, and Health, 4-H began at the turn of the twentieth century, emerging from the extension work of land-grant universities and quickly spread north of the border into Canadian provinces such as British Columbia by 1914.

<sup>48</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Monthly Reports (October, 1921), Yakima High School to Department of Vocational Agriculture Report

### *Measuring Success*

Agricultural education yielded immediate results in terms of improving teacher satisfaction, promoting student interest, and fostering confidence in the future. Reflecting on her July experiences in Victoria, Amy Handford undoubtedly spoke for many teachers as she related her initial frustration when a lack of space and overcrowded schoolrooms made it so difficult for “an enthusiastic teacher to really do much good,” that she contemplated moving to the United States; Gibson’s “practical help” with agricultural education was “indeed, what is needed.” She was especially pleased by the interest in her own Nature Work materials from her time in England and found the Summer School “strenuous for all...although I was played out at the finish, it was more than worth the effort.”<sup>49</sup> Although professional men dominated the field of rational agriculture, Handford’s enthusiasm spoke to the satisfaction found in her new role as purveyor of scientific expertise, an appealing effect of the modernization of the countryside.

Similarly, teachers reported “great interest” among the children, so much so “that nearly all their recesses and spare time before and after school [is] being spent voluntarily in the garden.”<sup>50</sup> Earl MacLeod remarked that besides fostering better relations among them, lessons in nature study and garden work “produced in the pupils a feeling of responsibility that makes for a stronger and freer effort in all their work,” giving rise to the election of student commissioners charged with supervising the collective work of their peers.<sup>51</sup> In a passage that undoubtedly resonated with Gibson’s goals and those of other rural progressives, Samuel Clark noted “while our ‘crop’ hardly repaid us, in terms of dollars and

---

<sup>49</sup> BCA, GR 1446 Reel B2031 Amy Handford to Gibson, Nelson BC, 20 September 1914.

<sup>50</sup> BCA, GR 172, B6392, P.C. Coates, Victoria, BC (Oaklands School), 29 November 1915; John Harris, Upper Trout Creek School (West Summerland) to Gibson, 12 December 1915.

<sup>51</sup> BCA, GR 172, B6392, Earl L. MacLeod, South Vancouver, 8 December 1915.

cents, for the money and labor expended, yet we learned a great deal, and I am sure that all appreciate in a fuller sense what Carlyle means when he says, ‘that work is in communication with nature.’”<sup>52</sup>

Agricultural education was especially popular in the Okanagan. By 1916, the district of Vernon had the highest number of enrolled pupils in agriculture.<sup>53</sup> The following year Kelowna equalled Vernon’s high school enrolment with twenty students while Penticton and Summerland also had impressive numbers.<sup>54</sup> So popular did agricultural classes become that some pupils had to be turned away.<sup>55</sup> Elementary schools teachers of Rural Science reported that all their students participated actively in classroom Nature Study work and either home or school gardening.<sup>56</sup>

By 1919, nineteen Okanagan communities had school gardens, the all-important incubator of rural boys and girls.<sup>57</sup> As the centrepiece of applied knowledge, the ancient garden re-emerged as a modern and progressive educational practice. Teachers such as Henry Bailey proudly reported, “many interesting problems in arithmetic have been worked practically from the garden measurements (such as areas of rectangles - circles - triangles)” as well as “several interesting subjects for composition.”<sup>58</sup> By combining the “first interests of the human race” with scientific discourse, rural Okanagan schools with their vibrant plots laid claim to a future ruled by the farmer over the urban industrialist. Just as the fruited

---

<sup>52</sup> BCA, GR 172, B6392, Samuel Clark to Gibson, 17 December 1915.

<sup>53</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Dept of Education, Inspector’s Reports, Gibson to James Britton (Vernon), 18 September 1916.

<sup>54</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Inspector’s Reports, B6395, Austin to Gibson, 10 September 1917.

<sup>55</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Inspector’s Reports, B6395, Gibson to Britton, 14 February 1917.

<sup>56</sup> BCA, GR 172, BC Dept of Ed; Teacher’s Reports, 1915-1924, Reel B6392.

<sup>57</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Inspector’s Reports, B6395, Ansley to Gibson, 23 June 1919.

<sup>58</sup> BCA, GR 172, BC Dept of Education; Teacher’s Reports, 1915-1924, Reel B6392, Henry Bailey, 3 December 1915.

landscape blended ancient pastoral motifs with modern innovations, so too did the garden represent a “natural foundation” upon which children could build a prosperous future.

A similar situation greeted planners in Olympia immediately after the implementation of Smith-Hughes. In only the second year of its operation, the premiere apple regions of Yakima, Walla Walla and Kennewick were among the eight schools accredited for Smith-Hughes instruction; by 1922, 22 high school departments had 728 students across the state.<sup>59</sup> When growth and interest in vocational instruction outstripped actually the budget, the state had to decide between allocating existing funds over a greater number of schools or better funding existing agricultural programs.<sup>60</sup> Enthusiasm in fruit-growing regions helped drive increasing enrolment, particularly because horticulture had been closely imbued with scientific trappings from the beginning of its promotion in the Pacific Northwest. Armed with a litany of tools for class study ranging across fruit jars, garden hoes, soil augers, plant presses, and pruning shears, teachers supplemented school work with all-important horticultural field trips. Indeed, horticulture became second only to animal husbandry for the number of student field trips.<sup>61</sup> With its attendant focus on applied knowledge, the curriculum organized lesson units on subjects such as soils and horticulture around outdoor farm projects, both on school property and during the summer at the homes of children.

Not content to leave the direction of learning to teachers alone, children were encouraged to foster their own clubs or associations to reinforce the centrality of rural experience to their identity. Informally, students in places like Yakima organized their own

---

<sup>59</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Report for the Vocational Education Department for the Biennium ending June 30, 1922.

<sup>60</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Annual Report for the Washington State Board of Vocational Education to the Federal Board For Vocational Education, Descriptive Statement Supplementing the Statistical Report, June 30, 1921.

<sup>61</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Washington State Board for Vocational Education, Annual Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 1924, W.G. Hummel Director.

club devoted to the study of orchards, apple shows, and packing house methods, delighting administrators and parents who saw future orchardists excited about the possibilities of rural life.<sup>62</sup>

More formally, students on both sides of the boundary competed for a host of prizes just as their parents did at prestigious agricultural exhibitions. Before joining Gibson's department, Provincial Soil and Crop Instructor J.C. Readey explained that the contests had less to do with blue ribbons than "to train the heads and hands of the boys and girls; to give them broad minds and big hearts; to improve their health by giving them an interest in outdoor life; and to encourage on the part of all British Columbia citizens a stronger and more intelligent interest in Agriculture."<sup>63</sup> Washington's Commission for Vocational Education was equally enthusiastic about exhibitions that gave boys "an insight into the scope and extend to which science enters into farming activities," a realization vital to the future development and prosperity of rural life.<sup>64</sup>

The true educational value of these contests revolved around the belief that participation instilled a sense of pride and accomplishment in children and reinforced the need for expertise and intelligence in their rural endeavours. In addition to participating in school fairs with their own separate exhibits, agricultural students from Kelowna and other valley communities came face-to-face with other "rural-minded" people at the annual Provincial Fair at New Westminster.<sup>65</sup> While careful to guard against competition-for-

---

<sup>62</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Monthly Reports (October, 1921), Yakima High School to Department of Vocational Agriculture Report. After 1928, local chapters of the Future Farmers of America also stimulated club activities. A national organization that began in Virginia, FFA chapters became ubiquitous features of extra-curricular activity for high school students.

<sup>63</sup> J.C. Readey, "Boys' and Girls' Crop Competitions" *The Agricultural Gazette of Canada*, 1 (June 1914): 501; quoted in David C. Jones, "Agricultural Schooling," 35.

<sup>64</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Annual Descriptive Report of the Washington State Board for Vocational Education for the year ending June 30, 1926.

<sup>65</sup> BCA, GR 173, B6395, Britton to Gibson, 1 September 1922.

competition's sake, Gibson viewed the fair in much the same way he viewed the garden – a site to encourage children's experiential education where by learning from example by and with nature, children moved one step closer to sharing an affinity with their surroundings.<sup>66</sup>

With subsidized railway travel and a crescendo of publicity, Washington students met their peers from across the state at the annual Agricultural Conference at Pullman where they engaged in education and competition before returning home to deliver reports to their schools and farmers' groups.<sup>67</sup> As a forum of friendly competition and camaraderie, these venues served as the ultimate celebration of rural modernism, neatly capturing the belief in raising healthy future citizens steeped in nature and with a more intelligent or scientific relationship with their future vocation. These settings were also a showcase for believers that a countryside defined by art and science could stand as a beacon of progressive thought and action.

### *Overcoming Resistance*

Despite some successes, mundane but predictable elements conspired against the smooth adoption of progressive education laid out in department circulars and bulletins. Among the first growing pains, teachers reported financial problems. A Mr. Somerville of Revelstoke complained that his school board had not provided funds to buy the proper equipment to prepare a plot. Although he secured some tools from farmers, he observed, "Borrowing from people who barely have the necessary ones for their own use will hardly be satisfactory."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Miss Rabb, a Vernon area teacher, reported that her community's

---

<sup>66</sup> Part of Gibson's criticism of the Department of Agriculture's sponsorship of student events was that they saw the fair in isolation from the on-going work of the school and distorted the balance by offering big cash prizes and a singular emphasis on results rather than process.

<sup>67</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Washington State Board for Vocational Education, Annual Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 1924, W.G. Hummel Director.

<sup>68</sup> BCA, GR 1446 B2031 C.E. Somerville, Teacher, Big Eddy School (Revelstoke) to Gibson, 3 February 1915.

finances were in such disarray because of the inability of the unemployed to pay their taxes that there was little prospect of a garden in the coming school year.<sup>69</sup> The initial expansion of Washington's Smith-Hughes program highlighted similar economic considerations, particularly as they affected the sustainability of vocational programs at smaller schools that, by offering fewer courses, received less compensation from government despite fixed start-up costs and teacher' salaries.<sup>70</sup> Overworked teachers could also foil agricultural expansion. When the school in Grandview, Washington dropped out of the program, the State Supervisor for Agricultural Education blamed the instructor's lack of "vision and ambition to put the necessary effort into the work to make it successful," rather than the instructor's other responsibilities as school principal.<sup>71</sup> This was particularly troubling since these were precisely the community schools that planners wished to reach and where failure would surely undermine the idealism and reality of a rural renaissance.

When economics did not interfere with agricultural goals, local problems forced accommodation or even rejection of official goals of neat rows and measured plots. Miss A.D. McDonald reported that the ground outside her New Denver schoolhouse was very rocky and "not by any means suited to gardening." To add insult to injury, during the summer months a number of cows, horses, and sheep repeatedly breached the fence, consumed the flowers, and left everything "completely destroyed."<sup>72</sup> T.O. Alexander grappled with elusive intruders who stole the crop just as pupils began to see some results.

---

<sup>69</sup> BCA, GR 1446 B2031 Vida B. Rabb, Teacher (Vernon) to Gibson, 20 March 1915.

<sup>70</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1919-1920, HM Skidmore to C. Paine Shangle, Wepato, WA, 1 June 1920.

<sup>71</sup> WSA (Olympia), *Fourth Annual Report of the State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for the State of Washington, Year ending June 30, 1921*.

<sup>72</sup> BCA, GR 172, BC Department of Education, Teachers' Reports, 1915-1924, B6392. A.D. McDonald (New Denver) to Gibson, 12 February 1916.

“Attempts to trace the offenders,” he lamented, have “been unsuccessful.”<sup>73</sup> Near the Oregon border, the district supervisor for Two Rivers found that the worst difficulty for agricultural instruction was low morale among farmers uncertain of the availability of water “even a month ahead.” The supervisor pessimistically recommended that unless the situation improved the next year, “it would hardly seem advisable to continue an agricultural department in the school.”<sup>74</sup>

In all cases, the non-human environment was a major variable in educational planning. If one element stands out in the rhetoric surrounding agricultural instruction in the region, it was that education would finally replace the age-old insecurities of agrarian life with a modern orientation that lifted humanity from subservience to partnership with the natural world. While poor textbooks or faulty equipment could be replaced, in practice, the ground could not be replaced if crops failed to thrive. And so rather than replace “old” farming knowledge with modern insights, agricultural education reinforced what many children already knew from their own families – that maintaining gardens was a constant struggle as the environment was always ready to reclaim its former visage.

To the great frustration of educators, maintaining the centrepiece of agricultural education – the garden – over the summer was difficult. Students initially charged with maintaining gardens often surrendered to their impulses for fun rather than work, leaving “nothing but cleaning up to do” in September.<sup>75</sup> Teachers were often absent, possibly

---

<sup>73</sup> BCA, GR 172, B6392, T.O. Alexander, South Vancouver (General Brock School) to Gibson, 14 December 1916.

<sup>74</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 9, Folder, Memos and Reports, Two Rivers Report, 21 May 1926.

<sup>75</sup> BCA, GR 172 British Columbia Department of Education, Teacher’s Reports, 1915-1924, B6392, Annie M. Hunter (Kelowna, 26 March 1920).

attending classes on agricultural education, or, more often, for personal recuperation and, like some agricultural instructors, did not take their “projects too seriously for the summer.”<sup>76</sup>

If students could not be enticed to maintain gardens, some officials reasoned that it would be simpler to require them to maintain “home gardens” subject to instructor inspection. While sound in theory, success was not guaranteed in practice. Try as he might to fulfill his Smith-Hughes duties, Victor Morgan was shut out of school in October because of apple vacation and “found it impossible to do much constructive visitation work. Every hand was busy gathering fruit, and if [children] could be found at home at all they were too busy to confer concerning the work.”<sup>77</sup> Mindful of satisfying his superiors, Morgan was rendered powerless by the seasonal tempos of orchard life as they clashed with carefully formulated lessons designed to increase affection for rural life. Handling apples instead of notebooks, Morgan’s students risked drawing unfavourable lessons from their tired bodies and long days under the autumn sun.

Notwithstanding the intentions of agricultural instruction to incorporate the values and outlook of the fruit farming community, pupils did not always accept the prescribed nature training at face value. Far from being clean environmental slates, boys and girls invariably bore the impressions formed by the daily demands of horticultural life. In one British Columbia community, children were taught to record their observations of insect and animal habits in order to learn what organisms cause harm. Despite the best efforts of the

---

<sup>76</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 9, Folder, Memos and Reports, Rosalia Report 21 May 1926. According to a 1925 Circular Letter, “during summer, teachers [are] expected to “SUPERVISE” work of students with their home projects; make home visits to encourage parents to take interest, and promote cause of agricultural education among students not currently enrolled by visiting them, also; order equipment to prepare classroom, etc.” WSA-O, Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Circular Letters, 11 March 1925; WSA-O, Vocational Education Board – Records, 1914-1940, Box 9, Folder - Memos and Reports, Report - Rosalia WA, 21 May 1926.

<sup>77</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Monthly Reports (October 1921), Letter from Victor Morgan to Vocational Board, October 1921.

teacher to impress them with the importance of bird life, “they all want to cling to the idea that birds which steal a few cherries etc. should be killed and cannot realize the benefit done by these birds in ridding us of insects.”<sup>78</sup> In the same way that farmers were accused of “mulish individualism” in resisting the insights of scientific agriculture, so too were students not prepared to surrender their orchard-centric view of the environment.<sup>79</sup> This clash of ideals and contrasting experiences was not easily rectified, although Washington state officials recognized that instructors who did not have “a rosy path of duty” needed to be “specially fortified” with wisdom, common sense, and human understanding to negotiate and reshape environmental as well as agrarian values.<sup>80</sup>

While the environment was defined by the symmetry of orchard plots and the predictability of irrigation, it too undermined the classroom lessons of agricultural education. As neglected school gardens illustrated graphically for pupils returning from summer vacation, maintaining the idealized garden was a constant struggle in seeming contradiction to the underlying theme of natural order found in texts, illustrations, and the organization of the land. The goal of finishing nature’s work promised a fixed result or reward, not the constant cajoling of the flume and the hoe. Even where everything was properly followed in preparing a school garden, the prospect of adverse weather was a stark reminder that not all was within the realm of human control or understanding. If agricultural education sought to give children an enthusiasm for rural values and their agrarian communities, it also held the possibility of turning them away in light of its struggles and volatility.

---

<sup>78</sup> BCA, GR 1446, B2031, H.E. Murray (Armstrong) to Gibson, 25 March 1915.

<sup>79</sup> Jones, “Agricultural Schooling,” 40.

<sup>80</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Circular Letters (Agriculture Instructors), Washington, State Board of Vocational Education, Olympia, 7 October 1924.

Although the goals of rural education found acceptance across a broad constituency of parents, trustees, and pupils, resistance appeared in some surprising quarters. School inspectors saw inspecting school gardens and collecting rural science reports as an added burden. The Vernon inspector privately asked teachers if the “agricultural work interfered with the regular school work.” The teachers vigorously denied this and lent their unqualified support to agriculture although the inspector “did not show much sympathy” for their endorsement.<sup>81</sup> In Washington too, school principals and vocational authorities came into conflict. Despite the enthusiasm of the local agricultural instructor, Principal Hoffman complained to Skidmore that vocational instruction had been more expensive than anticipated and impractical for Grade 8 students since most boys worked away from home for wages. In a further rebuke to Skidmore, Hoffman argued that other courses also needed equipment, “and we do not want to try to ‘carry all our eggs in one basket’ and a small basket at that, for I am fast becoming to the belief that the agriculture work here is neither popular or practical.”<sup>82</sup>

The differing uses of school resources also fostered dissension when the moral value of sport and its need for playing fields encountered the agricultural demands of gardening and crop experiments. The school board in Vernon, with its agricultural base and gentleman farmer heritage, briefly considered replacing its agricultural grounds with tennis courts, much to the chagrin of Gibson who quickly added that he supported tennis, “in its proper time and place.”<sup>83</sup> Conversely, enthusiasm for agricultural education could swing to the opposite

---

<sup>81</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Inspector’s Reports, B6395, Britton to Gibson, 18 November 1916.

<sup>82</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1919-1920, HH Hoffmann (Superintendent, Kennewick Public Schools) to Skidmore, 1 January 1920.

<sup>83</sup> BCA, GR 173, BC, Inspector’s Reports, B6395, Gibson to Austin, 27 April 1918. For an examination of sport, health, and masculinity, consult J.A. Mangan, ed. *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992).

extreme. To the slight embarrassment of Gibson, one Okanagan school ran afoul of the local inspector because, by converting its entire property to gardens, it forced children to play on the nearby street during recess.<sup>84</sup>

If overzealous inspectors and reticent administrators demonstrated the challenges in translating theory to practice among officials, parents had a similar range of reactions based upon the interplay of class concerns and public education. Notwithstanding the refined aspirations of British Columbia's orchardists, some parents feared that agricultural studies would limit the university options of their children by impinging on time for the core or "classic" academic subjects required for the traditional professions. "Some of them," observed one teacher, "think that the only time a child is doing school work is at this desk. It will take time to educate these parents and I am trying to do it through the children."<sup>85</sup>

In contrast, some parents criticized agriculture for being too abstract to have day-to-day utility for their sons and daughters, prompting instructors to stress the practical or vocational application of their studies out of school.<sup>86</sup> This was less of a problem south of the border where state officials fiercely protected and promoted the vocational or applied character of agriculture education. Just as he instructed Washington teachers not to force their lessons into an academic mould, Skidmore also emphasized that when dealing with class projects, teachers must "be definite, be specific, business-like [original emphasis]." Lest there be any confusion, Skidmore concluded tellingly, "one of the biggest lessons to be

---

<sup>84</sup> BCA, GR 1446, Dept of Ed., Elementary and Technical Correspondence, 1914-1919, B2033, Anstey to Gibson, 23 February 1918.

<sup>85</sup> One critic noted that according to a 1928 Department of Education survey, only 14% of high school pupils ever reached university, forcing 86% of pupils to "take subjects for which they have no particular liking in order to gratify the wishes of a few classical men in the University." GR 173, B6397, VVV to Gibson, 28 September 1928; BCA, GR 1446, B2031, Amy Hume (Parksville) to Gibson, 27 March 1915.

<sup>86</sup> BCA, GR 1446, B2031, Gibson to A.H. Tomlinson, 16 January 1915.

learned by these boys is that farming is a business and he who succeeds hereafter must apply business methods.”<sup>87</sup>

Academic and vocational differences that animated Canadian and American programs were profound in theory but often subtle in practice. British Columbia’s determination to include agriculture in an academic curricula reflected Gibson’s aim to usher in a revolution in learning so that all, whether children of a lawyer or orchardist, would transform their thinking and actions. In this regard, Gibson and like-minded advocates positioned agriculture as more than an occupational choice, but as a defining aspect of rural culture. From an early emphasis on developing a relationship with the natural world through garden activities, British Columbia high school students proceeded “to the more mature consideration of how best to manage all these things in the making of a living from the soil,” helping to secure “an ever-advancing rural citizenship.”<sup>88</sup>

By comparison, agriculture education in the United States was separated from academics both in administration and implementation. This difference reflected educational priorities structured by legislative strategies and attitudes towards the interplay of science and agriculture. With its aristocratic trappings and legacy, horticulture was placed in British Columbia as a profession requiring culture and intellect, which science in turn accentuated and validated. To the south, the discourse of Jeffersonian agrarianism provided a different inflection for science that emphasized the practicality of the new farmer, rather than his cultural sophistication. Science, in turn, accentuated that practicality while also being its “modern” validation. Thus, rather than revamp the classic educational system that was not up to the task of creating a skilful farmer, proponents focused on creating a new one. The benefit

---

<sup>87</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 9, Folder, Memos and Reports, Rosalia Report 21 May 1926.

<sup>88</sup> J.W. Gibson, “Agriculture and the Schools”, *Agricultural Gazette*, June 1920.

of the American approach lay in devoting resources exclusively to vocational needs independent of academic acceptance or funding priorities. However, making a separate stream dramatically diminished the potential of agriculture to shape the development and outlook of all rural children, regardless of familial class or occupation.

In both cases, what bothered educational reformers was the assertion that agricultural education could somehow disadvantage pupils, especially in light of their fervent belief that agriculture was “a great liberalizing subject of instruction...[that] stands so close to the first interests of the human race.”<sup>89</sup> In a September 1919 memorandum, the BC Department of Education evoked the twin touchstones of modernity and science in reiterating the importance of the agrarian mission, arguing “the whole trend of world events has shown the immense importance of encouraging food production and the modern scientific development of our agricultural lands.” The department confronted these challenges “by developing in the minds of all boys and girls of school age a new interest in this ‘Oldest of arts and youngest of sciences’ - agriculture.”<sup>90</sup> Unifying the traditional benefits of the countryside with the progressive strides of science, American advocates followed a similar course. In the hands of children, home projects and classroom experiments were not rote and decontextualized exercises but a step towards “the increased production of foodstuffs, and the maintenance of a balance between the country and the city.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, the future of province and state depended on its agrarian fabric and so scientific agriculture ensured that regions such as the Okanagan and Yakima valleys, with their “finest class” of fruit growers, would ultimately direct its moral and economic development.

---

<sup>89</sup> J.W. Gibson, “Education in and through agriculture,” *Agricultural Gazette*, August 1919.

<sup>90</sup> BCA, GR 458, File 4, Memorandum on Agricultural Education in British Columbia, 10 September 1919.

<sup>91</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1919-1920, H.M. Skidmore to A.C. Kellogg, 2 June 1920.

*Success in the face of failure*

Despite problems, agricultural instruction continued to expand. Between 1921 and 1938 in Washington State an unrelenting demand for agricultural instruction resulted in a five-fold increase in the number of participating schools to 89 programs in which six used two agricultural teachers<sup>92</sup> despite difficult economic conditions that made the prospect of teaching “high school sons of farmers how to farm when the sons go home every night where the struggle to farm is the bread-and-butter struggle of life...a very ticklish procedure.”<sup>93</sup> Still, the economic problems of apple growers could also prompt schools to act, and in such circumstances, only state budget shortfalls prevented acceptance of all applicants. Governor Clarence Martin, however, was determined to expand educational opportunities and told state instructors that although two million children were without school due to closures across the country, he would expand schooling in his state. “In Wenatchee,” he observed, “they speak of their fine apples, and the same with Yakima. It is easy for us to be taken up with material wealth. But when they speak of resources, our more important resource is citizenship.” In the language of the orchardist, Martin reminded his audience “you cannot put youth in cold storage during the depression.”<sup>94</sup>

Thousands of kilometres away, events conspired to end agricultural education as a provincial department, although not necessarily as a course of instruction. With the election of William Lyon Mackenzie King’s Liberals in 1921, the continued involvement of the

---

<sup>92</sup> WSA (Olympia), Vocational Education Board Records 1914-1940, Box 1, Annual Descriptive Report of Vocational Agriculture to the State Board of Vocational Education, July 1938.

<sup>93</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Circular Letters (Agriculture Instructors), Washington, State Board of Vocational Education, Olympia, 7 October 1924.

<sup>94</sup> WSA (Olympia), Commission for Vocational Education (86-2-73), Folder, Misc Material, 1933-34, Governor’s speech given at Education Convention, June 8, 1934.

federal government in funding agricultural instruction fell into doubt.<sup>95</sup> As rumours circulated about its impending demise, several school boards, including Vernon, abandoned agriculture classes for fear of being burdened with the budget shortfall. Nevertheless, the Okanagan communities held steady. Even when the termination of federal funding in 1924 resulted in the dismissal of the District Supervisors despite provincial protests, interest and participation in agricultural education remained.<sup>96</sup> In the Kelowna and Penticton districts, the former supervisors were hired as full-time instructors in agriculture, ironically fulfilling Gibson's desire to make the course a part of the regular school program. Thus in a moment of near defeat, the garden and the classroom continued to promote the unique vision of preparing rural children for rural life personified by blooming flowers, tent caterpillars, and apple judging.

The final blow to the official program fell in April 1929 when a new provincial government dissolved Gibson's position and program. Without federal support, the province decided to focus funding on the traditional curriculum. Assuming his new duties as Director of High School Instruction, Gibson must have been particularly bitter in having to respond to correspondence from his old post consisting of agricultural budgets, school gardens and nature competitions with news of the program's demise.<sup>97</sup> But even this turn of events – the final disappearance of targeted government funding and bureaucratic support – did not bring

---

<sup>95</sup> While no single reason seems to stand out for King's decision, David Jones proposed four potential reasons: lacklustre results, poor administration on the part of the provinces, federal indebtedness after the First World War, and partisan politics. Cited in Ambrose, "Better and Happier Men and Women," 282.

<sup>96</sup> David Jones sounds a far more pessimistic note at the conclusion of his essay in *BC Studies*, suggesting that the program and its goals rapidly collapsed after federal funding was removed, partly because the district supervisors had already lost their "missionary zeal" through the "falseness" of compromises with the Department of Agriculture and school board trustees. However, a review of Education documents reveals that agricultural instruction continued and even expanded while Gibson actively promoted and maintain the program until the demise of his post in April 1929. David C. Jones, "We cannot allow it to be run by those who do not understand education": Agricultural Schooling in the Twenties" *BC Studies* 39 (1978): 30-60.

<sup>97</sup> Among the letters on file included proposals for a new school garden in Westbank and news from the Salmon Arm Fair regarding home garden competitions. BCA, GR 171, B6391, Correspondence for 1929.

agricultural education to a grinding halt. Gibson's philosophy did not disappear with his new position, and children did not stop learning about the natural world. At the same time, without the transformative spirit and dreams of rural reformers to guide its institutional development, lessons about the orcharding landscape became less structured.

The fate of agricultural instruction in Washington state was less dramatic, but equally relevant in understanding the struggle surrounding the place of horticulture and the future of rural society. In the long run, the decision to incorporate agriculture into a vocational training stream proved to be a more resilient financial strategy. Unlike the experience in British Columbia, agricultural education continued uninterrupted as a streamed field of study after 1929 thanks to a series of short-term acts that continued to appropriate funds on the lines of Smith-Hughes. By 1936, calls for the creation of a more durable funding framework led to the passage of the George-Deen Act that provided \$14 million in perpetual appropriations.<sup>98</sup> American success in agricultural education, however, was not unconditional.

While the provision of agricultural instruction was an important victory for rural reformers, their efforts were undermined by the stigmas attached to vocational education. The popular belief that narrowly-trained teachers who were less well qualified than their academic counterparts taught agriculture undercut its appeal. Probably more damaging was the belief that it was suitable for students of low ability, thus subverting the image of the "intelligent farmer" and a reinvigorated rural movement.<sup>99</sup> In general, whether as a local course or part of a vocational program, the priorities that guided agricultural education – spurring the growth and influence of rural life – changed over time, muting the original

---

<sup>98</sup> MD Mobley, "A Review of Federal Vocational-Education Legislation," *Theory into Practice* 3 (5) December 1964: 168.

<sup>99</sup> William B. Logan, "Vocational Education: Facts and Misconceptions," *Theory into Practice* 3 (5) December 1964: 162; Leonard Cantor, "The 'Re-visioning' of Vocational Education in the American High School," *Comparative Education* 25 (2) 1989: 125.

enthusiasm for building a modern countryside. That process was more imperceptible and gradual – one might even say natural – like the faint borders of reclaimed garden plots.

### *Conclusion*

Like the early “fruit-mad days” that held out heady promises and unbridled optimism for settlers taking up their orchards from Summerland to Sunnyside, agricultural education began with high hopes and bold goals in communities on both sides of the boundary. Far from being a feeble movement led by an irrelevant countryside constituency increasingly marginalized by an urbanizing society, advocates persuaded government to initiate programmes and funding to beautify school grounds, plant gardens, and conduct classroom experiments ranging from the starch content of potatoes to the course of sap in plants.<sup>100</sup> Much like the environment that promoters sought to change, the ideas that buttressed the movement found wide currency with both American and Canadian advocates of rural regeneration and reveal a dimension of the region that transcends nature and nation. As a symbol of vitality as well as a scientific undertaking, farming required specialized training and expertise. Proponents envisioned their work as heralding and reflecting an ascendant modern and rural future for North America, a future that invariably rested upon children.

On the one hand, the rise of agricultural education testified to the growing confidence of rural proponents and validated their vision. Of course, the history of compulsory schooling in North America was shaped by rural priorities, if only because such efforts had to respond and accommodate demographic realities and the seasonal demands of agriculture. What set agricultural education apart from this earlier history was the belief that the old way of

---

<sup>100</sup> BCA, GR 172, BC Department of Education; Teacher’s Reports, 1915-1924, B6392, Eva Carr, Ellison School (Ellison municipality, r.r. 1 Kelowna, BC); 14 Dec 1915.

schooling was ill equipped to address the new reality of scientific agriculture as the cornerstone of a dynamic and progressive rural society.

On the other hand, the movement for agricultural education laid bare the deep anxieties that challenged unconditional optimism for the future. Although rural people were well versed in the perceived social, moral, and environmental advantages that they enjoyed over their city-bred brethren, their overall population continued to decline relative to urban areas. And what made depopulation particularly alarming was the spectre of rural children, the literal future of the modern countryside, turning away from the family farm. Ultimately, both of these impulses inspired educational reform in the early twentieth century. And like the motivation that lay behind them, these efforts bore equally conflicting results as rural educators, parents, and children at times embraced and rejected the content and symbolism of agricultural education.

Proponents in both countries shared the view that agricultural education was a declaration of rural modernity and of the central place of the farmer within it. But Canadian and American efforts also revealed differences in answering a fundamental question: would orcharding be a cultured profession or a practical vocation? From the beginning, contrasting methods guided the introduction of agricultural instruction. In British Columbia, agriculture was to be the centre of a reorganized educational program that united the disparate subjects of Literature, Arithmetic, and Science. Conversely, in Oregon and Washington agricultural instruction was set up as a parallel educational stream, the vocational counterpart to the academic orientation of regular schools.

Despite their different underpinnings, both projects were animated by the central belief that rural life had become “modern” and thus a wellspring of advancement for the

dominion and the republic. With the crucial participation of teachers and agrarian professionals, ornamental school grounds, colourful gardens, and agricultural lessons transformed schools across the region. Critically for reformers, children not only learned the benefits of scientific agriculture, but also the promise of a rural rejoinder to the urban-centric vision of human society. Casting off the stereotypes of ignorance and backwardness, this new countryside instructed children in the benefits of uniting art with science, and nature with humanity. More than anything else, it instilled in them an intimacy with their environment in the hopes of keeping them on the land and leading a new rural citizenry into the future that underpinned the rhetoric of reformers.

By all reasonable measurements, educational reformers could rightfully claim success with the introduction of agricultural education. Building on earlier local efforts in Nature Study, reformers quickly forged a new state-level institutional framework to promote and coordinate a systematic program of agricultural instruction. Expanding school district participation, growing enrollment, and glowing testimonials from satisfied teachers and enthusiastic students reinforced the confidence of advocates that agricultural education had produced the desired result – rural life was dynamic, stimulating, and thoroughly modern in character and outlook.

While Canadian and American programs enjoyed some success in advancing a re-energized rural mindset, similar problems followed their introduction. In British Columbia, skeptics questioned the usefulness of agriculture in schools, fearing it left their children ill-equipped for university by straining already-stretched school budgets. Advocates such as Gibson countered that critics missed the larger truth that agricultural education was not merely another subject in the curriculum, but should be the centre of the learning experience

for a rural-based society – the prism through which teachers and children experienced and learned of the world around them. While in the short-term this proved to be an effective strategy in securing government support, the special provisions for funding outside the “core” curriculum left it vulnerable to changing political fortunes. To the south the vocational nature of agricultural instruction dulled similar criticisms and helped ensure its long-term survival. However, separate streaming ultimately marginalized it from the broader goals of transforming education in general and thus compromising its universalist tendencies.

Paradoxically, in the course of instilling a view of the environment based upon observation and order, agricultural instruction was undermined by that vision. Unlike the controlled environment of the summer school gardens in the Inland Empire, the wider countryside did not enjoy the same effortless manipulation and served to both suppress enthusiasm and disappointment. Years when crops and gardens excelled increased the interest of teachers, students, and parents but scorching summers, mild winters, and other climatic conditions that led to partial success or failure sapped enthusiasm. Such episodes reinforced the fact that despite the ascendancy of science, agriculture was still vulnerable to the age-old elements that had followed humanity through millennia. Indeed, the host of orchard pests and problems that children encountered were new actors on the landscape just like the settlers and their farms, with both equally determined to stay.

Whether the disappearance of provincial oversight in British Columbia or its vocational continuation in Washington and Oregon, both experiences illustrate the successes and defeats that confronted progressives attempting to promulgate their vision of rural citizenship. If children learned that finishing nature’s work promised increased productivity and rural wealth, they also discovered, like their parents before them, that it also promised

struggle and instability. And perhaps most ominously, the later sight of farms being cut up into city lots highlighted how agricultural education failed where it mattered most: it could not reverse the trend towards an urban future. But until the orchards they passed on their way to school were nothing more than a childhood memory, a new generation of girls and boys followed in their parent's footsteps through depression and war.

## 4

*Staging a Modern Paradise:  
Exhibits and the Display of Nature, Progress, & Consumption*

Thought is the blossom,  
language the bud,  
action the fruit behind.  
~Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

During the final weeks of October, 1910 orchardists from Medford, Hood River, Yakima, Wenatchee, Vernon, and Kelowna converged upon Vancouver to participate in the first Canadian National Apple Show. Already tired from the several weeks spent preparing for the show, exhibitors immediately busied themselves with the mammoth task of organizing over three thousand separate exhibits comprised of 194 varieties of fruit. Tons of materials such as decorative plants and flowers, silken fabric, paint samples, illustrative photographs, placards, and tiny flags were combined to accentuate perfect specimens of fruit ranging from designer plates of apples to colossal box displays. For seven days, orchardists and curious urbanites scrutinized the artistic sensitivities and practical skills of exhibitors in an exuberant celebration of the orcharding landscape and its natural bounty.

The National Apple Show's official opening was marked with a grand procession of notable dignitaries led by a platoon of mounted police and the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders Band. After messages of welcome from Mayor L.D. Taylor, Premier Richard McBride, and acting Minister of Agriculture William Bowser, the manager of the exhibition, Maxwell Smith, took to the platform. Also known for his work as a former Dominion Fruit Inspector and editor of *Fruit Magazine*, Smith pronounced, "while acknowledging the superiority of no other people

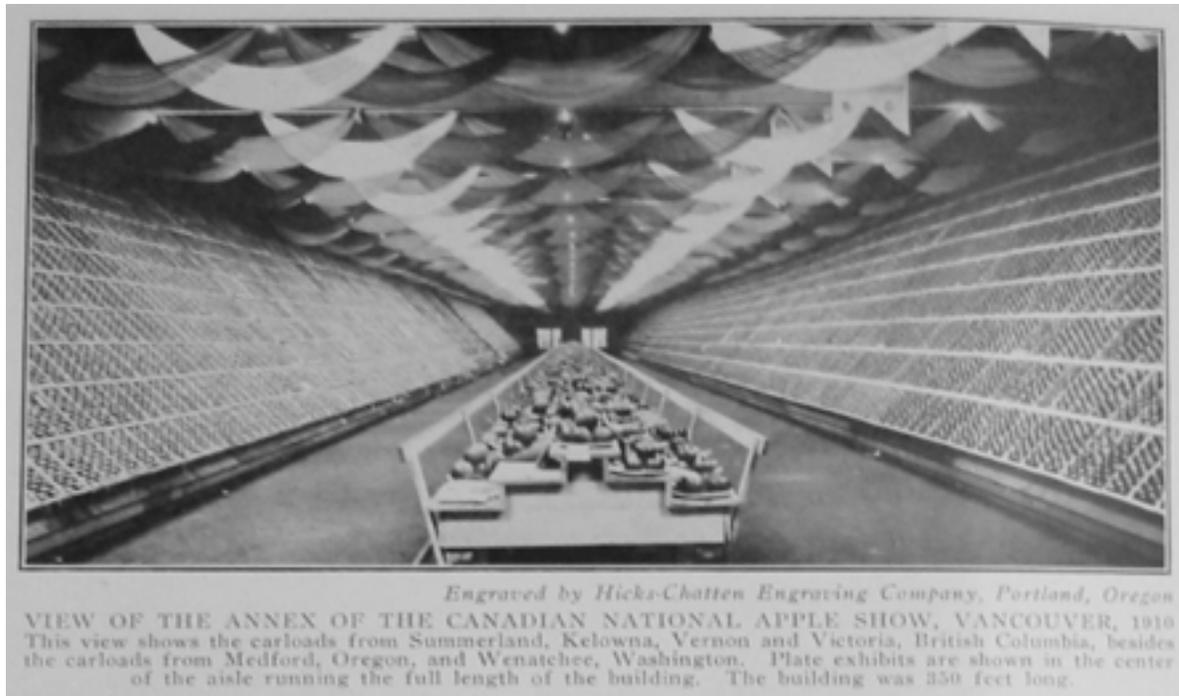


Figure 10: Carloads of fruit from across the Pacific Northwest provide a stunning portrait of Nature’s bounty. *Better Fruit* January 1911.

on earth, we are always glad to welcome to a friendly contest all who approach us on the basis of a dignified equality, and today we give you the most beautiful and the best Apple Show ever held.” Thanking the dominion government for climbing into “the chariot of progress as it rolls swiftly by on the heels of the prancing steeds of nature and science,” he reminded his audience that “in the scientific utilization of mother earth and God’s quickening sunlight we have in this splendid show of the King of Fruits a triumphant exemplification of the innate dignity of honest labor.” In full oratorical flight, Smith preached that “as the successful cultivation of the apple is the supreme test of soil and climate, let me say to those seeking a country in which conditions are all that go to make human life pleasant and profitable, seek ye first the kingdom of the apple, and other things needful in the sphere of agriculture will be added unto you.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Canadian National Apple Show, Vancouver,” *Better Fruit*, January 1911, 32.

Fruit fairs, by uniting nature and science, feminine and masculine, celebrated the transformation of landscapes and people in the service of a new rural project steeped in the trappings of burgeoning nationhood.<sup>2</sup> Just as the flurry of promotional pamphlets, guides, and manuals created in the minds of prospective immigrants an imaginative landscape infused with expectations and ideals, colourful exhibitions performed a similar function for orchardists and on-lookers. Thus, the logic of display extended beyond comparing fruit grades for prizes and validated the region's dramatic social, economic, and environmental transformation.<sup>3</sup>

As the successor to the old farmers' fair, horticultural exhibitions were a dazzling allegorical representation of orcharding life and all that made it desirable and modern. Through the creative display of perfect apples, the exhibition invited participants to celebrate the co-operative relationships of the individual and community, art and science, fruit farming and nation-building that lay at the heart of a new rural project. The sense of balance and order conveyed by exhibitions also reflected the idealized stability of orchard life as it affected women, First Nations peoples, and migrants. Orchardists also used exhibitions to improve the work of farmers and to educate the public about the desirability of superior fruit and the benefits to a thoroughly modernized and progressive countryside from scientific

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Maxwell Smith's post-show report in *Better Fruit*, attendees "heard much of Canada as a nation, and in this show was British Columbia's acknowledgement of that sentiment." *Better Fruit* 5 (7) January 1911.

<sup>3</sup> My analysis proceeds from a semiotic concept of culture or the notion that culture is a "system of meaning" by which we make sense of the world and attach significance to our material and social environment. Among a host of pertinent works, two references from anthropology and cultural geography include Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) and Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1989). On the subject of the history and cultural significance of exhibitions, important works in the American and Canadian contexts include Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture* (Chicago: N. Hall, 1979), Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1993), Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), and Elsbeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

agriculture's focus on efficiency and production. Fairs that welcomed outside participants also highlight a moment when the regional environment forged a common identity for farmers on both sides of the border.

Shifts in immigration patterns and marketing needs after the First World War gradually reduced the importance of exhibitions as other mediums of display took their place. While these new media such as poster advertising and label art continued to highlight the innovation of orchardists and their desire to educate, they failed to reinforce a trans-boundary identity. Paradoxically, the educational legacy of exhibitions also undermined orchardists in the long term. While they compelled growers to seek perfect fruit, they also created false expectations of uniformly high quality among the consuming public.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Lineage of Display*

Representing a space for social and economic exchange, the exhibition traces its heritage through the common marketplace and festivals back to the earliest human societies. In Athens' central Agora marketplace and Rome's Forum Romanum, people gathered to exchange goods and opinions about civic affairs while ritualistic festivals based on religious or seasonal events provided similar opportunities. With the rise of Christianity in Europe church-sponsored fairs preserved earlier elements of pageantry, but set them apart from the more mundane marketplace gatherings. The gradual decline of religious oversight and the rise of permanent retail shops made the fairs more an occasion for rowdyism than exchange

---

<sup>4</sup> The rise of industrial capacity, market competition, and new technologies and its impact on product differentiation is convincingly documented in Glenn Porter and Harold C. Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth-Century Marketing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971).

and thus prompting civil authorities to fret about pleasure-seeking crowds threatening to overwhelm elite sensibilities and the orderly exchange of agrarian commodities.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the colonial period of eastern North America, fairs and farmers' markets similarly punctuated community life. By the early nineteenth century, agricultural societies in Britain and North America provided more formal venues for dialogue concerning agrarian issues and further impetus for the proliferation of fairs. With roots in the Enlightenment, the gradual emergence of the British exhibition as a large-scale "rational festival" in the 1820s helped inspire even grander agricultural events across the Atlantic.<sup>6</sup> New Yorkers visited their first state fair in 1841; Toronto played host to its first Provincial Fair five years later. By bringing together agriculturalists from across the region, these fairs had an educational component with lectures on topics ranging from stock breeding to crop raising and later to horticulture, especially as fruit raising moved from a side-line interest into a commercial crop specialization.<sup>7</sup> As the fairs expanded, so too did the prestige of prizes for compelling displays of produce.

The fascination with display reached dizzying heights with London's Great Exhibition of 1851. Gathered in the stunning Crystal Palace built for the occasion, the British dominated a host of international exhibitors with an imperial showcase that promised colourful commodities, liberal rule, and capitalist development. The net effect was a new scale of national spectacle and instruction firmly linked with industrial pre-eminence.<sup>8</sup> North American elites were eager to emulate this to showcase the crowning achievements of the

---

<sup>5</sup> Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Heaman, *Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 9-15.

<sup>7</sup> J.C. Folger and S.M. Thomson, *The Commercial Apple Industry of North America* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1921), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Louise Purbrick, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interpretive Essays* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001); John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* (London: V&A Publications, 2001).

New World, beginning with the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia and reinforced by the gleaming Beaux-Arts pavilions at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition that commemorated Columbus' cross-Atlantic voyage.<sup>9</sup>

In explaining the rising popularity of exhibitions in the nineteenth century, historians such as Keith Walden note the growing influence of an ascendant middle class determined to articulate and shape societal priorities as well as its own identity through "rituals" valorizing industrial capitalism.<sup>10</sup> In her evaluation of agricultural fairs, E.A. Heaman casts them as elite-driven vehicles for transforming farmers into passive pupils who could "relinquish skills and leave things to the experts" intent on rationalizing production.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Allan Trachtenberg argues that massive exhibitions such as the 1893 Columbian Exposition were a ruling-class tool to "win hegemony over an emerging national culture." Robert Rydell expanded that thesis to include ideas about race and progress in post-Civil War America. Recognizing the important role of these rituals in "forging transitions to modernity," historians have highlighted an overwhelmingly urban-centric "culture of consumption" in which "pastures were converted to city blocks [and] office towers blocked more sunlight."<sup>12</sup> What they overlooked was that fairs did not merely validate modernity, they were critical sites where entrants as well as visitors contested the scope and nature of it along an urban/rural axis.

Rituals such as horticultural exhibitions tantalized people with other courses that the modern future might take. Surrounded by cultured farmers and fragrant fruit, participants and

---

<sup>9</sup> Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893* (Chicago: Ivan R Dee, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Walden, *Becoming Modern In Toronto*, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Heaman, *Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 293.

<sup>12</sup> Although he acknowledges agriculture and its attendant features were displayed at larger events such as the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, Walden's evaluation of the fair is overwhelmingly urban in focus and concern. Walden, *Becoming Modern*, 333.

visitors alike were invited to question the need to cover pastures with cobblestones or blot the sun with concrete. More pointedly, fruit fairs defied the stereotypes of rural degeneracy circulating in city broadsheets and challenged the urbanites' sole claim to sophistication and progress in North American society.<sup>13</sup> Even in larger venues where farmers shared space with manufacturers and industry, contrasting claims to progress appeared. With ribbons and apples, fruit belt communities in both Canada and the United States styled the orchard as the source of modern advancement; exhibitions were a place to articulate, reinforce, and promulgate that relationship.

### *Displaying Modernity*

Understanding the relationship between modernity and display has spawned a diverse and rich literature in geography, philosophy, art history, and sociology.<sup>14</sup> One of the earliest and celebrated theorists to interrogate this relationship was Walter Benjamin in his imposing and quasi-mythical work *The Arcades Project*. Consuming his life from its inception in 1927 until his untimely death fleeing Nazi persecution in 1940, Benjamin situated nineteenth-century Paris and its new institutions, including the exhibition, the department store, and the museum, as the well-spring of modernity by creating “a sort of commodification on display” and urban spectatorship “in which capitalism now put a greater premium on display than use or exchange value.”<sup>15</sup> According to Vanessa Schwartz, “if *The Arcades Project* suggests anything, it is that modernity cannot be conceived outside the context of the city, which

---

<sup>13</sup> Walden, *Becoming Modern*, 204-214.

<sup>14</sup> Manon Niquette and William J. Buxton, “Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions,” *Canadian Journal of Communications* 22 (1) 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Vanessa R. Schwartz, “Walter Benjamin for Historians,” *American Historical Review*, 106, 5 (December 2001), 1731.

provided an arena for the circulation of bodies and goods, the exchange of glances, and the exercise of consumerism...modern life seemed urban by definition.”<sup>16</sup>

Building on Benjamin’s concern with the production of subjectivity, hegemony, and ideology, contemporary theorists such as Tony Bennett characterize fairs as “exhibitionary complexes” that, like museums and public parks, “broadcasted” messages of power where crowds of people monitored one another through glances and stares, blurring the line between subject and object within an ideal and ordered whole in which the working and middle classes could commingle and the former could “adopt new forms of behavior by imitation.”<sup>17</sup> Such displays forged an acceptance of modernity in spite of costs and shortcomings for a host of peoples and agendas.

Despite the undeniable innovation and utility of such insights, their urban-centric orientation leads to flawed assumptions and significant omissions. Most fundamentally, the rise of the great metropolises was not a self-contained process, but depended on flows of peoples, resources, and ideas marshaled from disparate territories. On a local level, the rise of cities was intimately connected to transformations in the countryside, with environmental and cultural consequences for both.<sup>18</sup> What growers and like-minded rural advocates offered with their polished fruit was an alternative vision of modernity that prioritized rural-centric ideals of science and a co-operative nature that were inconceivable and undesirable outside the context of the orchard.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1733. The widely accepted rationale of this sentiment is reinforced by a vibrant literature devoted to the exploration of the city as a “template for modernity.” See David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Thomas Patin, *Discipline and Varnish: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, and Counter-Memory in the Museum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 12.

<sup>18</sup> See William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

Beyond its striking impression, the display of horticultural practices represented a rural future where science and the artistry of nature's influence combined to produce an alternative to the urban/industrial understanding of progress. Captured in pronouncements celebrating the "Inland Empire," this understanding ultimately rested upon a "green" imperialism that unleashed a new ecological and social regime in the Pacific Northwest. Just as scientific expeditions and cartographic surveys acted as a "technology of power" by creating "a set of rules for the abstraction of the landscape...into hierarchies" and thus appropriation, so too did displays of fragrant apples.<sup>19</sup> To paraphrase J.B. Harley, through its uniformity, repeatability and visibility, the "logic of display" legitimized specific forms of power and authority central to the creation of a horticultural society.<sup>20</sup> In doing so, the display occluded the contingencies of lived experience and nature that nevertheless found expression in the idealization of "nature's empire."<sup>21</sup>

Apples, both as a symbol and resource in the colonization of the Pacific Northwest, dramatized the ecological transformation of the region. Their presentation at fairs added a concise environmental history detailing the systematic achievements springing from the use of agricultural science. For example, by declaring their fruits as grown in irrigated or non-irrigated districts, entrants highlighted a debate about which fruit was the superior expression of rural modernity. Whereas pioneer orchards often produced diseased fruit and represented poor methods of cultivation, exhibitions showcased perfect fruit "owing to the effects of

---

<sup>19</sup> J.B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," in James S. Duncan and Trevor J. Barnes (eds.), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text & Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 244-45; for related examples, see Daniel Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 246.

<sup>21</sup> For an examination of exhibitions and western promotion, see Douglas M. Edwards, "Show Windows of the West: Exhibitionary Complexes and the Promotion of Montana's Agricultural Possibilities," *Agricultural History* 73, 3 (Summer 1999): 322-348. For an examination of contemporary fairs and the (re)imagining of agriculture for consumer audiences, consult Lewis Holloway, "Showing and telling farming: agricultural shows and re-imagining British agriculture," *Journal of Rural Studies* 20 (3) 2004: 319-330.

spraying” combined with “the enforcement of the law governing infected orchards”<sup>22</sup> and so demonstrated the tremendous bounty stemming from the progressive transformation of nature and the people that claimed it for their home.

### *Community and Environment on Display*

Like the annual harvests that marked the cycle of orchard life, community newspapers performed their own autumnal rites with reports on fairs that reinforced the centrality of nature’s partnership to rural identity. In British Columbia, the Kelowna *Courier* reminded residents that in keeping with last year’s successful show, “fine specimens of apples” were needed for the “principal event in the community calendar,” the local Agricultural and Horticultural Association Fair.<sup>23</sup> Across the line, Wenatchee growers had little time to enjoy news of their impressive showing at Spokane and Yakima resulting in first and second place finishes since “the leading fruit growers of the valley are this week preparing an exhibit for the St. Louis Exposition.”<sup>24</sup> Not content with a successful harvest, orchardists at Hood River collected and polished fruit for display at city hall, prompting the *Glacier* to pronounce that “everything points to the biggest and best fair that Hood River has ever held.”<sup>25</sup>

Regardless of nationality, both Canadian and American fruit growers responded enthusiastically to the call for fairs in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Whether local, regional, or international in scale, fairs affirmed the benefits of agricultural life. Community-level exhibitions extended the harvest through the close proximity of the work of the orchard and of display by the same growers who weeks earlier were picking or packing

---

<sup>22</sup> “Polk County’s First Annual Apple Show,” *Hood River Glacier* 15 November 1906.

<sup>23</sup> “Horticultural Fair,” *Kelowna Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 27 August 1915.

<sup>24</sup> “At the Fairs: O.G. France Takes First Premium at Spokane,” *Wenatchee Republic*, 13 October 1904.

<sup>25</sup> “All Ready for the Big Fruit Show,” *Hood River Glacier*, 15 October 1908.

fruit. This connection played a tangible role in orienting community identity around horticulture and its promise of prosperity. Recognizing that a range of businesses from merchants to bankers thrived in fruit farming settlements, Okanagan fair organizers felt that these businessmen should show their interest “by donating special prizes for the show.”<sup>26</sup> Fruit growers in The Dalles demonstrated horticulture’s blending of vocation and rural identity by filling city hall with apples.<sup>27</sup>

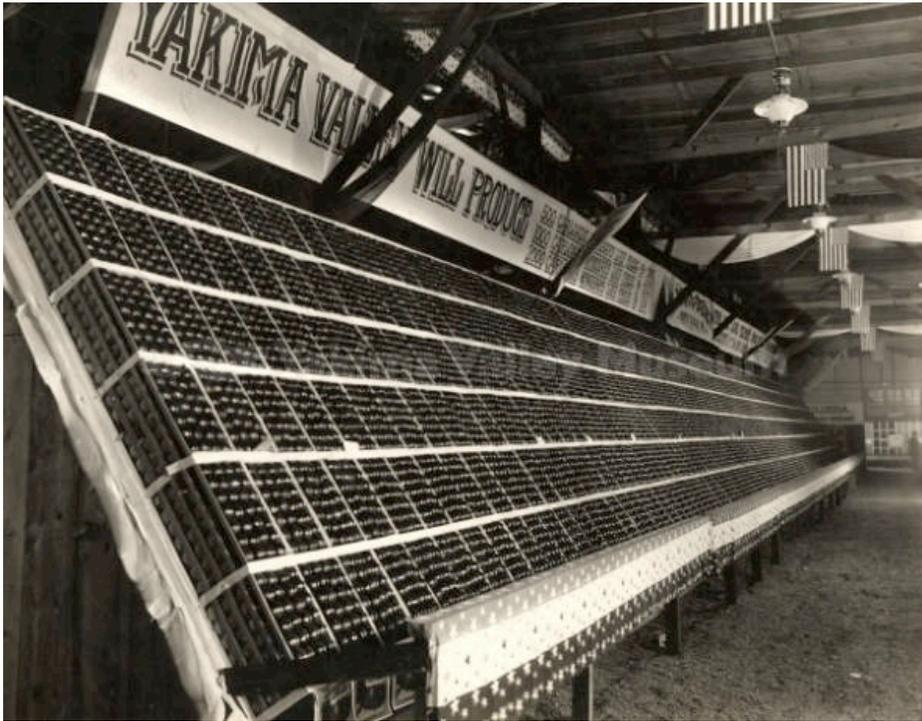


Figure 11: Regional competition at Spokane and Yakima's Bounty. Dennison, “Apple Display,” 1908, Yakima Valley Museum Collection [2005-800-008].

Larger exhibitions such as Spokane’s civic-led and organized National Apple Show reinforced the potential of horticulture to sustain a new rural society.<sup>28</sup> Unlike strictly local celebrations, these regional fairs welcomed participants from across state lines and

<sup>26</sup> “Agricultural and Horticultural Association of Kelowna,” *Better Fruit* 10, 3 (September 1915).

<sup>27</sup> “Polk County’s First Annual Apple Show,” *Hood River Glacier*, 15 November 1906.

<sup>28</sup> With self-described National Apple Shows, civic governments were the catalyst for their organization, although participation by other levels of government lent them a larger gravitas, and also offered an opportunity for civic boosterism.

international boundaries. By attracting distinguished attendees, including state governors and premiers, these celebrations indicated the importance of promoting horticulture. Without minimizing the tensions of competition, fruit growers shared in the collective celebration of their enterprise and of rural modernism. In addition, growers from such far-flung districts as Vernon, Wenatchee, and Ashland became aware of each other. To that end, Maxwell Smith reminded his American brethren at the Portland Apple Show not to “forget that there is another pebble on the beach of this great Pacific Ocean away up yonder in British Columbia” eager to “extend hands across the border.”<sup>29</sup> Whether from different states or different countries, participants paid homage to a common rural future that at times bridged national differences in favour of a trans-border identity based on a common environmental transformation and experience. Thus, when growers returned to their homes and pored over prize lists at association meetings or in newspapers, their sense of place expanded, if only momentarily, among the printed names and places.

At the national or international level, government had a dramatically bigger role in organizing and executing these much larger exhibitions. Occupying anywhere from 500 to 700 acres, the exhibition site was the figurative representation of a model city replete with streets and avenues lined with impressive pavilions organized by nationality or resource. Bustling with curious on-lookers intent on glimpsing the future or escaping into the amusements and crowds, the exposition was the weakest site of intimacy between local growers and exhibit organizers. Nevertheless, by sharing space in an allegorical tour of modernity beside manufacturers and industry, horticulture proclaimed its enlightened orientation and so offered another path in the conflicted search for human advancement. Taken together, the display of abundance from individual nations presented an opportunity to

---

<sup>29</sup> Address by Maxwell Smith, *Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1910, 67.

consider agriculture's benefits in a collective panorama highlighting the vitality of modern rural life.

Despite the distance between growers and the exhibits at international events, government delegations expressed a similar faith in the relationship between rural modernity and the nation-state. Admittedly, an ample food supply was hardly a unique source of pride for competing countries, but rural life achieved new importance as a marker of national development. While public fascination with urban life and the industrial inventions at large-scale fairs has been well documented, agricultural displays have received less attention. In organizing the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, for example, the U.S. government designed the eighteen-acre Palace of Agriculture as the single largest exhibit structure and housed horticulture in its own seven acre pavilion. Coinciding with the massive expansion of fruit raising in the Pacific Northwest, organizers pronounced that the "actual net space for [horticultural] exhibits" was "much more than has ever before been provided for horticultural exhibits at any exhibition."<sup>30</sup> Four acres were set aside specifically for apple displays and sixty-nine acres of grounds surrounding the Palace were turned over to the Chief Horticulturalist for additional exhibits. For the same fair, the Canadian government ordered 60,000 pamphlets devoted to agriculture and 30,000 on the fruit industry, eclipsing all other subjects such as "Economic Minerals" and "Fish and Game."<sup>31</sup>

Ostensibly, the depiction of industry and agriculture underlined that both were vital to societal growth though one sphere might dominate in shaping larger priorities or capturing the attention of the public. In organizing international exhibits, North American governments

---

<sup>30</sup> NARA-DC, RG 43 Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Records Relating to Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Correspondence Concerning Final Reports, Box 1, E-1369 Package 10, "Construction Report," 13-15

<sup>31</sup> LAC RG 72 Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 121, Folder 1, Louisiana Purchase (St. Louis, MI), 1904.

appeared more sympathetic to rural aspirations than to industry as shown by their promotion of agriculture and horticulture. Although this allegiance was partly guided by goals of agrarian expansion and the need for immigrants, it also hints at a vision of progress rooted in nature. For example, Canada's latter-day complaint of being unfairly typecast as a natural wonderland stems from deliberate government policy. Before the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, a Canadian organizer decided to do "as in the past" and "put up an exhibit of the natural products of the country, and not go in with manufactured goods at all" since that had been "the best way to make an impression on the people as to Canada's resources" and had strongly impressed exhibition judging committees.<sup>32</sup> Canada's entry of grain and grasses from all provinces won the grand prize in St. Louis and the display of "Canadian Fruits" supplied by Ontario and British Columbia also received top honours.<sup>33</sup> Eager to dispel images of Canada as a howling wilderness, official favour with generous displays of fruit and produce suggests that government organizers, like horticulturists in the Pacific Northwest, inscribed ideals of progress in displays of nature's bounty.

*The Progress of Order: Exhibitions as an Educational Tool*

In the Rogue River Valley as elsewhere, growers such as Ned Vilas waited. As a new orchardist, Vilas had finished the hard work of preparing his land to plant young fruit trees but the six to eight year wait until the trees began to produce challenged the fortitude of even the most confident farmer.<sup>34</sup> Nagging doubts about the decision to invest in orchard lands

---

<sup>32</sup> LAC RG 72, Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 130, Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915, File 1, Hutchinson to Boyd, 6 January 1914.

<sup>33</sup> LAC RG 72, Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 121, Folder 2, Louisiana Purchase (St. Louis, MI), 1904, Memo Re: Awards at St. Louis World's Fair, 30 March 1905.

<sup>34</sup> Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue River Memories* (Medford: Gandee Printing, 1980), 62.

were understandable. Consequently, news of successful displays from southern Oregon, such as winning first prize at the 1909 National Apple Show, was welcome reassurance.

Combining satisfaction and a note of relief, the *Clarion* acknowledged, “Rogue River Valley growers have long contended that Rogue River Valley produces the finest apples in the Northwest, and confirmation of their claims by competent judges caused much elation here.”<sup>35</sup> Whether claimed by an individual grower or a Board of Trade entry, exhibition accolades reassured orchardists that their faith and investment in the bountiful landscape was not misplaced.

If exhibitions bolstered the confidence of fledgling orchardists, they worked in a similar way with prospective growers. Before the critical mass in orchard growth needed to sustain regional fairs, nascent western communities worked with other agencies such as immigration boards to sponsor general fruit exhibits at distant eastern fairs.<sup>36</sup> Outside the fair grounds, an enterprising Kelowna orchardist had samples of Okanagan apples displayed in the windows of a newspaper office in Brockville, Ontario. He expected the resulting comments and inquiries “to mean home seekers in the Okanagan and the Kelowna district during the following summer.”<sup>37</sup> Eager to promote the benefits of fruit farms with the president of Great Northern Railway, James J. Hill, Wenatchee growers descended on his special train car during a brief stopover to present him with eight boxes of first-rate apples.<sup>38</sup> Taking the display one step further, the Medford Commercial Club set up a fruit exhibit at the town’s rail station so passengers traveling through to points north or south might be lured

---

<sup>35</sup> “Oregon Apple World King,” Medford *Clarion*, 19 November 1909.

<sup>36</sup> “Exhibition Fruit for Minnesota State Fair,” *Fruitage, for fruit men only; the exclusive fruit paper of America*, vol. 1 (3), 1896.

<sup>37</sup> “Local News,” Kelowna *Courier*, 10 February 1910.

<sup>38</sup> “Noted Railway Man Visit City; Fine Apples for Visitors,” Wenatchee *Republic*, 5 November 1913.

during a brief stopover to purchase a few choice apples, or on a return trip, their own orchard.<sup>39</sup>

Even without grand exhibition halls, fruit displays resonated with the cultural imagination of viewers who transformed them into something more than a simple collection of produce. As retail marketing changed and the supply of apples grew, organized displays increasingly became a prerequisite of “good impressions” to facilitate the sale of fresh fruit.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it became important to present nature’s bounty not through the disorganized apple piles found at farmers’ markets of yesteryear but in systematic arrangements on plates or in clean boxes. As well as appealing to customers, the arrangements were an allegory of rural modernity.

With the advent of competitive exhibitions, communities used the impressive displays to enhance their reputations. “The most effective means of making known the allurements and progressiveness of [your] neighborhood,” intoned the editor of *Better Fruit*, “is through local fairs and exhibits at county, state and interstate fairs.”<sup>41</sup> Claiming rival titles to “Apple King of the World,” Okanagan, Wenatchee, and Rogue River Valley organizations ensured that their respective successes at the National Apple Show and other venues found extended life in promotional booklets and newsprint stories.<sup>42</sup> Trophies and medals appealed to more than simple vanity; they enhanced community reputations and validated the changing ecology of the Pacific Northwest. Ultimately, this image of a trans-border environment

---

<sup>39</sup> SOHS, Interview Tape 125.

<sup>40</sup> David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Daniel Robinson, "Marketing Gum, Making Meanings: Wrigley in North America, 1890-1930", *Enterprise and Society* 5 (2004): 4-38.

<sup>41</sup> “Editorial,” *Better Fruit*, 19 (3), 1924.

<sup>42</sup> *Kelowna, British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan* (Kelowna Board of Trade, 1912); *Wenatchee: Gateway to the Land of Perfect Apples* (Wenatchee Commercial Club, 1910), 8; *Medford, Rogue River Valley* (Medford Commercial Club, 1910), 18.

united in a common project of co-operative nature brought farmers together across the border and was repeatedly held forth as the key to the success of rural modernism.

Exhibitions were merely another example of governments and rural people striving to establish modern agriculture and the highest levels of political authority recognized this common-sense value. In his third message to the 1913 session of the Washington State legislature, Governor M.E. Hay pointed to upcoming fairs in San Diego and San Francisco as “an opportunity we cannot afford to miss” in displaying the resources of the state.<sup>43</sup> Through its Department of Agriculture, British Columbia’s government remitted annual grants to horticultural associations to support initiatives such as exhibitions. Similarly, Oregon created a State Fair Commission specifically to oversee exhibition work state-wide level for a number of fields, including horticulture.

Responding to local grower pressures, government officials supplemented general support for exhibitions with a host of specific actions. Throughout the Northwest, September signaled the arrival of fair-related tasks for horticultural officials. The Oregon State Board of Horticulture re-circulated detailed instructions for preserving ripened exhibition fruit and deployed local agents to offer hands-on expertise.<sup>44</sup> North of the Columbia, the whole force of Washington State’s horticultural department was “kept very busy with exhibits” ranging from local fairs to state-wide competitions.<sup>45</sup> In British Columbia, participation in over fifty fairs challenged the ability of horticultural assistants to maintain their regular duties.<sup>46</sup> Outside of community celebrations, horticultural inspectors also acted as intermediaries between state authorities and local growers in gathering, organizing, and shipping fruit to

---

<sup>43</sup> WSA-E, State of Washington, Third Message of Governor M.E. Hay to the Legislature of 1913 (Olympia: EL Boardman Public Printer, 1913), 39.

<sup>44</sup> OHS, “How to Preserve Ripe Fruits for Exhibition Purposes,” *Rogue River Fruit Grower* 1, 7 (October 1909)

<sup>45</sup> State of Washington, Department of Agriculture, Fourth Biennial Report (1918-1920), 102.

<sup>46</sup> BCA, GR 1189 Horticultural Branch, 1920-1961, Box 1 OK District Horticultural Bulletin 1920; File 1.

national and international exhibitions where expenses and logistics required greater coordination.<sup>47</sup> Through such efforts, inspectors maintained close relations with farmers while local bodies like the Kelowna Farmers' Exchange supplied exhibition fruit.<sup>48</sup>

By encouraging and managing fairs, inspectors helped fulfill the educational aims of exhibitions by “bringing together excellent demonstrations of what the best care of fruits and vegetables will produce,” meshing with the conventional wisdom of the time about the educational benefits of observation and comparison.<sup>49</sup> Before dying at the hands of an anarchist at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901, President McKinley echoed the widely-held belief that fairs were “time-keepers of progress” and a “record of the world’s advancement” by stimulating energy, enterprise, and human genius.<sup>50</sup> Washington state’s Department of Agriculture reflected a similar perspective in describing the State Fair as being “of enormous value to the state and to its people as one of the marks in its agricultural development” whether as an educational venue, advertising opportunity, or meeting place for farmers.<sup>51</sup> British Columbia’s Premier John Oliver, himself a farmer, noted in his diary the “educational value” of exhibitions and used government funds to support them.<sup>52</sup> For American and Canadian fruit farmers, the orcharding landscape was the ultimate repository of these ideals. In their pageantry of progress, the educative properties of fairs were a widely repeated refrain.

---

<sup>47</sup> NARA-DC, Telegram, 29 September 1899. RG 54 Records of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Correspondence Relating to Fruit Exhibitions at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Box 2;

<sup>48</sup> BCA GR 402, Department of Agriculture, Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Year 1912; NAC, Hutchinson to O’Halloran 15 August 1910; RG 72 Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 128, Brussels Exhibition 1910.

<sup>49</sup> State of Washington, Department of Agriculture, Fifth Biennial Report, (1920-1922), 65.

<sup>50</sup> NARA-DC RG 43, Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Records Relating to Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, January 1901-August 1905; Box 2, Minutes of Meeting of the Lady Board of Managers, 28 April 1903.

<sup>51</sup> WSA-E, State of Washington, Department of Agriculture, Fourth Biennial Report, 1918-1920 (Olympia: Frank M. Lamborn Public Printer, 1920), 71.

<sup>52</sup> BCA, GR 441, Box v. 411, John Oliver Personal Diary and Notebook – 24 March 1919.

Within the rubric of scientific agriculture farmers did not surrender their role as knowledge-based experts to a professionalized clique, but embraced it as a co-operative effort. In their “learning culture” fairs were another educative opportunity alongside college extension courses, association meetings, mobile demonstration work, research bulletins, and horticulture libraries. “Where master grower competes against master grower,” reminded *The Fruit Grower*, “where the interest is focused upon the highest quality, the best packing, the most beautiful specimens obtainable, a model is placed to which we will all strive.”<sup>53</sup> Reinforcing the orchardists’ superiority and modern pedigree, *Better Fruit* remarked, “it is for us farmers to have some insight as to what the fairs mean. A mind held to a treadmill job in a town cannot be expected to grasp the broad scope of agriculture nor to understand the finer points of its science.”<sup>54</sup> In contrast, exhibitions portrayed the qualities of intelligence and management that orchardists believed differentiated horticulture from other pursuits. Ultimately, this naturalistic demand for modern farmers helped shape a litany of relations at the heart of rural modernism spanning race, class, and gender.

While celebrating horticulture, exhibitions reflected a global phenomenon of native displacement and validation of colonial control. The social vision embedded in fruit displays “naturalized” the marginalization of First Nations in favour of a new class of rural dwellers by reaffirming the logic of transforming “wilderness” into “blossoming civilization.” Thus, “finishing nature to its intended end” inseparably joined environmental change with imperialism. And yet, the contours of rural modernity were complicated by the intrusion of Native agency partly due to the conflicted approach to First Nations held by settlers and between governments and settlers. Just as prairie farmers complained that government aid to

---

<sup>53</sup> OHS, “The Apple Show,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1911).

<sup>54</sup> “Editorial Notes,” *Better Fruit* 24, 6 (December 1929).

Natives in agriculture created unfair competition, orchardists made similar charges.<sup>55</sup> These complaints cited economic considerations but also revealed settler ambivalence in terms of how agricultural Natives challenged the progressive link between nature and farmer identity. Fruit growers stressed the need for intelligence and industry in horticulture, a view shared by government agencies administering Indian affairs and philanthropic citizens who cited the educational benefits of display work as a reason to include Natives in exhibitions. While Aboriginal displays might have the effect of reinforcing orchardist superiority, strong displays could also blur the social boundaries of rural modernity.<sup>56</sup>

Government supervision of Indian affairs in North America is a history fraught with heavy-handed paternalism and overriding self-interest.<sup>57</sup> In defining Indian interests, non-Native officials on both sides of the border repeatedly turned to the colonial farmer as a role model for their charges. Inspired by the agriculturalists' commitment to rural development, American officials were more inclined than their Canadian colleagues to see fairs as a component of the campaign of native advancement. In one circular, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reminded his Washington and Oregon counterparts that by eliminating Wild West features and horse racing, native-based fairs would "encourage the Indian to take the progressive view." Consequently, exhibits that "emphasize in an impressive manner the difference between inferior and high grade agricultural products" would arouse "enthusiasm and rivalry." On the road to Indian self-support and independence, the annual Indian fair should be "a mile-stone fixing the stages of the Indian's progress" toward the ultimate goal of

---

<sup>55</sup> Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1990).

<sup>56</sup> For more background, see Robert A. Trennert, Jr., "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904," *American Indian Quarterly* 11 (3): 203-220.

<sup>57</sup> J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 200-201.

Indian participation at county and State fairs “where the Indian farmers on equal terms will compete with the white man.”<sup>58</sup>

Fruit farmers on both sides of the Boundary already had an extensive history of competition with First Nations over orchard care, water rights and the reduction of reservation lands, but displayed little inclination to continue this trend in their local or regional horticultural exhibitions. Archival records, newspaper coverage, photo collections, and prize lists related to these fairs are generally silent about Native involvement, suggesting a desire to minimize Native participation. However, Yakima and Rogue River Indians did participate in several State Fairs between 1914 and 1921, highlighting a potential point of discord between government and settler aspirations.

Although First Nations peoples generally competed in special categories, white women supervising the “Women’s Building” at the State Fair in Yakima sought “several exhibits of fruits and vegetables put up by women of Indian blood so that they may be entered in straight competition” with non-Native women as a means to enhance the “civilizing” process.<sup>59</sup> While the participation of white women was often confined to “feminized” exhibition spaces such as displays of the products of their kitchens, their presence beside native women and men complicated a racialized and gendered vision of progressive farming.

At the national and international level, both American and Canadian authorities were ambivalent about including the First Nations. More often than not, their participation was

---

<sup>58</sup> NARA-S, RG 75, Box 161, Department of the Interior, Office Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Circular Letter No. 896, 2 September 1914.

<sup>59</sup> NARA-S, RG 75 Box 161, Correspondence Regarding State Fairs, Celebrations, and Exhibitions, 27 August 1920, Superintendent to Miss E.M. Sprague, Toppenish, WA. For more on the subject of women and exhibition space, consult Mary Pepchinski, “The Woman’s Building and the World Exhibitions: Exhibition Architecture and Conflicting Feminine Ideals at European and American World 1873-1915,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Theorie und Wissenschaft der Architektur* 5, 1 (July 2000).

limited to the unofficial entertainments around larger exhibitions, particularly as the “dying race” portrayed in events such as Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.<sup>60</sup> While these exhibits stimulated the colonial fantasies of observers, they distressed government officials and undermined their modernist aspirations. For example, Canada’s delegation to the 1905 Universal Exhibition in Belgium revelled in the dominion’s reputation for producing “the most practical and progressive Agricultural Bulletins,” for serving as a model for Belgian orchardists in advanced spraying methods, and for the warm reception given their fruit and grain displays by visitors whose main image of Canada had been of a cold climate rich with fish and fur resources. Alarmingly, a private show featuring Canadian wigwams, canoes, snowshoes, and oil paintings of winter scenes threatened their good work. “A person visiting this abode of Canadian civilization,” complained the Canadian official, “has the chills and involuntarily grasps at his hair, dreaming of some Indian chief carrying off his scalp.”<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, the validation of the imperial process through the display of nature’s productivity held significance far beyond an innocent preference to show pretty fruit. As inculcators of orchard values, fruit displays ultimately touched on a host of related aspects of perfecting country life. The experience of First Nations indicates that apples, whether in orchards or at exhibitions, were ultimately a medium to reflect social and environmental priorities that structured notions of identity and belonging.<sup>62</sup> Despite potential disagreement about native displays, these notions highlighted the modern orientation of rural life and ultimately the perfection of the orchard community. The markers of this perfection, like its earlier promotion, depended on excluding a range of peoples deemed incapable of working in

---

<sup>60</sup> Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> LAC, RG 72, Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 122, Universal and International Exhibition at Liege, Belgium, 1905, Ernest Guardot to George O’Halloran, 9 August 1905.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of First Nations and tensions surrounding their own efforts at orcharding, see Chapter Five.

cooperation with the natural world.

At the simplest level, the faces that organized the fruit or who scrutinized nature's offerings validated this association were white and male. Of course, "whiteness" had specific connotations as demonstrated by earlier promotional appeals to well-to-do British Canadians to the north and "native" Americans to the south. In his evaluation of nineteenth century urban life, Walden suggests, "what it meant to be middle class was something to be defined and promulgated, in the home and on the street as well as at work."<sup>63</sup> For orchardists and their prosperous vision of rural life, this assessment was equally valid as they sought to reinforce and reproduce their relationship to the environment through display work. This relationship was heralded as the domain of a new class of rural citizen although instances of "non-preferred" fruit farmers certainly challenged the aspirations of those who sought to encourage the ideal farmer.

A central tenet and touchstone in the formulation of the successful orchardist was intelligence. In the eyes of American orchardists, appearing at fruit exhibitions was a marker of acumen with opportunities for taking in lectures, studying displays, and talking with other growers. Attendance, in short, was the hallmark of progressive growers since "it creates new ideals. It makes better orchards, better methods and better men."<sup>64</sup> With overt aristocratic flair, Lord Grey's homage at the opening of the New Westminster Exhibition to the necessary "qualities of mind" for successful fruit growing made an equally explicit connection between intelligence and fruit growing.<sup>65</sup> The belief that true horticultural success required superior mental faculties than other forms of farming also ensured that the

---

<sup>63</sup> Walden, *Becoming Modern*, 24.

<sup>64</sup> Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, 1911, p. 29-30.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Central Okanagan Land (1911), 3.

agricultural experiences of other rural peoples such as Eastern Europeans or African Americans would be left outside the exhibition halls.<sup>66</sup>

What set the orchardist apart from the common farmer or the ignorant urbanite was his dual affection for cultured nature and rationality. Fragrant fruit displays demonstrated his talent in matching colours and brought to light the outline of an alternative masculinity as had earlier promotional appeals and settler testimonials which cast the horticulturist as a man who placed cultural sophistication on par with scientific expertise framed by “Dame Nature.” Unlike the violent masculinity described by historians such as Annette Kolodny and Glenda Riley, apple exhibits dramatized the existence of a gentler masculine archetype of elevated class that blurred rigid distinctions between exploitation and protection.<sup>67</sup>

The exhibition became an allegorical countryside where genteel men as well as the feminized environment bore the hallmarks of progress. The annual Portland Apple Show was typical of similar fairs on both sides of the boundary. Entering the Majestic Theater building at Fifth and Washington, a reporter from *The Oregonian* streamed through two floors “decorated with the green of the apple leaf and the dark red of the Spitzenberg.” Inside he found new sympathy for Eve in light of the tempting but forbidden apples on display, “‘don’t handle’ signs being common.” Marvelling at the care with which orchardists unpacked their cotton-swathed specimens “as though they were diamonds fondled by a jeweller,” he remarked on how they fussed and polished the apples until they had “a mirror-like finish.”

Blue-badged judges of the Oregon State Horticultural Society drifted about, covertly

---

<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, such exclusions did not preclude examples of “undesirable settlers” turning to fruit farming. In the early 1900s, Doukhobors began to settle in Kootenay Valley, and turned to fruit farming as part of their communal operations. However, they did not produce a significant volume of fruit before the First World War, and Doukhobors traded nearly exclusively with their brethren in Saskatchewan. Despite Doukhobor success in growing fruit, their habits and customs distanced them from the ideal of the gentleman farmer.

<sup>67</sup> Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Glenda Riley, *Women and Nature: Saving the “Wild” West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1999), 191 & xiii.

comparing the exhibited specimens to one discreetly carried in their pockets. “Only a baby show,” concluded the reporter, “is on a par with this apple show.”<sup>68</sup>



Figure 12: The beauty of order: Kelowna's winning entry at the 1909 Spokane National Apple Show. Courtesy Kelowna Public Archives, Photo No. 405.

Parallels to baby shows and their overwhelmingly feminine character highlighted their similar obsession with preparation and display but it was men who created the allegorical depiction of feminized nature endowed with the fruits of their union. Celebrated also in poetry and song, the sexualized landscape expressed the ideals of co-operation as a natural outgrowth of feminine and masculine virtues. Indeed, respect for such qualities spanned the border. Maxwell Smith told his Portland audience that Canadian fair organizers

<sup>68</sup> “King of Fruit is Given Welcome,” *The Oregonian*, 30 November 1910.

were equally committed to the proper depiction of man and nature and sought to display fruit “in the most artistic manner possible,” complete with proper staging, decorating, and lighting. Only with these elements, continued Smith, could exhibits be “perfect” and “educational.”<sup>69</sup> The utility of art, however, was not practiced in isolation but reinforced by related tasks such as grading and organizing massive volumes of fruit representing the rationality of scientific agriculture.

*Exhibiting the New Rural Citizen*

The blending of art and science, like co-operative goals in general, was rooted in something more than the idiosyncratic culture of the exhibition with its stuffy judges and preening orchardists. The ultimate purpose was to showcase the new rural citizen whose efforts producing bountiful harvests laid the foundation for an enduring prosperity. Incorporating the rhetoric of producerism, fruit growers and their friends saw displays as emblems of citizenship in the larger mission of nation-building and as a means to encourage their children to continue their parents’ work. Exhibitions offered girls and boys “no better opportunity...for comparison and study” in the pursuit of horticulture. To make the connection more explicit, education departments in Victoria, Olympia, and Corvallis, in cooperation with school boards, encouraged agricultural students to contribute exhibits to Provincial or State fairs.<sup>70</sup> Ever mindful of the urban pull, growers hoped that through cultivating a sense of camaraderie with other “rural-minded” pupils, children would embrace

---

<sup>69</sup> Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, 1910, p. 64.

<sup>70</sup> WSA-O Commission for Vocational Education, Circular Letter, Washington, State Board of Education, 7 October 1924; OSA Box 1, Education Department, Agricultural Club Reports, 1929-1943; BCA GR 173, B6395, Britton to Gibson, 1 September 1922.

rural life as a source of progressive thought and action in contrast to city life that was “base and sordid, and its opportunities mean and meager.”<sup>71</sup>

The educational linkages between progress, gender, and nation-building also reinforced women’s roles. In her study of settler society along the borderlands of Montana and Alberta, Sheila McManus argues that ways of thinking about space and place are ultimately invested with specific social constructions of gender relations.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the space of the exhibition provides insights into the role of gender in structuring the presentation of rural life. At the international level, both Canadian and American governments were amenable to women participating in displays illustrating their specific labour, ranging from painting to gardening. However, in the organization of fairs, countless applicants experienced Miss Daisy Vaughan’s fate. Seeking employment with Canada’s delegation at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, she was told bluntly “we have not had any ladies in any of our Exhibition staffs; so that I fear there is no chance for you of that kind.”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the Portland Travelers’ Aid Association warned unescorted “girls and young women” about the dangers of seeking employment at the exposition even though reduced rail fares, exposition interest and assured employment formed “an irresistible attraction to the working girl...who longs for this sort of vacation.” The Association cautioned that the labour supply already exceeded demand. Cast adrift at the exhibition grounds or in the larger city, numerous perils threatened youthful womanhood. The “simply appalling” situation at St.

---

<sup>71</sup> WSA-Ellensburg, “Educational Value of State and County Fairs,” *Wenatchee Republic*, 12 October 1904.

<sup>72</sup> Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

<sup>73</sup> Ultimately, the Canadian government did not send an official exhibit to the Exposition, much to the surprise and consternation of American organizers. RG 72, Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 122, Lewis and Clark Centennial American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair (Portland, OR), 1905, Sydney Fisher to Miss Daisy D Vaughan, 3 January 1905.

Louis the previous year prompted Portland organizers to seek the co-operation of Western newspapers so “young women...will take this warning in time.”<sup>74</sup>

Yet, the exhibitions recognized women’s sexuality. Reflecting the metaphor of personified nature as a blossoming maiden and partner for intelligent farmers, some fairs had beauty contests for young women. From its inception in 1908, the National Apple Show in Spokane elected an “Apple Blossom Princess” who embodied the burgeoning beauty of the orchard itself.<sup>75</sup> A premium was put on maidens. Well into the 1960s, female members of royalty in the Okanagan were to be between 17 and 21 years of age, “not be married, divorced, or have had a marriage annulled.”<sup>76</sup> From a promotional standpoint, of course, such contests spurred attendance.

Most tellingly, men dominated the countless artistic opportunities provided by horticultural displays. When women’s participation was visible, it typically stylized their contributions through domestic duties such as the perennial baking contests that were a feature of fairs, as well as baby contests and flower shows.<sup>77</sup> During the First World War, organizers of Spokane’s Apple Show took motherhood and apple pie one step further. Honouring Herbert Hoover’s call to conserve food, the Show offered a \$50 gold piece to the woman with “the best, well-balanced meal composed of from five to ten dishes, for one person, all made wholly or in part from apples.”<sup>78</sup> Despite the active importance of women’s labour in harvesting and packing fruit within the orchard economy, particularly as a display of Great War patriotism, the horticultural exhibitions gave it scant recognition.

---

<sup>74</sup> “Warning to the Girls”, *Wenatchee Republic*, 11 May 1905.

<sup>75</sup> Great Northern Railway, *Second National Apple Show, Spokane Washington, November 15-20, 1909* (Spokane: Great Northern Railway, 1909).

<sup>76</sup> *The British Columbia Orchardist* 5, 6 (October 1964).

<sup>77</sup> “Great Rivalry for Big Prize,” *Mosier Bulletin*, 1 December 1910; BCA, MSS 1093, Kelowna Women’s Institute, 7 August 1915.

<sup>78</sup> Editorial, *Better Fruit*, 12, 5 (November 1917).

Not only was women's labour practically invisible but, as in the promotional drive that ushered in fruit farming, the crucial role of seasonal labour was not celebrated. When horticultural associations met at the fairs, orchardists heard lectures about labour or discussed it among themselves but labour was a problem to be solved, not a fundamental constituency deserving of celebration alongside farmers and nature in the creation of a modern countryside.

*Consuming Rural Modernity; or, How to be a Spectator and Consumer*

If the volume of polished fruit can be used to gauge the growers' passion for their way of life, there is little doubt about the importance of displays for horticultural identity. And throughout the first twenty years of fruit exhibitions in the Pacific Northwest, horticulturalists sought the allegiance of fair visitors just as aggressively as they courted their own collective validation. To this end, governments, horticultural associations, and newspapers eagerly proclaimed the annual growth of crowds as a testament to their success. But, as with all didactic experiences, the viewing public did not receive the meanings conveyed by fruit passively. Similarly, fair organizers may have approached horticultural displays with different priorities and objectives than the growers and their supporters. In the larger realm of daily life, the economic storms that buffeted fruit farmers also began to wear at the lustre of their show fruit.

Reflecting on the resounding success of Vancouver's first Canadian Apple Show, Maxwell Smith basked in the applause of American growers as he boasted of it being "the greatest in the world's history, not only because it was the largest collection of strictly exhibition apples, but because of...the total absence of side-shows, fakirs, and the usual

circus features of the ordinary fall fair.”<sup>79</sup> Horticulturists opposed sideshows as distractions from the educational properties of displays. Like morning library visits, afternoon fox hunts, and evening opera performances that marked the sophistication of tending fruit, the absence of fakirs gave necessary “dignity and class” to fruit shows.<sup>80</sup>

The challenge of developing “dignified” fairs remained a concern for like-minded horticulturists. Six years after Vancouver’s triumph, A.H. Harris complained to fellow orchardists that the advertising for Spokane’s National Apple Show was a “striking case of bad publicity” by emphasizing “matters foreign to the orchard, the market, and the grower.” Reviewing a recent advertisement that promised night spectacles, carnival parades and “uproarious fun and frolic on down town streets,” Harris railed, “not a word appears about the dignity of the apple game.” Reports in local papers proved equally inadequate with “blessed few words” about the event as a “show of apples” and as “a comprehensive exposition of the idea of horticulture.” Distraught but defiant, Harris protested “against such unfair exploitation of the apple and legitimate horticulture” and “against the methods which would make a joke of a display of the products of farm or orchard...[or] the treatment of men and women who live on the land.” In spite of the promoters’ reply that the attendees were “hungry-for-amusement” country folk, Harris and other critics blamed the “plea of the sideshow for the dimes and dollars which have come to producers at the end of a hard year’s work.”<sup>81</sup> The notion that displays of rural progress might not captivate the imagination of the very people with the most to gain from a modern countryside struck idealistic critics as unthinkable. Ignoring the class divisions within rural society, critics subtly invoked the

---

<sup>79</sup> “Address by Maxwell Smith,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1910, 64.

<sup>80</sup> “Canadian National Apple Show, Vancouver,” *Better Fruit*, 5, 7 (January 1911), 28.

<sup>81</sup> “Publicity – Good and Bad,” *Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society* (1916), 106.

urban/rural axis. If rural communities were home to sophisticated and hard-working people, cities were full of dangerous distractions for pleasure-seekers. Banishing fakirs and hucksters would allow fairs to be “purified” by rural sensibilities.

While Harris’ grievances underline the offended dignity of an orchardist, his bid to discipline attendees points to another audience – the consumer. From the outset, displays were advertisements since the rural project would collapse without the sale of nature’s bounty to apple-eating families. Enthralling visitors with tantalizing exhibition experiences justified the labour and expense of competing. Presentations of flawless, gleaming apples and enormous box exhibits could attract consumers and reinforce the desirability of the modern countryside.

But what exactly were attendees experiencing? Were shows merely an afternoon of amusements, awkward meetings between hormone-driven adolescents, strange sideshows, or a sea of pockets to pick? Historians of other fairs have demonstrated convincingly that a walk through the gates could entail any number of experiences beyond an elite exercise in establishing hegemony.<sup>82</sup> Despite the best efforts of orchardists, similar possibilities were found at the fruit fairs, and not always to their liking. Certainly, fruit promoters envisioned the exercise as something more than crass commercialism. Canadian promoters such as Maxwell Smith pointed to the benefits of exhibitions for the non-growing public when he praised the “publicity” generated by fairs like Vancouver’s National Apple Show.<sup>83</sup> The Secretary of the Oregon State Horticultural Society more directly praised modern apple shows as “one of the greatest teachers, not only to the grower, but to the consumer.” The lessons imparted to orchardists in distinguishing different apple varieties, their quality,

---

<sup>82</sup> David C. Jones, *Midways, Judges and Smooth-Tongued Fakirs: The Illustrated Story of County Fairs in the Prairie West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

<sup>83</sup> “Address by Maxwell Smith,” 64.

appearance and arrangement also applied to consumers who would learn to distinguish superior from inferior stock, and thus better appreciate the rational skills and efforts of the orchardist. In doing so, consumers would not resent giving growers a fair return on “perfect fruit.”<sup>84</sup>

Like horticulturalists, consumers were a local, regional, and international audience. From his vantage as Acting Pomologist for the American delegation at the Paris Exposition of 1900, M.A. Taylor argued that the continuously stocked displays “demonstrated the ability of the fruit growers of the United States to furnish European consumers an unbroken supply of choice fruits throughout the year.”<sup>85</sup> Lest American growers become overeager, their government advised exporters in a memo “not for publication” that French apple producers “exercise an important influence on matters of legislation.” To lessen the chances of a reaction, growers were asked to send small regular shipments rather than “occasional large lots that would be likely to frighten producers and holders as well as to unduly depress prices for the time being.”<sup>86</sup>

In protecting the reputation of rural modernity and its benefits for consumers, exhibitors learned of the need for a quick wit. Eager to impress visitors with an assurance of quality, Canada’s delegation at Belgium’s 1905 Universal and International Exhibition advertised the country’s new Inspection Act at its horticultural exhibit. This failed to impress a British importer who complained that poor apples were hidden in the middle of his last shipment from the Dominion. “Of course we looked aghast and exclaimed: ‘They must have

---

<sup>84</sup> Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, 1911, 29-30.

<sup>85</sup> NARA-DC RG 54 Records of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Correspondence Relating to Fruit Exhibits at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Box 2, M.A Taylor to Editor Orange Judd Farmer, 24 November 1900

<sup>86</sup> NARA-DC RG 54 Records of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Correspondence Relating to Fruit Exhibits at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Box 2, Memo “Suggestions to Apple Exporters Who Contemplate Making Shipments to France”

come through American ports, ” confided the delegate, confirming, “this is another case of getting hardened to the business, viz, to be ready with some kind of excuse” to maintain the perfection of Canadian fruit.<sup>87</sup>

To orchardists, the fruit they produced was testimony to their vital role in maintaining the infrastructure of human life and consumption was more than an act of commodity exchange. Yet, they had to sell their product. Recognizing that most shoppers were women who, like exhibition judges, scrutinized the latest arrival of apples for quality as well as price, the ideal market display, like its exhibition counterpart, conveyed the perfection of horticulture. Courting consumer loyalty brought growers face-to-face with the necessity of embracing “modern” techniques in presenting their fruit. Speaking before the 1911 Meeting of the Western Fruit Jobbers’ Association at Sacramento, California, E.H. Shepard of Oregon noted the unanticipated confluence of modernism and nature when “twenty-five years ago who would have said the humble codfish would ever be sold in a neat little package with a trade-mark? Who would have expected to buy sugar in a lithographed carton; milk or cream in a tin?” With the dawn of mass consumption, Shepard argued that apple growers must be equally progressive in melding their affinity for bountiful crops with modern packaging. In Shepard’s view, the innocuous paper bag used at grocery stores was “a very inconvenient package in which to carry home a dozen apples, particularly if you get into a crowded streetcar and hang on to the strap.” Because paper bags were prone to burst, women shied away from purchasing large quantities of fruit. Brightly-coloured corrugated boxes “with a

---

<sup>87</sup> LAC, RG 72 Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, Volume 122, Universal and International Exhibition in Liege, Belgium 1905, Hutchinson to Halloran, 25 July 1905

small neat wooden handle” were the answer to increase sales and ensure agrarian prosperity.<sup>88</sup>

The carefully-packed apple box was in many regards a prototypical lesson of rural modernity and the culmination of the ecological, social, and political relationships that linked farmer and consumer. Like the dazzling horticultural display, the new pack embodied the modern attributes of quality, organization, and presentation with a naturalistic flare. Such evidence of plenty and rationality, farmers believed, not only disrupted stereotypes of “backward” country folk but also educated consumers with the proper skills to make sound choices in selecting perfect fruit.

As at exhibitions, growers wrestled with their sense of place in presenting their fruit at market. Spurred by competition and the challenges of co-operative marketing, it could expand or contract, spanning farm, community, state, and region.<sup>89</sup> When local growers initially sold fruit further afield, they put little more on the boxes than the black-stencilled name of the shippers. As the sale of fruit at more distant markets became more common, growers increasingly appreciated the importance of “place” in successful marketing. As early as 1892, Oregon growers had chafed under the practice of jobbers and merchants selling their fruit under California labels in New York and other eastern markets, denying them the chance to foster consumer consciousness.<sup>90</sup> Yakima growers fared even worse across the Atlantic, with apples sold in London storefronts as “Yellow Northern Pippins from Wenatchee Valley, California,” highlighting the problem that “Londoners are enjoying the

---

<sup>88</sup> Premium List, 1911: Northern California Citrus Fair, in connection with the convention of the Western Fruit Growers’ Association (Sacramento: Western Fruit Jobbers’ Association, 1911).

<sup>89</sup> The earliest marketing examples were defined by direct farmer control with the sale of fruit exclusively to local customers. Although this initial period was later associated with the inefficiencies and disorganization of the pre-modern countryside, the direct interaction between farmer and customer survived as the ever-elusive ideal in subsequent efforts that reflected the modern orientation of orchardists.

<sup>90</sup> OHS, “Fruits of Oregon; fine display at Hood River,” 1 October 1892, Scrapbook 43, 118.

wonderful lusciousness of Pacific Northwest apples under false pretenses.”<sup>91</sup> If selling fruit at the highest price was the grower’s only concern, mislabeled apples would draw no protests and might secure greater returns thanks to California’s pre-eminence. Properly-labeled packages, however, were vital in sustaining public awareness about the transformative work of farmers in the Pacific Northwest.

Conveying the rational benefits of apple growing to distant consumers was not a simple task. Nevertheless, orchardists adopted modern business practices in marketing their fruit. One of the most telling changes was the development of eye-catching trademarks. Replacing the minimalist boxes, cooperative and private shippers created colourful labels to adorn their apple shipments in a bid to differentiate nature’s bounty in the eyes of consumers. Inspired by the experiences of Florida, Oregon and Washington growers turned to lithographic houses in San Francisco and Los Angeles to create brand labels late in the nineteenth century. By 1913, British Columbia orchardists, facing competition from south of the border, also turned to box art.<sup>92</sup> The result was a veritable litany of logos adorning boxes from individual orchard packinghouses to larger cooperative operations that pooled apples from scores of growers.

As an invitation for consumption, the logo brought the paradoxes of rural modernity into sharp relief. Collectively, orchardists agreed that horticulture was a progressive way of life and a vital engine of national development. But in marketing their crops, growers created a series of competing brands and consequently undermined this larger impulse. When a curious public came to exhibitions, the specificity of community entries was couched in the collective tribute to farmer and nature. But once apples moved from the exhibition hall to the

---

<sup>91</sup> OHS, “California Is Stealing Northwest Apple Glory,” 20 November 1910, Scrapbook 43, 108.

<sup>92</sup> *Selling the Harvest: Fruit Box Label Art* (Kelowna: Kelowna Centennial Museum, 1990).

grocery store, this wider focus became a bane for orchardists competing against one another for superior reputations and profitable returns. Ultimately, consumers were less concerned with specific brands than with the quality of produce they were conditioned to expect from the modern countryside.

Categorizing the plethora of competing brand images is an imposing task that leaves more questions than answers. The examples of logos, however, generally can be divided between human-centric and nature-based themes. Labels often reflected the economic, cultural, and ecological context of the North American West in both American and Canadian artwork. The earliest cases of orchardist artwork were clearly inspired by exhibition experience and a pronounced sense of place. During the 1907 selling season, images of plate show apples and fruit-bearing tree limbs against a backdrop of productive orchards often adorned Oregon labels.<sup>93</sup> These images reflect grower confidence that the appeal of nature's bounty and the fertile orchard lands would connect just as strongly with consumers as with them. In essence, the apples would sell themselves.

This original preference to highlight the transformed landscape gave way to depictions of other figurative landscapes. For example, Okanagan growers, many of whom had come from Britain, used such imperial motifs as John Bull, Union Jacks, and tall ships to evoke an imperial community bound by production and consumption within the British Empire. The confluence of the Inland Empire and patriotism had led some American growers to choose such brands as "Empire Builder," "Regal Red," and "Royal Purple" but they soon changed to more republican images of "Liberty Bell" and "Uncle Sam." Naturalistic images were equally diverse, ranging from depictions of the orchard landscape with "Mount Hood

---

<sup>93</sup> *Better Fruit*, 2, 5 (November 1907).

Apples” in Oregon, nearby Lake Chelan with “Trout Brand” apples in Washington, to the more fantastic Okanagan Lake monster “Ogopogo” in British Columbia.<sup>94</sup>

In other instances, growers used such popular images or emblems of the North American West as buffalo, caribou, and cowboys. But perhaps the most iconic figure in the popular imagination to combine the human and naturalistic elements of the west was First Nations. Numerous examples of native imagery existed on both sides of the border, from “Big Chief Brand” in British Columbia to “Yakima Chief” in Washington state. One of the earliest and most successful apple branding campaigns using Native imagery emerged in 1912 when Wenatchee growers featured a smiling, cartoon-like Indian named Skookum. With a memorable name derived from Chinook trading jargon meaning best, the Skookum campaign soon expanded from apple labels to include advertisements in the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Good Housekeeping*. By 1917, manufacturers were competing for the rights to produce Skookum Indian dolls while New York merchants used the popularity of the term to rebrand socks, shirtwaists, and boys’ clothing.<sup>95</sup>

In an ingenious promotional extension that combined Native agency with marketing demands, the Skookum Packers’ Association hired a Wenatchee Indian named Kiutus Tecumseh to promote their apples. Noted as an accomplished tenor, orchardist, and self-described descendant of the famous Shawnee chief, Tecumseh made several nation-wide tours between 1928 and 1936 that combined inspirational hymns, readings from his poetry and lectures on “The American Indian.”<sup>96</sup> Clad in full Plains Indian regalia, Tecumseh also distributed gifts of apples to public figures such as President Coolidge and Washington’s

---

<sup>94</sup> The correlation between potential markets and the choice of brand names is difficult to establish. While it is clear that Canadian and American brands drew upon culturally-specific icons, such as John Bull and Uncle Sam, it is not as clear if such icons were selected for a “cultural advantage” within a particular market.

<sup>95</sup> “‘Skookum’ Apples,” *Better Fruit*, 11, 9 (March 1917).

<sup>96</sup> “Talented Indian Visits Spokane,” *Spokane Chronicle*, 13 September 1937.

Governor Martin.<sup>97</sup> While the public was clearly intrigued by Tecumseh’s “civilized” qualities, Wenatchee growers preferred a stereotypical presentation of Native identity to market apples. Happy fruit-eating Indians suggested unconditional acceptance of non-Native priorities while obfuscating Native dispossession and the critical but resented role of First Nations labourers in the orchard economy.<sup>98</sup>



Figure 13: Skookum apple label, circa 1930s.

In another light, consumer marketing was merely another dramatization of the tensions between the cooperation and competition of the horticultural exhibition. The *Oregonian* intoned: “The Spitzenberg is a Spitzenberg, still, whether grown to perfection in a Hood River orchard...or in the sunny valley of the Umpqua for Rogue River.” The ultimate

<sup>97</sup> “President Receives Apples,” *Spokane Chronicle*, 7 January 1928; “Cashmere Indian Chief Sends Governor Fruit,” *Oregonian*, 6 August 1936.

<sup>98</sup> For another examination of the use of First Nations images in popular culture, see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

truth for orchardists was that “there is room for all” because “all are Oregon apples. Let us not forget this basic fact.”<sup>99</sup> Conversely, the *Medford Sun* noted that broad unity of action might place “this valley on a mere equality with others which are not in its class.” While not ruling out the possible advantages of wider cooperation, the potential downside was “permitting [others] to derive benefits to which they are not entitled and burdening this valley with a load from which it would be free if standing on its own merits.”<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Hood River growers jealously guarded their reputation for shipping superior apples since it gave “the Hood River label a copyright value which will never be infringed upon by other ‘Oregon apples.’”<sup>101</sup>

As the need to promote settlement waned after the First World War, the shift in focus to consumers became more pronounced. Despite the to-and-fro in shaping the scope of place, district-level efforts at fruit marketing remained dominant before the Second World War, due in no small part to the difficulty of sustaining larger co-operative organizations.<sup>102</sup>

Corresponding with the largesse of nature and an increasingly media-savvy society, orchardists experimented with larger-than-life publicity stunts as a latter-day exhibition of farmer pride and marketing know-how. Yakima growers, in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, created the “World’s Largest Apple Pie” in 1927. Filling a pan one foot deep and ten feet across, the pie required 100 pounds of sugar, one barrel of flour, two

---

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in “Room Enough for All,” *Hood River Glacier*, 22 November 1905.

<sup>100</sup> “Rogue River Apples,” *Medford Sun*, 29 November 1910.

<sup>101</sup> Editorial, *Hood River Glacier*, 28 November 1907.

<sup>102</sup> For studies that relate to co-operative efforts in the Pacific Northwest, see C. Brewster Coulter, “The Big Y Country: Marketing Problems and Organization, 1900-1920” *Agricultural History* (4) 1946: 471-488; Ian MacPherson, “Creating Stability Amid Degrees of Marginality: Divisions in the Struggle for Orderly Marketing in British Columbia, 1900-1940” *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7 (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1990): 309-331; and Christopher Garrish, “Okanagan Growers and the Abandonment of Orderly Marketing: Land Use Change, Single Desk Selling and the Coming of the Agricultural Land Reserve” (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2002).

and a half pounds of cinnamon, and 400 gallons of apples.<sup>103</sup> Baked in a specially-constructed oven, the pie was distributed to nearly one thousand school children while photographers and cameramen captured the moment for newspapers and newsreels.<sup>104</sup> In the midst of the Great Depression, Yakima growers again trumpeted the virtues of bounty by constructing a giant Yakima Apple Box that could hold the equivalent of a freight carload of produce. Bolted directly onto a train flatbed and emblazoned with the words “Yakima Apples” and “World’s Biggest Box of Apples,” the box was packed under the media’s gaze with 75,600 apples over three days in preparation for auction. As the train traveled east, the Union Pacific railroad stoked publicity by encouraging big city dealers along the route to make bids until Detroit finally captured the box for \$1001.<sup>105</sup>

In a cogent explanation that applied to all branding efforts, Harry L. Miller of the Skookum Packers’ Association argued that through “countless messages in magazines, on billboards, in newspapers and streetcars,” a brand would “popularize apples from the Pacific Northwest with housewives all over the country.”<sup>106</sup> As partners in maintaining a healthy food supply, farmers and housewives were linked in a way that transcended purely economic considerations. But as gatekeepers of the family budget and diet, women did not always ally their interests with farming interests, provoking responses that oscillated between gratitude and disdain.

During the First World War, both the Canadian and American governments introduced market controls to curb speculative price increases and to provide predictable supplies of such basic necessities as foodstuffs. Both British Columbia orchardists and

---

<sup>103</sup> *Yakima Daily Republic*, 15 October 1927.

<sup>104</sup> *Yakima Morning Herald*, 16 October 1927.

<sup>105</sup> *Yakima Morning Herald*, 31 October 1934.

<sup>106</sup> “Skookum First Advertised Brand,” *Better Fruit* (April 1929).

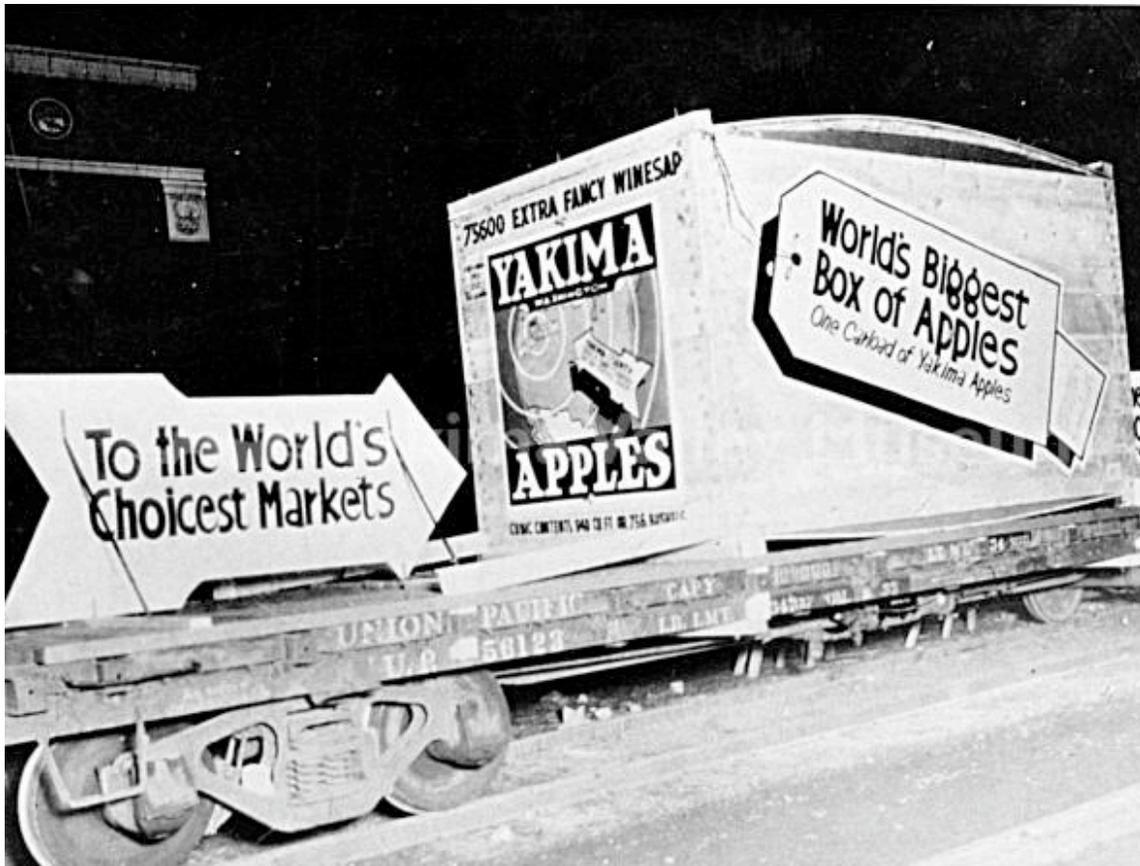


Figure 14: Big box, big promotion. Yakima apples en route to market, 1934. “Carload of Yakima Apples Sent to Market on this Special Box,” 1934, Yakima Valley Museum Collection [2001-800-071].

women’s organizations pressed for stable prices for daily necessities. Farmers complained that some retailers, by marking up apples by three hundred percent, victimized consumers through high prices and growers with fewer sales. By allying themselves with the consumer, growers expected they could force prices down to the benefit of both.<sup>107</sup> However, the orchardists’ support for “fair prices” had already put them at odds with price-conscious women who argued that food costs were still too high. Faced with government entreaties to increase their output, farmers were dismayed. Combining a long-standing critique of urban life and women’s perceived propensity for vanity, E.H. Shepard rebuked their boycotts of eggs and butter to protest high prices. Declaring that farmers and fruit growers made only a

<sup>107</sup> *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the BC Fruit Growers' Association for the year ending December 31st, 1912 Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1913, 33.*

modest living “sunup to sundown,” Shepard scathingly intoned, “if you dear ladies in the city... put less money on your back and your indulgences and more money into good, wholesome food, particularly boxed apples, you will have better health and more money at the end of the year.”<sup>108</sup>

The demonstration of consumer self-interest spurred the creation of grower-led “education” campaigns and calls for closer co-operation between producers and consumers. To this end, the need to educate women assumed a new impetus. At the same time, empowering consumers in their market decisions was a double-edged sword. In the same way that fairs enabled orchardists to learn from other growers to produce better crops, so too did vibrant displays help the public acquire the necessary skills to scrutinize produce. Indeed, apples could be misleading. E.H. Shepard warned British Columbia orchardists, “you know there is just as much difference between the flavour of a baked Spitzenberg and a Ben Davis as there is between chalk and cheese. The public does not. It must be educated.”<sup>109</sup>

Thanks in no small part to the history of dazzling displays and evolving marketing practices, consumers were only interested in fruit free of blemishes and other imperfections. At a meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, one fruit farmer warned that at apple shows, consumers saw “only perfect fruit” and so believing “that only perfect apples are suitable for consumption,” shunned “poor [but healthy] fruit.” Critics agreed that fruit shows shaped consumers’ preferences but suggested if consumers demanded “the best” after seeing perfect apples, “perhaps other growers will be forced to improve their methods.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, the rational pursuit of perfection remained the legacy of rural improvement and consumers’

---

<sup>108</sup> Editorial, *Better Fruit*, 11 (8) 1916.

<sup>109</sup> *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the BC Fruit Growers' Association for the year ending December 31st, 1912* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1913) 33.

<sup>110</sup> OHS, “The Apple Show,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1911.

views of nature's bounty. However, the irony is that show apples, rather than being the most desirable fruit, were rendered toxic through an elaborate preservation process.<sup>111</sup> Embodying in its poisoned skin the very impossibility of perfection, the crimson sheen of polished fruit offered in the final analysis the most graphic illustration of the perils behind the prestigious prizes and scrutinizing gazes that animated the rural project.

### *Conclusion*

Whether local or international, fairs revealed the interaction of culture and ecology in fashioning rural identity. Replete with colourful ribbons and proud orchardists, the exhibition celebrated rational effort and its culmination with the "perfect" apple. Like a modernized seasonal rite, the fair reinforced the unity of scientific agriculture and environmental change to underscore its centrality in all realms of human endeavour. Just as prospective settlers discovered in promotional pamphlets and later in their bearing orchards, the greatest expression of this collaboration was the fruit itself. Viewed as an extension of the orcharding community, exhibitions provided another venue for growers and non-growers alike to rediscover and reinforce nature's bounty as a validation of the progressive partnership between farmer and environment. The scope of this validation touched on a range of interrelated issues central to the conceptualization and realization of a rural-based modern community, including Native displacement, gender comportment, and intelligent stewardship.

Despite the valorization of bounty and its underlying co-operative achievements, conflicts arose from the portrayal and experiences of orcharding life. For farmers, exhibition prizes were a source of pride and a useful tool in touting the superiority of specific fruit

---

<sup>111</sup> One method of preserving fruit for exhibition purposes circulated to Oregon growers included the use of formaldehyde, boric acid, zinc chloride, sulphurous acid, and alcohol. "How to Preserve Ripe Fruits for Exhibitions Purposes," *Rogue River Fruit Grower*, 1 (7) October 1909.

districts for settlers and for expanding markets but competition could pit family against family, community against community, and nation against nation. This tension became more pronounced when the display moved from the exhibition hall to the marketplace. But as much as ribbons were earned competitively, they also formed part of a greater whole that celebrated the achievements of Nature's partnership in transforming the region.

The instructional aspects of the exhibition extended beyond growers by providing prospective settlers with an idealized landscape that was as carefully managed as the orchard environment itself. After the First World War, the number of fruit exhibitions declined in the face of shifting orchardist needs and changing marketing practices. Yet, the new elaborate labels and larger-than-life promotional efforts perpetuated the exuberance of rational abundance for orchardists and consumers alike. At the same time, considerations of market forces and shifting views of the orchardists' identity hindered the ability of these display mediums to sustain a trans-boundary identity that transcended political borders or market imperatives. In short, the collective celebration of horticulture was a casualty of the transition from exhibition space to marketplace.

Taking a longer view, the educational legacy of exhibitions hindered orchardists in other ways. Brightly polished and pleasantly formed, exhibition apples fostered and perpetuated an idealized form of perfect fruit. While this had educational benefits for growers, flawless apples also worked against their interests. Growing and harvesting fruit was not an exercise in perfection, but a process conducted in lived nature with blemishes and spots. By valorizing gleaming fruit, orchardists unwittingly created dissonance between their produce and the expectations of consumers, and by extension, their own prosperity.

## 5

*“From shiftless fruit tramps to a respected seasonal reservoir of people”: Migratory Labour, Science, and Community Identity*

I worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes  
 And I slept on the ground 'neath the light of the moon,  
 'Long the edge of your cities you'll see us, and then,  
 We've come with the dust and we're gone in the wind.  
 ~Woody Guthrie (1912-1967)

During the summer of 1910, men bunked in modest rooming houses in Kelowna's downtown awoke early to prepare for the long day ahead under the sun and trees. Twenty years later and nearly three hundred miles to the south, a comparable scene played itself out at a camp clearing just outside of Yakima as people drifted from their tents to wash and prepare food before departing for nearby fruit farms. On the eve of the Korean War, families performed a similar ritual in the orchards surrounding Medford, gathering outside their wood-frame huts to socialize before heading in their individual directions to begin work. Linked by their common labour in the orchards, agricultural workers gave expression to a common trans-border community in the Pacific Northwest, but one that remained outside of the captivating images of blossoms and apples circulated by promoters and fruit farmers. However, their place on the periphery of rural society across time and place illustrates both the shortcomings of the horticultural vision that inspired fruit farmers, and the problem of incorporating workers into the rubric of the orcharding landscape. The competition of the daily practical demands of orchard work with the higher ideals of horticultural life created a confused set of impulses and reactions.

As the quintessential expression of the modern countryside, horticulture was an exclusive vocation reborn as an antidote to the urban ills of class conflict, ethnic tensions, and environmental harm. Whereas cities fostered division and disorder, horticulture anchored social and economic stability by creating communities comprised of affluent and sophisticated orchardist families. Indeed, the exclusive nature of orcharding was not merely an accident of wealth, but was the result of a natural process of selection rooted in the act of farming itself. Not everyone possessed the markers of intelligence or wealth to be fruit farmers, and in this way undesirable peoples such as working-class families and their potentially disruptive impact on community order would be excluded.

Fruit grower aspirations and realities, however, soon diverged. Whether due to ignorance or the demands of expanding production, farmers soon discovered that they needed more labour, at least seasonally, than their families could supply. Their increasing reliance upon a heterogeneous population of migrant workers, particularly during the labour-intensive harvest season created tensions in orcharding communities as residents feared the appearance of hundreds of men, women, and children as a source of social and moral disorder. Just as environmental changes and economic instability highlighted the shortcomings of scientific agriculture, labour demands illustrated the limits of farmer control. In the struggles over securing labour, issues of class, race, and gender dramatically shaped the perceptions and actions of orcharding communities.

Beset by poor living arrangements, violence, and hostility, agricultural workers struggled to articulate a common response in their search for better wages, working conditions, and recognition as community members. Their attempts to organize radical unions met stiff resistance from communities and governments who regarded the labourers'

desire for a more inclusive community ideal as an attempt to subvert the basis of the orcharding landscape itself.

Awakened to the difficulties in procuring labour during the First World War, governments subsequently took a keener interest in the issue, an action that ironically validated orchardist faith in the importance of agriculture to society. Through the prism of scientific agriculture and industrial managerial techniques, professional researchers strove to transform the migrant from a source of anxiety and community disorder into a stable component of agricultural production. In this way, the ability to refashion migrant workers emerged as another emblem of rural progress. The logical end of these professional efforts echoed the features of California's "factories in the field" which these same professionals condemned for creating "business" farmers and de-humanizing labour.<sup>1</sup> However, farmers never fully embodied the characteristics of the merciless businessman, and despite the considerable resources of government agencies, research stations, and agricultural organizations, migrants proved no more compliant in the quest for perfection than the crops they were hired to harvest.

*Historicizing Labour in the Pacific Northwest*

When Dr. James Cardwell retired as president of the Oregon State Horticultural Society in 1905, the annual meeting in Portland fêted him for his leadership and contributions to the industry. After a series of tributes, Cardwell vividly recalled the transformation of the rustic Oregon Territory of his youth to a progressive rural society. Explaining that "the fruit industry as a business in its variety, extent, and commercial importance, is of recent origin and within the memory of the present generation," he called the accomplishments of "proud but humble families" in "felling trees and building

---

<sup>1</sup> David Vaught, "Factories in the Fields Revisited," *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (2), 1997: 149-184.

homesteads...a worthy tribute to the brain and muscle of men of our time.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, not only did they survive but they also brought beauty to the valleys with their orchards. For Cardwell, the connection between intelligence, toil and prosperity was clear “and should be kept green in the memory of those who come after us.”<sup>3</sup>

Cardwell’s memorialization of human struggle confirmed what Society members knew, the countryside was “made” by people conducting the gritty business of carving canals, overturning earth, and setting out seedlings to say nothing about the business of railways, real estate, and finance. Cardwell’s valorization of individual initiative did not preclude stories of self-reliant men banding together to lend mutual assistance, but it privileged the self-directed pioneer farmers and rendered the contributions of others – principally those either unable or uninterested in owning a farm – invisible in the story of rural development. In this heroic narrative, only the fledging farmer represented human effort, thereby affecting perceptions of the rural past as well as its future.

Agreement with Cardwell’s assessment extended well beyond the applause that followed his address. Horticultural communities in British Columbia and Washington similarly honoured the work of orchardists above that of other rural residents, particularly the migrant labourers so vital to their success. Orchardists were familiar with waged labour, whether as English domestics in Kelowna’s fine homes or as foremen in Yakima’s large orchards but the orcharding landscape anchored and legitimized an idealized vision of social relations.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Lord Grey’s effusive praise for “the best class on earth” succinctly captured what was then both new and old about orchard life. The cultural antecedents for privileging

---

<sup>2</sup> James Cardwell, *A Brief History of Early Horticulture in Oregon* (Portland: 1906), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Cardwell, *A Brief History*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> “Home Helps,” *The Imperial Colonist* February 1907, . 4-8; W.J.T. Mitchell (ed), *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 15.

the farmer are complex; accurately prioritizing their influence on grower identity is impossible. Nevertheless, it is clear that the exclusion of labouring peoples had long-standing cultural antecedents that gained new currency with the help of emerging technologies and the development of new lands.

*Historicizing the Invisible Labourer*

Within the Western tradition, the pastoral is typically traced to the writings of Theocritus in the third century BCE where he idealized country life as a Golden Age when nature generously sustained people without onerous labour.<sup>5</sup> Sustained in the works of such classical poets as Virgil, the pastoral tradition gained new life in the art, poetry, and literature of Christian Europe as a cultural shorthand for social and natural perfection well into the nineteenth century. While the tradition itself has distinct phases, author John Kinsella emphasizes “pastoral has always been about a sense of removal from the place of work.” To achieve this, “the place of labour has to be made aesthetic, to be given a beauty, to cover up the truth of hardship” through the pastoral convention of “monopolising of power, comfort, and control.”<sup>6</sup>

The English pastoral tradition presented a similar displacement of labour. While touring the Norfolk countryside in 1810, Louis Simond saw large farm-houses “with all their out-houses substantial and complete – very few cottages. I do not know and where the common labourers live.”<sup>7</sup> According to Brian Short, the legislative and technological changes that displaced the working poor from Simond’s inspection also buttressed artistic

---

<sup>5</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 65.

<sup>6</sup> John Kinsella, “Can there be a radical ‘western’ pastoral...?” *Literary Review: An International Journal of Contemporary Writing* 48, 2 (Winter 2005), 120-121.

<sup>7</sup> Louis Simond, *An American in Regency England: the Journal of a Tour in 1810 – 1811*, Christopher Hibbert, ed. (1968), as quoted in Brian Short, “Images and realities in the English rural community: an introduction,” in *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

conventions that helped “perpetuate and uphold a myth of arcadian beauty.”<sup>8</sup> From the eighteenth to twentieth century, Short argues this myth coalesced in an urban-produced pastoral idyll that largely banished working people from view, literally and figuratively.

Pastoral ideas were also present in North America where, as in Britain, they obscured as well as illuminated. Enticed by the promotional images of the British American Land Company in the 1830s, Philip Henry Gosse, a genteel settler, wrote enthusiastically about his “picturesque-looking” farm in Lower Canada’s Eastern Townships before crop failures eroded his pastoral assumptions.<sup>9</sup> Just across the border in New York, Thomas Cole of the famed Hudson River School produced rustic portraits of the Catskill Mountains despite the distant intrusion of the steam locomotive.<sup>10</sup> The pastoral ideal stirred the creative impulses of North American poets, novelists, and travel writers, while popular magazines published articles devoted to the “visual literacy” of picturesque landscape viewing.<sup>11</sup> With the growth of new middle-class pursuits ranging from nature-based tourist excursions to landscape gardening, the picturesque achieved tangible expression in people’s daily lives. Yet, the consequences of the pastoral ideal were not limited to exhilarating trips or neatly-trimmed hedges; by the late nineteenth century, people, drawn by the appeal and potential of achieving ordered perfection in the westward lands of North America, became settlers.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Short, “Images and realities in the English rural community: an introduction,” in *The English Rural Community*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> J.I. Little, “Canadian pastoral: promotional images of British colonization in Lower Canada’s Eastern Townships during the 1830s,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, 2 (2003): 189-211.

<sup>10</sup> Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Robert William Hetch, “Nature’s ‘Cunning Alphabet’: Pastoral Landscapes and Politics in Nineteenth-Century American Literature” (PhD Thesis, Syracuse University, 2002), 61

<sup>12</sup> Two North American examinations of ideas and westward settlement include Doug Owrham, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) and David Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

Whether distributed at world expositions, railway stations, real estate offices, or the local post office, promotional pamphlets from British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington resonated with the pastoral legacy and profoundly affected the reception and place of agricultural labourers in rural society. In signifying how “the countryside and its workers are controlled and how power is distributed,” the orcharding landscape was “a metaphor for human relationships” buttressed by its conflation with a perceived “natural” order.<sup>13</sup> The pastoral legacy, the edenic images that de-emphasized the prospect of onerous labour and the portrayal of the Jeffersonian yeoman south of the border all displaced the rural labourer from the imaginary community of the orchard.<sup>14</sup> The marginalization of labouring peoples also stemmed from the advent of scientific and technological innovations that formed the foundation for a prosperous rural society free from social strife. Small and profitable orchard lots promised “light labour” with ample returns, a family-friendly middle class vocation where children’s occasional participation in the field was a playful and romantic outgrowth of horticulture’s picturesque trappings. The limited mention of labour costs and ambiguity about the need for hired help dramatized the marginal position of landless people within horticultural life. With persuasive prose and imagery, promoters placed credit for the vibrant communities of the Pacific Northwest squarely on the shoulders of dynamic farmers whose progressive outlook was confirmed by their enjoyment of modern conveniences.

Settled in their orchards, growers looked beyond brochures to articulate and reinforce their sense of identity. Through harvest fairs and such social activities as fraternal societies, reading clubs, evening dances, fox hunts, and opera engagements, orchardists forged a “shared symbolism” by celebrating “the heroic founders” of their social system that

---

<sup>13</sup> Hetch, “Nature’s ‘Cunning Alphabet,’” 10.

<sup>14</sup> For additional discussion of fruit farming’s associations with Biblical imagery, see Chapter 2.

legitimized their aspirations and identity.<sup>15</sup> And, as in Cardwell's nostalgic retelling, these heroes were growers dedicated to building a new rural society in the Pacific Northwest, but with scant participation by labour.

*(Re)interpreting Labour*

Settlers lured to the fruit fields of the Pacific Northwest soon grappled with the question of labour. If purchased lots were not already cleared, groomed, and planted, arrivals immediately needed to hire help. Even settlers whose land was already planted or bearing required labour. In the spring of 1910, Kelowna residents were bombarded by news that recent orchard and irrigation development created such a great demand for labour that the “supply is entirely insufficient and the [land] companies are at a loss what to do.”<sup>16</sup> Yakima farmers similarly read about “orchard work for thousands” creating “mad efforts” to find sufficient numbers of labourers.<sup>17</sup>

Though needed, the gangs of men who camped in town to work on concrete flumes or tree plantings conflicted with the settlers' idealized vision of rural life. English immigrants may have been particularly susceptible to urban images of working-class degeneracy. The “quintessentially English” magazine *Country Life* painted a cautionary tale of Scotland's Blairgowrie district, where “from a social point of view fruit-growing certainly has its drawbacks.” Famous for its strawberries and prosperous farmers, Blairgowrie was also an annual destination for “the converging forces of the destitute and degenerate” from regional industrial centres such as Dundee, Perth, and “even from the smoke-stacks of Glasgow.” Comprised of “slouching men” and “hard-drawn women” with “squalid children clinging to

---

<sup>15</sup> Frederic Jameson, “Criticism in History,” *The Ideologies of Theory: Essay 1971 – 1986, Volume 1: Situations of Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 126.

<sup>16</sup> “Editorial,” *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 7 April 1910.

<sup>17</sup> “Orchard Work for Thousands,” *Yakima Weekly Herald*, 25 May 1910.

their skirts,” these working-class families collectively formed for readers “a rabble host on which dirt, poverty, and drink have set their blatant trade marks.”<sup>18</sup> Portrayed as the corrupted products of urban life, migrant workers were an unwelcome though necessary intrusion.

Admittedly, the antipathy and suspicion directed to labour was not unique to fruit farming, nor was scientific farming an antidote to labour strife. What was distinctive, however, was horticulture’s explicitly middle-class formulation and attendant “uplift” of rural life through the linking of nature and science by intelligent farmers who, through efficiencies, could reduce their dependence on labour. Horticulturists also benefited from the structural organization of commercial fruit cultivation based upon manageable lot sizes, neighbourly relations, and profits from small operations.

In the first years when production was low, labour was not a problem. Reviewing her life on a berry farm since arriving in British Columbia in 1908, Mrs. Shook recalled “the picking was the least of our troubles. The family could, in many cases, handle the crop, and with the help of school-children, city cousins, and a few Orientals the crop was easily harvested.” As the size of the crop grew, Mrs. Shook noted, “no longer were the family able to handle the picking” since they had to pack and ship the fruit. She recalled, “the Oriental was the only help in sight that could be called upon.”<sup>19</sup> What is telling from Shook’s recollection is how she cast the dependence on outside help. The aid of school children and “city cousins” in the early years lent the character of labour an “extended family” quality that waned as the Shooks increasingly relied on hired labourers particularly Asians, a trend that surfaced in other fruit farming communities.

---

<sup>18</sup> “The Fruit Fields of Strathmore,” *Country Life*, 7 February 1903.

<sup>19</sup> “National Service and the Problems of Berry-Picking,” *The Agricultural Journal* 2 (1917), 264.



Figure 15: Lending a hand with prolific nature in a Yakima orchard, circa 1912. Colville, “Apple Picking Crew,” 1912, Yakima Valley Museum Collection [1991-126-034].

Mutual aid was a practical solution to labour issues and technical issues. When Medford orchardist Cecil Clemens started out, he traded work with his neighbour. “He had no machinery,” Clemens explained, whereas “I had machinery and no money to hire help. So we’d trade. I would spray his orchard and then he’s take two men and spray my orchard.”<sup>20</sup> During the heyday of Kelowna’s early growth, orchardist T.L. Gillespie picked the orchard of the Rev. Graham Brown “at the usual rate.”<sup>21</sup> Mutual assistance for orchard operations,

<sup>20</sup> Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue River Memories* (Medford: Gandee Printing, 1980), 97.

<sup>21</sup> BCA, MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, “History of the K.L.O. Benches; Their Tragedies and Comedies.”

whether general maintenance or the harvest, reinforced the centrality of farmer effort in building a new rural society.

Since the growth of orchards from first planting to acceptable yields could take from five to seven years, hopeful orchardists who lacked the funds to be self-sufficient had to seek other sources of income such as waged labour on other farms. Some new settlers who did not need extra funds worked for their neighbours to learn the skills necessary to operate their own orchard at maturity.<sup>22</sup> While some young “remittance men” developed reputations for spending money and attending dances at the expense of their newly-purchased orchards, others provided a valuable function as farm hands who, as land owners from respectable backgrounds, were accepted as social equals.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, settlers in British Columbia, Washington, or Oregon with visions of familial comfort and harmonious surroundings discovered the limits of mutual aid. As with Mrs. Shook’s berry farm, larger acreages forced families to use outside help though it compromised the ideals of orchard life. The demands of wide-scale fruit plantings and irrigation as well as financial disparities and contrasting practices among orchardists invariably shook settler convictions about recreating their own latter-day Eden.

In new communities dotted with family farms, the influence of large orchard operators was keenly felt. Rather than being content with an orchard of ten acres, men such as the Cornell-educated Wilson Fyke moved to Hood River in 1904 and acquired or planted an astonishing 500 acres of apples.<sup>24</sup> On a slightly smaller but significant scale, the 130 acres

---

<sup>22</sup> This theme is developed and discussed more extensively in Chapter Three, “Fruitful Empires: The Contours of Anglo-Canadian and American Colonization, 1880-1920”

<sup>23</sup> David Mitchell and Dennis Duffy, eds. *Bright Sunshine and a Brand New Country: Recollections of the Okanagan Valley, 1890-1914* (Victoria: Provincial Archives, 1979), 35-36.

<sup>24</sup> Southern Oregon Historical Society (SOHS), “Oral Interview with Paul Dwayne Culbertson, 24 February 1981,” Tape 182.

of prime orchard land owned by Harvard graduate Conro Fiero placed him in rarified company. Across the border, the large land owners were often sprinkled with aristocratic pedigrees and fortunes. In 1891, Lord Aberdeen purchased over 13,000 acres from Forbes Vernon and set out 200 acres of orchard on his newly christened Coldstream Ranch. Twenty years later, the eccentric James Cameron Dun Waters acquired a 2500 acre ranch, named Fintry in honour of his childhood home, where he raised apples and Ayrshire cattle.<sup>25</sup> Among influential commoners, Kelowna's T.W. Stirling enjoyed a sizable reputation as a land developer and orchardist with a fruit ranch of 160 acres.<sup>26</sup>

Beyond illustrating the great disparities of wealth and resources among farmers, property differences also had tangible ramifications for developing the orchard economy and creating a homogenous society. By their very design, these properties required both a sizeable labour force and a managerial form of organization that detracted from family-centric ideals. This immediately highlighted a conundrum at the heart of a modern countryside. What was the appropriate balance between art and science, lifestyle and business, for rural society? While orchardists lauded the application of science and new business methods as proof that fruit farming was not a "backward" agricultural vocation, the very large orchards threatened to reproduce the same excesses that made urban industrial life a failure in the eyes of rural critics. And in matters both figurative and literal, the labourer was the personification of this predicament.

---

<sup>25</sup> Paul Koroscil, "A Gentleman Farmer in British Columbia's British Garden of Eden," in Paul Koroscil, ed. *British Columbia: Geographical Essays In Honour of A. Macpherson* (Burnaby: Dept. of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 1991), 87-111.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5 (1986), 88.

*Labour and the Limits of Gender, Transciency, and Race*

The fundamental predicament faced by orchardists was never just about who would do the work that they could not do themselves, but how this would reflect on their ideals as progressive farmers. In looking at their own households, the sexual division of labour emerged as one ideal. While the participation of girls and women in orchard work was visible in promotion and practice, the middle class ideal – promoted both in homes and schools – was to have men and boys work outdoors and women and girls, indoors.<sup>27</sup> But given labour scarcity and quality concerns, the status quo was untenable. Aided by the picturesque qualities of the orchard, farmers and women were redefining the gendered nature of labour before the beginning of the First World War.

In the field, younger daughters might engage in such basic activities as picking while their mothers and older sisters might thin apple trees, handle the horses who hauled spraying machines, or level boxes of apples before they were sent to local markets.<sup>28</sup> In packing houses, initially the domain of men and boys, warehouse operators concluded that the fairer sex “usually [is] more painstaking and put[s] up a more attractive pack” while boys were “the poorest packers of all for they are too inclined to play and be careless and not willing to strictly follow orders.”<sup>29</sup> In the hands of women and girls “who are not obliged to work the entire year, who desire to earn money for dresses, vacation trips and the many other

---

<sup>27</sup> The public/private division also affected agricultural education, with educators generally settling on “domestic” training for girls versus “outdoor” farm training for boys. For more information, see Chapter 4, *Growing Green Revolutionaries: Children and Agricultural Elementary Education, 1914-1929*.

<sup>28</sup> Yakima Valley Museum (YVM), DBX 120, Director’s Apple History Project (1995), *Apple History – Hinman Papers*, “Interview: Charles H. Hinman” (1/25/95).

<sup>29</sup> “Fruit Packing School for Rogue River Valley,” *Rogue River Fruit Grower* (1, 5) May 1909.

incidentals that count when ‘papa’ foots the bills,” packing was transformed into “ideal employment” for the self-respecting orcharding family.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the qualities of romance that Dr. Cardwell identified provided another opportunity to redefine work and gender in the orchard. If farmer and nature represented a symbiotic relationship between masculine and feminine, a similar dynamic emerged between the packing and consumption of fruit. Although farmers generally directed their advertising and marketing efforts at female consumers, male consumers had a role in the lore of the packing houses. A promotional advertisement for the community of Central Point, a few miles outside of Medford, claimed that women packers sorted through apples as well as marriage proposals. To ensure a high quality pack, the women put slips of paper with their names in each box and encouraged customers to report on its condition. When some inventive women added their addresses, this fostered a flurry of letters from curious men, including an Alaskan suitor who sent a three dollar gold nugget to one packer with the offer to send another “if she would send him her photograph.”<sup>31</sup> By reinforcing the whimsical traits of the orchard, such stories altered the relationship between labour and femininity. Rather than dwell on the image of women with cracked hands shivering over sorting tables in poorly-lit rooms, orchard work was packaged as a romantic interlude when women earned extra money and imagined about potential suitors.

While ideas of pin money and long-distance romance could deflect anxieties about women’s labour, fears of transient outsiders were more durable. Migrant labourers emerged as the source of all manner of ills disrupting the peaceable development of horticultural life. Beyond alarmist articles fueled by fears of rootless “tramps,” the destitute, criminals, and

---

<sup>30</sup> “100 Women and Girls as Packers; free packing school at third apple show will show entry of feminine sex into this industry” Yakima *Weekly Herald*, 9 November 1910.

<sup>31</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 43, “Central Point, Oregon, 28 March 1903, 64.

especially, “aliens” and “Asiatics,” the local press only offered fleeting glimpses of migrant workers before the First World War. In February 1910, the Kelowna *Daily Courier* reprinted a “humorous” piece from the Fernie *Free Press* that recommended adding “an occasional ration of apple sauce” to a Kelowna alderman’s recommendation to supply “a diet of bread and milk” to the city’s “indigents.”<sup>32</sup> The exact identity and circumstance of these migrants will never be fully known.

In Oregon and Washington, commentators saw the inherent disorder of the “rabble host” as a potential threat to rural life. During the 1914 hearings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations in Seattle, state official E.W. Olson painted a disturbing portrait of a state “seething” with intermittent employment as “one of the great faults of our industrial life here.”<sup>33</sup> Lamenting that “we require probably 50 per cent more people here in summer time in these different [agricultural] industries than we do in the winter,” Olson expressed the widely held fear of footloose labourers threatening the social and economic order of the modern countryside.<sup>34</sup> Troubled by a recent string of burglaries and “sneak looking into windows” at local hotels, the Wenatchee *Republic* mused, “is our community to become the dumping ground for the thugs and tramps of this part of the state?” Hitherto, the town had had no such problem but “as it grows larger these things must be looked after more carefully” to avoid the growth of local “rat-holes.” Rather than merely react to a growing problem, the *Republic* concluded “would it not be well at the start to make it so everlastingly hot for the thug, the tramp, the hobo, the Weary Willie, and the Meandering Mike, who

---

<sup>32</sup> Kelowna *Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 3 February 1910.

<sup>33</sup> “Women in the Fruit-growing and canning industries in the State of Washington,” *Bulletin of the Women’s Bureau*, No. 47 (Washington: Government Printing Press, 1926), 39.

<sup>34</sup> “Women in the Fruit-growing and canning industries,” 39.

attempts to stop in Wenatchee that he will forever after pass by on the other side?”<sup>35</sup> In denigrating migrants as a blight upon community order and identity, the *Republic* also perpetuated a communal amnesia regarding the importance of migrants to the prosperity of fruit farming communities.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout the region, farmers relied increasingly upon the annual appearance of “blanket stiff” and “fruit tramps” for the labour-intensive harvest. The outlines of a migrant labour force began to take shape on the Great Plains of the 1850s as farmers moved to a specialization in wheat which fostered a dependency upon a plentiful supply of temporary workers.<sup>37</sup> New technologies that permitted larger farms also increased the demand for temporary labour. Instead of one or two hired hands working beside the farmer the entire year, a group of temporary hands worked only the harvest and then moved on. Because harvest periods were not uniform across the region, the opportunities for work lasted over some months. The beginning of commercial horticulture in the Pacific Northwest drew some of these migrants from the thresher to the fruit ladder.<sup>38</sup>

Initially housed in make-shift settlements or “jungles” at the edge of town, migrants solicited employment directly at the orchard or congregated downtown where farmers came to hire them. In contrast to the image of the temporary but steadily employed labourer, migrants typically worked less than a week picking and hauling before resuming the quest for work.<sup>39</sup> Waiting for work to begin or finding new work presented the challenge of acquiring cash to purchase necessities such as food. In such a predicament, transients such as Thomas

---

<sup>35</sup> “Wenatchee; the Beautiful,” *Wenatchee Republic*, 1 May 1905.

<sup>36</sup> Nels Anderson, *On Hobos and Homelessness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 65.

<sup>37</sup> Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 44; Toby F. Sonneman, *Fruit Fields In My Blood: Okie Migrants in the West* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1992), 19.

<sup>38</sup> Sonneman, *Fruit Fields In My Blood*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Paul H. Landis and Melvin S. Brooks, *Farm Labor In the Yakima Valley, Washington* (State College of Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 343, December 1936), 48.

Horland pooled their money with other jungle residents to buy bread before raiding a chicken coop for their dinner.<sup>40</sup> Such actions made sense to hungry men but confirmed fears of footloose outsiders conspiring to steal from hard-working local residents and undermining the sanctity of rural life.<sup>41</sup>

Local attempts to regulate the supply of labour became more pronounced as reliance on migrants increased. With calls for a single “order desk” where registered farmers could procure labourers with documented wage schedules, hours of work, and work conditions, the farmer organizations and business clubs who sought labour echoed the co-operative mantra in fruit packing and marketing. In the cryptic words of *Yakima Weekly Herald*, such organization would “get labor...of the kind desired.”<sup>42</sup> The nature of desirable labourer caused debate, although what was not desirable was easier to identify, particularly when issues of race and radicalism were at the forefront.

Among the non-white peoples who comprised a migrant labour force, the Chinese emerged as one of the most visible and reviled. The discovery of gold in California in 1849 and in British Columbia a decade later stimulated large-scale Chinese immigration to North America. As the gold rushes faded, Chinese migrants filled vital roles in mining, canning, railway construction, and agriculture. Their importance to western development, however, did not insulate them from public antipathy. Responding to growing resentment against the Chinese, in 1882 the United States Congress passed a Chinese Exclusion Act which banned Chinese immigration; Canada imposed a \$50 head tax in 1886 and ultimately raised it to

---

<sup>40</sup> Greg Hall, *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001), 46.

<sup>41</sup> Reactions to transients could also be self-defeating at times as when the Prosser city marshal dynamited two transient jungles along the Yakima River before a nearby construction project was complete. Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> “Effort Mad to Find Labor,” *Yakima Weekly Herald*, 25 May 1910.

\$500. While the head tax did not halt Chinese immigration, it achieved the desired effect in drastically curtailing the number of immigrants.

By the late nineteenth century, opportunities for work in agriculture brought Chinese migrants to the Rogue River, Columbia, and Okanagan valleys. Largely young single males, most migrants were sojourners who planned to save their wages and return to their families. Established in segregated neighbourhoods, Chinese nevertheless were a visible presence. In addition to providing such services as laundries and restaurants, migrants also secured employment through labour bosses who contracted their services to employers. On both sides of the international boundary, the Chinese performed a similar array of tasks: pruning trees in the spring, repairing water flumes in the summer, or picking apples in early autumn. Despite their vital role in the economic development of Western society, however, the Chinese worked in the shadow of Anglo-American hostility fueled by depressed wages, concerns about morals, and racialized concepts of citizenship.

By the turn of the century, growers were divided over the presence of the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and certainly were in conflict with their urban contemporaries.<sup>43</sup> In the larger centres of Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, a racist consensus was building among working class whites fearful of depressed wages while middle class whites worried about racial purity. Sensing the shifting winds of public tolerance, political leaders like Washington Governor Albert Mead declared, “the high standard of living and the schedule of wages of our laboring class should not be undermined by the presence within our borders of an

---

<sup>43</sup> Although precise statistics are difficult to compile, American growers generally believed their British Columbia counterparts had greater access to Chinese labour. “Editorial,” *Better Fruit*, (6, 7) January 1912.

increased alien population from Asiatic countries.”<sup>44</sup> Similarly, British Columbia’s premier, Richard McBride repeatedly called for keeping British Columbia “white.”<sup>45</sup>

The presence of Chinese labourers placed fruit growers in the awkward position. They were mindful that the employment of Chinese exposed them to criticisms about their commitment to a superior rural society for the “white race” but they needed Chinese labourers to maintain their cultured lifestyle. The Chinese reputation for diligence combined with their relatively low wages, even compelled farmer organizations like the Kootenay Fruit Growers Association to lobby the government to remove barriers to Chinese immigration in 1906.<sup>46</sup>

The valuable role of Chinese labourers in helping growers maintain their livelihood was echoed in orchard homes as well. Well-to-do Medford orchardists such as Jack Morrill employed Chinese household servants to help perpetuate the trappings of middle class life.<sup>47</sup> For the affluent British settlers in the Okanagan Valley, securing domestic help was a necessity particularly as it affected perceptions of middle-class women and family status. Organizations like the British Women’s Emigration Association provided some valley homes with “superior [white] women” as “Home Helps”<sup>48</sup> but for those who could not secure white help or “afford to pay eight pounds a month, a good Chinaman is perhaps the best servant in the world.” As Kelowna orchard promoter Ted Carruthers explained in a pamphlet for

---

<sup>44</sup> Third Message, Governor Albert E. Mead to the Legislature of 1909 (Olympia, WA: CW Gorham, Public Printer, 1909), 10.

<sup>45</sup> For examples see Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989) passim.

<sup>46</sup> Mario Lanthier & Lloyd L. Wong, “The Chinese,” *Ethnic Agricultural Labour in the Okanagan Valley: 1880s to 1960s* <<http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/thomp-ok/ethnic-agri/index.html>> (20 December 2007).

<sup>47</sup> SOHS, “Oral Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Lillian Salade, and Alicia Ruhl MacArthur, 2 April 1980,” Tape 147.

<sup>48</sup> “Emigration Notices,” *Imperial Colonist* April 1908, 11. A short-lived effort to establish British women on their own farm at Coldstream is described in Andrew Yarmie, “‘I Had Always Wanted to Farm’: The Quest for Independence by British Female Emigrants at the Princess Patricia Ranch, Vernon, British Columbia, 1912-1920,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 16 (2003), 102-125.

prospective British settlers, “he will...in fact, do all that two maids in England will do” with the caveat that “at the same time he does not live on the premises, but in his own shack in the back yard.”<sup>49</sup>

Japanese migrants had an important but smaller role as orchard labour. Like their Chinese counterparts, they initially came as sojourners who hoped to make their fortunes. In the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, railway construction in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon drew Japanese immigrants via large labour contract firms. At Hood River, these migrants soon found employment clearing land and working in sawmills before emerging as a field labour force.<sup>50</sup> Similarly in Washington, Japanese migrants cleared land on the Yakima Indian Reservation recently opened to non-native settlement.<sup>51</sup> In the Okanagan, Lord Aberdeen’s Coldstream Ranch recruited upwards of 100 Japanese labourers from Vancouver in 1907, providing an important precedent for agricultural opportunities in other areas of the valley.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the immigration barriers faced by Chinese women that stifled natural population growth, the immigration of Japanese women known as “picture brides” gradually changed the texture of the Japanese community. Like the sojourners that first came to the fruit fields, Japanese families moved through the region as work dictated. Boarded in small crowded dwellings, frigid temperatures and crude straw mattresses made conditions even worse. As one Japanese woman recalled, “the distasteful part of this life was having to move

---

<sup>49</sup> Kelowna Centennial Museum, E.M. Carruthers, “The Creation of an Orchard in British Columbia” (1912).

<sup>50</sup> Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon’s Hood River Valley* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 68.

<sup>51</sup> Tom Heuterman, *The Burning Horse: The Japanese-American Experience in the Yakima Valley, 1920-1942* (Eastern Washington University Press, 1995).

<sup>52</sup> Bill Hoshizaki (ed), *The Vision Fulfilled: Historical Sketches of Central Okanagan Japanese Canadian Families & Community Organizations, 1894 – 1994* (Kelowna, BC: Kelowna & District Association of Japanese Canadians, 1995), 13.

to place to place. In Japan one almost never moved.”<sup>53</sup> The process of moving, however, “was really quite simple because we had no furniture. Our chairs were just wooden apple boxes.” Japanese migrants also worked as servants in orchardist cultural institutions such as Medford’s exclusive University Club.<sup>54</sup> Prized for their work ethic and diligence, the Japanese were nonetheless paid lower wages than white workers and faced growing public opposition. Still, compared to wages paid in Japan, work in the Pacific Northwest remained attractive.<sup>55</sup>

Although questions of race and labour usually revolved around the highly-charged issue of Asian immigration, First Nations also served as a migrant labour force. Despite tensions over land use, water rights, and uneven government support, Native Americans nonetheless contributed to horticulture on both sides of the border. Already a crucial source of labour to the expanding resource economy of the Pacific Northwest, ranging from the sawmills of Burrard Inlet to the hop fields of Puget Sound, and the salmon canneries of the Columbia River, First Nations were the first significant source of migrant labour.<sup>56</sup> Unlike the Asians and the blanketstiffs, they did not usually cause community anxieties. At the Coldstream ranch in 1894, Lady Aberdeen’s rustic impulses were stirred when she observed how “our hop-picking is a very picturesque sight from all accounts. The Siwash Indians arrive, tents & all & settle down for a holiday time at the picking...At night they light their fires & dance & sing & amuse themselves & present a weird appearance.”<sup>57</sup> Another early white settler, Myra De Beck found the sight of native labour with teepees and campfires as

---

<sup>53</sup> Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> SOHS, “Oral Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Lillian Salade, and Alicia Ruhl MacArthur, 2 April 1980,” Tape 147.

<sup>55</sup> Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 63.

<sup>56</sup> John Lutz, “After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, N.S. 2, (1992) 69-94.

<sup>57</sup> R.M. Middleton, *The Journal of Lady Aberdeen: The Okanagan Valley in the Nineties* (Victoria: Morriss Publishing Ltd., 1986), 56.

other-worldly, recalling that “if you had guests you’d never dream of neglecting to take them to see the hop picking.”<sup>58</sup> Other settlers marveled at the exotic appearance of the Nez Perce who began an annual migration to pick hops in 1904.<sup>59</sup> Beyond fuelling the colonial imagination, the proximity of local reserves facilitated the expansion of Native labour on valley orchards in the 1900s to the point where some farmers relied exclusively on First Nations as a source of hired help.<sup>60</sup>

In Washington and Oregon, the growth of horticulture also owed its success to the labours of Native Americans. Although periods of violence such as the Yakima War of 1850 and the Bannock War of 1878 certainly fueled antagonism between native and non-native communities, Indian participation in the orchard economy provided more peaceful opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. Three Indian reservations lay within the vicinity of Yakima, Walla Walla, and The Dalles but even in regions that lacked a local Indian reservation, Natives remained an important labour source. In the Hood River Valley where indigenous tribes were relocated to distant reservations after 1856, Native families made the trek to the valley so they could work in the harvest.<sup>61</sup> So valuable were Natives as an early and valued source of labour, area farmers frequently clashed with zealous Indian agents who wanted to curb unfettered farmer access to Native labour.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Mitchell and Duffy, eds. *Bright Sunshine and a Brand New Country*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> For another example of Native wage labour and cross-border migration, see John Lutz, “Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare: Annual Migrations of ‘Canadian Indians’ to the American Pacific Northwest,” in *Parallel Destinies: Canadians, Americans and the Western Border*, eds. John M. Findlay and Ken Coates (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest and University of Washington Press, 2002), 80-103.

<sup>60</sup> Lloyd L. Wong, “Migrant seasonal agricultural labour: Race and ethnic relations in the Okanagan Valley” (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1998), 216.

<sup>61</sup> Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 84.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew H. Fisher, “They Mean to be Indian Always: The Origins of Columbia River Identity, 1860-1885” *Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (Winter 2001), 481. See also Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

*In Defence of 'Whiteness': Race and Patriotic Labour*

A series of moderately successful harvests in the early years of the fruit boom helped solidify the faith and finances of newly-settled orchardists. Unconditional optimism in the face of ever-growing harvests, however, was sorely tested in 1912 with the collapse of fruit prices thanks to plentiful production throughout the region. Given that and a general recession, farmers focused on wages as a means to control production costs. When white labourers were emboldened to demand higher wages based on the well-versed principles of supply and demand, farmers sought cheaper labour sources while devoting less financial resources to maintaining satisfactory working conditions.

The labour situation came to a head in the depths of the Great War when demands for labour elsewhere and for foodstuffs made agricultural labourers scarce. Incited by the high-minded rhetoric, fruit farmers wanted to contribute to the war effort. The war dramatically transformed relations in the countryside, affecting notions of gendered work, working-class identity, and middle-class morality. The fallout from the growing crisis extended beyond the workers and threatened to undermine the image of upstanding horticulturists. Even before the United States entered the war, E.H. Shepard sharply rebuked his fellow Oregon growers as he observed that “Outside the harvesting season, the average fruitgrower is not a very hard worker, and a big lot of them spend from one-quarter to half their time fooling around town instead of being actually engaged in producing something on the ranch which would bring them in extra money.”<sup>63</sup> Although Shepard did not directly link farmer leisure and an overdependence upon migrants, the unflattering picture of pleasure-seeking orchardists shirking productive work did not wear well as the Great War dragged on.

---

<sup>63</sup> “How can we make more money on apples,” *Better Fruit* (9, 8), February 1915.

Animosity between orchardists and urban residents flared when Asians were one of the few sources of labour. In an echo of Shepard, one Kelowna resident scolded orchardists: “Let the half idle farmer do for himself what his Chink, or his Jap, or his Hindoo does for him. Let the employer do a little more actual work himself and let the women help” as he admonished, “Keep BC White.”<sup>64</sup> When orchardists at a horticultural meeting in Spokane supported “the importation of the Mongolians, saying that their crops would have been wasted this year had not professional men given their services in the orchard,” the carpenters’ union protested “any such importation of Chinese for seasonal labor” and cast suspicion upon the dire claim that lawyers and doctors helped with the harvest since they were not visibly absent from their places of work.<sup>65</sup> To these critics, rather than representing the pinnacle of intelligent and progressive rural citizenship, fruit farmers posed a threat to the sanctity of civilization with their inclination to employ “undesirables” so they could continue indulging in town visits and afternoon socials.

Never wholly at ease with Asian labour due to their own racialized ideals of horticultural life, farmers were sufficiently chastened by community criticism to embrace the call for a “white” countryside as a logical extension of the “war of values” stemming from the overseas conflict. Previously shunned from sharing a place beside the industrious farmer in the celebration of the modern countryside, with the First World War white migrant labourers now enjoyed a positive public role as patriotic subjects of local newspaper campaigns and government poster art. British Columbia orchardists demonstrated their commitment to the defence of racial purity by competing with growers across the border to

---

<sup>64</sup> “Letter,” *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist* 7 December 1916.

<sup>65</sup> “Disapprove Move for Alien Labor,” *Yakima Morning Herald*, 23 November 1917.

employ migrants “for the purpose of keeping labour ‘white.’”<sup>66</sup> The importation of American white labourers illustrated how the exigencies of war allowed for a qualified redefinition of migrants whose “whiteness” provided an opportunity to transcend community prejudice and claim a place beside the farmer in the war effort. Beneath the rhetoric, however, the traditional migrant labour force remained marginalized while the presumably temporary contributions of women, men, and children who otherwise worked outside of the orchard labour economy became part of nationalistic lore.

Heeding rural pleas for support in maintaining food production, the Canadian and American governments experimented with excusing farmers and agricultural labourers from military service.<sup>67</sup> In addition, government-sponsored programs such as the Canadian “Soldiers of the Soil” and the American “Boys’ Working Reserve” lured boys to work on farms and orchards by offering them a chance to wear a military-style uniform complete with medals for successful service.<sup>68</sup>

Women seized the chance to participate directly in the war effort and defend the ideals of racial purity. At a mass meeting of the British Columbia Consumers’ League in Vancouver, women expressed a determination to undertake field work “in an effort to keep further Asiatics from coming in and to prevent an excess of labour when the troops return from Europe.”<sup>69</sup> Not to be overshadowed by their big city sisters, Okanagan chapters of the provincially-sponsored Women’s Institute organized female volunteers to meet the practical demands of the harvest with the added benefit of “showing the foreign population in our

---

<sup>66</sup> Kelowna *Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 26 April 1917

<sup>67</sup> “Gov’t Authorizes Local Exemption Board To Permit Men Needed in Fields to Postpone Date For Joining Colors,” Yakima *Daily Republic*, 6 August 1917.

<sup>68</sup> “Soldiers of the Soil,” *The Agricultural Journal* 3 (1918), 91. In contrast to BC’s focus on recruiting students, Oregon and Washington sought the help of librarians to direct boys not in school to enlist.

<sup>69</sup> “Women Labourers to Help Fruit Growers,” Kelowna *Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 19 April 1917.

midst that they cannot ‘hold up’ the farmers for exorbitant wages.”<sup>70</sup> American women were equally intent on transcending gendered roles to defend “whiteness.” Shortly after America’s entry into the First World War, the federal Council of National Defense in tandem with its Women’s Committee sponsored the creation of state-level affiliates to coordinate the material and labour demands of the war effort.<sup>71</sup> In conjunction with the Farm Labor Service, urban and rural women volunteered for placement directly on farms or through parallel government programs such as the Women’s Land Army. With growing public concern over “alien” labour, Mrs. Smith, chairwoman of the Washington State Women’s Committee, proudly reported, “women assisted materially in the saving of the fruit crops.”<sup>72</sup> Likewise, Oregon’s Horticultural Commissioner A.C. Allen informed his superiors: “women have stepped into the breach and have helped out wonderfully. This is particularly true in the fruit districts where their work has been eminently satisfactory.”<sup>73</sup>

Despite their unprecedented assistance, urbanites were unlikely to return to the orchards after the war. In evaluating the success of the programs in 1917, Dr. Suzzallo of the Washington State Council of Defense recommended that as well as paying a “good standard wage” farmers must provide a “standard but cheap equipment for housing workers during the season.” Because of “unsanitary conditions,” he reported, many city workers “said that they would not return to the orchards.”<sup>74</sup> Suzzallo’s recognition that adequate conditions were “a difficult problem to handle cheaply” and the negative experiences of seasonal labourers revealed the unequal benefits of horticultural life, a fact long known by migrant labour.

---

<sup>70</sup> “Kelowna Women Will Organize for Labour,” *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 29 March 1917.

<sup>71</sup> “Farm Labor Organization Plans,” *Better Fruit* (12, 2) August 1917.

<sup>72</sup> Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918),

<sup>73</sup> Oregon State Archive (OSA), 4/07/05/03, Department of Agriculture – Horticultural Records, Box 41, Horticultural Records, 1893-1921, Correspondence 1918, AC Allen, Commissioner for Third District to [?], 30 November 1918.

<sup>74</sup> “The Labor Problem Among Fruit Growers,” *Better Fruit* (12, 8), February 1918.

Similarly, in describing the contribution of British Columbia's Women's Institutes to labour needs, Mrs. Shook defended farmers against the urban pickers. Chastising female "shirkers" who returned to Vancouver to denounce poor working conditions and low wages, she retorted, "fruit-picking is not a holiday, to work only when they feel inclined." Rejecting accusations that farmers exploited patriotic women with reduced wages, or worse, allowed them to work in the proximity of Chinese help, Shook admitted that problems existed. Pledging to rectify mistakes, Shook recommended that farmers provide meals for the pickers and improve "the oversight of the girls after working-hours."<sup>75</sup> Such an acknowledgement was an ironic and damaging reflection on farmers who normally criticized the laissez-fair stance of urban life towards womanhood and morality.

Contrary to Mrs. Shook's assertions, gaps in the proper treatment of "respectable" labour, particularly white women, highlight more than inevitable problems of procuring farm help in war-time; they also offer insight into established attitudes towards seasonal labourers. While orchardists defended their cherished image of a modern countryside against complaints of scant provisions and minimal accommodations for "guests," the existence of these problems at a time of heightened respect for labour suggests that agricultural labourers normally experienced much worse conditions. Not surprisingly, a growing number of labourers addressed their grievances through collective action.

#### *Radicalism and Race in the Countryside*

In the eyes of the growers, such collective action transformed the migrant worker into a treasonous co-conspirator allied against personal prosperity and rural identity. Labour radicalism was not unknown in the Pacific Northwest. From hard-rock mining in Idaho to felling Douglas Fir along the shores of Puget Sound or the British Columbia coast, images of

---

<sup>75</sup> "National Service and the Problems of Berry-Picking," *The Agricultural Journal* 2 (1917), 266.

exploited workers, adverse environmental conditions, and domineering bosses created fertile ground for the growing influence of industrial unionism and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Although this “exceptionalist” view is not without its critics,<sup>76</sup> because the miner and the logger remained resilient icons of worker militancy, the focus on traditional resource sectors has occluded the arguably greater inroads IWW organizers made among seasonal workers in the fields and orchards of Washington on the eve of the First World War. The extreme hostility directed by orchardists and state agencies towards labourers sympathetic to the IWW illustrates how anti-labour attitudes transcended the rural/urban divide and firmly linked the idealized fruit fields of the Pacific Northwest with overcrowded and distant metropolises. At the same time, this underlying hostility further dramatized the tenuous and awkward place of migrant labourers in rural society.

Founded in June 1905 at a Chicago convention featuring leading radicals such as Mary Harris Jones and William Haywood, the Industrial Workers of the World endorsed industrial unionism and opposed the conservatism of the American Federation of Labor. Committed to the abolition of capitalism and the organization of the skilled and unskilled regardless of sex, race, or residency, the IWW complemented its radical program with a focus on a host of such day-to-day concerns as wages and working conditions. The growth of its Harvest Committee and later, the Agricultural Workers Organization (renamed the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union), dramatized the lot of the disenfranchised farm labourer in the modern countryside. Indeed, the agricultural branch of the IWW was one of its most successful in terms of membership growth and provided over half of its finances

---

<sup>76</sup> James N. Gregory, “The West and Workers, 1870-1930,” in *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Deverell (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 240-255; David Bright, “The West Wants In: Regionalism, Class, and *Labour/Le Travail*, 1976-2002” *Labour/Le Travail* 50 (Fall 2002): 149-162.

between 1915 and 1925.<sup>77</sup> Although most of the IWW's agricultural efforts occurred in the Great Plains wheat belt, eastern Washington's fruit fields also saw significant activity and growing alarm.

The IWW's first successful membership drive in the Pacific Northwest in 1909 attracted mainly white male migrants. Beyond socializing during work breaks or in town at the end of the week, IWW members also spread their message through a newspaper, the *Industrial Worker*. First published in Spokane in 1908, it touched upon a range of subjects from debates over how to best organize farm workers to information about which communities "blanket stiffs" should avoid.<sup>78</sup> Although their mobility set migrants apart from resident labourers, the IWW highlighted their shared experience of temporary employment, lack of property, and a work environment marked by long hours, heavy lifting, and repetitive tasks. Organizing resident labourers to press for higher wages or improved conditions, however, was difficult because of their fears of community opinion or employer retaliation.<sup>79</sup>

After a period of difficulty following its initial success in 1910, the resurgence of the IWW in the Pacific Northwest during the 1916 harvest season fostered optimism of even greater gains. Through community newspapers, local commentators claimed that IWW actions were "in the direct interest of Germany" and soft-pedaled community lynchings of union members in Montana with the rationalization that they would be "a warning to IWWism everywhere."<sup>80</sup> Buttressed by federal legislation that criminalized a range of "disruptions" to wartime production and the creation of new state institutions such as

---

<sup>77</sup> Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 4.

<sup>78</sup> In one instance, a contributor made a pointed connection between piety and prosperity, warning that "of all the places in the Northwest, Pullman is the worst by the story of every worker who has been there." Admonishing readers to "let the crop rot on the ground," the writer surmised, "the farmers around there are religious and therefore mean...Keep away from Pullman at all costs!" Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 62.

<sup>79</sup> Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 47 and 67.

<sup>80</sup> "Principles of IWW Menace to Country," *Walla Walla Bulletin*, 12 September 1917.

employment bureaus, state and county Councils of Defense aggressively pursued the IWW in the Inland Empire where the threat of a general strike and work sabotage precipitated a wave of military raids on IWW offices and Wobbly arrests.<sup>81</sup>

Local communities used a variety of methods to counteract the IWW. Towns often used vagrancy ordinances to disrupt union activity by arresting members or running them from town, particularly if they recruited members on the streets through speeches and literature distribution.<sup>82</sup> Wenatchee farmers tried to neutralize IWW organizational efforts by forming a “Harvester’s League” to register “loyal” and presumably anti-union individuals to help in harvest work. When vagrancy laws and employment registers were not enough, Yakima residents turned to vigilantism. When some thirty masked men in March 1918 kidnapped the local IWW secretary and acted out his lynching before applying tar and feathers, half the town’s Wobblies left the next day.<sup>83</sup> Although the IWW was active among workers in British Columbia’s mines, on its railways, and in Vancouver’s lumber mills and squatter jungles, orchardists were not directly involved since they did not have large-scale farms that required large labour crews.<sup>84</sup>

By 1918, the mass trials and imprisonment of IWW leaders combined with the destruction or seizure of union property effectively neutralized both radical and conservative union movements. In his 1919 address to the Washington State Legislature, Governor Ernest

---

<sup>81</sup> Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1988), 400.

<sup>82</sup> According to Ahmed White, vagrancy ordinances “formed the basis of a comprehensive, localized system of labor regulation” when “class control remained a dominant and explicit feature of policing...of the most shameless sort.” Ahmed White, “A Different Kind of Labor Law: Vagrancy Law and the Regulation of Harvest Labor, 1912-1924,” *University of Colorado Law Review* 75 (Summer 2004): 668 and 672.

<sup>83</sup> Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 127 and 146.

<sup>84</sup> Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990), 117; Andy Parnaby, “On the hook: Welfare capitalism on the Vancouver waterfront, 1919-1939”(Ph.D. diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2002). By 1926, the AWIU had some success in attracting migrants to the concepts of industrial unionism, particularly across the Canadian prairies which led to the opening of union halls in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg. (Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 218.)

Lister celebrated the work of farmers and concerned rural residents who assisted “in the proper moulding of sentiment against a [labour] strike.”<sup>85</sup> The violence migrants experienced illustrates the anti-labour attitudes that transcended the rural/urban divide. Specifically, it underlines the rural hostility attached to migrant labourers as disruptive “outsiders,” whether white or not. Indeed, nearly 93% of fruit migrants were native born and white, compared to 85% for the rural population at large.<sup>86</sup>

Whereas in Washington white migrants bore the brunt of community hostility, in British Columbia, Chinese and Japanese migrants were the main subjects of antipathy. In contrast to white workers, the Chinese endured their difficulties privately and anonymously; the surviving evidence of their experiences though scant is instructive. Spanning a thirty-year period, Kelowna resident Kai-tao’s correspondence with his wife Ho and their growing children in China shows the inevitable stresses of a ten-year separation with allusions to rumoured affairs and discussions of divorce.<sup>87</sup> Through personal difficulties, the family’s continued dependency on Kai-tao for financial support prompted his wife to warn that “you are causing your family to suffer hardship” when he sent money infrequently. Responding to news in her village that Kai-tao was “sloppy out there” with “clothes...like rags,” Ho confessed, “I don’t know if you really [are] as people say. Is it because you can’t make money from farming?”<sup>88</sup> Although the exact cause of Kai-tao’s situation is never fully revealed, diminished opportunities for work due to ethnic tensions were a real possibility in light of area campaigns to bar Chinese from any type of employment, alarmist newspaper stories of “an Oriental invasion,” and vigilante gangs that forcibly expelled Chinese from

---

<sup>85</sup> State of Washington, *Fourth Message of Governor Ernest Lister to the State Legislature, Sixteenth Session* (Olympia, WA: Frank M. Lamborn, Public Printer, 1919), 10.

<sup>86</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> Kelowna Centennial Museum (KCM), Ho to Kai-tao (Letter 18) 10 December 1918

<sup>88</sup> KCM, Ho to Kai-tao (Letter 41) 8 December 1928

communities.<sup>89</sup> Socially and economically isolated, his struggles are emblematic of the challenges faced by the Asian community in its struggle to share in the prosperity of the orcharding landscape.

While community animosity was a fixture for non-white labourers, increasingly it was also directed at the small number who made the transition to farming their own land. Indeed, steadfast opposition replaced the conflicted views of fruit farmers over the subject of hiring Asian workers. In 1917, the Okanagan Farmers' Institute appealed to the provincial government to enact laws "that would forever debar Orientals from acquiring title to agricultural lands within the province of B.C." At the 1921 convention, the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association lobbied the federal government to strike a commission "to seek a solution to the Oriental Question especially as to the ownership or control of fruit and farm lands...and consider the limitation and control of all alien immigrants."<sup>90</sup> Through the 1920s, Okanagan Valley farmers gathered as "members of the White Race" to declare their commitment to using every legal means at their disposal in "keeping out the Oriental absolutely" because of the "undesirability of assimilation with them." To achieve this goal, farmers in places like Osoyoos and Oliver pledged to uphold a range of tactics, including "neither to sell, lease nor rent any lands or buildings, nor to employ in any capacity whatsoever, directly or indirectly, any member of the Oriental Race."<sup>91</sup> Similar campaigns followed throughout the Valley and beyond with the provincial Boards of Trade convention taking up the campaign to bar Asians from owning or leasing land.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Wong, "Migrant seasonal agricultural labour," 183-185; Patricia E. Roy, *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 110-119.

<sup>90</sup> Wong, "Migrant seasonal agricultural labour," 181-182.

<sup>91</sup> Wong, "Migrant seasonal agricultural labour," 181-182.

<sup>92</sup> Roy, *The Oriental Question*, 113.

Through the 1920s, farmers groups, business owners, and municipalities kept up the pressure on the provincial and federal governments to protect British Columbia for the “white race.” Provincial politicians lobbied their federal counterparts in kind, commissioning a Report on Oriental Activities to spur action. Released in 1927, the report was predictably used by critics to illustrate the growing Asian ownership of farmland, although such growth paled in comparison to levels of non-Asian ownership. While the provincial government made efforts to appease anti-Asian sentiment and constitutionally control property matters, any legislative remedies to bar ownership invariably ran afoul of exclusive federal powers concerning aliens and treaty obligations, highlighting a period of simmering discontent.<sup>93</sup>

After earning valuable experience as labourers and sharecroppers a small but increasing number of Japanese had purchased their own farms in Oregon. By 1919, Hood River residents formed the Anti-Alien Association with the objective of neither selling nor leasing land to Japanese residents since “America should be preserved and protected for Americans.”<sup>94</sup> Mayor Joe Meyer, himself a leader of a local anti-Japanese organization, echoed a common refrain when he declared that “the farmers of this valley object to competing with Japanese farm labor – where all the family gets out and works on the land.” Like Washington State, Oregon passed an Alien Land Law in 1923 that denied aliens the right to purchase land. Since American law did not permit the naturalization of Asian immigrants, this denied them the opportunity to purchase land. Their American-born children, however, were American citizens and could do so.

In British Columbia, the head tax no longer seemed to limit immigration from China but in fact, many of the Chinese landing at British Columbia ports were earlier immigrants

---

<sup>93</sup> Roy, *The Oriental Question*, 119-120.

<sup>94</sup> Tamura, *The Hood River Issei*, 83 and 90.

returning from extended visits to China. Under pressure from British Columbians who had support throughout Canada particularly from retail merchants, the Canadian government passed an exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act in 1923. Meanwhile, despite an earlier Gentlemen's Agreement that sharply reduced Japanese immigration, after the First World War it was widely but erroneously believed that the Agreement was not checking Japanese immigration. In the Okanagan, rumours that Japanese investors had purchased large blocks of land, stimulated anti-Japanese feelings. That pressure from British Columbia also led the federal government to negotiate downward revisions of the Gentlemen's Agreement later in the 1920s.

Not all orchardists wanted an unconditional ban on Asian immigration even though it might mean surrendering their ideal of horticulture as an occupation for the "best class on earth" and developing a new kind of rural community. In a letter to the local newspaper, one Kelowna grower in pointed out that because early orchardists had not brought in people "from the congested districts in the Old Country to carry on the work of development...it is necessary to employ whatever help is available." To reconcile his ideal and the practicalities of the situation, he concluded, "if any solution to this problem may be forthcoming, and an adequate supply of suitable help assured...John Chinaman can go back to Hong Kong without a single tear being shed by yours truly."<sup>95</sup>

But as much as punitive laws and farmer antagonism dramatized labour's insecure position after the First World War, these expressions can also be viewed in the larger context of an on-going struggle to define rural identity against a host of resilient outsiders and conflicting economic needs. Without diminishing the impact of anti-Asian sentiment,

---

<sup>95</sup> "Letter," *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 21 October 1920.

Chinese labourers continued to work in Okanagan orchards and a few Japanese operated their own farms despite punitive laws and racial prejudice.

*Prelude to War: Confronting the Rural Worker*

In the interwar period, with labour shortages and labour radicalism still fresh in the collective memory, state agencies, university departments, and agricultural experiment stations, guided by political currents, made labour a field for study and perfection alongside apple varieties, soil profiles, and natural pests. These studies collectively reflected a consensus that migrants were a social, economic, and moral threat to horticultural communities in the Pacific Northwest. In an echo of Indian policy logic pursued by governments a generation earlier, researchers identified mobility as the primary impediment to the social and economic order necessary for the vitality of horticulture. Once mobility was constrained, so too would be problems it brought.

The issue of labour mobility, however, pivoted on other social concerns. In the United States, the white, native-born profile of migrants made the prospect of curbing mobility theoretically appealing. The quest to re-engineer labourers' lives marked a new level of state intervention that reflected continuing confidence in science. Under the guise of aiding the downtrodden migrant worker, researchers provided the intellectual foundation for managing labour and rural affairs, particularly during the Great Depression. Despite the rhetoric of assisting labourers, the growth of state managerialism was animated by the goal of regulating migrants for the needs of farmers, rather than regulating farmers for the needs of migrants. British Columbia growers, however, generally rejected any notion of curbing the mobility of Asians lest it encourage them to stay put rather than moving on.

The concern of philanthropists and social scientists about the lives of labouring people dates from the 1890s, when a visible and engaged cohort of middle class women increasingly linked the private home with society at large. Blending middle class morality, the idea of separate spheres, and concepts of racial hygiene, Progressive Era reformers in both Canada and the United States railed against the excesses of unfettered industrial development and worried about explosive urban growth, “undesirable” immigration, militant poverty, and illicit working class behaviour.<sup>96</sup> Beginning in the 1920s, women’s groups, universities and government agencies directed their scientific gaze at migrant and resident labourers on the fruit farms of the Pacific Northwest.

Armed with survey reports, interview forms, and statistical evidence from state and local agencies, researchers agreed that the annual appearance of labourers threatened an efficient orchard economy, an ordered rural society, and the tranquility of farming. They described the sudden and disruptive change when “the low shacks or bunk houses, deserted at other seasons, [begin] swarming with people, and tent colonies spring up overnight.”<sup>97</sup> Other researchers remarked how “fruit tramps” or “fruit gypsies” lived “wherever they happened to work,” and that their teeming numbers required “especial provision...for housing them in the harvest season.”<sup>98</sup> Another study described migratory workers as “an ignorant, individualist, and incoherent mass” that was “entirely dissociated from the established channels of social and community organization.”<sup>99</sup> The issue, simply put, was that “the

---

<sup>96</sup> Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

<sup>97</sup> “Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts of the Northern Pacific Coast,” *U.S. Children’s Bureau Publication No. 151* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), 17.

<sup>98</sup> “Women in the Fruit-growing and canning industries,” 10.

<sup>99</sup> Joseph Campbell Scroggs, “Labour Problems in the Fruit Industry of the Yakima Valley” (MA Thesis, University of Washington, 1937), 2.

transient laborer creates the greatest problems in education, housing, relief, and general social control.”<sup>100</sup>

While mobility was undeniably a source of instability in rural areas, researchers were not entirely unsympathetic to the migrants’ situation. One blunt assessment declared, “the living conditions are perhaps worse among farm laborers than among any group in the farming population in this part of the country.” Generally, workers were responsible for their accommodations, which usually assumed all manner of improvised dwellings. Nearly half of transient families lived in crowded single-room tents, including makeshift awnings tied over cars, or in single-room cabins.<sup>101</sup> Actual beds were unknown; sleeping on straw covered old carpets was the norm.<sup>102</sup> Although camp sanitation was subject to state regulation and inspection, enforcement was haphazard and access to clean water and toilet facilities was problematic.

Researchers noted the social repercussions of mobility since “it is naturally difficult for a transient to participate extensively in community activities and organizations.” Fewer transients attended church compared to their resident counterparts, and only a tiny fraction actively belonged to farmer-based organizations like the Grange.<sup>103</sup> Migrant children attended several schools irregularly, if at all, while those “following the fruit” were more prone to repeat grades than their resident counterparts. Even children of families who worked closer to home in neighbouring counties might miss the first several weeks of school due to the demands of harvest work.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 30.

<sup>101</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 41-42.

<sup>102</sup> “Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts,” 28.

<sup>103</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 40.

<sup>104</sup> “Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts,” 32.

Migrants were rarely rewarded for community participation. Migrant children who did attend school frequently sensed “an unwelcome feeling on the part of the teacher because she regards them as a nuisance” who were “destined to become one of the great army of misfits.” In other cases, middle-class efforts to exclude transients from jobs in favour of resident workers at times of labour oversupply illustrated graphically that locals who complained about the influx of “strangers,” had little interest in fostering a different relationship. Farmers expressed low opinions of migrants, with one lamenting that “the good workers have found steady employment, leaving the average to degenerate on government relief” punctuated by occasional orchard work.<sup>105</sup>

In contrast to the image of swarming migrants endlessly on the move, researchers discovered that the patterns of transient families were surprisingly stable. Rather than chase a variety of different crops over the year, they frequently worked on only one crop a season in a single or adjacent county, while others followed the same fruit harvest over greater distances. Even more startling was the finding that over half of transient families made only two moves during the previous season.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, few migratory families depended exclusively upon harvesting fruit as source of income, but used it to supplement their regular or primary occupations in factories, as skilled mechanics, or labourers in the lumber industry. Roughly a quarter of the migratory families owned or rented their own farms.<sup>107</sup> And while over 80% of all labourers were “native-born whites,” the representation among migrants was even higher.<sup>108</sup> Oral testimonials offer a glimpse of how the migrants saw movement as

---

<sup>105</sup> Scroggs, “Labor Problems in the Fruit Industry of the Yakima Valley,” 46 and 68.

<sup>106</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 43.

<sup>107</sup> “Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts,” 20.

<sup>108</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 40.

stability based on the rhythmic repetition of work and movement.<sup>109</sup> Returning to camp at the end of the work day, one researcher noted that “good-natured and vulgar boisterousness” underlined the “the hearty spirit of comradeship and the affability” of migrants as the nucleus of their fellowship.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike the popular stereotypes that diminished the significance of women’s paid labour, researchers reported that contrary to popular opinion over half of the female interviewees did not work for “pin money” but to meet familial expenses or supply necessities even though the seasonal nature of their work limited their incomes. Researchers concluded that the seasonal nature of women’s employment was “insufficient reason for ignoring or even minimizing the importance of [women’s] contributions.”<sup>111</sup> Farmers, of course, saw women’s work as a means of “saving the crop” but did not give much attention to their needs.

Despite an active calendar that saw one woman move with her husband several times as they harvested different crops, she “explained that her present way of living paid about as well” as her previous occupation in nursing and that “the nervous strain was much less.” Another woman described her family as “tourists” who moved from North Dakota in search of a place to settle that offered better health and quality of life. In a similar vein, one middle-aged couple who picked apricots, walnuts, and apples was “just travel[ing] around” with no plans to settle. Similarly, a young couple traveling by car with their own camping equipment told researchers that their business was “following the fruits” and gave their home address as

---

<sup>109</sup> While it is acknowledged that studies forged in their own political, social, legal, and institutional context help structure the creation of knowledge itself through “categorizing and assessing certain populations, usually with the purpose of supervising, treating, punishing, servicing, and/or reforming individuals or groups deemed in some way deviants or victims,” their critical use can also offer alternative perspectives. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>110</sup> Scroggs, “Labor Problems in the Fruit Industry of the Yakima Valley,” 50.

<sup>111</sup> “Women in the Fruit-growing and canning industries,” 11 and 171.

“wherever they could find work or wherever they happened to be.” In the seemingly ominous words of one researcher, they had “no plans for the future except the seasonal migrations.”<sup>112</sup>

This disparate community, continually formed, broken, and reformed, represented a kind of worker subculture that set it apart from both the dominant culture of orchardists, and resident labourers. Without indulging in romantic fantasies about freedom that merely obfuscate the very real limitations they faced, migrants did experience a sense of rural life that offered an alternative to occupations more thoroughly transformed by the managerial innovations of industrial capitalism. In many ways, the sheer number of family orchards, the bounty of scientific agriculture, and the vision of a horticultural society that underpinned it all conspired against the incursion of similar techniques. These difficulties, however, did not preclude attempts to address questions of labour efficiency. Indeed, the mobility question continued to guide researchers intent on “improving” rural society through the years of the Great Depression and Second World War.

Despite evidence of a migrant population that, rather than fostering disorder, provided a valuable sense of continuity for transient and resident alike, researchers remained convinced that the problem of instability lay not with community misconceptions and poor treatment, but with transiency itself. One researcher proposed that “a careful dovetailing of agricultural employment with seasonal industrial employment” could sustain a larger resident labour population and end the seasonal influx of migrants.<sup>113</sup> However, critics warned that industry could not be organized around the seasonal tempo of agriculture and that agricultural-industrial settlements would become company towns where “individuality and ambition might be discouraged” and the sanctity of rural life undermined. As an alternative,

---

<sup>112</sup> “Women in the Fruit-growing and canning industries,” 43-45.

<sup>113</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 64.

the Yakima Welfare Federation's Committee on Transient Labor proposed settling seasonal workers on small farms of one to five acres. While such a plan appeared compatible with the character of orcharding communities, one researcher wondered if a worker would "be any happier if he is hired by growers who are determined to keep their labor costs as low as possible?"<sup>114</sup> Indeed, while farming and waged labour was part of the region's history, the notion of the worker-farmer was fundamentally antithetical to the ideals of horticultural life, if not oxymoronic in the eyes of orchardists proud of their place as independent yeomen.

Unlike the experience in Washington state, the plight of the migrant labourer in British Columbia did not form part of an official government or academic research agenda before 1943. Any effort to study or address migrants fell largely to community or farmer organizations such as the Labour Committee of the BCFGA. However, this arrangement was mostly devoted to monitoring conditions in provincial districts concerning labour supply and wages, and proposing recommendations for the general members to endorse for provincial consideration, such as restricting the immigration of Asian labourers. When migrants finally did draw government attention, almost no consideration was given to rural issues. Rather, in the grips of the Great Depression, the federal government was preoccupied with urban migrants and fears of labour radicalism, culminating with the violent clash between protesting migrant workers and the RCMP during the On-to-Ottawa Trek in July 1935.<sup>115</sup>

As before, growers grappled with the necessity of migrants at the same time they struggled with their fears and disdain for them. And, as in Washington, whiteness was not a guarantor of community acceptance. Beginning in the 1930s, the migrant profile of labour

---

<sup>114</sup> Scroggs, "Labor Problems in the Fruit Industry of the Yakima Valley," 80- 81.

<sup>115</sup> Instead of looking to the potential demand for labourers in rural districts, R.B. Bennett's Conservatives turned to the Department of National Defence who established isolated work camps in the interior of British Columbia. Ronald Liversedge, *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

shifted due to the influx of Doukhobors east of the Okanagan Valley. Although cautiously welcomed as a potential labour source in some communities, cultural differences stoked anti-Doukhobor attitudes as well as the violent actions of some members of the Sons of Freedom who used arson to protest materialism and government-mandated education. In 1939, the Penticton Board of Trade with the agreement of the local newspaper rejected Doukhobor employment in area orchards, evoking the spectre of a “Doukhobor invasion” comparable to the “Oriental problem” with the admonishment “do you want land values to go down because of undesirable residents and undesirable conditions?...don’t ruin the future of the Okanagan for your children by giving employment to Doukhobors.”<sup>116</sup>

While notions of refashioning the countryside for an expanded population of settled labourers proved impractical and unpopular, the need for change remained. Consequently, in the United States by the 1930s, the emerging consensus was for “the scientific administration of relief for the marginal group of farm laborers or their rehabilitation.”<sup>117</sup> By the mid-1930s political changes and economic distress provided a major catalyst for the expansion of the federal bureaucracy in the United States under New Deal programs providing ample proof for professional researchers that “intelligent Government assistance” was key.<sup>118</sup> Some of these ideas mirrored earlier developments on the Canadian prairies where provincial governments subsidized travel for harvest workers to complement the railways’ special excursion fares and set up hiring halls for farm labour that minimized the need to “roam the countryside in a hit-and-miss search for work” as was common in Washington and Oregon.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Wong, “Migrant seasonal agricultural labour,” 191-194.

<sup>117</sup> Landis and Brooks, *Farm Labor*, 11.

<sup>118</sup> Paul S. Taylor, “Migratory Farm Labor in the United States,” *Monthly Labor Review* (March 1937).

<sup>119</sup> Hall, *Harvest Wobblies*, 218

Proponents of state managerialism pointed enthusiastically to such new institutions as the Resettlement Administration and argued that the New Deal migrant camps in the Pacific Northwest “demonstrated their value to public health, decency, and morale,” to agricultural production, and to the well-being of the orchard community.<sup>120</sup> Rather than compete to secure an unpredictable supply of agricultural workers, farmers could maximize their harvests with a systematic approach to the procurement of labour. Similarly, the poor living conditions of migrant camps, a potentially fertile ground for radical politics, were transformed under government oversight. One contemporary observed that the overall effect of “careful registering, cooperative regulation, and the establishment of government labor camps” was nothing short of dramatic, changing migrants “from shiftless fruit tramps to a respected seasonal reservoir of people.”<sup>121</sup>

Ironically, such efforts brought the modern countryside close to what these professionals and advocates regarded as their oppressive embodiment in California’s agricultural fields. The situation of California’s migrant workers exploded into public consciousness with Carey McWilliams’ devastating exposé *Factories in the Fields*. Spurred by labour strikes in southern California in the early 1930s, McWilliams and fellow journalist Herbert Klein inspected work sites and interviewed workers, contractors, farmers, and government officials in Bakersfield, Fresno, Sacramento, and Salinas. McWilliams concluded that contrary to grower claims of communist agitation, “semi-rural” “farmer industrialists” who were more akin to bankers running a business created the state’s exploitative labour system, were turning California’s fabled farms into virtual factories. Coinciding with the release of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, McWilliams’

---

<sup>120</sup> Taylor, “Migrant Farm Labor.”

<sup>121</sup> Willis Bungay Merriam, “Rogue River Valley and Associated Highlands” (PhD Thesis, University of Washington, 1945).

book enjoyed instant acclaim and was instrumental in creating momentum for government investigation and oversight.<sup>122</sup>

McWilliams' assessment of California agriculture has remained a touchstone of agricultural relations in the state, but recent scholars have reappraised it. David Vaught paints a portrait of farmers that is softened with attention to producer idealism and the variety of labour systems that militate against sweeping generalizations of industrial excess.<sup>123</sup>

Vaught's assessment is also helpful in understanding farmer-labour relations in the Pacific Northwest, although McWilliams' views are not irrelevant. Undoubtedly, orchardists aspired to be more than the rural counterpart of the soulless businessmen. Additionally, the whole issue of labour procurement highlighted that their business methods fell well short of the sophisticated industrialist. At the same time, McWilliams' conclusion that farmers "will never be an ally of labour" cannot be entirely discounted as orchardists vigorously tried to control labour costs as part of their need to embrace "modern business methods." As the history of farmer-labour interaction suggests, grower idealism was never wholly benign and could be antagonistic to perceived outsiders while offering a unifying vision of rural life.

On the other side, agricultural labourers were far from unanimous in accepting well-intentioned help; they found allegiance with neither the grower nor the program administrator. Photographed by Dorothy Lange presumably to build public support for migrant programs, one migratory worker in a Yakima Valley auto camp offered his own visual context. In his estimation, rather than helping the typical migrant worker, "them [Work Projects Administration programs] are keeping us from a living." The Pennsylvania native's

---

<sup>122</sup> McWilliams himself was swept up in the momentum when California Governor Culbert Olson appointed him to head the Division of Immigration and Housing, a state agency charged with labour camp inspection. Vaught, "Factories in the Fields Revisited," 153-154.

<sup>123</sup> David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops and Labor, 1875-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).



Figure 16: A Critical Transient. “Migratory worker in auto camp. Single man, speaks his mind.” (Yakima, 1939) Library of Congress, FSA 8b34364: LC-U.S.F34-020378-C.

main complaint was the release of local residents from non-agricultural work projects during peak labour demand. Ultimately, this was done in cooperation with farmers’ groups to ensure sufficient harvest workers rendering the WPA little more than a farmer-controlled placement agency. To add insult to injury, these local residents took “the jobs away from us that never had no forty-four dollars a month [from other WPA projects].” Simply put, “this system they’ve got here in the fruit is a rotten system the way they work it.”<sup>124</sup> His critique, however uncomfortable for researchers and program supporters, demonstrated that the high-minded rhetoric of aiding migrants was always secondary to meeting the needs of the true heirs of rural modernity – the farmer.

---

<sup>124</sup> “Migratory worker in auto camp. Single man, speaks his mind.” (Yakima, 1939) FSA 8b34364: LC-U.S.F34-020378-C.

Into the 1940s, the exigencies of the Second World War amplified the necessity of organized programs, particularly in light of earlier war-time experiences and continued community ambivalence. Like a latter-day promotional brochure, government-sponsored information campaigns in Washington and Oregon presented idealized conceptions of migrant life that reflected positively on the role of science and rational management in forging a modern countryside. In 1943, the Farm Labor Committee publicized its work in migrant camps with an exhibit of informative captioned photographs of camp scenes designed to rehabilitate the image of migrants. No radicalism or grime appeared. In one example, C.A. Jauch of Tacoma “freshens up with shave at transient camp,” a reassuring sign of comfortable amenities and respectability among migrants. Mercedes Rhine is shown preparing to pick apples in another, illustrating that though arduous, the work “is not beyond the capacity of high school girl.” Similarly, depictions of camp facilities like the mess hall where “food is plentiful and good, and rates are low” and happy families relaxing together tried to assure the public that migrant life was respectable, clean, and white.<sup>125</sup>

The existence of such campaigns, however, pointed to the persistence of community fear and hostility, particularly when the official sponsorship of placement schemes such as the wartime Bracero program to recruit Mexican nationals for agricultural work undermined the purified ideal.<sup>126</sup> The program was a part of the 1943 Farm Labor Supply Appropriation Act designed to “assist farmers in producing vital food by making labor available at the time

---

<sup>125</sup> Washington State Archives (Olympia), Department of Agriculture, Emergency Farm Labor Committee, Box 34.

<sup>126</sup> In April 1943, Congress passed the Farm Labor Supply Appropriation Act to “assist farmers in producing vital food by making labor available at the time and place it was most needed.” Under the act, each state's agricultural extension service coordinated the labor programs through oversight of various program elements such as recruitment, training, and placement. Erasmo Gamboa, *Mexican Labor & World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).



Figure 17: Running water allows for a clean shave. Washington State Archives - Olympia, Department of Agriculture, Emergency Farm Labor Committee, Box 34.



Figure 18: Enjoying some quality time in a clean cabin “provided by the grower.” Washington State Archives - Olympia, Department of Agriculture, Emergency Farm Labor Committee, Box 34.

and place it was most needed.” Under the act, each state's agricultural extension service coordinated the labour programs through oversight of various program elements such as recruitment, training, and placement. Among prospective temporary workers, Mexicans emerged as a vital source for agricultural production and constituted nearly all of the international workers employed in Oregon and Washington until 1947. Despite their importance to the agricultural economy, their reception in local communities was far from harmonious. In addition to community ambivalence, Mexican workers found their contractually-mandated wages unilaterally undercut by employers. Additionally, difficult living conditions replete with overcrowded tents, poor heating, and inadequate food exacerbated feelings of isolation and cultural dislocation among workers. While many endured in silence, others decided to strike, which did little to endear them to the wider community or the federal government zealously focused on increased food production.<sup>127</sup>

North of the border, the federal government also discovered the utility of state managerialism in wartime. In 1943, the federal government entered into agreements with provincial counterparts to create Dominion-Provincial Farm Labour Committees to foster “the better use of existing farm labour.”<sup>128</sup> However, such use did not always meet with the approval of local communities. Already beset by tensions over the use of Doukhobours, the federal government’s decision to place Japanese evacuated from the Lower Mainland in the Okanagan Valley prompted more tensions. While Okanagan residents recognized the acute need for labourers in area orchards, several communities were prepared to sacrifice access to a desperately needed labour supply. At Kelowna, City Council pledged to withhold municipal services from any Japanese evacuee and lobbied the federal government to declare

---

<sup>127</sup> Gamboa, *Mexican Labor & World War II*, 96-99; 129.

<sup>128</sup> *Labour Gazette*, August 1943: 1074-1076.

the Okanagan a “protected area” to ensure it remained free of Japanese persons.<sup>129</sup> As with the Chinese, Japanese labourers left fruit growers conflicted. By the early summer of 1942, thoughts of autumn labour shortages compelled Vernon City Council to embrace the use of Japanese, partly buttressed by a growing public confidence that such use would be well-controlled by government and temporary in nature.<sup>130</sup>

In this context, government programs that revived the patriotic image of sanitized white labourers working alongside farmers or that funnelled enemy aliens into communities were predicated upon the priorities of the farmer rather than of the labourer. Whatever potential existed to transform the place of agricultural labourers in the orcharding landscape with photographs and administrative programs, they were invariably subservient to the goal of increased agricultural production during wartime. Labour placement programs met the practical needs of agricultural production without altering fundamentally the relationship between the two, as well as the contours of rural identity.

### *Conclusion*

From its inception, the orcharding landscape legitimized the aspirations of well-to-do horticulturalists to fashion a harmonious and homogenous rural society free from the ethnic and class strife of urban centres. Drawing upon a pastoral tradition, labour was subsumed with a family-centric vision of cultivation that by precluding the need for a permanent labour force reinforced the superiority of an ordered, ethnically pure and middle-class countryside. However, the actual labour needs of orcharding impinged on this idealized image of natural order. Local residents eased some of the burden, but harvest work usually outstripped the

---

<sup>129</sup> Wong, “Migrant seasonal agricultural labour,” 204-206.

<sup>130</sup> Wong, “Migrant seasonal agricultural labour,” 211-212. For a compelling comparative analysis of reactions to Japanese evacuees in two communities, see Patricia E. Roy, “A tale of two cities: The reception of Japanese evacuees in Kelowna and Kaslo, B.C.,” *BC Studies* 87 (1990): 23-47.

labour supply. Consequently, their need to rely on a transient and heterogeneous population of labourers placed them in an awkward position of having to defend their cherished horticultural ideals while earning community scorn by employing “outsiders” commonly portrayed as dangerous and amoral.

Labour issues assumed new prominence during two world wars and the Great Depression. To meet the national priorities of war production and economic recovery, government researchers focused on what they viewed as the weak links in the rural economy – farmer practices in recruiting migrant labour and the lack of a stable labour pool. In contrast to the progressive symbols of macadamized roads or agricultural schools, orchardists frequently provided workers with unsanitary, dilapidated overcrowded housing. While migrants usually had to accept this, urban critics cited these conditions as an example of orcharding as an idyllic façade. Farmers exacerbated their difficulties through a lack of initiative and collective organization in recruiting workers. Unfavourable work conditions perpetuated the marginalized position of labourers.

Against the backdrop of hostile attitudes, poor living conditions, and violence, agricultural workers were far from passive. Migrants could use the very element that earned community scorn – their mobility – to advantage by moving on. While battles over wages were predictable flashpoints, agricultural labourers also sought to articulate a common identity that spanned the fault-lines of race and residency that set them apart. Workers also aspired to redefine the rural identity sustained by the orcharding landscape. Whether chatting around the camp or as interview subjects for researchers, the workers’ vision of the countryside valorized their difference, their ingenuity, and their centrality to rural prosperity.

Because of farmer defiance and government interest, their success in marshalling a collective response was uneven at best.

Like their tantalizing promise of natural order and bountiful crops, researchers argued that agricultural science could minimize the social and economic disruption caused by the seasonal influx of workers. Academics and officials studied labouring peoples, at times confirming popular fears about their negative impact on communities and the need for more efficient farmer practices. By applying the insights of managerial capitalism in procuring, employing, and training workers, scientists sought to re-engineer the labourer from an agent of disorder into a stable and non-threatening component of agricultural production.

Ultimately, scientific agriculture's promise of a fully productive natural environment necessitated a parallel transformation of the social environment. Thus, labour was a problem to be solved not so much for agricultural workers, but to ensure that its subservient position did not destabilize a countryside defined by the ideas and priorities of its farmers. But like the idealized view of a co-operative and productive nature, the compliant, sanitary, and non-threatening labourer proved equally elusive.

## 6

### *Bounty Unbound: Shifting Ideals and Excessive Nature in the Modern Countryside*

Blessed be agriculture! if one does not have too much of it.  
~Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900)

Initially reflected in captivating photographs and vivid prose, the fruit farm took root across the Pacific Northwest and transformed the land and the people living on it. Countless people took up the invitation to work and live closer to nature, attracted by promises of health, refinement, and stimulating work. In a real sense, fruit farming represented more than a simple agricultural occupation; its proponents believed that unlike wealthy industrialists, science-wielding fruit farmers would preserve the influence of the land rather than subvert it to the naked ambitions of human folly, and that they could incorporate a respect for nature while seeking to transform it. Fruit farmers believed that the science that gave industry powerful tools to abuse the natural world could let them claim the mantle of modernity by furthering nature's "intended design," a belief seemingly validated by trees heavy with fruit and packing houses bursting with produce. Bountiful harvests, traditionally a sign of or emblem of a "blessed" state of being, provided a different reference point for understanding past environmental relationships as they related to farmer identity, land use, and environmental change while making the acceptance of the pitfalls of the industry more difficult to accept.

This chapter explores the interrelationship of fruit farming and science within the rubric of "excessive nature." Orchardists had dutifully heeded the advice of experts and

practiced the scientific agriculture that promised progressive citizenship and generous harvests. Surrounded by evidence of nature's generosity, orchardists soon confronted the troubling paradox that large harvests brought problems of restraining nature with profound implications for the basic assumptions at the heart of rural modernism and, in turn, the land and themselves.

Beginning with a conceptual analysis of bounty, I trace orchardists' struggle to restrain or embrace nature and its implications for shaping human practices ranging from co-operativism to marketing. This "natural" dilemma highlights the environment's role in uniting Canadian and American farmers as a trans-border community while simultaneously reinforcing nationalist competitive tendencies. More than mere profit or wealth, fruit growers saw large crops as a positive harbinger both for their immediate survival and their longer-term prosperity. Thus, the tendency to dwell on promised profits as the central rationale for expanding fruit production only partially explains orchardist motivations. What cannot be ignored is that burgeoning crops found a wellspring of meaning in the inherited cultural beliefs of farmers and the hopes of a new rural movement that sought to establish the countryside as the progressive foundation of national development. In contrast to the ignorant urbanite or crass industrialist, the citizen-farmer exemplified "the innate dignity of honest labor" with "the scientific utilization of mother earth and God's quickening sunlight."<sup>1</sup> The altered landscape ultimately embodied those beliefs and the later confusion that confronted farmers with overflowing packing houses but empty bank accounts.

### *Birth of an Orchard Community*

In the decade or so before the First World War, boosters, settlers, and governments had much to celebrate. In British Columbia, the population reached 528,000 by 1921, a

---

<sup>1</sup> "Canadian Apple Show, Vancouver," *Better Fruit* 5, 7 (Jan. 1911), 32.

dramatic increase from its 1901 total of 179,000 residents.<sup>2</sup> Over the same period, the State of Washington more than doubled its population to reach 1.3 million, while Oregon nearly doubled in size to almost 800,000.<sup>3</sup> A significant number of the newcomers found their calling in the new orchards of the trans-boundary region. In the Kelowna area alone, the population almost quadrupled from 600 people in 1905 to 2200 by 1912.<sup>4</sup> Yakima's and Medford's population increased by almost eighty percent, reaching 14082 and 8840 residents, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

Unquestionably, the birth of commercial horticulture attracted well-to-do settlers whose background and station reinforced the exclusivity of the modern countryside. In southern British Columbia, the prevalence of middle-class Britons from the British Isles and eastern Canada lent horticultural life a distinctive air.<sup>6</sup> Kelowna orchardist T.L. Gillespie recalled, "I was surprised to find that the farmers I met were the kindest, most friendly and most intelligent men I had ever met. In the cities, farmers had been presented to me as a sort of half-civilized, uneducated hobo."<sup>7</sup> Orchardists included the monocle-wearing Colonel Lindsay who "was a typical retired Army officer of the music-hall stage" to Phil Shaw who organized many Gilbert & Sullivan operettas at the local opera house and on more than one occasion was seen irrigating his orchard "dressed in the uniform of the wicked Captain from

---

<sup>2</sup> Jean Barman, *Growing Up British In British Columbia: Boys in Private Schools* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 198-99.

<sup>3</sup> *State of Washington, Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990* (Population Division U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995); *Oregon, Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990* (Population Division U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995)

<sup>4</sup> British Columbia, Royal Commission on Municipal Government, *Report* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1912), 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Decennial Population for Counties and Cities: 1890 to 2000* (State of Washington: Office of Financial Management, 2001); Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue River Memories* (Medford: Gandee Printing, 1980), 42

<sup>6</sup> According to Jean Barman, 179,000 Britons emigrated to the province before 1921, forming nearly one third of its total population. Barman, *Growing Up British In British Columbia*, 198-99.

<sup>7</sup> BCA, MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, "History of the K.L.O. Benches; Their Tragedies and Comedies," 3.

the ‘Pirates of Penzance.’”<sup>8</sup> Many communities bore the distinctive imprint of their British patrons, complete with familiar past-times and associations from the Old Country including rugby, cricket, tennis and Sunday morning polo matches. On other occasions, orchardists came together in riding parties devoted to paper chases and coyote hunts that culminated with afternoon tea.<sup>9</sup>

South of the boundary, settlers also embraced the leisure and sophistication of horticulture. Much like Okanagan residents who looked east to the cultural influences of England and Scotland in fashioning their communities, Washington and Oregon orchardists drew inspiration from the privileged milieus of the eastern United States. In a pointed rejection of Frederick Jackson Turner’s argument that the western environment “strips off the garments of civilization and arrays [the settler] in the hunting shirt and the moccasin,” Rogue River Valley promoters proudly remarked that new settlers “have surrounded their orchards with Eastern culture.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, life among the orchards was dramatically different compared to the conventional stereotypes of mind-numbing work and rural isolation. Mary Phipps, who moved to Medford in 1917 with her husband to take up orcharding, recalled that the town “was known as a community where a higher percentage of high school graduates went to college than any other town of its size in Oregon, and the people were exceptionally cultured and well-educated.”<sup>11</sup> Colourful residents like General Sooymsmiths and Gracie Andrews, a

---

<sup>8</sup> BCA, MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, “History of the K.L.O. Benches; Their Tragedies and Comedies,” 5.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of studies of the British influence in western Canada include Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981); Barman, *Growing Up British*; Paul Koroscil, “Resettlement in Canada’s British Garden of Eden” in C. Kerrigan (ed.) *The Immigrant Experience* (Guelph: University of Guelph Press, 1992): 129-164; Jason Patrick Bennett, “Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in turn-of-the-century British Columbia” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 9 (1998): 63-92; Mitchell and Duffy, *Bright Sunshine*, 44. .

<sup>10</sup> OHS, Scrapbook 49, 26 February 1914; Rogue River Valley, fruit industry; farmers & roads, 139.

<sup>11</sup> Southern Oregon Historical Society (SOHS), Oral History Interview with Mary Phipps (Mrs. Dolph), Tape 120, 6 November 1979, 120-2

former Broadway star, added to the community's lustre. Like their Canadian counterparts, orchardists had busy social calendars with opera engagements, dances and parties at local establishments where "champagne was always flowing just like water."<sup>12</sup> Phipps recalled how life as an orchardist was "very social, there were a lot of social activities, and everything was beautifully done: you got out your sterling and your crystal and your candles when you entertained; it was all very nicely done."<sup>13</sup>

Reinforcing the exclusivity of horticulture was the influx of remittance men. As sons of wealthy eastern or British families, these men were sent to fruit-growing communities in the hope they would find a suitable middle class vocation occupation, typically as orchardists. In British Columbia, the Okanagan was a rendezvous for hundreds of British public school men who lived on "fabulous amounts of money" ranging from \$300 to \$400 a month, sometimes sent in annual or bi-annual lump payments.<sup>14</sup> South of the border, remittance men were equally privileged. Comprised of young eastern-educated college graduates, these young bachelors were intrigued with the prospect of growing fruit and its combination of scientific sophistication and leisure, although for many the latter proved most appealing.<sup>15</sup> Mary Robinson remembered Oregon's remittance men who came out to tend fruit after "misbehaving in eastern cities." Content to "sit on the front porch and watch their pears grow," remittance men "had no attitude at all, they didn't know one thing about raising a pear or doing anything but playing through life." However, what they lacked in technical expertise was more than made up by their colourful contributions to the town's cultural life,

---

<sup>12</sup> SOHS, Interview of Grace (Andrews) Fiero by Seth Bullis, 18 June 1968, Tape 18, 18-5.

<sup>13</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mary Phipps (Mrs. Dolph), Tape 120, 6 November 1979, 120-4

<sup>14</sup> According to the Bank of Canada's Consumer Price Index, a "basket" of goods and services that cost \$400 in 1914 would cost nearly \$7500 in 2007. Bob Gamman remarked that "the manager of the Bank of Montreal wouldn't get \$400 a month in those days." Mitchell and Duffy, *Bright Sunshine*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Tape 116, September 12, 1979, 116-13.

making for “a very gay social area.”<sup>16</sup> While First Nations and other non-preferred immigrants were vilified at times for their work ethic, remittance men were immune from such criticisms. Indeed, one sympathetic orchardist insisted, “they were real men, they really were.”<sup>17</sup>

While leisure was an important hallmark of orcharding life, it was also a gendered experience. In addition to the generally male purview of sports, orchardists established all-male clubs devoted to the productive mixing of leisure and business. Conversely, women were left to their own devices when their husbands were in town for horticulture-related business.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, as agents of middle class sensibilities, women sought to influence the development of their communities. Often organized over luncheons or tea parties, women engaged in philanthropic work such as raising money for local charities, providing clothes for the underprivileged, or establishing reading rooms for “young men who loaf about.”<sup>19</sup> In Washington and Oregon, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs enabled local groups to pursue their work in a state and national context while the Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada fostered a similar provincial and national framework for local Institutes devoted to rural revitalization and education.

Ultimately, the cultural activities that united orcharding communities – whether colourful operettas or reading clubs – were more than simple distractions from the drudgery of agricultural work. Rather, through their everyday actions, male and female horticulturalists sustained and reproduced an exclusive vision of the modern countryside in which both

---

<sup>16</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mary Susan Deuel Robinson, Tape 76, 8 August 1978, 76-9.

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell and Duffy, eds., *Bright Sunshine*, 31.

<sup>18</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Tape 116, September 12, 1979, 116-26.

<sup>19</sup> While waiting for their menfolk in the restaurant of the Nash Hotel, Medford wives founded their own network dubbed the Colony Club in honour of their membership in the “orchard colony” of recent immigrants. SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Tape 116, September 12, 1979, 116-28; Sproule, 18.

leisure and work were equal and dynamic components of a rural renaissance. As orchardist T.D. Mitchell argued, scientific work enabled the farmer to undertake up-to-date methods “and more leisure and less grinding work is getting to be within reach of increasing numbers.”<sup>20</sup> The orchardists’ comfort with scientific agriculture and the numerous occasions for refined pleasure available to the progressive rural citizen demonstrated the dynamism of horticulture.



Figure 19: Regatta in the Orchard City; Manly sports and dignified spectators at Kelowna, 1910. Canada, Patent and Copyright Office, Library and Archives Canada, PA-029777.

A common attachment to fruit farming did not always mute the social tensions between local orchardists and their eastern-bred counterparts. University degrees and family remittances often set British orchardists apart from their Canadian brethren in the same way that New England orchardists were a step removed from other growers. Marriage perpetuated social divisions. In British Columbia, members of the local elite often returned to Britain to

<sup>20</sup> “Some Aspects of the Profession of Agriculture,” *The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen*, October 1911.

arrange marriages that solidified their business interests and social position.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, well-connected horticulturalists in Washington and Oregon favoured marriage prospects from their eastern milieu as a matter of familial status and wealth.<sup>22</sup> Spacious homes and large acreages also marked differences among orchardists. Such distinctions left deep impressions on Canadian-born locals like Vera Lawson-Wright who remembered: “In the early days, Mill Creek was a natural dividing line in [Kelowna.] The ‘English kids’ lived across the creek and attended private schools.”<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, wealth did not guarantee social harmony. Elizabeth Vilas, the matriarch of a prosperous Oregon orcharding family, was the “perfect lady in that when she went out she had her gloves and she had her hat and her outfit matched” but “was a sort of black sheep in the social structure in Medford because...she felt that [eastern orchardists] were keeping to themselves too much with the country club and their little groups and all” and “didn’t associate with the native people.” Mary Phipps recalled that Vilas “used to try and break that up just with a twinkle in her eye.” On one occasion, Vilas went with her husband to town for supplies. While he was engaged in business, she drove the horse and wagon down Main Street to do some errands before returning to get him. Eastern friends later warned, “now Elizabeth, you must not do that, that isn’t proper for a woman in your position to drive a team of horses up Main Street.” The next time Vilas went to town for supplies, “she took the horse and wagon, and yelled at the horses and whipped them up, and went as

---

<sup>21</sup> Jane Sproule, “The Polarization of Okanagan Farming Communities and the 1955 Packing House Workers’ Strike” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1991), 15.

<sup>22</sup> Atwood, “Blossoms & Branches,” 61.

<sup>23</sup> Vera Lawson-Wright, “Early Memories of Kelowna, 1907-1910,” *OHS* 45 (1981), 122.

fast and made as much noise as she could up and down Main Street...just to shock her lady friends.”<sup>24</sup>

While such tensions indicated that fruit farming communities were not free of discord, a shared belief in modern conveniences, progressive citizenship, and leisured refinement of horticultural life blunted its rough edges. Although her family did not own an orchard, a young Nan Harris of Kelowna found that her family’s own love of reading amid their enjoyment of afternoon lakeside picnics reinforced the tone of intelligence and culture set by the orchardists. Personal friendships with orchard girls, like Ivy Lawes, solidified the lure of horticulture. “To live, as Ivy did,” Nan remembered, “in a white house in the middle of an orchard seemed to me the height of bliss.”<sup>25</sup> Mabel Ruhl, whose husband published the *Medford Mail Tribune*, was similarly captivated. Although the Ruhls forsook fruit farming, they circulated easily among prominent orchardists and shared their affinity for the orcharding landscape. “I always wished we had [an orchard],” Mabel recalled, because “they were so pretty when they were in bloom and all that.”<sup>26</sup>

Just as enthusiasm for horticulture overcame local divisions, so too did it span the border. While market competition ultimately sharpened differences between American and Canadian growers and dominated popular views of the industry, an analysis of professional correspondence and farmer testimonials reveals the outlines of a vibrant trans-boundary community. In the early decades of the industry, cross-border visits and even exchanges were commonplace. Under the auspices of mutual education and a common passion for

---

<sup>24</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mary Phipps (Mrs. Dolph), Tape 127, 4 December 1979, p. 127-5.

<sup>25</sup> Nan Harris, *Nan: A child's eye view of Early Okanagan Settlement*, ed. Ursula Surtees (Kelowna: Regatta Press, Ltd., 1990), 8.

<sup>26</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Lillian Salade, and Alicia Ruhl MacArthur, Tape 147, 2 April 1980, 147-147-52.

horticulture, these tours reinforced a broader vision for the region. Among the numerous examples, a cross-border exchange in October 1920 is particularly illustrative.

Following a similar trip in August, T.M. Anderson notified his superiors in Victoria on October 2<sup>nd</sup> that “it is expected that a number of Ranchers from Kelowna will join the Party for Wenatchee on [Friday] October the 8<sup>th</sup>. Considerable interest has been aroused regarding the Cover Crops and several Orchards have been sown to Hairy Vetch and Rye.”<sup>27</sup> As the party passed through other Okanagan communities, its numbers grew. The following day, P.S. Darlington, the horticulture inspector in Wenatchee, was settling into his Saturday routine when he was startled by the appearance of the Okanagan party, now totaling 14 members. The telegram announcing the party’s visit arrived that afternoon. Darlington spent the day with the men, presumably introducing them to local orchardists and touring model orchards, while “Mr. Usher took some of them out to Quincy to see the new air-lift pumping plant which has recently been installed there.” On Monday afternoon, Darlington planned to inspect the upper country around Oroville before returning to Wenatchee. “The British Columbia fellows are also starting back this afternoon,” Darlington explained to M.L. Dean, Chief of Horticulture, “and I think [they] will go right along the route with me. They seem to feel that they have had a profitable trip, although they struck us at a very busy time.” Darlington’s supervisor, C.L. Robinson, who had been out of town, was sorry that he had not “received the information relative to the visit of the Canadian Brothers in time so that I could have reached the Wenatchee and spent the day with them.” Robinson nevertheless drew solace from the fact that “a good number came, and I know that they received information

---

<sup>27</sup> BCA, GR 1189, British Columbia, Horticultural Branch, 1920-1962, OK District Horticultural Bulletin 1920, Box 1, File 1, 2 October 1920.

enough so that they are satisfied.”<sup>28</sup> While the Okanagan party’s view of this particular trip is unknown, one can surmise it was profitable based on Anderson’s August report where a similar trip was “very interesting and his party have assured him that the information obtained will be of inestimable value to them and their co-operation is assured in carrying out of work in connection with orchard fertility problems.”<sup>29</sup>

### *In Pursuit of Bounty*

During the initial period of rapid growth in communities such as Kelowna, Yakima, and Medford, generous economic returns from fruit sales confirmed the sanctity of ample crops.<sup>30</sup> Tending to their fledgling orchards in anticipation of their first substantial yield, recent arrivals-turned-orchardists were undoubtedly envious but pleased to hear about growing profits. Boards of Trade eagerly disseminated the latest returns for the season, to entice settlers and to assure the local population that their agricultural pursuits were on a sound footing. Provincial and state governments closely monitored agricultural development while local horticultural associations provided information confirming that growing crops and growing returns went hand in hand. The logic of this relationship continued with little controversy until a convergence of factors reshaped the evolution of the fruit industry as well as the partnership between farmer and nature.

Eager to protect the reputation of horticulture, orchardists and officials moved to dispel misinformation and clamp down on damaging developments. One over-riding concern was real estate speculation. Throughout the promotional era, legitimate projects competed

---

<sup>28</sup> WSA-O, State of Washington, Department of Agriculture, Horticulture Division, Division Chief Files and General Files (1903-1963), Box 12, Darlington to Dean, 11 October 1920 and Robinson to Darlington, 13 October 1920.

<sup>29</sup> BCA, GR 1189, British Columbia, Horticultural Branch, 1920-1962, OK District Horticultural Bulletin 1920, Box 1, File 1, 14 August 1920.

<sup>30</sup> “Medford Population Gains Nearly 400 Per Cent,” *Medford Sun*, 2 December 1910; “Hood River Apple Crop Grows,” *Hood River Glacier*, 12 September 1907; “Yakima Fruit Wins Friends,” *Yakima Weekly Herald*, 27 July 1910.

with unscrupulous promotions of exaggerated potential profits on marginal land. Locales such as Walhachin, British Columbia, with difficult terrain, poor soil drainage, priority of water right and costly irrigation, proved inhospitable and after struggles and bankruptcies, were abandoned.<sup>31</sup> Determined to halt the potentially fatal haemorrhaging of settler interest in orcharding, the province struck a Royal Commission in 1912 to investigate “real estate operators misrepresenting essential conditions such as soil, climate, irrigation, land clearing and earning capacity affecting the value of the land.”<sup>32</sup> In his testimony, an orchardist who gave up his Okanagan farm and returned to England in 1911, remarked that, “it was impossible not to be struck with the obvious, shall I say, lack of riches everywhere. I met man after man, some of whom had been fifteen or twenty years in the country but never a one of them had done much more than keep his head above water.”<sup>33</sup> W. Crawley Richardo underlined this point in addressing the British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association on the need “to eradicate, to a very large extent, the real estate agencies which did not educate the producer or help the industry.”<sup>34</sup>

South of the border, similar stories threatened the reputation of horticulture. In Medford, Oregon, some buyers were hoodwinked with claims of two pear crops per year.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Mabel Ruhl, whose husband edited the Medford *Tribune*, recalled one real estate agent who loitered at the train station offering free transportation to the local hotel. En route, he would strike up a conversation about fruit lands, and then offer to take the curious to land on the outskirts of town. The area in question was dry, rocky, and treeless but the agent

---

<sup>31</sup> Patricia Badir, “‘Our performance careless of praise’: Memory and the Production of Space in Walhachin, British Columbia.” *BC Studies*. 133 (2002): 31-68.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Koroscil, “Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914,” *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5 (1986), 97.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> BCA, GR 402, British Columbia, Department of Agriculture, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Records, 1911-1919, Box 1, File 32, BCFGAR Report of the Executive and the Secretary, January 1914.

<sup>35</sup> Atwood, *Blossoms & Branches*, 37.

remarked “that’s the great asset: [the rocks] draw the sun, and they make the soil warm and the trees grow fast our here.”<sup>36</sup> Professor W.S. Thornber, horticulturalist and Director of the Extension Department at Washington State College, lamented the impact on the reputation of orcharding when “overzealous real estate booming without sufficient knowledge or honest judgement of what constitutes good orchard lands and climates” promoted properties that “were never expected to bear fruit.” But in acknowledging the many stories of hard-working people “who invested their small savings in Western orchards” only to lose their money to unscrupulous agents, Thornber quickly suggested a double standard where “we rarely hear of the losses of Eastern people who invested their savings in mining property [since] nobody sympathizes with a person who loses in mining stock.”<sup>37</sup>

Another recurring concern was that the production of too much fruit would reduce prices and diminish returns. However, in what became the mantra of the time, confident orchardists and horticultural experts believed that with proper cooperation, producing fruit “will become simply a question of supply and not of overproduction”<sup>38</sup> Academics and other public figures predicted that population growth would increase demand for fruit especially because of claims of the redemptive properties of apples for body and mind.<sup>39</sup> Recalling his time grafting twenty thousand apple trees in Indiana fifty years earlier, Professor C.L. Smith remembered hearing warnings that “you will have too many, you will have to feed them to the hogs; you will ruin the apple business.” Smith told his Washington audience that since

---

<sup>36</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Mabel Ruhl, Tape 116, September 12, 1979, p. 116-8.

<sup>37</sup> WS Thornber, “Future of the Fruit Industry of the Northwest,” *Better Fruit* 10 (7) January 1916.

<sup>38</sup> “President H.W. Cottle's Address,” *Second Biennial Report, State Board of Horticulture, 1893* Appendix, Containing Proceedings of Fruit-Growers' Convention, held at Salem, Oregon, April 18 and 19, 1893

<sup>39</sup> “Fruits as Medicines,” *Wenatchee Republic*, 30 March 1915.

that time, the same nursery had sold over five million trees, “and apples sold higher than before.”<sup>40</sup>

In the early 1900s, optimism and confidence grew with ever-increasing crops, revealing the powerful association between nature’s bounty and wider prosperity. In contrast to those who warned of over-production, others emphasized the prestige of expanding acreages and growing yields. British Columbia’s Department of Agriculture heralded the “wonderful expansion of horticultural industries” with an estimated total fruit and vegetable crop value at nearly four million dollars by 1911, an increase of 798 per cent over ten years.<sup>41</sup> Premier McBride gloated that “the expansion of fruit-growing and farming in British Columbia easily makes a world record” while Governor Lister rejoiced that “thousands of acres in all parts of Eastern Washington of what was formerly barren waste, have been transformed into thriving fruit raising communities.”<sup>42</sup> To farmers new and old, the notion that those natural riches might be rejected, let alone be perceived as a liability, seemed antithetical, especially with the development of urban centres. The foundation of Seattle or Spokane, reasoned the *Wenatchee Republic*, was fashioned with local apples and wheat and “would indeed be built on sand if they had not the rock of the richest valley in the world as a foundation; a rock, indeed, that neither time nor tide may wear away.”<sup>43</sup> Revealing a boundless faith in the fundamental role of agriculture, apples promised to sustain civilization, not hasten its demise.

But for all of the heady confidence in agricultural science reflected in depictions of the orcharding landscape, rationalizing nature’s bounty did not translate consistently into

---

<sup>40</sup> OHS, “Address of Professor C.L. Smith,” *Sutherland Commercial Club and Horticultural Society*, 1910.

<sup>41</sup> BCA, GR 400 BC Dept of Agriculture Provincial Horticulturalist, Volume 1, File 14.

<sup>42</sup> Twenty-third Report of the British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association (1912), 26; Inaugural Message of Governor Ernest Lister to the Thirteenth Legislature of the State of Washington (1913), 4.

<sup>43</sup> “Civic Pride,” *Wenatchee Republic*, 24 November 1904.

practice. As Kelowna orchardist T.L. Gillespie recalled, “I was surprised to find everybody ready and willing to impart information...the only trouble was that their advice was often conflicting.”<sup>44</sup> Agricultural researchers grappled with making their advice clear and comprehensible without compromising the content of their scientific insights. Such specialized content invariably reinforced the intellectual credentials of orchardists but also threatened to undermine those credentials as farmers devised their own interpretations. Ultimately, such outcomes highlighted the need for extension courses and traveling demonstrations to effectively rationalize farmer knowledge, and by extension, their actions.

While orchardists expected the insights of agricultural science to evolve with each succeeding year, contradictory recommendations muddied its promised clarity. J.A. Balmer, researcher at the Horticulturist Experiment Station at Pullman, wrote that in the orchards of the Inland Empire, “clean culture is the rule, weeds are not allowed.” He agreed that weeds “not only impoverish the soil, but the amount of water necessary to produce a good weed cannot be spared, it is all needed to produce good fruit and trees.”<sup>45</sup> Conversely, another researcher advised that keeping the orchard floor clean rapidly disintegrated mineral matter and thereby wasted plant food. “The wisest horticulturists” in the east, he asserted, advocated cover crops that conserved the fertility of the land and enriched the soil when it was plowed under in the fall.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Nature's Bounty: Pests*

Although agricultural science delivered its promised bounty, farmers had not counted on other forms of nature's generosity, namely pests. On both sides of the border,

---

<sup>44</sup> BCA, MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, “History of the K.L.O. Benches; Their Tragedies and Comedies,” 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Cultivation of Orchards,” *Fruitage, for fruit men only; the exclusive fruit paper of America* 2 (10) March 1898.

<sup>46</sup> “Why Cultivate,” *Yakima Herald*, 11 April 1898.

governments had created Boards of Horticulture late in the nineteenth century partly in response to pest infestations. While scientific practices promised some respite, the ideal was pest-free cultivation. Initially, boosters and farmers in the Plateau region gleefully compared their new farms to the diseased pioneer orchards as another demonstration of their progressiveness. Towns such as Kelowna declared their blossoming lands to be pest-free as a result of natural benefaction and scientific vigilance.<sup>47</sup> Such claims were short-lived.

Despite the best instructions and techniques from area scientists, growers in the newly settled valleys soon fought the same foes such as the codling moth as their predecessors. The tenacity of organisms, first introduced into many areas by the very rail cars that brought local fruit to market, proved to be too much.<sup>48</sup> The conundrum faced by farmers was that the large crops they desired were also a bountiful food source for pests that could not otherwise survive in the semi-arid valleys. As Henry David Thoreau observed years before, both people and “many indigenous insects, birds, and quadrupeds, welcomed the apple tree to these shores.”<sup>49</sup>

In an echo of Smythe’s injunction about irrigation and men, pest infestations led to calls for grower co-operation. Any hope of success against the codling moth and other pests required co-ordinated and systematic efforts by government agencies and growers. Prompted by grower demands and economic necessity, governments in BC, Washington and Oregon sent horticultural experts to the fruit districts to aid in the quest to eliminate Eden’s

---

<sup>47</sup> BCA, Kelowna Board of Trade, “Kelowna, the Orchard City of the far-famed and lovely Okanagan, ‘The City Desirable,’” 1908.

<sup>48</sup> David Dendy, “A Worm in the Apple,” in Ruth Sandwell, ed., *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 14.

<sup>49</sup> Henry David Thoreau, “Wild Apples: The History of the Apple Tree,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 1862.

unwelcome guests.<sup>50</sup> As the industry developed, they inspected orchards, demonstrated the identification and treatment of infestations, and enforced regulations.<sup>51</sup> To the end, the editor of *Better Fruit* reminded readers, “the inspector is your friend – not your enemy.”<sup>52</sup> But as Oregon Horticultural Commissioner J.W. Pomery observed, “you cannot successfully bring about a reform by force. It must come through a patient and tactful education.”<sup>53</sup> At the same time, one Okanagan inspector recommended leaving something “to the responsibility of the grower himself.”<sup>54</sup>

In an age of bulletins and demonstration courses, “ignorant and careless” growers stood as a stark counter-example to the image of the scientific and industrious grower. As part of the wider rationalization of nature, orchardists who neglected their trees were prosecuted and subsequently billed for any necessary cleanup through fines or liens against their property.<sup>55</sup> While some growers cited a lack of finances to purchase necessary pest-fighting equipment, others neglected to comply with pest control measures to accommodate the “balance” of nature and thus redefined their partnership with the natural world. By accepting nature’s bounty on its terms, they reduced the quality and quantity of fruit and undermined the credentials of the “modern” farmer, serving as a troublesome reminder that nature’s partnership came in different forms.

---

<sup>50</sup> BCA, GR 400 BC Dept of Agriculture Provincial Horticulturalist, Vol 1, File 6 Field Inspectors’ Reports, 1917; OSA, Dept of Agriculture, Horticultural Records Box 41-43; WSA, State of Washington, Dept of Agriculture, Horticulture Division, Division Chief Files and General Files (1903-1963).

<sup>51</sup> WSA-E, CE339-10-3, Yakima County Government, Board of County Commissioners, Miscellaneous Papers, “The State College of Washington, Washington Bureau Farm Development, and the Commissioners of Yakima County, co-operating with the United States Department of Agriculture,” 21 May 1917.

<sup>52</sup> “Enforcement of Horticultural Laws,” *Better Fruit* 10 (11) May 1916.

<sup>53</sup> “Enforcement of our Horticultural Laws,” *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1915.

<sup>54</sup> BCA, GR 400, British Columbia Department of Agriculture, Provincial Horticulturalist, Volume 1, File 6, Field Inspector Reports 1917.

<sup>55</sup> *Sixth Biennial Report of the Board of Horticulture to the Twenty-first legislative assembly of the State of Oregon, 1900.*

If pests highlighted a fault-line within the settler community, they also reinforced the schism between Native and non-Native society. Because white orchardists identified their whiteness with intelligence and refinement, at best they treated First Nations horticulturists with ambivalence when both national governments promoted agriculture on reservations. Nevertheless, government officials were sensitive to white settler complaints about pest-infested orchards. Dominion Entomologist Hewitt C. Gordon Hewitt recounted that some fruit growers had complained “that the Indians are keeping their orchards in a very dirty condition, that is in regard to insect pests.” Recognizing that Indian orchards were “no doubt...a source of danger,” Hewitt agreed, “it was very very hard on the white man...near the Indian reserve.”<sup>56</sup> Similarly, in Yakima County, a horticultural inspector informed the local Indian superintendent of “complaints from fruit growers adjoining the Yakima Indian Reservation and from some living on the reservation, that the Indian Owners who have orchards are neglecting them. These orchards are a menace to growers who are trying to keep the trees clean.”<sup>57</sup>

While most scientists recommended pesticides such as lead arsenate to kill insects, others recognized that chemicals were ineffective and turned to “new tactics,” namely “Old Mother Nature.” Dr. I.M. Miller of Yakima noted that Californians had successfully used the ladybug to eradicate black scale. Even more promising were birds that consumed close to 85 percent of hibernating codling moth larvae but Dr. Miller mused, “we are deprived of that aid since the spray material keeps the birds from the orchard.”<sup>58</sup> When farmers complained that

---

<sup>56</sup> CG Hewitt, *Evidence Before the Select Committee on Agriculture and Colonization* (1910), quoted in Paul W. Riegert, *From Arsenic to DDT: A History of Entomology in Western Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 185.

<sup>57</sup> RG 75 (0021) 10, 26, Correspondence Relating to the Promotion of Farming, 1912-1918  
ASA 06/16/10 Box 156, F.E. DeSelle Horticultural Inspector #2 to Superintendent Carr, 5 February 1914.

<sup>58</sup> OHS, Dr. I.M. Miller, “New Tactics Suggested in Moth War,” *Better Fruit* (22, 6), 1927.

birds ate fruit, one newspaper suggested that they consider birds “as servants, employed to destroy weeds and insects, for whom sufficient food and needed protection is generously provided.”<sup>59</sup>

*Nature's Bounty: Irrigation*

In both countries, government support of irrigation was a key development that spurred horticulture and validated the concepts of cooperation between farmers and nature at the heart of the modern countryside. Increasingly, growers accepted irrigation as part of scientific agriculture. Even debates about non-irrigated land in the Kootenay Valley were moot by 1918 when only a few years earlier, “if one were to have mentioned the need of irrigation...they would have been laughed at.” Under the sway of scientific agriculture, growers appreciated that even well-watered regions could experience periods of little rainfall. Thus, rather than suffer the vagaries of precipitation like ignorant pioneers, orchardists embraced irrigation as “the cheapest form of insurance.”<sup>60</sup>

By 1914, problems over irrigation provided an unintended rallying point for grower unity. One of the first challenges was the unstable financial position of the private irrigation companies that sold water to orchardists. In theory, the companies would use real estate profits to improve, maintain, and expand the irrigation works but when sales fell so too did irrigation upgrades. In some cases, the wooden flumes and earthen trenches constructed during the initial boom had reached the end of their expected lifespan; in others, proposed irrigation schemes were never completed due to recession and declining property prices. Faced with inadequate water and failing infrastructure, the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association appealed to the government for government-owned irrigation systems

---

<sup>59</sup> OHS, “Government Experts Investigates Destruction of Fruit by Birds,” *Rogue River Fruit Grower*, October 1910.

<sup>60</sup> “Irrigation Needed on Kootenay Farms,” *The Agricultural Journal*, September 1918.

throughout the province where needed.”<sup>61</sup> British Columbia government officials responded to farmers who were chafing under poorly managed privately-owned irrigation works by revising the Water Act in 1914 and becoming directly involved in irrigation schemes, leading to the creation of user-owned and controlled water districts by 1920.<sup>62</sup> Governments south of the boundary, who were equally concerned about the cost and condition of irrigation, supported the development of grower-led water districts by investing in them. This brought more arid land under cultivation, fulfilling the promise of an expanded rural civilization of blossoming trees.<sup>63</sup>

While government and grower efforts in irrigation conformed to William Smythe’s vision of environment-based co-operation, water was also a crucible for conflict. In clashes repeated throughout the Plateau, settlers and First Nations struggled over water access long after colonial governments had crafted reservations that often reserved prime land and water rights for recent immigrants. On their reservation in eastern Washington, the Yakama people confronted strikingly similar issues. The Yakima press celebrated irrigation projects such as the Tieton dam and their support of agriculture as “the emblem of the industry that has superceded the fishing industry in the Yakima valley” – and by implication, the priorities of Native peoples.<sup>64</sup> The fact that nearby federally-sponsored reclamation projects depleted the reservation’s precious water resources in favour of extensive irrigation schemes for white farmers evoked no concern. White farmers could raise high-value crops such as fruit, while Yakama Nation agriculturalists were limited to crops that required little water and fetched

---

<sup>61</sup> BCA, GR 400, British Columbia Department of Agriculture, Provincial Horticulturalist, Volume 1 File 8, British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association Resolutions for February 13-14 Meeting (1917).

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth Wayne Wilson, “Irrigating the Okanagan: 1860-1920” (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989), Chapter 5.

<sup>63</sup> Christine E. Pfaff, *Harvests of Plenty: A History of the Yakima Irrigation Project, Washington* (Denver: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 2002).

<sup>64</sup> “Indians Disgusted As Dam Water Handicaps Fishing,” *Yakima Morning Herald*, 3 July 1925.

less. Moreover, the white farmers' pre-emption of springs and artesian wells used historically by the Yakama people created potential criminals out of many who required drinking water. William Speedies, a Yakama, recalled, "Mr. Winans told me that I must not go down to this spring to get any water, where we had been in the habit of getting water, and we had to go up the fence about half a mile, but some times we stole through the fence, crawled under the wire to get our drinking water...that spring has been there ever since I can remember ...Now I have to go there and steal water."<sup>65</sup>

In southern British Columbia, the Westbank Nation had ample water thanks to a creek that flowed across their reserve but had no right to use it because the provincial government recognized a settler's water claim for Lot 434 dating from 1875 although the reserve itself was not allotted until 1888. While there was no doubt of the Westbank band's historic domain, the provincial government refused to recognize any right based on prior usage. By 1915 the dispute came to a head when the band barred the latest owner of Lot 434 from entering the reserve to repair an aqueduct since he had reneged on an agreement to provide a small amount of water for the reserve's tomato crops. According to the Indian Agent, "the real hardship... is ... that all the water flowing down the Creek in the summer time comes from several springs each of which rises from the ground on the said reserve and flows into the Creek about a mile above [Lot 434]. All the water in the Creek some two or three miles above the boundary line of the Reserve is either used by settlers or disappears in the ground, and for two miles at least above the springs the Creek bed is absolutely dry."<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Testimony in *United States v. Winans* transcript of record, pp. 176, 180 (speaking through interpreter); quoted in Barbara Leibhardt Wester, "Yakima Land Use in the Federal Allotment Era," in *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Reading in Environmental History* eds. Dale Goble and Paul Hirt (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 213.

<sup>66</sup> Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG10, Indian Affairs, Series C-II-2, Volume 11301, Reel T-16112 Inspector of Indian Agencies - Okanagan Agency - Irrigation and Westbank I.R. Water dispute, 1914-1917, Letter Indian Agent [Robert Brown?] to Secretary, Dept of Indian Affairs Ottawa 7 July 1915.

Notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the local Indian Agent to achieve a semblance of justice for the Westbank band, the Comptroller of Water Rights in Victoria simply stated “If there is not more than enough to irrigate [Lot 434], then the Indians must go without, for irrigation purposes at least.”<sup>67</sup> For the peoples of Yakama and the Okanagan, government overturned the most basic relationship of using environmental resources in a people’s immediate domain as it laid bare the ascendancy of a new ecological regime.<sup>68</sup>

*Nature’s Bounty: Fruit*

Of course, as representatives of a new countryside movement blessed with intelligence and culture, growers were not oblivious to the “boom and bust” qualities of the wider economy and inevitable price fluctuations. But growers insisted that their partnership with nature could weather periodic economic storms. This belief endured its first severe test in the spring of 1911, a time of unparalleled optimism and prosperity. Whether in Summerland or Sunnyside, farmers rejoiced in unprecedented quantities of maturing fruit as new orchards came into bearing. Farmers packed boxes, sent them to packinghouses, and consigned their fruit with local co-ops or shipping agencies and waited for their returns. After changing hands from jobbers to local wholesalers and finally merchants, growers received bills for selling expenses. Nature’s bounty in hands of other men had replaced prosperity with ruin.

Undeniably, it was in the economic realm where the mettle of a trans-boundary community was sorely tested. The 1911 Canadian federal election and the fight over free

---

<sup>67</sup> LAC, RG10, Indian Affairs ,Series C-II-2 ,Volume 11301, Reel T-16112. Inspector of Indian Agencies - Okanagan Agency - Irrigation and Westbank I.R. Water dispute, 1914-1917, *Letter*, William Young (Comptroller of Water Rights, Victoria) to A. Megraw, Inspector of Indian Agencies (federal), Vernon, BC; 29 November 1916.

<sup>68</sup> For more discussion of American water rights and social conflict, consult Donald J. Pisani, *Water, Land, and Law in the West: The Limits of Public Policy, 1850-1920* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1996).

trade with the United States laid these tensions bare. While farmers generally supported free trade, Okanagan growers opposed reciprocity for fear of being flooded with American fruit. While reciprocity was eventually rejected, grower fears persisted. In 1915, BC Premier Richard McBride observed that “after years of industry and investment of much capital, the growers find themselves unable to sell their apples – the finest in the world – except at a loss.” This was particularly frustrating since “everywhere there is a cry for increased production, and so far as British Columbia is concerned the fruit-growers have all anticipated the necessity,” only to be undercut by the “splendidly organized” Washington and Oregon growers who, with surplus fruit and slackened demand, “are slaughtering our markets.”<sup>69</sup>

Faced with full packing houses, flooded markets, and depressed prices, calls for co-operation gained increasing force and legitimacy. Indeed, rationalizing nature’s production only made sense if it was accompanied by a rational means of bringing produce to market. Thus, co-operative efforts became another expression of rural modernity as a practical means to bring fruit to market and to fulfill man’s partnership with the natural world. In all co-operative undertakings, growers on both sides of the boundary wrestled with similar problems – the need for a uniform pack and grade of fruit supported by efficient packing houses, warehouses, storage plants, adequate transportation, and ultimately, stable and fair prices. In the years before the First World War, co-operative efforts began locally as reflected in the names of such organizations as the Hood River Apple Growers’ Association, the Yakima Valley Fruit Growers’ Association, and the Okanagan United Growers.<sup>70</sup> Their

---

<sup>69</sup> LAC, MG 27 II B9, Volume 127, Richard McBride to H.H. Stevens, 24 February 1915.

<sup>70</sup> C. Brewster Coulter, “The Big Y Country: Marketing Problems and Organization, 1900-1920” *Agricultural History* (4) 1946: 471-488; Ian MacPherson, “Creating Stability Amid Degrees of Marginality: Divisions in the Struggle for Orderly Marketing in British Columbia, 1900-1940” *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7 (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1990): 309-331.

efforts demonstrated the success of co-operative thinking and the orchardists' modern business outlook.

Proponents soon realized that local co-operators did not appreciate the full scale of nature's bounty and of the larger economic system within which it was sold. Much like efforts to contain pests, far-reaching solutions required extensive co-operation. Orchardists discovered that they could control how their apples were packed and stored but not their selling price. Some growers suggested that a central selling exchange would let them stabilize prices by controlling the flow of fruit onto the market rather than contribute to gluts with individual panic selling or destructive auctions. This led to the establishment of umbrella co-operatives such as the Okanagan Fruit Growers in British Columbia and the North Pacific Fruit Distributors that included co-operatives from Washington and Oregon.<sup>71</sup> Much to the disappointment of co-operative proponents, their high hopes ended in collapse and acrimony before the end of the First World War due to local jealousies, private competition, and rising prices as a result of the European conflict. But just as growers demonstrated their co-operative abilities by answering the patriotic call for "apple ammunition," they would continue to espouse its importance after the war.

#### *Continuity and Change during the Interwar Years*

Despite economic difficulties after the First World War, dreams of a blossoming empire continued to thrive. While never eclipsing the pre-war mania, horticultural promotion in the 1920s provided a sense of continuity in the modern countryside. Demonstrating its faith in rural life, British Columbia's government embarked on an ambitious scheme to

---

<sup>71</sup> Coulter, "The Big Y Country," 483.

develop southern Okanagan fruit lands for returning veterans.<sup>72</sup> Local horticultural agents fielded inquiries from prospective settlers in the prairie provinces; Kelowna and Vernon produced pamphlets as promotional tools and reflections of orchardist aspirations.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in southern Oregon, nature, culture, and science still combined to foster the ideals of an exclusive horticultural community. In a familiar refrain, Jackson County Commissioners called Nature's handiwork "a gracious gift to our people by the Creator." With "everything that contributes to the progress and uplift of the human family," the Commissioners stressed, "this country does not want more people so much as it wants better people...who will take an interest in maintaining the desirable class of citizenship already here, of whom we are so proud."<sup>74</sup>

In other instances, such reflections also offered glimpses of subtle but significant change. While the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce gladly pronounced that "the 3,000 growers in this district specialize in apples [and] grow nothing else," it also celebrated Wenatchee as "a progressive, all modern and prosperous city filled with 12,000 neighborly people." While the focus on town amenities is not altogether unrelated to the benefits of a horticultural society, the chamber proclaimed the city "is rapidly spreading into the orchards which are being removed to make room for 100 to 200 new homes annually."<sup>75</sup> Although the chamber stressed that disappearing orchards were on marginal land, the trend had ominous implications for horticulture as the basis of rural society.

---

<sup>72</sup> James Murton, *Creating a Modern Countryside: Liberalism and Land Resettlement in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> BCA, GR 1189, British Columbia Horticultural Branch, 1920-1962; Box 1 - Horticultural Branch; OK District Horticultural Bulletin 1920; File 1, 2 October 1920.

<sup>74</sup> OHS Northwest Promotional Pamphlets, MSS 6000, Box 9, Hood River County, OR (1907-1992), "Where Nature Lavished Her Bounties; Jackson County, Oregon" (Jackson County Commissioners, 1924-5).

<sup>75</sup> "Wenatchee, the Gateway to Opportunity," Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce, 1925.

In the space of a generation, the ideal candidate for fruit farming also underwent changes. Farming required “a more rigid training than any other profession,” and the modern farmer was multifaceted, acting as “a mechanic and a scientist, a manager, and a business man” but whereas twenty years earlier *Better Fruit* celebrated the urban migrant as ideally suited to learning the modern practices of fruit growing, it pronounced in a 1925 editorial “a town boy is hopeless on the farm” since “a farmer is made from boyhood.”<sup>76</sup> Such sentiments highlighted the changing perspective of orchardists. Where once the very basis of fruit farming was geared towards community building and population expansion, a new generation of orchardists gradually shifted to emphasize a more exclusively rural mentality that again defined expertise as a trait born with the soil rather than one that brought to the countryside.

After the First World War, nature continued to expand her bounty as the pre-war plantings came into full bearing. In British Columbia alone, the apple crop jumped from 1.3 million boxes in 1920 to 2.8 million in 1921; in Washington State the figure exceeded 6 million boxes.<sup>77</sup> Calling it a “seething caldron of [marketing] unrest,” one writer argued, “at no time in the last ten years, has the Northwest shown as much interest in marketing as today.”<sup>78</sup> The post-war recession that wreaked havoc with growers’ bottom lines created in the Okanagan scenes of orchardists “by the dozen camping on all the shippers’ doorsteps looking for money.”<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> “Farmer vs. Businessman,” *Better Fruit* 23 (5) November 1928.

<sup>77</sup> David Dendy and Kathleen M. Kyle, *A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association* (Kelowna: BCFGA, 1990), 47; C. Brewster Coulter, “The Big Y Country: Marketing Problems and Organization, 1900-1920” *Agricultural History* (4) 1946: 473.

<sup>78</sup> Joseph Waldo Ellison, “The Cooperative Movement in the Oregon Apple Industry, 1910-1929” *Agricultural History* 13 (2) 1939: 91.

<sup>79</sup> Dendy and Kyle, *A Fruitful Century*, 47.

Again, bumper crops compelled growers to revisit co-operation. Through the 1920s, no less than four prominent co-operative plans were proposed and debated by orchardists. Interest reached a fever pitch in 1923 thanks to the work of Aaron Sapiro, a San Francisco lawyer well known for promoting co-operation. Among Northwest growers, Sapiro's efforts led to discussions among Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia orchardists about establishing a central selling exchange.<sup>80</sup> Such an organization offered tantalizing possibilities both for marketing fruit and orchardist identity. The proposal for a trans-boundary exchange matched the scale of nature's bounty and promised to give more concrete form to a cross-border rural civilization as Canadian and American growers worked together from mutual interest. However, the large scope of the proposal and the numerous players involved added a layer of complexity to its approval that ultimately growers were unable to overcome.

Although trans-boundary solutions suffered a setback, regional ones gained in popularity. Invited to speak to Okanagan growers, Sapiro told them, "co-operative marketing is the only hope of the man who tills the soil or cares for the orchard" since it "means the substitution of merchandising for dumping." His endorsement led to the establishment of another central selling agency for British Columbia orchardists, but with the help of court decisions that undermined contract agreements, those who chose higher returns over price stability ended that co-operation.<sup>81</sup>

Attempts to create co-operative marketing schemes moved in fits and starts. After periods of intense hardship, interest in collective action sharply rose, only to wane when prices for fruit stabilized or increased. Efforts to establish co-operative fruit sales were

---

<sup>80</sup> Ellison, "The Cooperative Movement in the Oregon Apple Industry," 94.

<sup>81</sup> Dendy and Kyle, *Fruitful Century*, 49 and 53.

undermined by the failure of the largest growers, who shared the disdain of many business leaders such as Henry Ford for “collective” organizations, to join in their success. The *Medford Clarion* declared that local farming organizations were merely “a small stepping stone” to surrendering farmer control to a “Jew-directed holding company” or “super-association” where “the fruit grower...barely controls his own life.”<sup>82</sup> Others denounced co-operative proposals as “purely communistic” attempts to set up soviets in orcharding communities.<sup>83</sup> The negative portrayal of union activity in the press, especially attempts to organize migrant labourers, provided reason for some growers to distance themselves from any talk of co-operatives and their usefulness.<sup>84</sup> Agricultural specialists advocating increased grower co-operation also acknowledged that the state’s effectiveness in offering reliable crop forecasts, market news, and fruit inspection services to facilitate co-ops also meant “the government is making the individual more independent and more able to conduct his business than formerly.”<sup>85</sup>

As the drive to rationalize nature and production progressed after the First World War, the efforts of governments and their scientific experts to create “symmetry” between farmer and nature became a source of tension. During the initial boom government agencies took a leading role in facilitating horticultural growth by promoting agricultural science and the modern countryside. By the 1920s, the same agencies began to hold farmers accountable for the very practices of “modern” pest control they helped promote. In British Columbia, the horticultural board’s spraying crews “kept [pests] down for a number of years,” but the pests

---

<sup>82</sup> “Jewish Exploitation of Farmers’ Organizations,” *Medford Clarion*, 18 April 1924.

<sup>83</sup> Dendy and Kyle, *Fruitful Century*, 60.

<sup>84</sup> “General Roundup is begun among IWW Agitators,” 21 November 1917; “Whip, Feathers and tar applied to IWW Backs...in name of women and children,” 10 November 1917.

<sup>85</sup> J.C. Folger and S.M. Thomson, *The Commercial Apple Industry of North America* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 338.

“beat our best effort” of the experts. That prompted the government to turn pest control over to the growers.<sup>86</sup>

The use of pesticides as a modern technology of the modern countryside had other unintended consequences that severely tested faith in scientific agriculture and the superior relationship of growers to the natural world. This problem became more acute as public and official awareness about spray residue on fruit shifted after the First World War. The issue came to a head for Washington and Oregon growers in 1925 when British health officials condemned a large number of fruit shipments due to fears of arsenic poisoning, leading to calls for a complete embargo. As the attendant publicity spilled over into the US, worried American consumers scaled back apple purchases which exacerbated a severe market slump.<sup>87</sup>

Despite initial friction about the role of federal inspectors in condemning overseas-bound fruit shipment, fruit growers rallied around the call for “clean fruit” which met British arsenic tolerances. State agencies and agricultural colleges diligently began to experiment with mechanical cleaning and acid baths as the most effective methods of removing the offending residue.<sup>88</sup> The irony was that the need to wash fruit in a hydrochloric acid solution spawned a new set of technologies that, in a different circumstance, might be celebrated along with scientific bulletins and automobiles as a proud marker of rural modernism. Similarly, a growing awareness of insect resistance to pesticides by the 1930s, as well as fears that orchard soils were invariably harmed by the chemicals, fostered grower apprehension. It appeared that if urban capitalists destroyed the environment through

---

<sup>86</sup> BCA, GR 680 British Columbia Commission on Dyking, Draining, & Irrigation, Box 6, File 20, [?] Perry to F.M. Clement, 7 September 1946.

<sup>87</sup> “Excess Spray is Taboo This Year,” *Better Fruit* 20 (11) May 1926.

<sup>88</sup> “Tests Show How To Remove Residue,” *Better Fruit* 21 (7) January 1927.

factories and industry, orchardists were slowly and silently accomplishing the same goal. While British Columbia orchardists escaped direct retribution at the hands of British inspectors, they could take little comfort in the fact that the tools of scientific agriculture were not an unmitigated good.

More broadly, the shift from enthusiastically promoting pest control to ensure maximum production to monitoring tolerances and marketable fruit signalled that the hallmark of the modern countryside – rural growth – was in doubt. The “balance” between city and country that rural advocates espoused at the turn of the century as essential to social harmony and progress was increasingly muted. This shift was not wholly a consequence of government priorities no longer mirroring rural aspirations since farmers themselves also began to question the tenets of horticultural expansion.

With the onset of the Great Depression, growers again wrestled with the fundamental tenets of rural modernity – the continued expansion of farmlands and increased production. Dramatically reversing government actions of only thirty years earlier, United States Secretary of Agriculture Hyde called for the elimination of 30 or 40 million acres of land from production. Concurrently, the continued faith of growers in increased sales through population growth and advertising began to wane. In arguing that agricultural expansion was antithetical to farmer interests, Yakima orchardist H.E. Newman also rejected a fundamental tool of rural modernity – reclamation. In what would have been denounced as heresy a few decades earlier, Newman warned that it was nothing more than a tool of “real-estate speculators, railroad and commercial organizations seeking to enlarge the scope of their

businesses, and from the politicians who represent them” and that farmers must “take action” to halt an oversupply of fruit.<sup>89</sup>

Such views demonstrated that the benefits of a rational and ordered countryside were becoming elusive. Growers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho inundated the Interstate Commerce Commission with oral and written submissions detailing their hardships in maintaining the prosperity that had seemed so attainable towards the end of the First World War. Against a backdrop of abandoned apple tracts and growing mortgage payments, orchardists attacked railway rates on the basis of shared responsibility since “railroad interests twenty years ago enthusiastically encouraged the development of orchard tracts.”<sup>90</sup> In British Columbia, orchardists also grappled with the rising production costs and fluctuating prices for fruit that prompted an increasing number to “forget the worry of the orchard” and seek non-farm employment.<sup>91</sup>

Not all growers were ready to abandon the modern countryside. The editor of *Better Fruit* angrily refuted the idea that greater production harmed fruit growers since industry had expanded with “more and bigger factories, more autos, more oil, more steel, more buildings, more filling stations and more hot dog stands.” He charged that those who would deny fruit growers the prospect of bigger harvests and growing communities took from horticulture its very basis of modernity, the production of “a necessity of modern healthful living.” His logic was clear: just as people could never be too healthy, so too could there never be too much fruit for the world. At the same time, progressive orchardists continued to ensure that the apple industry “adopted scientific methods and organized itself so that it has roots well

---

<sup>89</sup> Letter, *Yakima Herald*, 6 January 1933.

<sup>90</sup> “Fruit Men Ask Lower Rate,” *Better Fruit* 23 (5) November 1928.

<sup>91</sup> BCA, GR 680 British Columbia Commission on Dyking, Draining, & Irrigation, [?] Perry to F.M. Clement, 7 September 1946.

built.”<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, instead of excited news about expanding fruit settlements and rising real estate values, local newspapers and horticultural journals expressed relief that reports of shrinking apple acreages bettered “the situation of the grower with good varieties in well tended orchards.”<sup>93</sup>

As they endured the unending bleakness of the Great Depression, growers returned to old issues with renewed vigour. Orchardists in Washington and Oregon continued to support co-operation at the local level; British Columbia growers again considered the necessity of a central selling agency that would now depend on compulsory rather than voluntary association. Spurred by a strike of orchardists for a minimum of one cent per pound for apples in 1933, growers looked to Ottawa for leadership.<sup>94</sup> Due to the severity of the depression and a philosophical shift from production to marketing, the federal government passed the Natural Products Marketing Act of 1934 that permitted the creation of the Tree Fruit Board, a co-operative agency to sell and market fruit.<sup>95</sup> Although the courts subsequently disallowed the act, the intervention of the provincial government ensured the survival of the Board as a regulator of fruit marketing.

As growers struggled to regain their footing, European events were again a startling catalyst to the form and function of the modern countryside. After nearly two decades, war again swept the world and ignited a slumbering economy. This context revived the nearly forgotten promises of horticulture. With the demands of the war economy for agricultural products, nature’s bounty was suddenly a vital and patriotic component of the Allied effort.

---

<sup>92</sup> “Editorial Notes,” *Better Fruit* 25 (10) April 1931.

<sup>93</sup> Editorial, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 20 April 1936.

<sup>94</sup> David Dendy, “‘A Cent a Pound or on the Ground’: Okanagan Fruit Growers and Marketing, 1920-1935.” M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981.

<sup>95</sup> Dendy, *Fruitful Century*, 77. For an examination of marketing efforts leading up to 1934, see Mark Cox, “Innovation on Trial: British Columbia Fruit Growers and the Rise and Retreat of Regulation, 1925-1931,” in Peter Baskerville, ed., *Canadian Papers in Business History*, vol. 2 (Victoria: Public History Group, 1993), 125-146.

Like the production of munitions, tree limbs heavy with fruit became an icon of prosperity and demonstration of grower efficiency. With government-mandated price controls, better fruit distribution, and captive markets, orchardists savoured stable or increasing prices and the orderly marketing of their fruit.

Once again, science offered a better future. After decades of seemingly endless experimentation with chemical mixtures and fears over lead arsenate poisoning, science finally fulfilled its nearly-forgotten promise to orchardists. Rediscovered during the Second World War as an effective agent to control lice, insect typhus and malaria, DDT quickly became “the wonder insecticide” for farmers. Orchardists felt that DDT gave them “almost perfect control” over their crops and the enjoyment of their work. It eliminated traditional pests such as the codling moth, made the trees and fruit look healthier because, unlike lead arsenate, it left no stains, and it killed the biting flies and mosquitoes that pestered orchard workers.<sup>96</sup>

After the war, fruit farmers possessed an optimism not seen since horticulture’s promotional golden age. In the inaugural April 1946 issue of *The Goodfruit Grower*, editor F.W. Shields of Yakima, for example, declared that fruit farming already “exceeded the audacity and dwarfed the dreams” of the original pioneers. Echoing his predecessors, Shields argued that “imagination, enthusiasm, faith, water, sunshine, soil, knowledge and science will inevitably conspire to build an even greater empire, the likes of which has never been equaled by man.” Even the visionaries of 1910, fearful of overproduction, could not have imagined the development of “modern storage plants, improved transportation, refrigeration and expanding markets” that let the countryside thrive. Predicting more growth over the next decade, Shields had faith in continued innovations in production, packing, storing,

---

<sup>96</sup> “Codling Moth Pest Yields to DDT,” *The Goodfruit Grower*, 22 August 1946.

transportation and marketing. “There is a lot of sand in the desert we are about to convert into a Garden of Eden,” he concluded, “but it will require more and better sand to make it and keep it prosperous.”<sup>97</sup> Looking to the combination of science, predictable commodity prices, and a systematic labour supply, it appeared that fruit farmers could finally claim a vision fulfilled. With spring blossoms and autumn harvests, the future beckoned.

### *Conclusion*

For both promoters and governments, the birth of the modern countryside represented the achievement of a new rural society. The sight of young fruit trees juxtaposed with the yellowed arid expanse of the Okanagan or the Yakima area dramatized a process of nature being restored rather than being diminished. The application of science in the form of flowing canals confirmed the partnership of settler and land. For orchardists, nature’s bounty ultimately validated horticulture’s modern scientific orientation. Just as advocates had promised, the dissemination of agricultural research led to increasingly generous harvests. However, as more young orchards bore marketable fruit, the inevitable result was that more apples fought for access into the same markets. The solution was to extend the co-operation that existed between farmer and nature among farmers themselves. Full packing houses, flooded markets, and depressed prices gave force and legitimacy to calls for co-operation.

Despite the consistency with which the case of co-operation was pressed, support grew in fits and starts. After periods of intense hardship, interest in collective action sharply increased, only to wane when prices fruit stabilized or increased. In addition, efforts to establish co-operative fruit sales were undermined by a minority of growers who remained outside these organizations and eroded their effectiveness as volunteerism waned. Not only did co-operation never enjoy blanket acceptance by orchardists, not all of the other players

---

<sup>97</sup> “Codling Moth Pest Yields to DDT,” *The Goodfruit Grower*, 22 August 1946.

ranging from the middleman to the merchant favoured it. While proponents compared co-operation to modern corporations, opponents fanned the flames of socialism and anti-Semitism to discredit and undermine such efforts.

Pest infestations also led to calls for grower co-operation. Areas that were originally heralded as “pest free” such as the Okanagan Valley now hosted new organisms like the coddling moth. Despite the advice of the experimental stations, spraying, and the enforcement of laws against farmers who did not combat insects, the pests remained an uncomfortable reminder that the progressive farmer could not always “finish” nature to his desired end. By the mid-1920s, unconditional faith in rationalizing nature showed signs of strain as government agencies distanced themselves from previous agricultural practices, leaving growers with a shaken faith in agricultural science and bountiful nature.

This was in contrast to the initial optimism after the war about horticulture’s ability to sustain a modern countryside for the rural middle class. Soldier resettlement schemes, escalating land prices, and high returns on fruit offered ample evidence of horticulture as the path to an enlightened rural future. However, the vision of social, economic, and ecological order sustained by the orcharding landscape again proved elusive. Farmers struggled to achieve stability in marketing their fruit just as they had in procuring much-needed farm help. Similarly, orchardists fought to preserve the racial and gender composition of their communities while they struggled to balance their bottom lines. And though poor crops certainly befell orchardists with their attendant challenges, surprisingly the larger problem remained scientific agriculture’s fulfillment of creating productive farms rich with fruit.

Ultimately, farmers were forced to reinterpret the meaning of generous harvests in the new reality of the interwar period. In the twentieth century, the story of agriculture and the

environment in North America often follows the arc of growing farmer demands on the land followed by a “rejection” of those demands with environmental degradation and loss. What orchardists discovered was that the difference between dearth and bounty was not always clear, that prolific harvests did not necessarily represent prosperity but could mean poor financial returns and red ink. Conversely, small crops did not necessarily lead to financial ruin. Thus, farmers were forced to confront their most basic assumptions about bounty that was celebrated in glowing depictions of fruit farming and reflected in an ever-expanding population demanding wholesome food.

But what growers failed to do during peacetime, governments did under the auspices of two world wars – increased production and stable prices. In particular, the Second World War and the demands of the war economy redeemed many of the original horticultural precepts that were gradually eroded and discredited through the 1920s and 1930s. Under the umbrella of a single agency dictating the distribution and price of fruit, markets could indeed be found for all of nature’s bounty, and orchardists could again take pride in expanding harvests. Strange as it may seem, the battlefield made the fruited field meaningful again, and in doing so, gave life to nearly forgotten dreams of blossoms and progress.

## 7

*“A Dream of A.D. 2000 – What We Have Missed”:  
Horticulture in the New Millennium*

Is there any progress in horticulture? If not, it is dead, uninspiring.  
We cannot live in the past, good as it is; we must draw our inspiration from the future.  
~Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858-1954)

British orchardist W.M. Bear was still contemplating Westminster’s latest Fruit Marketing proposal for the 1935 season as he drifted off to sleep. Like his Canadian and American counterparts, Bear had shared in both the heady confidence of high fruit prices and the paralyzing despair of bleeding red ink. And like Ottawa and Washington DC, London responded to the complaints of growers with proposals to develop the fruit industry with varying degrees of success. As before, the chief difficulty in planning was not the dearth of lessons offered by the past, but interpreting them. How would present actions shape the evolution of the industry? What would become of the “fine art” of horticulture as a result? Bear opened his eyes, and saw a young man looking upon him with a deep sense of pity. In a Dickensian turn, the man intoned, “I am the Spirit of Progress, and have come to give you a glimpse of the future. Come with me and I will transport you to England as it will be many years hence. You are worried about the organisation of the fruit industry. Come and see.”<sup>1</sup> Moving from his bed, Bear followed the Spirit to a vast landscape of orchards arranged into orderly plantations. “You are now in the year 2000,” said the Spirit, “and this is one of the

---

<sup>1</sup> “A Dream of A.D. 2000 – What We Have Missed,” *Better Fruit* 30, 3 (September, 1935).

approved fruit areas.” The scene did not look familiar. Where was his farm? Was he still in Sussex?

The future would hold many changes for fruit growers. “You were trying to farm on unsuitable land,” clarified the Spirit, “which could never produce to the full: such farms as yours were scrapped long ago.” The Spirit explained that the 1935 marketing proposal played out as it had before – initial optimism was ultimately replaced by growing debts and calls for government intervention since the plan merely tinkered with the fundamental problems of production and distribution. In response, the Board was put under direct control of the Ministry of Horticulture with “absolute powers over the industry.” Land was nationalized and mapped according to agricultural suitability and crop specialization, and subsequently organized into block sections with packing stations, canning outfits and processing plants at the centre. Such systematic arrangements ensured absolute uniformity in pack and grade and diminished the role of salesmen, commission agents, dealers, and marketing authorities.

Central to the success of achieving full economic efficiency was rationalizing the role of the grower. Instead of functioning as an independent producer, the farmer became an employee of the Board and was paid a stable annual salary of roughly £50 per acre of apples he worked. Prospective growers wishing to enter the industry had to enter a suitable college and graduate with a Bachelor of Fruit-growing, “very similar to a B.Sc. of your time.” Entomologists kept “constant watch...for the first sign of insect attack” and marketing specialists determined “the exact moment when the crop should be picked for marketing or storage purposes.” Based on expert recommendations, “labour units” were dispatched like “a small army,” complete with their own canteen and sleeping accommodations. At the same time, labour service could also serve as punishment for orchardists who chafed at their lack

of independence. At the discretion of officials, farmers could be given a period of up to six months in a labour gang, and for “real insubordination,” indefinite suspension or dismissal.

With the achievement of a modern countryside, remnants of the orchardists’ earlier cultural life survived in muted form. To this end, growers were given an “entertainment allowance” to regale the parade of officials and experts who made their way through orchard districts during the year. To complement the men’s training in the field, growers’ wives were required to take a course in domestic science “with a special view to the correct feeding and entertainment of the scientist.” This was a particularly important domain of expertise since scientists could sometimes be “difficult” and “peculiar,” thereby reinforcing the importance of “the exercise of that charm which goes so far to produce harmonious relations between men.”

Relations between farmers and consumers also underwent profound changes to solve the perennial problem of markets and consumption. In the place of campaigns to expand apple consumption and preserve access to domestic markets, the Ministry mandated that every person had to include a “definite proportion” of local fruits in their daily food regime in the name of improving public health and guaranteeing brisk demand for fruit. Before he could pose another question, Bear found himself awake once again in bed. Momentarily dazed by his vision, he finally rushed to the window. Outside, the “dear old trees” he planted years before remained, as well as “the thousand and one things” that demanded his personal attention and expertise. With renewed appreciation, Bear dressed quickly and went into his orchard “glad at the prospect of an active day” but still tempted by future visions of stable prices and generous returns.

Looking back from the new millennium and a worldview dominated by free market globalization, Bear's dream of state managerialism and curtailed consumer freedom seems almost unintelligible. But at the same time, his dream reflected in microcosm the very consideration that guided the dramatic transformation of the Pacific Northwest at the turn of the last century: namely, the form and content of rural modernity embodied by growing fruit. In the shadow of the Second World War, orchardists once again found validation in an expanding and ascendant rural society. But like Bear's glimpse of the future, the prospect of stability and growth in post-war agriculture proved fleeting and illusory although elements of that original horticultural vision continued to find expression for many years to come.

#### *A Conflicted Legacy*

With the defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan at the hands of the Allied Powers in 1945, growers once again struggled with nature's bounty and efforts to constrain production. Oregon and Washington growers learned that while labour costs would still be subject to regulation, apples and apple products would be dropped from the "short supply list" of price-controlled commodities in September 1946. That undercut the triumphant optimism in publications like *The Goodfruit Grower* just a few months earlier.<sup>2</sup> By 1948, the publication bravely exhorted growers that the transition from war to a peace economy was "not the time for defeatism," but a moment of "rosy promise for a courageous people with vision" to produce better apples and better marketing practices.<sup>3</sup>

North of the border, the Canadian government's decision to terminate the Agricultural Supply Board in 1947 was offset by the continuation of some programs under new legislation before formally ending them in 1951. At the same time, British Columbia's orchardists

---

<sup>2</sup> "Apple Prices Decontrolled," *The Goodfruit Grower* 5 September 1946.

<sup>3</sup> "Editorial," *The Goodfruit Grower* 19 February 1948.

generally prospered in the immediate post-war years with a small land boom and influx of new settlers attracted to horticultural life, particularly from Germany towards the end of the decade. However, Okanagan growers also had to temper expectations with the continuing shift to a peace-time economy. Their first major test came in 1949 when the Canadian government effectively ended their exclusive access to the domestic market by allowing the resumption of fruit imports from Washington. That replayed old grievances about cheap imports and depressed prices.<sup>4</sup>

With memories of large crops and unstable prices still fresh, orchardists experienced a familiar turn of events. BC Tree Fruits, the single-desk marketing agency of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, tried to dispose of a surplus of 1.5 million boxes in 1949 by paying the freight to ship it to the United Kingdom and thus try to prop up domestic prices by removing excess supply.<sup>5</sup> Confronted with a large apple harvest in 1951, Yakima growers ruefully disposed of their crop closer to home, setting out approximately 3 200 carloads of apples stored from last year's crop over seven acres in the local landfill for pigs to eat. The bleak situation fostered by bountiful harvests and rebounding agricultural production in Europe contrasted markedly with life immediately after the war, prompting one Yakima farmer to embrace earlier solutions by declaring, "if our export market's gone to hell for keeps, then we've got to have a government subsidy."<sup>6</sup> Farmers were once again facing a frustrating paradox: the prosperity of high crop yields under the rationality of a war-time

---

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Garrish, "The Demise of the Orderly Marketing System: The British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, Single-Desk Selling and the Coming of the Agricultural Land Reserve," MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to deal with "excess supply" in the form of cull apples, BC Tree Fruits recommended in 1946 that the BCFGa establish a co-operative company to use the fruit in marketable apple juice. The same year Sun-Rype Products Limited was established. While the processing of apples went some way to curbing supply of fresh fruit, it did not preclude the need for other actions. David Dendy and Kathleen Kyle, *A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association 1889-1989* (Kelowna: BCFGa, 1989), p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> "Sad Applesauce," *Good Fruit Grower* 1951.

economy ultimately spelt financial disaster with the laissez-faire ideals of a peace-time economy. And as the farmers' complaint illustrates, the involvement of government seemed to be the defining variable.

At the same time, governments and farmers continued to find common cause after the Second World War. The Washington State government contested in court a 1946 federal regulation setting a 0.5 tolerance for fluorine on apples and pears since the new standard "seriously harmed the keeping quality of the fruit ... even though ... a higher tolerance is not injurious to health."<sup>7</sup> As before, horticultural experts and experiment stations developed and refined horticultural practices ranging from cultivation to pest control. Similarly, bureaucrats and scientists still explored new ways of bringing fruit to market, devoting resources to monitoring market conditions as well as exploiting new marketing opportunities.

#### *Redefining Bounty and Rural Progress*

With the dawn of the fabled post-war consumer society, modernity and growth continued to be synonymous concepts. Lonely was the person in the 1950s that questioned the unmitigated desirability of expanding industrial production, full employment, and burgeoning suburbs. Expansion was the hallmark of progress, and from its promotional beginnings, fruit farmers laid claim to it for the same reasons. However, in the triumph of industry over lifestyle, farmers were once again wrestling with the idea of limiting or even scaling back the growth of horticulture as the basis of rural society, inexorably undermining their vision as an alternative to the urban-centric vision of modernity. Bureau of Reclamation agents involved with the Columbia Basin Project wrestled with this shift after the Second World War when evaluating the size of family farms and irrigation support. The original valorization of the five or ten-acre orchard became increasingly problematic since small

---

<sup>7</sup> WSA-O, Progress and Industry Division, 88-4-495, Box 2, Report, 3 January 1946.

acres “must be cultivated intensively to support the owner, regardless of the soil quality.” Consequently, if 60-acre units of land were broken into 10-acre tracts under current directives, the Bureau could no longer deliver water.<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the corporate rationalism of Bear’s future England, eliminating marginal farms in the Hood River, Yakima, and Okanogan valleys would indeed foster the production of better fruit and higher commodity prices, but at what cost to the vitality of agricultural communities that trumpeted the growth of their upstanding schools and beautiful homes fifty years earlier?

The concept of the “intelligent orchardist” was also under attack as shown by the controversy over Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane, better known as DDT. Hailed at the end of the Second World War for its thoroughness in eliminating pests such as the codling moth, DDT became synonymous with effective pest control. However, growing public concern about its use was only the latest in a long line of devastating reversals that raised questions about the progressive credentials of horticulture. For decades, farmers proudly trumpeted scientific research showing how eating apples yielded health benefits. That, in turn, reinforced their ideas of the superiority of rural life and the host of economic, social, and moral benefits that flowed from it. In the tumultuous context of social protest and generational anger in the 1960s, the farmer became the thoughtless crony of chemical multinationals, and selfishly placed his own bottom line above the interests of a trusting populace. Joni Mitchell’s soulful 1970 plea for spots on her apples was the musical culmination of this shifting public and arguably urban-centric view that enshrined a popular skepticism towards the superiority of farming life.

---

<sup>8</sup> WSA-O, Progress and Industry Division, 88-4-495, Adv-Ala, Box 2, Agriculture Committee, Report, Advisory Commission to the State of Washington, Department of Conservation and Development, 13 December 1945.

Despite public unease, the banning of DDT did not fundamentally alter the environmental perspective of orchardists. On the contrary, farmers recommitted themselves to the legacy of scientific agriculture and its faith in “maximum nature” by turning to earlier and less successful chemical control methods, or eagerly awaiting the development of new compounds. Similarly, orchardists continued to look to science to help “finish nature” in terms of the appearance, colour, and ripeness of fruit, all-important considerations in bringing the “perfect” apple to market.

A year after the release of Rachel Carson’s landmark work on the dangers of DDT, *Silent Spring*, the Uniroyal Chemical Company registered the plant-growth hormone daminozide, popularly known as Alar, with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use on fruit crops such as apples. Praised for its ability to reduce fruit drop and so extend the picking season to produce higher quality fruit, government horticulturalists in the U.S. and Canada tested Alar in matters such as the rate and timing of application.<sup>9</sup> Some farmers, in due course, used Alar as an effective and inexpensive way of increasing production.

In February 1989, however, Alar was transformed from a relatively unknown product into a latter-day DDT with a story that ran on the CBS news program, *60 Minutes*. Based on a report by the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) entitled “Intolerable Risk,” the segment called Alar a “potent carcinogen” when applied to apples with particularly serious implications for children. The news set off shockwaves in the industry. Consumers threw out their apples, dumped their juice, and swore off the fruit; prices fell from \$13 per box to \$6.60 per box, approximately \$3 below the cost of production. In an attempt to restore public faith in the safety of apples, the Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of Alar and Uniroyal voluntarily withdrew it from domestic sale. Reflecting on the fall out, Okanogan

---

<sup>9</sup> H.B. Heeney and S.R. Miller, *Smithfield Experimental Farm, 1944-1985* (Ottawa: Agriculture Canada, 1986).

County orchardist Bert Stennes found the image of farmers willfully inflicting damage to families most difficult to take, declaring, “I took it personally when they called me a child-killer.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite the explosive nature of the *60 Minutes* segment, problems surrounding Alar were not completely unforeseen. Beginning in 1986, growing public concern with Alar prompted several supermarket chains to refuse apples treated with the chemical; the next year the Washington Apple Commission advised the minority of growers who still used Alar to stop doing so.<sup>11</sup> Most growers did follow that advice making the *60 Minutes* segment even more egregious. Although Alar was not used to the same degree in the province, the B.C. Fruit Growers’ Association had anticipated possible problems. Consequently, the Association echoed the move of their Washington counterparts and advised its members to cease applying the agent. In fact, the provincial government had followed the lead of growers and banned Alar in May 1988, almost a year before the *60 Minutes* segment.<sup>12</sup>

For the Bernath family, who tended their 54 acres orchard for four generations, the impact of the Alar scare on their Washington orchard was devastating. “No money was coming in,” recalled Cathy Bernath, “so we had to go to the bank to get next year's crop in shape. That put us in a hole that we never recovered from.” By the summer of 1991, the bank foreclosed, forcing the Bernaths off the land and into the city. “What made me especially mad,” she continued, “was that we had never used Alar.”<sup>13</sup>

Washington state growers launched a two hundred million dollar lawsuit against CBS and the NRDC for product disparagement to end what one orchardist called the reporting of

---

<sup>10</sup> Rick Steigmeyer, *Washington Apple Country* (Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing, 1995), 42, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Steigmeyer, *Washington Apple Country*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> British Columbia, *1989 Legislative Session; Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly* 17 May 1989, 6834.

<sup>13</sup> “Apple Growers Bruised and Bitter After Alar Scare,” *New York Times* 9 July 1991.

“junk science.” The apple industry also allied itself with the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), an organization with funding ties to a host of food processors and chemical companies, including Uniroyal. Founded in 1978, the ACSH has adopted a number of controversial positions, including the belief that the banning of DDT was “one of the most tragic public health decisions in history” since there is “little evidence of substantial harm to animals, and no evidence that [its] poses a hazard to human health.”<sup>14</sup> The ACSH took a similar view of Alar and led a vigorous counteroffensive claiming that the segment was based on environmental zealotry and poor research. So successful was the ACSH’s response, the term “Alar scare” has entered media lexicon as shorthand for irrational public scare-mongering based on questionable research. And while Tom Hale, president of the Washington Apple Commission, argued that in a post-Alar world, “we farmers are taking a hard look at what chemicals we’re using, and that’s a legitimate concern,” organizations like the Midwest Apple Improvement Association continue to memorialize the event as “the great Alar hoax.”<sup>15</sup>

Despite expressions of resistance, orchardists throughout the region realized that consumers were environmentally conscious. Thus, in the post-DDT age they experimented with different pest control practices. “Consumers still appreciate farmers in the romantic sense,” said David Granatstein, statewide coordinator for the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources at Washington State University, “[and] they see farming as a good, ideal life. The flip side is the belief that farmers are poisoning the earth.”<sup>16</sup> In conjunction with the guidance provided by state’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and the United States Department of Agriculture’s Western IPM Center, private

---

<sup>14</sup> “DDT Ban Turns 30,” *ACSH News* 10 (1) 2002.

<sup>15</sup> “Apple Growers Bruised and Bitter After Alar Scare,” *New York Times* 9 July 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Steigmeyer, *Washington Apple Country*, 53.

businesses such as Stemilt Growers, one of Washington state's largest apple packers and marketers, have focused on more "ecological conscious" practices in growing and harvesting fruit. In 1990, the company instituted a "Responsible Choice" program to foster environmental awareness that included the provision of advice on selecting chemical agents. About three hundred growers voluntarily subscribed to the program prompting orchardist Derek Carlson to say that, "growers realize that environmental pressures are pushing in their direction."<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Okanagan fruit farmers began experimenting with new methods of pest control under the province's Sterile Insect Release program. Developed in 1993 with the cooperation of the provincial and federal governments, the area-wide program focuses on key fruit-growing regions and brings together commercial orchardists and homeowners to combat the codling moth.<sup>18</sup> With the use of technologies such as pheromone traps and intensive monitoring, the program releases millions of sterile moths to mate with their wild counterparts. Since the resultant eggs are infertile, the program aims to reduce the codling moth population to the point that chemical control is unnecessary.

While such steps in reducing dependence on pesticides are laudable, some are also going one step further. In an echo of the early horticultural ideal of pest-free regions and restored nature, organic farmers eschew the use of pesticides and other forms of intervention to produce fruit which they argue is more healthy and less harmful to the wider environment. Elam Wills, an orchardist in Cawston, BC, began organic farming 30 years out of a desire to take a positive step for the environment rather than potential financial gains. "There was no real strong consciousness of organic [at that time]" said Wills. "There was no premium

---

<sup>17</sup> Steigmeyer, *Washington Apple Country*, 53.

<sup>18</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, "Organic Farming," *Integrated Fruit Production Guide* (2004), p. 3-6.

revenue on the income.”<sup>19</sup> Today, organic farming is a billion-dollar global industry with typically higher returns for orchardists. This financial reality has led to an upswing in the number of conventional orchardists that have converted to organic operations, although in 2007 organic farming remained a niche industry, accounting for approximately 1% of all farming operations in Canada.

In the post-war period, irrigation as an emblem and signifier of rural modernity had complicated the earlier portrait of brotherly co-operation and environmental progress. By the 1970s, the construction and operation of dams, reservoirs, and delivery systems on the Columbia and Yakima Rivers for irrigation and hydro-electric power production had taken a toll on the fisheries. In that decade, fewer than one thousand fish returned to spawn in the Yakima River basin, a far cry from the six fish runs of upwards of half a million adult sockeye, steelhead trout, Chinook and coho salmon that historically returned to the river. An exceptionally dry summer in 1977 compounded the problem. The Yakama launched a lawsuit to reopen the of issue water rights, particularly in relation to irrigation uses and the need for adequate flows to maintain and repair the fishery. A succession of court actions and judgments over the next fifteen years did little to redefine the status quo. Indeed, the state court ruled in 1990 that while the Yakama possessed water rights from “time immemorial,” that right had been diminished to “the minimum instream flow necessary to maintain fish life in the river.” That effectively enshrined the supremacy of irrigation demands represented by federal, state, and private stakeholders. As the case continues to wind its way through the courts, various state and federal agencies have attempted to address Yakama Nation concerns with special advisory groups and commitments from the Bureau of Reclamation to better

---

<sup>19</sup> “Eye on Organics,” Penticton *Herald*, 7 September 2007.

manage water supply during critical phases of the fishery life cycle.<sup>20</sup> Without minimizing the potential for change with these proposals, it is also clear that they do little to challenge the paradigm of scientific managerialism that underpins the current regime of water use.

North of the boundary, the historic priorities of horticulture led to a similar clash between water, fish, and aboriginal rights. Like other Plateau nations, the Okanagans relied on fishing as part of their economy, favouring sockeye salmon and kokanee runs that spawned up into Okanagan Lake from the Columbia River. However, the construction of dams along the route of several tributaries, such as the Vaseux Lake Dam, stopped salmon runs to the north and severely disrupted the overall health and size of fish populations. The increased pace of damming, diversions, and draining since the 1960s has compounded the issue, leading to increased pollution and changed aquatic vegetation that affects the health and diversity of fish and other aquatic resources.<sup>21</sup>

Another challenge that has been as resilient as the codding moth is the steady march of unfettered urban development, the very process that early horticulturalists vowed to resist. Across the continent, friction between rural and urban land uses have come into clearer focus as cities expand into their former agricultural hinterlands, in some cases bringing suburban homeowners into contact with the smells and noises of agri-industries.<sup>22</sup> This trend still affects the outlook of surviving orchardists. Citing a weak apple market and continued complaints from suburban neighbours in Medford, Jim Root removed apple trees from his orchard to await some form of urban development since “agricultural and residential

---

<sup>20</sup> Committee on Western Water Management, *Water Transfers in the West: Efficiency, Equity, and the Environment* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1992), 183-188

<sup>21</sup> GGE Scudder and IM Smith, *Assessment of Species Diversity in the Montane Cordillera Ecozone* (Burlington, ON: Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> “The War Between Town and Country,” *Maclean's* 29 November 2004.

properties just don't mix. It's just conflicting activities."<sup>23</sup> Conversely, Paul Dwayne Culbertson remained defiant. Increasingly surrounded by the growing footprint of Medford and sharpening differences between rural and urban needs, he refused to give up orcharding because "it's in my blood. And it's in my son's blood...and as I've told these stupid people on the county court up there...if you people just get off our backs and leave us alone, Culbertsons will be farming here long after you're all gone."<sup>24</sup>

In Kelowna, similar problems prompted growers to protest against the provincial government. Two bad crop years and record low prices left the industry on the verge of collapse, leading to calls for financial help. In arguing for government assistance, grower Rob Holitzki insisted that orchardists were "not a drain" on the economy but major contributors to the tune of \$900 million in economic activity. "When they give us a nickel a pound," he complained, "it's considered a bailout, not an investment." Beyond economic value, Holitzki also evoked the classic benefits of horticulture as an environmental alternative to urban development in reminding the government "we're stewards of the land. We create jobs, pay taxes and keep the land green."<sup>25</sup>

Contrary to such pronouncements, however, growers themselves have been agents of change. At the very same Kelowna protest, orchardist Pete Steeves criticized the provincial government's 1972 Agricultural Land Reserve that limited all agricultural lands to agricultural uses. While this move was intended to remove pressure on farmers to develop their land for non-agricultural purposes, Steeves complained, "we want the same rights of the land as everyone else has to determine the most appropriate use of our land."<sup>26</sup> Arguing "land

---

<sup>23</sup> "Orchard is falling to city use," *Medford Tribune*, 15 April 1999.

<sup>24</sup> SOHS, Oral History Interview with Paul Dwayne Culbertson, 24 February 1981, Tape 182, p. 182-31.

<sup>25</sup> "Smoke Signals Aimed at Victoria," *Kelowna Daily Courier*, 17 May 1999.

<sup>26</sup> "Smoke Signals Aimed at Victoria," *Kelowna Daily Courier*, 17 May 1999.

use should be a local process, decided by city councils and regional districts,” orchardists like Steeves were acting not as stewards, but as potential developers just as they had in Washington and Oregon. Indeed, the subtext of the protest was that growers should either receive government assistance or be allowed to recoup at least some of their investment by selling their land at the highest possible price. In the late twentieth century, it was not fruit-bearing acres that fetched top dollar, but residential neighbourhoods and shopping malls.

Labour continued to be a problem. When governments ended wage controls and fixed commodity prices after the Second World War, farmers complained of fluctuating production costs and the prospect of social and economic instability. Additionally, during the war governments in both countries had played a major role in procuring farm labour, whether rural or urban, “enemy alien” or loyal citizen, and Native or non-Native. In one such instance, Okanagan growers, fearing a labour shortage for the 1946 season, reversed course and appealed to the British Columbia Security Commission, the federal agency charged with responsibility for moving the Japanese from the coast and maintaining them, to delay its Japanese removal plan, a plan that growers originally demanded be carried out within six months after the cessation of hostilities.<sup>27</sup> Across the border, the end of the Federal Extension Service’s exclusive role in screening, selecting, and transporting braceros from Mexico to Oregon and Washington, prompted state officials to lobby President Truman for its extension.<sup>28</sup> The government extended the program until 1964 but new regulations made

---

<sup>27</sup> “Retention of Japanese for further year asked,” *Vernon News*, January 1946, quoted in Lloyd L. Wong, “Migrant Seasonal Agricultural Labour: Race and Ethnic Relations in the Okanagan Valley” (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1988), 210.

<sup>28</sup> WSA-Olympia, Progress and Industry Division (1945-56), 88-4-495, Series Title: Adv – Ala, Folder 7, Agriculture Comm., Minutes 1945-46, Report, 8 July 1946.

growers responsible each step and its associated cost, effectively putting the program financially out of reach for Northwest producers.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these setbacks, the general consensus between government officials and growers was to avoid a wholesale return to past labour practices where recruitment was often ad-hoc and unpredictable. Consequently, both parties aspired to maintain order through placement agencies, seasonal labour agreements with migrant groups, and the continued use of government-created infrastructure.<sup>30</sup> Oregon and Washington growers found help with the growing population of Mexican American migrants. In the years immediately after the war, state officials and growers noted a marked upswing in the number of Mexican American labourers seeking work, presenting an ideal alternative to braceros, especially since the latter were subject to a series of federal conditions concerning wages and living conditions. While American growers were turning away from using imported seasonal labour, the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association called on the government to use labourers from Mexico and the Phillipines "with the understanding that they will be returned to their country of origin at the end of the crop year."<sup>31</sup> But as in past years, fears surrounding the use of non-white labour continued to generate controversy, prompting one orchardist to warn, "growers must expect 'a lot of trouble' if Mexicans are imported."<sup>32</sup>

Although such a program never came to fruition, Okanagan growers enjoyed some relief from labour shortages with the arrival of unskilled Portuguese labourers recruited by the Canadian government beginning in 1953. Principally settled in the south of the valley,

---

<sup>29</sup> Erasmo Gamboa, *Mexican Labor & World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 121.

<sup>30</sup> Gamboa, *Mexican Labor*, 124.

<sup>31</sup> *Report of the Orchard Labour Committee to the 86th Annual Convention of the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association* (1975), p. 30, quoted in Wong, 223.

<sup>32</sup> "Grower Wants Legislation," *Kelowna Daily Courier*, January 1957.

these immigrants quickly became an important source of seasonal labour. Like Mexican Americans in Washington and Oregon orchards, they proved vital to expanding agricultural production but nevertheless experienced difficult living conditions and an undercurrent of resentment from the wider English-speaking community.<sup>33</sup>

As labour demands pressed upon orchardists, seemingly immutable fears subsided. Sixty years after Native migrant labourers first worked in the Okanagan Valley, the Orchard Labour Committee of the BCFGGA revisited the possibility of employing “Indian pickers [who] would be kept in family groups” to meet harvest demands. By 1966, the Indian Placement Program was launched with the joint participation of the BCFGGA and Manpower Canada. In Oregon and Washington, growers were already employing Native labour to supplement the growing role of Mexican Americans and Okie migrants and their descendants.<sup>34</sup> The BCFGGA Committee went one step further, however, and recommended using Chinese labour, declaring matter-of-factly, “[the] Chinese have played a large part in our operations in the past, and there seems to be no valid reason why they should not be able to do so again.”<sup>35</sup> Whether due to the passage of time or changing social values, the historic hostility experienced by the Chinese was muted in the memory of pioneer orchardists like Gint Cawston. “Looking back,” he remarked, “we salute them from Coast to Valley...[e]ven if none receive a medallion we can remember them with respect these unique people we once called ‘John Chinaman.’”<sup>36</sup>

If grower attitudes towards historically resented groups appeared more elastic, it did not necessarily indicate change in the conflicted relationship between farmer and labourer.

---

<sup>33</sup> Wong, “Migrant Seasonal Agricultural Labour,” 223.

<sup>34</sup> Wong, “Migrant Seasonal Agricultural Labour,” 224.

<sup>35</sup> “Propose to Bring in Indian Labour,” *The British Columbia Orchardist* (March 1966), 8.

<sup>36</sup> A.H. Cawston, “John Chinaman,” *Okanagan Historical Society* 31 (1967), 117, quoted in Wong, “Migrant seasonal agricultural labour,” 177.

Rather, similar community fears and grievances still appeared despite the shifting profile of labourers. For British Columbia orchardists, praise and hostility shifted between Native, Chinese, Doukhobors, and Portuguese labourers. A similar pattern repeated itself when French Canadian migrant workers began appearing in the 1970s. Suffering labour shortages, Okanagan growers eagerly welcomed them to their orchards. However, this initial enthusiasm did little to mute familiar fears of “outsiders” threatening law and order as well as community identity. Over the same period, Ottawa’s support for official bilingualism and the election of the first separatist government in Quebec in 1976 also fanned hostilities. Outright hostility boiled over in 1980 when bat-wielding Osoyoos residents attacked migrants celebrating St. Jean-Baptiste Day, Quebec’s nationalist holiday. In 1983, the B.C. Human Rights Commission concluded, “negative attitudes and discrimination against French Canadian fruit pickers is a serious and widespread problem.” After interviewing valley mayors, pickers, growers, and police, Tom Crowe, a researcher for the Francophone Federation of British Columbia, came to a similar conclusion and argued that francophone migrants “are treated like Mexican wetbacks in their own country. The locals object to them because they dress differently, speak a different language and they are dirty” while ignoring the fact that few growers provided access to showers or toilets for camping migrants. Increasing attacks against migrants by local youth prompted Doug Findlater, a social development worker with the Office of the Secretary of State in Kelowna, to blame community elders who gave form to hostility in local papers such as the Similkameen *Spotlight*. Declaring that French Canadian migrants “look like discards from another planet that should be kept moving because we don’t need you,” the paper’s unrepentant editor, Art

Oliver, hoped that the “hippies and transients who clutter up the sidewalks and river dikes” would stay away.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, community views of labourers in Oregon and Washington straddled praise and disdain when the dominant profile of seasonal migrants shifted from Okie to Mexican American in the same decade. Medford orchardist Ned Vilas praised Mexican migrants as hard workers, asserting “if it wasn’t for the Mexican’s we’d never get the fruit picked.” Compared to the high turnover among resident labourers, Mexicans were “dependable and they don’t fool around. They don’t sit down every fifteen minutes.”<sup>38</sup> Long-time Medford resident AC Allen, Jr. was more ambivalent, noting that while Mexicans “were used to work...[later], of course, they stopped that. And by that time quite a number of them had become naturalized and were kind of a nucleus here.” Reserving his primary criticism for the influx of undocumented “wetbacks” and attempts by migrants to strike and organize for better conditions, Allen concluded, “I think the Mexican problem is still another impact that has hit this valley which we didn’t have to have.”<sup>39</sup>

Such sentiments continue to pervade communities in the Northwest like Toppenish, Washington, where Hispanics now constitute 70 percent of the town’s population. As in the past, locals are conflicted over the thousands of seasonal migrants who are forced to sleep in their cars or squat along irrigation ditches because growers are not required to provide housing. With Spanish language church services and the advent of bilingual education programs, Toppenish resident Roberto Alviso had little doubt that “a person doesn’t have to tell you they are prejudiced...You hear it, smell it, see it in the eyes and in the body

---

<sup>37</sup> “Quebec families under attack,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 27 August 1983.

<sup>38</sup> Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue River Valley Memories* (Medford, OR: Gandee Printing, 1987), 185.

<sup>39</sup> Southern Oregon Historical Society, Oral History Interview with A.C. Allen, Jr., and his wife Eve, Tape 125, 26 November 1979.

language.”<sup>40</sup> But in a seasonal workforce that is nearly entirely Hispanic and where undocumented workers number as high as 70 percent, most orchardists willfully look past these facts to ensure their crops are picked.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, some workers are equally circumspect about community hostility, poor conditions, and pay rates that hover around the minimum wage. Men like Martin Castro look to the personal benefits when evaluating their situation, particularly when one month’s wages will support his wife and children for three months in his native Mexico. Others like nineteen-year-old Fausto Lopez Valenzuela do not dwell on hardships because “this is an adventure. And we are making very good money.”<sup>42</sup>

More recently, the focus on driving down labour costs put some larger Yakima growers in the unusual position of excluding Mexican Americans from orchard operations in favour of imported Thai workers under the federal H2-A guest worker program, prompting domestic workers to launch a lawsuit.<sup>43</sup> While some orchardists cited spot labour shortages and an increasingly unreliable local labour force as the reason to import Thai workers, Erik Nicholson, United Farm Workers’ Pacific Northwest regional director, argued that “there’s a subtle race card being played here, which is the legacy of agriculture.” Just as the Chinese were succeeded by the Japanese, and later Filipino and Mexican workers, so too are Thai workers part of a historical succession of one group replacing an older group that has “become more organized,” pitting labourers and ethnic groups against one another.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, seasonal labourers recognized that responsibility for their deteriorating situation lay not with other migrants as much as it did with the orchard economy. While the transition to a Mexican American labour force fostered resentment over job security and

---

<sup>40</sup> “Farmworkers arriving from Mexico don’t plan to stay, but they do,” *Seattle Times*, 21 June 2000.

<sup>41</sup> “Mexican Foreman is essential to growers,” *Seattle Times*, 19 June 2000.

<sup>42</sup> David Guterson, “The Kingdom of Apples,” *Harper’s*, October 1999, 50.

<sup>43</sup> “Displaced farmworkers due contractor,” *Seattle Times*, 14 July 2005.

<sup>44</sup> “New state import: Thai workers,” *Seattle Times*, 20 February 2005.

wages, Okie migrants like Bill and Vicki recognized the common bonds of agricultural work. “Now that I’m talking to them,” recounted Bill, “I like these people. At first they wouldn’t hardly look at me...and I used to have this bad feeling too about them bein’ here, but it was never towards the people.”<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, while ethnicity and migration has complicated the struggle to reach out to workers, progress is possible. In the fallout from the conflict over Thai workers, the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA) representing pickers in the Northwest reached an agreement in early 2006 with one of the country’s largest overseas labour recruiters to improve the wages, benefits, and working conditions of guest workers while recognizing UFWA representation. “This is the first national agreement that we’re aware of,” declared Arturo Rodriguez, UFWA president, “that’s ever dealt with H-2A workers or guest workers in this county. To be able to have the opportunity to provide these workers representation, we’re just very excited about that.”<sup>46</sup> The agreement itself reflects a careful balancing act by the UFWA to bring the interests of overseas and domestic workers together. Whether this agreement will bring long-term stability to an industry that is redefining the place of the family farm and local labour is yet to be seen.

Whether the recipient of scornful glances at the corner store or police harassment in front of the employment office, pickers feel the apprehension or disdain that follows them, regardless of ethnicity. As one migrant known as Daniel noted, “local people figure we don’t have roots or aren’t part of anything.” But like other labourers, Daniel remained unapologetic in the face of community hostility and laid claim to the same productionist mantle of the farmers. Exhibiting pride and irony, Daniel declared, “we do have roots, very strong roots,

---

<sup>45</sup> Sonneman, *Fruit Fields in My Blood*, 198.

<sup>46</sup> “UFW, labor recruiter reach agreement,” *Seattle Times* 12 April 2006.

and we are a part of something. We're a part of feeding these people who have contempt for us." This defiance could also be found in the way migrants incorporated stigmatized descriptions into their speech as a means of reasserting their importance to the orchard economy. "We'll call ourselves fruit tramps," explained one Washington state picker, "but only when we're joking. We're fruit pickers, not tramps."<sup>47</sup> When the quest to lower labour costs profoundly affected migrants and their families, they strove to preserve and articulate their own relationship to the orchard.

By the late twentieth century, signs of the triumph of science and business acumen at the expense of art and lifestyle abound. Despite the comparatively smaller role of the state in family-based agricultural production, the modern orchard has more in common with Bear's government-run fruit districts than with Lord Grey's cultured society of yesteryear. Like the dream of bureaucratic-supervised efficiency, free market liberalism has imposed its own brand of hyper-efficiency and maximum production upon orchard life, albeit one that makes no promises to producers for stable prices or predictable returns. Already supported by subsidized water and electricity, agribusinesses that both grow and harvest their own massive acreages increasingly dominate the industry, particularly since they also provide packing services to smaller orchardists as a way to provide a reliable revenue stream when commodity prices decline.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, with the advent of dwarf trees and more compact plantings favoured by progressive growers, the traditional picturesque orchard, the symbol of rural modernity of a previous age, has itself been rendered obsolete. In contrast to early pioneers who obsessed over the aesthetic details of pruning and groomed grounds, orchardist David Lowry argued that today "the important thing is to get production. That's a major

---

<sup>47</sup> Sonneman, *Fruit Fields in My Blood*, 175, 43.

<sup>48</sup> David Guterson, "The Kingdom of Apples," *Harper's*, October 1999, 51.

difference. I don't worry about whether a tree looks good or beautiful. I worry about how many pears you can get on it."<sup>49</sup> At the same time, this seemingly simple objective is made all the more desperate by giant grocery chains such as Arkansas-based Wal-Mart who zealously seek lower prices. As Yakima County orchardist Heinz Humann notes, "They want perfect fruit, and they don't want to pay much for it."<sup>50</sup>

As in the past, orchardists and the fruit industry continued to pursue the holy grail of enticing consumers to eat more apples. And just as before, expanding consumption needed to include new forms and new venues. Although not an exact parallel of the enforced diet in Bear's futuristic Britain, both the Canadian and American governments provide dietary guidelines that give a prominent role to fruits and vegetables, and by extension the potential for expanded consumption. Buttressed by advice from other sources such as local health agencies and advocacy groups, farmers are not alone in their mantra about doctors and apples. Still, the virtues of health as a marketing strategy has limitations, particularly when it invariably reinforces the existing dominance of other fruit, principally citrus, in the North American diet. Nevertheless, apple producers finally beat citrus growers at their own game thanks to none other than Ronald McDonald.

Long the saviour of hurried but guilty parents, McDonald's Restaurants in Canada and the United States in 2005 began including nutritional menu items in response to growing public consciousness about the perils of fast food.<sup>51</sup> The result was Apple Dippers, a product that continued the tradition of making apples more convenient to eat outside the home. In its latest modern guise, the apple's long history with proper skin colour and size was now completely irrelevant. Skinned and cored, nature's bounty is sold in packages of ready-to-eat

---

<sup>49</sup> Atwood, *Blossoms & Branches*, 101.

<sup>50</sup> "Growers say fruit's ready, but workers are scarce," *Seattle Times* 30 August 2006.

<sup>51</sup> "You Want Any Fruit With That Big Mac?" *New York Times* 20 February 2005.

apple slices, a process aided by research conducted by scientists at the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.<sup>52</sup> Practically overnight, McDonald's went from purchasing zero apples in 2003 to becoming the single largest restaurant buyer of apples at 54 million pounds in 2005. The move left Joel Nelson, president of California Citrus, smarting from a missed opportunity. "We've got to pool our resources and do a better job of processing oranges in an economical fashion," he confessed.<sup>53</sup>

For apple producers, McDonald's decision to provide apple slices at their 1375 Canadian and 13,700 US locations is both a blessing and a curse. After 15 years of flat sales, James R. Cranney Jr., Vice President of the U.S. Apple Association, argues that "this is exactly what the apple industry needs because we think it's going to increase consumption." But beyond eating, McDonald's relatively recent entry into the apple arena has already affected the orcharding landscape of the Pacific Northwest. At a 2004 meeting of apple producers, the fast food chain announced its interest in purchasing Cameo apples, a variety prized for maintaining crispness after processing but traditionally only a small percentage of total production due to its less than appealing appearance. Cameo production in Washington state alone shot up 58 percent the following year, according to the Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Association.<sup>54</sup> And while prices for Cameos are healthy, they will inevitably decline when production rises.

McDonald's impact on the beef and potato industry, both in terms of driving down costs and how the industry operates, has sobering lessons for growers.<sup>55</sup> While dippers removed the tyranny of appearance from the equation, the demand for uniform crispness and

---

<sup>52</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, "Tipsheet," November 2005.

<sup>53</sup> "You Want Any Fruit With That Big Mac?" *New York Times*, 20 February 2005.

<sup>54</sup> "You Want Any Fruit With That Big Mac?" *New York Times*, 20 February 2005.

<sup>55</sup> For a revealing account of the impact of diet upon people and the environment, please consult Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the American Meal* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

flavour on a mass scale perpetuate the focus on one or two apple varieties. Even the prospect of meeting McDonald's massive appetite is fraught with risks, particularly when producing a new variety can take upwards of ten years for a product that may not survive unchanged over that time. Moreover, McDonald's foray further undermines a marketing history in which growers themselves sought to preserve aspects of locality and the like that differentiated their produce from a purely mass commodity with cost as the only relevant factor. As Desmond O'Rourke, economist and publisher of the *World Apple Report* argues, the bigger a buyer the greater the likelihood that "it will want large volumes of uniform apples that have to be the same variety and the same size," which invariably favours "large shippers who can produce those numbers."<sup>56</sup> For an industry that has persisted on the model of the family farm for longer than most agricultural sectors, such opportunities come at a costly price. It appears that instead of government intervention, it will be private capital that fulfills W.M. Bear's cautionary vision of industrial-style efficiency and consolidation in fruit growing.

Despite the undeniable pressures of fruit growing, such changes were not accepted unconditionally. Surveying the advent of dwarf trees and other agribusiness practices that "treat fruit trees like row crops - short term investments that yield maximum profits," the Greenmantle Nursery in Garberville, California warned against the wholesale rejection of the original orchard tree. Blending aesthetics with environmental virtues, the nursery observed "we should remember that a chief beauty of fruit is that it grows on *trees*" -- real trees that have "stood up to drought and storm, deer and porcupine, grasshoppers and borers that will even tolerate the vagaries of the human condition." Rejecting the implied short-term lifespan of the hyper-efficient orchard, the nursery urged the preservation of traditional trees with the

---

<sup>56</sup> "McDonald's grabs piece of the apple pie," *The Guardian*, 23 March 2005.

simple prediction that the “magnificently inconvenient specimens... are most likely to bear fruit for our great-grandchildren's generation.”<sup>57</sup>



Figure 20: The new modern countryside – a young dwarf orchard at Kelowna, circa 2002. Photo taken by the author.

The celebration of beauty and science that made fruit farming a more enlightened expression of human progress than crowded cities and regimented work is a distant memory. Gone is the culturally-conscious grower who identified the orcharding landscape with sophisticated leisure and a cultivated nature that offered escape from the pitfalls of urban life. But even if horticulturalists can no longer claim these attributes, they now find expression in viticulture. While grape cultivation dates from the genesis of commercial fruit farming, jam and jelly-making superceded short-lived experiments with wine making. Unlike the

---

<sup>57</sup> Greenmantle Nursery, *The Greenmantle Catalog* (Garberville, CA: Greenmantle Nursery, 1983).

promotion of orcharding a century earlier, no effort is made today to position grapes as the basis of an enlightened rural society comprised of intelligent farmers. Yet, expanding vineyards promise leisure and sophistication for visiting urbanites in a memorable natural setting. As Matt Villano explained to readers of the San Francisco *Chronicle*, “within days of our arrival in [Kelowna], my wife, Nikki, and I heard the word ‘lifestyle’ so often it became almost a mantra.”<sup>58</sup> Part of that lifestyle has been the refashioning of the city’s old apple packing district as a “cultural destination” replete with desirable shops, high end condominiums, art galleries, and a wine industry museum housed in a former packing house.

In the place of apples, the Okanagan Valley is reinventing itself with its growing reputation for wine. Under the headline “Who Needs Napa?” the Toronto *Globe and Mail* raved that, “with the backdrop of mountains that slide into Okanagan Lake, the beauty of standing in the vineyards...which have been cut into the slopes, is simply majestic.” Stretching from the border at Osoyoos along Highway 97 to Kelowna, wineries entice visitors with promises of fine wine and hints of sophistication. One of the largest wineries, Mission Hill, is a case study of a reinvented landscape. Originally founded in the 1960s, Mission Hill was one of a handful of pioneer wineries that struggled for a toehold in a valley dominated by the apple industry. Beset by poor grape varieties, lacklustre wine, and the restrictions of the Liquor Control Board, government assistance in the 1980s gave the industry a much-needed boost. Anthony von Mandel, a Canadian wine importer, purchased Mission Hill in 1981 and invested \$30 million over the next decades to create a nature-blessed shrine to middle class escape with wine tasting, educational tours, and a summer-long Shakespeare festival.<sup>59</sup> The estate’s blend of European architectural motifs evokes a

---

<sup>58</sup> “Harvesting the good life, Kelowna BC,” San Francisco *Chronicle*, 22 October 2006.

<sup>59</sup> “Who Needs Napa?” *Globe and Mail*, 28 August 2004.

timeless association with the landscape in much in the same way that orchardists historicized their own new farms with allusions to Eden. Framed by mountains with its Italian piazza, 17th century Austrian fountain, gently curved arches, columned walkways, and distinctive bell tower overlooking rows of grapes above Okanagan Lake, the Mission Hill site belies any hint of its recent creation. In an eerily familiar refrain, tour staff inform visitors that von Mandel imagines the estate as an “oasis” from the hustle-and-bustle of modern life, a place to “relax” and “reflect” free from the oppressive technology and other burdens of the outside world.<sup>60</sup> With its prolific rows of grapes and natural beauty, the landscape still sustains the values celebrated by fruit farmers a century earlier.

The wine industry has not simply attracted investors keen to replicate a European historical view. Just as they engaged in orcharding a century earlier, the Osoyoos Indian Band became the first aboriginal owners of a winery, Nk'Mip (pronounced in-ka-meep) Cellars in 2002. While the band has grown grapes for decades, the development of wines assumed a higher profile thanks to a joint venture with Vincor International, a company that counts Jackson-Triggs and Inniskillin as two of its brands. In contrast to other wineries, a tour of the site entails salmon and wild-game barbecues featuring entertainment by aboriginal performers. Not to be outdone by other wineries, the band is engaged in a \$25 million expansion, an all-season RV park, and a golf course. Looking across the border to Indian casinos in Washington, Nk'Mip chief Clarence Louie is keen to develop tribe-to-tribe commerce to sell Nk'Mip wine since “lots of casino tribes have high-end restaurants and high-end events.”<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Personal tour, Mission Hill Estate, 1999.

<sup>61</sup> “Native Winery Breaks New Ground in the Okanagan,” Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 5 June 2004.

Albeit on a lesser scale, areas in Washington and Oregon formerly known for apple growing have witnessed a similar reinvention of the landscape. Tourists who visit the Yakima Valley Visitor Information Center are greeted by a large, colourful map of Washington State illustrating major Interstate routes and a number of communities, including Yakima's depiction as "Washington's Wine Country." Among the kiosks, video presentations, and computer terminals, glossy brochures invite travelers to relax, experience nature, and sample wines on a self-guided tour of over thirty different wineries that dot the Yakima Valley along Highway 12. Those who favour a more structured experience can participate in tour packages such as "Thanksgiving in Wine Country," which includes hotel accommodation. Kathy Coffey, president of Yakima's visitors and convention bureau, notes the pairing of wine and tourism is as natural as wine and cheese, and the two need to move forward together.<sup>62</sup>

Crossing into Oregon, Route 99 snakes through the Willamette and Rogue River valleys. Among the rolling hills formerly celebrated as the seat of apple and pear production, Californians like Dick Erath started a handful of commercial vineyards in the 1960s and 1970s from scratch and without farming experience. While the explosive growth of California's vineyards overshadowed them, these pioneer vintners nevertheless established a solid foundation for Oregon's wine industry. By the 1990s, the state's reputation for wine making combined with tourist promotion set the stage for another wave of winery growth, this time on a larger scale backed by corporate investors. While the original cohort welcomed the opportunities from expanded recognition and tourism, they also felt that as the industry expanded, something was lost. Looking back, Dick Erath evoked a strikingly familiar portrait of community and agriculture. "In those early days," he remembered, "we had great times.

---

<sup>62</sup> "Short Trips: Taste tour blends old with new," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10 July 2003.

We had picnics, parties, and jazz events. Our kids and our wives all knew each other. We were romantics, pioneers, and we knew it...we were all struggling, but we had this dream...that we were creating a new industry. It was damn hard work but it was exciting.”<sup>63</sup>

Even if the daily experiences of orchard life provide fewer opportunities to enjoy the intangibles qualities that made horticulture something other than simple farming, those moments still attract interest from orchardist and non-orchardist alike. As a successful novelist and contributing editor to *Harper's Magazine*, David Guterson helped perpetuate the romance and appeal of orchard life during a 1998 autumn trip to eastern Washington. In a striking echo of its genesis a century earlier, Guterson penned, “the pastoral of Washington’s apple country is a fine illusion, sweet to indulge. What is more inviting to the urban dweller than the sight of apple trees hung with fruit? What is more beautiful than an orchard?” Punctuated with pessimistic pronouncements on tariff walls, vertically-integrated orchard operations, and escalating overhead costs, Guterson’s account also reflects optimism in his focus on his daily experiences of picking fruit: the weathered ladders, heavy bins, callused hands and afternoon sun offer a kind of “fragrant punishment, too much of a very good thing.” Indeed, it was not the massive acreages of “factory apples” with their uniform taste and ripeness that appealed to Guterson, but a wild orchard with its countless varieties and flavours reminding him that “the apple’s power, its mythic resonances, its poetry and poignancy, is increasingly diminished in the contemporary world, perhaps already lost.” The piercing beauty of a roadside orchard where he collected apples, however, offered hope. “I carry apples in the sack of my coat,” he ends, “each a kind of good fortune, each a gift to be

---

<sup>63</sup> “How long can Oregon stay low key?” *New York Times*, 4 February 1998.

met with gladness that the world includes such things as this. In this way, I bring my apples home, my windfall fruit, to eat.”<sup>64</sup>

In the new millennium, the convergence of environmental trends in the promotion of organic produce and the local-food movement has given renewed attention to the home orchard among people in their early 30s, with echoes of its genesis at the turn of the twentieth century. Hailing from England, Gerry Grunsfeld turned 150-square foot backyard in Brooklyn, New York into a mini-orchard, complete with two cherry trees and two apples, including a Cox’s Orange Pippin. “My wife thinks I’ve gone crazy,” Grunsfeld confesses, “but there’s something magical about seeing fruit develop.” Across the country in Los Angeles, California, Lora Hall turned her 6,500-square foot yard into a mini-orchard of dwarf trees to wean her dependence on the local supermarket. “I have several friends in the neighbourhood with established home orchards and we kind of share,” says Hall, adding that she often gets so much fruit that the neighbours actively share their bounty. “A neighbourhood where people know each other and share food – how un-big city is that?”<sup>65</sup>

In lieu of colourful promotional brochures or lavish horticultural fairs, marketing the orcharding landscape continues to find new outlets and new opportunities. One significant change has been the shift from attracting new rural residents to attracting urban visitors with agricultural tourism. Annual celebrations such as Wenatchee’s Apple Harvest Festival are important catalysts in drawing tourists eager to spend money and experience the perceived rustic qualities of horticultural life. Spurred equally by economic diversification and the prospect of educating people about rural issues, some orchardists have turned their farms into tourist destinations with guided orchard tours, horse-drawn wagon rides, children’s games,

---

<sup>64</sup> David Guterson, “The Kingdom of Apples,” *Harper’s*, October 1999, 56.

<sup>65</sup> “Backyards, Beware: An Orchard Wants Your Spot,” *New York Times*, 13 March 2008.

and the chance for visitors to pick their own apples. One of the original players in the creation of an orcharding landscape in 1904, the Kelowna Land and Orchard Company farm opened its gates to agri-tourism in 1995. Ten years later, the 150 acre orchard attracted 70,000 visitors annually with field trips, a children's petting zoo, a fruit and cider store selling orchard products, and a restaurant to let visitors unwind afterwards. The atmosphere of the orchard is unmistakably historical with its country-style character, but its historical air speaks more to contemporary expectations of rural simplicity than to the elitist origins of horticulture as a middle class vocation. And while such operations certainly offer the prospect of stronger bottom lines, the need to craft enjoyable "rustic" experiences may require farmers to downplay the modern elements and problems of farming, begging the question if such an arrangement can fulfill agri-tourism's advertised benefit of facilitating a direct exchange of values between tourists and the farm community.

### *Conclusion*

Inevitably, dreams of the future did not coincide with the reality it finally assumed. For those orchardists that read of W.M. Bear's vision of the twenty-first century in the midst of the Great Depression, the future was both inspiring and frightening. The prospect of a wholly rational fruit industry and its fulfillment of economic stability required farmers to abandon the dream of a cultured and vibrant rural society as a compelling alternative to urban development. In the years after the Second World War, the hyper-efficiency of Bear's premonition gave way to a more familiar combination of surplus crops, depressed prices, and bleeding bottom lines. Nevertheless, growers aspired to extend and replicate the stability of the war with further experimentation and innovation in marketing efforts. Similarly, governments did not wholly abandon farmers, as scientists continued to diligently advise

farmers in horticultural matters and agencies attempted to connect orchardists with a predictable labour supply.

Likewise, despite different faces in the fields and farmhouses, animosity and division flared between the various constituents of the modern countryside. As before, migrant labourers endured community suspicion and disdain, while orchardists aspired to maintain a common profile in ethnicity and class. At the same time, old-time orchardists blunted the edges of this tension in their recollections of the valuable contributions of migrants such as Asian labourers in the Okanagan. With the passage of years, it seemed that those people perpetually excluded from community identity enjoyed a belated and admittedly circumscribed redemption.

The ascendancy of urban society in the post-war period curtailed the loftiest ambitions of the first commercial orchardists that fanned out across the Pacific Northwest at the turn of the twentieth century. The modern rural future they envisioned did not come to pass. Nevertheless, the hallmarks of innovation that orchardists originally celebrated were a necessity for new generations of farmers which guided the quest for new markets, different fruit varieties, and new orchard forms. And despite the disappearance of afternoon polo matches and evening operas, elements of that cultured intelligence were rearticulated in the landscape by the proliferation of wineries that offered visitors a familiar message. Similarly, orchard agri-tourism offered an excessively rustic if recognizable invitation to imagine, if only for a moment, a fruit-laden alternative to streets and concrete.

## *Conclusion*

Many things grow in the garden that were never sown there.  
~Dr. Thomas Fuller (1654-1732)

The land does not lie. Looking from the car window, what used to be a routine and predictable Spokane visit offered a series of surprises thirty years later. Even compared to memories tinged with childhood nostalgia, the six-lane highways, commercial strip developments, and massive growth in residential neighbourhoods underscore the shifting profile of the region. Undoubtedly, extended absences amplify the inevitable changes wrought by the passage of time, making the gradual appear abrupt. But the surprise I experienced was also due to the similarities I recognized despite the new people and new forms that shaped the land, illustrating that the boundary between the past and present was not always an exercise in contrasts.

As a commodity that is widely available and relatively inexpensive, apples are not instinctually associated with opera outings and polo matches. And yet, at the beginning of the twentieth century, commercial fruit farming was synonymous with these attributes, representing for settlers the basis of a progressive and dynamic rural society. More than mere rhetoric, dreams of blossoms fostered violence and dislocation, spurred massive investments, lured thousands of settlers, and fundamentally transformed the land.

Reimagining the land as a garden was a process born from the colonial imagination of “luxuriant landscapes,” one that positioned apples as agents of “cultured civilization.” Despite the timelessness of apple cultivation in the Western tradition, horticulture was merely the latest articulation of change that affected land. The quest for furs, souls, and cattle

left their own legacy, one that instilled and helped perpetuate a regional identity in defiance of national machinations between Britain and the United States. Additionally, whether as traders, sources of labour, or farmers, First Nations peoples shaped and were shaped by the consequences that flowed from redefining the land.

For the indigenous peoples, the disruption of local ecosystems by massive irrigation works and the cultivation of vast acres of orchards affected their economies, social networks, and relationships to the broader environment. Throughout the development of horticulture, Native peoples such as the Yakama and the Okanagan protested the environmental costs of unfettered irrigation and fought to protect rivers and the fish life they sustained. Nevertheless, agriculture offered First Nations a tool to ensure a modicum of prosperity although colonial society was, at best, ambivalent about this, particularly when the interests of Native and non-Native growers clashed as it did in the conflict over water for irrigation.

At the outset of the twentieth century, high expectations found powerful expression in colourful brochures and tiny seedlings as American and Canadian boosters and governments set out to transform the valleys of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. In the process, scores of place-names became synonymous with the success of local boosters and government in expanding the domain of rural life. Fueled by a wide-ranging and extensive debate about the future of North American society, rural advocates on both sides of the border positioned the ancient yet modernized practice of horticulture on the vanguard of a rural renaissance. Confronted with a pioneer past of poor agricultural practices and diseased orchards, commercial horticulture sought redemption in the mantra of science. Buttressed by the development of an extensive research infrastructure that spanned government stations and university departments, orcharding was reborn in the guise of rural modernism.

With massive investments by private capital and government agencies spanning irrigation canals to grafting manuals, fruit farming had exciting possibilities for grower wealth. Indeed, orchardists could cast off the stereotypes of the drudgery and isolation of farming with work that required keen intelligence and scientific insight to finish nature to its “intended end.” In partnership with the natural world, fruit growers found validation in feminized nature captured in photographs and poetry. Importantly, settlers believed that this relationship amplified nature’s bracing influences in sustaining social, economic, and environmental order. Further, the prospect of partnerships extended across the international boundary as horticulture gave orchardists a common touchstone of experience and a wider frame of reference for measuring their work.

Confidence in the modernization of rural life as well as fears about urban growth underlined the urgency of reforming rural education. To that end, proponents agitated for government action to ensure that children were infused with a love of nature and properly versed in scientific agriculture. Embarking upon their respective education programs, administrators, teachers and parents in both countries responded enthusiastically to the prospect of creating an agricultural-centric curriculum. While both countries experienced remarkably similar problems – anxieties about “specialized” education, uncooperative schoolyard soils, summer-time indifference among students and staff, and real-world orchard demands – agricultural education did achieve success in fostering interest and pride in rural life. The eventual elimination of government-sponsored agricultural education in British Columbia contrasted with its vocational continuation in the United States, suggesting a more durable rural foundation south of the border. But over the long term, both programs failed to stem the inexorable drift of rural children to an urban-based society.

In the modern countryside, education was not limited to children. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, growers met at stunning exhibitions to celebrate their horticultural triumphs, and to reaffirm their commitment to the ascendancy of rural civilization. Whether at local, regional, or international events, exhibitions were touted as educational tools for farmer and consumer alike. By participating in such events, orchardists embraced the abundance of nature's bounty as a collective affirmation of their vocation. Similarly, growers reasoned that men could be schooled to produce better apples, and thereby elevate the tenor of their communities. Dazzling arrays of fruit were also designed to impress and educate the non-farming public in modern horticulture's ability to produce perfect apples. However, over time this had the unintended effect of steering consumers away from other, less perfect specimens of nature's bounty, creating a perennial conundrum for growers. Outside of the exhibition hall, broader marketing trends in branding and label art emerged as another vehicle to denote the modern orientation of horticulture, albeit in a context where farmers exercised less control and ultimately experienced more frustration.

An undeniable appeal of growing apples was the perceived link between one's proximity to the land and the nature of human society. Wracked by racial mixing and class conflict, North American cities were the social manifestation of humanity's alienation from the natural world. Through their daily intimacy with the feminized orchard, farmers sought to root their social order of well-to-do and self-sufficient white farmers into the soil itself. However, sustaining this vision was a constant struggle as the need for labour was an inescapable truth of the modern countryside.

Non-white residents, notably the Chinese or Japanese, occupied a conflicted position in the eyes of progressive horticulturists. While providing a critical source of labour, they

also undermined orchardist aspirations to create an exclusive white and middle class society. When orchardists hired non-whites, the wider community chastised them and threatened the prestige of orcharding in the process. In the realm of seasonal work, differences in ethnicity and residency also fostered divisions among the region's labourers. Okie or Anglo migrants viewed the growing role of Mexican American workers with trepidation and resentment. Linguistic and cultural differences certainly helped foster divisions among labourers, as did questions of "whiteness" among Anglo pickers. When it came to wages and work, farmers exacerbated migrant insecurities with lower pay and the use of labour contractors that muted the common experiences of seasonal work that linked all labourers.<sup>1</sup>

As growers struggled to balance their ideals with their undeniable labour needs, migrant labourers bore the brunt of community hostility. Although race served as a lightning rod of discontent for fruit districts, particularly in southern British Columbia, it turned out not to be the principal reason for local anger. Despite the fact that they were white native Americans, migrants south of the border fared little better in terms of acceptance, revealing the limits of community identity. Briefly redeemed during both world wars, migrants generally exposed the failings of rural modernism in creating a homogenous and privileged "continuous village" of orchards. And like the crops they tended, farmers and researchers learned that migrants were no more compliant in attaining the rationality of scientific agriculture.

Without diminishing the obvious financial appeal of hefty profits for prospective settlers, orcharding was far more than a "get rich quick" scheme. The prosperous homes, the dances, and the social engagements were expressions of an abiding faith in a new rural

---

<sup>1</sup> Toby F. Sonneman, *Fruit Fields In My Blood: Okie Migrants in the West* (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1992), 34.

society in harmony with the natural world. In short, fruit farmers found in orcharding an antidote to modern excess at the same time they trumpeted its redemption. Under the mantra of extending nature's influence, orchardists found in fruit farming the means to form a "high society" of intelligent men as the new rural vanguard in a dynamic countryside. No longer content to jealously view modern amenities as the purview of cities alone, growers argued that such benefits were equally the hallmark of horticultural communities.

Despite the undeniable success of promoters, governments, and other orchardists in creating horticultural communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, the heady promises of ample wealth and leisured sophistication were tempered by stories of struggle and failure in refashioning the land according to human desire. Marginal land, poor finances, and shady dealings all played roles in denying some benefits of a blossoming Eden. Conversely, growers struggled with promises fulfilled too well. Large harvests that yielded poor returns and red ink sorely tested the faith that bounty was desirable and had implications for their vision of an expanding and dynamic rural society. Nevertheless, the preponderance of productive acreages provided a critical mass of actions and reactions, leading men to plant tiny saplings, stoop over irrigation ditches, and push up wooden flumes in the desert.

Ultimately, evaluating the history of the fruit industry through a focus on the rise and fall of various marketing strategies or the innate "character" of the fruit farmer as an individualist producer only tells part of the story that invariably leaves aside the "irrational" social or cultural aspects of horticulture that are not easily represented in such approaches. Horticulture was certainly about the bottom line of what an apple bushel would net after costs of production and transportation. But in the context of the dizzying social, technological, and economic changes unleashed by an industrializing society in the first half

of the twentieth century, fruit farming was also explicitly about the creation of a landscape based on a partnership between farmer and nature linked by the language of science. Simply put, the orchard work and its associated trappings anchored notions of identity and belonging. Making better farmers through bulletins, extension stations, colleges, and night schools went far beyond creating better soil technicians to include the formation of “industrious men” to lead in the work of creating a dynamic rural civilization.

Similarly, the familiar tendency to pit the innocent country against the evil city skews our historical understanding of change in the countryside. In many ways, the agricultural transformation of the Pacific Northwest was a process that was just as violent and disruptive as its urban transformation. This environmental process of change was also intimately linked to people as growers and promoters celebrated urban-based settlers as the heirs apparent of rural life, supplanting the pioneer farmer and his inferior ways. The subsequent temptation to characterize this relationship as a clash between foreign “urban” ideas and indigenous “rural” knowledge, however, threatens to diminish our understanding of rural change. In other words, by characterizing change as an external urban process, rural life remains the static and reactive foil. In the case of horticulture, pioneer farmers were both advocates and opponents of scientific agriculture. Additionally, rural support for “urban” conveniences like good roads and electricity were genuine rural initiatives as orchardists rejected notions that progress should be an inherently urban process or experience.

The belief in the innate goodness of a generous environment that responded to the husbandman’s touch, briefly redeemed during the war, was again tested by the seemingly intractable instability of the orcharding landscape. Over the long term, the prospect of a society of family orchards was undermined by scientific agriculture and re-evaluations of

nature's demands. As a consequence, farmers turned to the difficult subject of restricting production by such means as not using marginal land and setting quality standards. In doing so, they challenged the very basis of rural modernity by checking rural growth as urban space continued to expand.

As much as they prided themselves in expanding nature's influence, orchardists also confronted the bitter truth that rural modernity was little different from its urban foil. Pests were one example of nature's bounty that farmers did not fully appreciate as a consequence of expanding production. As an outgrowth of scientific agriculture, toxic soils and poisoned fruit offset the promised gains of pesticides, not to mention the potential harm to labourers, consumers, and orchardists themselves. The basis of rural life as well as the wider economy was too closely tied to scientific agriculture for growers to contemplate a radical departure from its original vision. Indeed, while farmers felt betrayed by agricultural science for imperilling their livelihood, they generally remained convinced that it would also provide solutions to their problems.

If curtailing production and arable land proved to be the ultimate measure of rationalizing the orcharding landscape, co-operation was heralded from the beginning as a necessity for grower success in expanding the influence of rural life. Popularly and academically, much has been made of farmers' vaunted independence and revulsion towards any measure that might curb that autonomy, such as the use of co-operatives in the marketing of fruit. However, the history of orcharding in the Pacific Northwest is replete with examples of co-operative efforts, albeit most of them failures. Indeed, taking measure of the final result must be tempered by the repeated attempts to achieve co-operation and the examples of the

two world wars when orchardists thrived within the wartime economy where government-set labour costs and fruit prices provided the perfect conditions for rural prosperity.

In an echo of W.M. Bear's dream of the twenty-first century, government-led rationalization proved to be the key in achieving this end, albeit a frustratingly temporary one. What the wars illustrated was that the prospect of stability was only attainable through enforced co-operation. Previous co-operative efforts failed not through a lack of effort, but due to a significant minority of growers that opted to work outside of the co-operative framework. Without marketing control of the entire crop, co-operative efforts buckled and collapsed. Ultimately, if scientific agriculture expanded production, the need to transform the economic system within which the farmer operated only increased.

After two world wars, fruit farming as well as the communities it sustained had changed. On the one hand, the original horticultural promise of transforming rural life was ably fulfilled. Innovative business methods, new agricultural technologies, massive advertising campaigns, increased efficiencies and growing production firmly established horticulture's modern credentials. On the other hand, the prospect of building a vibrant "rural civilization" comprised of cultured and refined middle class farmers as a meaningful alternative to urban-industrial expansion ceased to have resonance. Nevertheless, politicians still acted in the interest of their grower constituents, governments devoted time and resources to horticultural issues, labourers came to pick and sort fruit, and orchardists tended to their trees. In other words, the orcharding landscape continued to leave its mark upon the land and its people.

During my trip across the Pacific Northwest, I came to appreciate more fully the striking similarities on both sides of the international boundary. Whether examining old

promotional pamphlets or reading reminisces of old-time orchardists, the contours of a trans-border community were evident. At first, this was a conscious exercise by orchardists as they gathered at horticultural meetings and dazzling exhibitions, affirming a common rural vision for the region. But even after market competition invariably made national difference more explicit, a shared pattern of experience and environmental change serves as a cautionary tale against reifying the border as a tool of narrative convenience. This is not to say that growers were not conscious of cultural and political distinctions when they crossed the boundary, but rather that such variations provided a different accent to a common language of rural modernity. Ultimately, the changes wrought upon the land tell a common story and speak to a similar vision of the past and the future.

In towns like Medford, Yakima, and Kelowna, pioneer street names, faded red motel signs and apple-shaped concession stands serve as artifacts of an earlier time when fruit was more than forgotten history and tourist kitsch. Yet, roads that seem to grow shorter with each passing year can still take the curious from these communities to orchards and their fabled rites of nature. And as before, these orchards range from examples of hyper-efficient operations comprised of large acreages, high-density dwarf trees, and sprinkler-controlled irrigation to smaller family farms with traditional orchard trees geared towards agricultural tourism. And as I reflect on my various road trips, it is the latter orchard, immediately recognizable from scores of black and white photographs, that draws me again.

When my journey through the Pacific Northwest began, I set out both as an academic and as a layperson shaped by fruit farming life during my childhood in the Okanagan Valley. And like the roads that connect these communities, my own path had its share of twists and turns along the way. Initially, my orchard walks were about trying to understand how dreams

of ripening fruit led to the creation of a modern countryside stretching from the southern Oregon into British Columbia. On my last orchard visit, the addition of my two young daughters brought new perspective to this question. Watching the girls laugh with one another as they roamed among the rows of trees recovering windfall apples for my partner, I recalled similar scenes scattered in local museums and archives from an earlier time. Gathering their fruit in our hands, I appreciated anew that while dreams of a rural future had faded, young families like my own continued to find meaning here, and that the power of orcharding's intangibles – like the promise of spring in autumnal fruit – remained.

## *Bibliography*

### **PRIMARY SOURCES**

#### **Archival Sources:**

##### British Columbia Archives

Department of Agriculture, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Records 1911-1919.

Department of Education, Elementary School Agricultural Education Correspondence, 1915-1929, GR 171.

Department of Education, Teacher's Reports, 1915-1924, GR 172.

Department of Education, Inspectors' Reports, 1916-1929, GR 173.

Department of Agriculture Provincial Horticulturalist, Field Inspectors' Reports, 1912-1922, GR 400.

Department of Elementary Agricultural Education Records, 1914-1930, GR 458.

British Columbia Commission on Dyking, Draining, & Irrigation, 1946, GR 680.

Horticultural Branch, 1920-1961, GR 1189.

Department of Education, Elementary and Technical Education Correspondence, 1915-1929, GR 1446.

Department of Education, 1914-1929, GR 1477.

Pooley Family Business and Personal Papers, 1896-1915, MSS 1584.

Summerland Board of Trade, "Home of the Big Red Apple," [1917].

Vernon Board of Trade. "Facts about Vernon, its resources and possibilities," 1908.

Thomas Leslie Gillespie, MSS 1695.

## Kelowna Centennial Museum

E.M. Carruthers, "The Creation of an Orchard in British Columbia," 1912.

Kelowna Board of Trade, *Kelowna, British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan*. Clarke & Stuart Co., Ltd., 1911.

Grand Pacific Land Company. *Kelowna, British Columbia*. 1911.

Kelowna Board of Trade. *Kelowna, The Orchard City*. 1907.

Kelowna Board of Trade. *Kelowna, the Orchard City of the far-famed and lovely Okanagan, 'The City Desirable'* 1908.

Okanagan Valley Land Company, Ltd. *Okanagan Centre*, 1908.

Central Okanagan Land and Orchard Company. *Okanagan Valley Fruit Lands*, 1910.

Letters, Ho to Kai-tao (Letter 18) 10 December 1918

## Library and Archives Canada -- Ottawa

Indian Affairs, Series C-II-2, Inspector of Indian Agencies - Okanagan Agency, RG 10.

Department of Agriculture, RG 17.

Albert Edward Kemp, Series II-D-9, Minister of the Militia, MG 27.

Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, RG 72.

## National Archives and Records Administration -- Washington DC

Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Records Relating to Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, RG 43.

Records of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Correspondence Relating to Fruit Exhibitions, RG 54.

Department of the Interior, Office Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Correspondence Regarding State Fairs, Celebrations, and Exhibitions, RG 75.

## Oregon Historical Society

Scrapbook 43, 60, 131.

Northwest Regional Promotional Pamphlets, MSS 6000.

The Dalles Business Men's Association. *The Dalles, Oregon: The Springtime of Western Development*. The Dalles: The Dalles Business Men's Association, 1910.

Jackson County Commissioners. *Where Nature Lavished Her Bounties; Jackson County, Oregon*. Jackson County Commissioners, 1924-5.

Medford Commercial Club, *Medford, Oregon: Rogue River Valley*. Medford Commercial Club, 1909.

Medford and Ashland Commercial Clubs. *Jackson County in the Famous Rogue River Valley: The Pear and Apple District*. 1910.

Medford Commercial Club. *Medford, Oregon, Rogue River Valley*, 1910.

Thirsa Ann Wilson (Kincaid), 6 June 1858, MSS 251.

Albion L. Francis, 27 April 1856, MSS 1500.

#### Oregon State Archives

Department of Agriculture, Horticultural Records, 1893-1921.

Education Department, Agricultural Club Reports, 1929-1943.

#### Southern Oregon Historical Society

Oral Interviews, 1977-1981, Tapes 18, 18-5, 76, 116, 120, 125, 127, 147, 182.

#### Washington State Archives - Ellensburg

Department of Agriculture, Reports, 1891-1922, CE32/1-1

Yakima County Government, Board of County Commissioners, Miscellaneous Papers, CE339-10-3

#### Washington State Archives - Olympia

Commission for Vocational Education, 86-2-73.

Vocational Education Board Records, 1914-1940.

Department of Agriculture, Emergency Farm Labor Committee.

Department of Agriculture, Horticulture Division, Division Chief Files and General Files (1903-1963).

Progress and Industry Division, 88-4-495, Agriculture Committee, 1945.

#### Yakima Valley Museum

Director's Apple History Project (1995), DBX 120

*King Spitzenberg – Brewster Okanogan County Washington*. Brewster Commercial Club, 1909.

Okanogan Commercial Club. *Okanogan, Washington*. 1910.

*Pullman, Washington, the center of the most fertile regions*. Pull-for-Pullman Club, 1906.

*Sunnyside, Washington*. Portland: Franklin-Ward Company, 1911

#### **Federal/Provincial/State Government Published Sources:**

Autobee, Robert. *The Okanogan Project*. Bureau of Reclamation History Program. Denver, Colorado, 1996.

British Columbia. Royal Commission on Municipal Government, *Report*. Victoria: King's Printer, 1912.

British Columbia. *1989 Legislative Session; Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly*.

Canada. Commission of Conservation and Thomas Adams. *Rural Planning and Development; a Study of Rural Conditions and Problems in Canada*. Ottawa. 1917.

Canada. House of Commons. *Debates*, 1913.

Heeney, H.B. and S.R. Miller. *Smithfield Experimental Farm, 1944-1985*. Ottawa: Agriculture Canada, 1986.

Meidinger, Dellis Vern, and Jim Pojar. *Ecosystems of British Columbia*. Victoria, B.C.: Research Branch, Ministry of Forests, 1991.

Pfaff, Christine E. *Harvests of Plenty: A History of the Yakima Irrigation Project, Washington*. Denver: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 2002.

State of Washington. *Annual Report of the State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for the*

- State of Washington, 1910-1925.*
- State of Washington. *Department of Agriculture, Biennial Report, 1915-1925.*
- State of Washington. *Message of Governor to the Legislature.* Olympia: EL Boardman Public Printer, 1910-1925.
- United States. *Bulletin of the Women's Bureau.* Washington: Government Printing Press, 1926-1927.
- United States. "Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts of the Northern Pacific Coast," *U.S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 151.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926.
- Other Published Primary Sources:**
- About the fruit and farming lands of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.* 1906.
- Aberdeen, Ishbel Gordon Temair. *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898.* Publications of the Champlain Society ; 38. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960.
- Aberdeen, Ishbel Gordon Temair, and R. M. Middleton. *The Journal of Lady Aberdeen : The Okanagan Valley in the Nineties.* Victoria, B.C.: Morriss Pub., 1986.
- Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Horticultural Society, 1900-1925.*
- Annual Report of the BC Fruit-Growers' Association, 1905-1955.*
- Bailey, Liberty Hyde. *The Country-Life Movement in the United States.* New York: Macmillan, 1911.
- Bealby, J.T. *Fruit Ranching in British Columbia.* London, 1911.
- Biennial Report, State Board of Horticulture, 1885-1895.*
- Cardwell, James Robert. *A brief history of horticulture in Oregon.* Portland: 1906.
- Commercial Club of North Yakima (North Yakima Wash.), and YA Pamphlet Collection (Library of Congress). *The Yakima Valley, Washington.* [North Yakima, Wash.: Commercial Club, 1904].
- Denison, William Lyman. *Walla Walla county, Washington. Souvenir for Lewis and Clark fair, Portland Oregon.* Salem, OR: The Statemam Pub. Co., 1905.
- Dosch, Henry. "Horticulture in Oregon." Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition Commission, 1906.

Dickerson, Edwin, ed. *The Little Packer*. Yakima, Washington: The Quick print, 1920.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Country Life." *The Atlantic*, November 1904.

Folger, John Clifford, and Samuel Mable Thomson. *The Commercial Apple Industry of North America*, The Rural Science Series. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.

Great Northern Railway. *Second National Apple Show, Spokane Washington, November 15-20, 1909*. Spokane: Great Northern Railway, 1909.

Landis, Paul H. and Melvin S. Brooks. *Farm Labor In the Yakima Valley, Washington*. State College of Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 343, December 1936.

Mitchell, David and Dennis Duffy, eds. *Bright Sunshine and a Brand New Country: Recollections of the Okanagan Valley, 1890-1914*. Victoria: Provincial Archives, 1979,

Harris, Nan. *Nan: A child's eye view of Early Okanagan Settlement*. Edited by Ursula Surtees. Kelowna: Regatta Press, Ltd., 1990.

Howard, Ebenezer, and Frederic James Osborn. *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. London: Faber and Faber, 1946.

*The Imperial Colonist*, 1907-1920.

Jackman, Wilbur. *Nature Study for the Common Schools*. New York: Press, 1891.

*Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society First Annual Report*. 1909.

National Cash Register Company., and YA Pamphlet Collection (Library of Congress). *Art, Nature and the Factory; an Account of a Welfare Movement, with a Few Remarks on the Art of the Landscape Gardener*. Dayton,: National cash register company, 1904.

Northern Pacific Railway Company., and YA Pamphlet Collection (Library of Congress). *About the Fruit and Farming Lands of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho*. St. Paul, Minn.: Northern Pacific Railway, 1906.

Phillips, Daisy, R. Cole Harris, and Elizabeth Phillips. *Letters from Windermere, 1912-1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984.

Redmayne, J.S. *Fruit Farming on the "Dry Belt" of British Columbia: the Why and Wherefore*. London, 1912.

Sennett, Alfred Richard. *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice*. London: Bemrose and Sons,

- Ltd., 1905.
- Simond, Louis, and Christopher Hibbert. *An American in Regency England: The Journal of a Tour in 1810-1811*. London,: Maxwell, 1968.
- Smythe, William E. *The Conquest of Arid America*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905.
- Sonneman, Toby F., and Rick Steigmeyer. *Fruit Fields in My Blood : Okie Migrants in the West*. Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1992.
- Tamura, Linda. *The Hood River Issei : An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Thoreau, Henry David . “Wild Apples: The History of the Apple Tree.” *The Atlantic Monthly* 1862.
- Wenatchee Commercial Club. “Wenatchee, the Gateway to the Land of the Perfect Apples.” 1910.

**Newspapers and Periodicals:**

- Agricultural Gazette*, 1916-1920.
- The Agricultural Journal*, 1915-1920.
- Better Fruit*, 1906-1935.
- The British Columbia Orchardist*, 1964-1968.
- Country Life*, 1903-1906.
- The Fruit Magazine, Scientific Farmer and Canadian Citizen*, 1911-1912.
- Fruitage, for men only; the exclusive fruit paper of America*, 1896.
- The Goodfruit Grower*, 1946-1950.
- Harper's Weekly*, 1910; 1999.
- Hood River Glacier*, 1908-1915.
- Irrigation Age, a Journal of Western America - The Agricultural Education Magazine*, 1908-1909.
- Kelowna Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 1904-1922; 1925; 1999.

*The Guardian* (Manchester), 2005

*Medford Clarion*, 1900-1915.

*Medford Sun*, 1910-1915.

*Medford Tribune*, 1999.

*New York Times*, 1991-2005.

*Pacific Monthly*, 1903.

*Penticton Herald*, 1910-1920; 2007.

*Proceedings of the Oregon State Horticultural Society*, 1895-1935.

*Oregonian* (Portland), 1900-1930.

*Rogue River Fruit Grower*, 1909-1912.

*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2006.

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2003.

*Seattle Times*, 2000.

*Spokane Chronicle*, 1925-1938.

*Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 1983.

*Vernon News*, 1890-1930.

*Wentachee Republic*, 1905-1935.

*Western Canada Irrigation Association*, 1912-1915.

*Western Life*, 1908.

*Yakima Herald-Republic*, 2007.

*Yakima Daily Republic*, 1917, 1927.

*Yakima Morning Herald*, 1917, 1925-1927, 1934.

## **SECONDARY SOURCES**

**Articles:**

- Ambrose, Linda. "'Better and Happier Men and Women': The Agricultural Instruction Act, 1913-1924." *Historical Studies in Education* 16 (Fall 2004): 257-285.
- Badir, Patricia. "'Our performance careless of praise': Memory and the Production of Space in Walhachin, British Columbia." *BC Studies*. 133 (2002): 31-68
- Bennett, Jason Patrick. "Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in turn-of-the-century British Columbia." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 9, 1998: 63-92.
- Brent, Maria. "Indian Lore." *Okanagan Historical Society* 30 (1966): 108-112.
- Bright, David. "The West Wants In: Regionalism, Class, and *Labour/Le Travail*, 1976-2002." *Labour/Le Travail* 50 (Fall 2002): 149-162.
- Clark, J.F.M. "Bugs in the system: Insects, agricultural science and professional aspirations in Britain, 1890-1920." *Agricultural History* 75 (1) 2001: 83-114.
- Coulter, C. Brewster. "The Big Y Country: Marketing Problems and Organization, 1900-1920." *Agricultural History* (4) 1946: 471-488.
- Cox, Mark. "Innovation on Trial: British Columbia Fruit Growers and the Rise and Retreat of Regulation, 1923-1931." In *Canadian Papers in Business History Volume II*, edited by Peter A. Baskerville. Victoria: University of Victoria, 1993: 125-146.
- Darroch, Gordon. "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario." *Canadian Historical Review* 79 (4) 1998: 621-659.
- Danbom, David B. "Romantic Agrarianism in Twentieth-Century America." *Agricultural History* 65 (4) 1991: 1-12.
- . "Rural Education Reform and the Country Life Movement, 1900-1920," *Agricultural History* 53 (2) 1979: 462-474.
- Demeritt, David. "Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia." *BC Studies* 108 (Winter) 1995-96: 29-59
- Edwards, Douglas M. "Show Windows of the West: Exhibitionary Complexes and the Promotion of Montana's Agricultural Possibilities." *Agricultural History* 73, 3 (Summer 1999): 322-348.

- Ellison, Joseph Waldo. "The Cooperative Movement in the Oregon Apple Industry, 1910-1929." *Agricultural History* April 1939: 77-96.
- Fahey, John. "Selling the Watered West: Arcadia Orchards." *Pacific Historical Review* 1993: 455-474.
- Fisher, Andrew H. "They mean to be Indian always: The origins of Columbia River Indian Identity, 1860-1885." *Western Historical Quarterly* 2001 32(4): 468-492.
- Fisher, D.V. "History of Fruit Growing in the BC Interior." *Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (1978) 42: 68-72.
- Jones, David C. "'We cannot allow it to be run by those who do not understand education': Agricultural Schooling in the Twenties." *BC Studies* 39 (Autumn 1978): 30-60.
- Harper, Marjorie. "A Gullible Pioneer? Lord Aberdeen and the Development of Fruit Farming in the Okanagan Valley 1890-1921." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* I, 2 (1986), 256-281.
- Herren, Ray and John Hillison, "Agricultural Education and the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions: The Rest of the Story." *Journal of Agricultural Education* 37 (2) 1996: 26-32.
- Holloway, Lewis. "Showing and telling farming: agricultural shows and re-imagining British agriculture." *Journal of Rural Studies* 20 (3) 2004: 319-330.
- Kinsella, John. "Can there be a radical 'western' pastoral...?" *Literary Review: An International Journal of Contemporary Writing* 48, 2 (Winter 2005): 120-133.
- Koroscil, Paul. "Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914." *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5, (1986), 73-103.
- Little, J.I. "Canadian pastoral: promotional images of British colonization in Lower Canada's Eastern Townships during the 1830s." *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, 2 (2003): 189-211.
- Loo, Tina. "Making a Modern Wilderness: Conserving Wildlife in Twentieth-Century Canada." *Canadian Historical Review* 2001, 82 (1): 92-121.
- Lutz, John. "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, N.S. 2, (1992): 69-94.

- Macpherson, Ian and John Herd Thompson. "The Business of Agriculture: Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of 'Business Methods,' 1880-1950." In *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, edited by R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer. Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992: 475-496.
- MacPherson, Ian. "Creating Stability Amid Degrees of Marginality: Divisions in the Struggle for Orderly Marketing in British Columbia, 1900-1940." *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7. Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1990: 309-331.
- Macquarrie, Heath. "Robert Borden and the Election of 1911." *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 25 (3) 1959: 271-286.
- Marshall, Alan G. "Unusual Gardens: The Nez Perce and Wild Horticulture." In *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*, edited by Dale D. Goble & Paul W. Hirt. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999: 173-187.
- Moore, Gary E. "The Status of Agricultural Education Prior to the Smith-Hughes Act." *Agricultural Education Magazine* 59 (8) 1987.
- Nash, Roderick. "The State of Environmental History." In *The State of American History*, edited by Herbert J. Bass. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970, 249-260.
- Neel, Susan Rhoades. "A place of extremes: Nature, history, and the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 1994 25(4): 488-505
- Niquette, Manon and William J. Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions." *Canadian Journal of Communications* 22 (1) 1997: 81-113.
- Ormsby, Margaret A. "Fruit Marketing in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia." *Agricultural History* 9 (2) 1935: 80-97.
- Pepchinski, Mary. "The Woman's Building and the World Exhibitions: Exhibition Architecture and Conflicting Feminine Ideals at European and American World 1873-1915." *Internationale Zeitschrift für Theorie und Wissenschaft der Architektur* 5, 1 (July 2000).
- Reinhart, Herman Francis. *The Golden Frontier: The Recollection of Herman Francis Reinhart 1851-1869*. Edited by D.B. Junis, Jr. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962.
- Raibmon, Paige. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

- Ronda, James P. "Dreams and discoveries: Exploring the American West, 1760-1815." *William and Mary Quarterly* 1989 46(1): 145-162.
- Roy, Patricia E. "A tale of two cities: The reception of Japanese evacuees in Kelowna and Kaslo, B.C." *BC Studies* 87 (1990): 23-47.
- Schwartz, Vanessa R. "Walter Benjamin for Historians." *American Historical Review*, 106, 5 (December 2001): 1721-1743.
- Taylor, Joseph E. "Burning the candle at both ends: Historicizing overfishing in Oregon's Nineteenth Century Salmon Fisheries." *Environmental History* January 1999: 54-79.
- Taylor, Paul S. "Migratory Farm Labor in the United States." *Monthly Labor Review* March 1937.
- Trennert, Jr., Robert A. "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904." *American Indian Quarterly* 11 (3): 203-220.
- Vaught, David. "Factories in the Fields Revisited." *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (2), 1997: 149-184.
- Walden, Keith. "Speaking Modern: Language, Culture and Hegemony in Grocery Store Displays, 1887-1920." *Canadian Historical Review* 70 (1989): 285-310.
- White, Ahmed. "A Different Kind of Labor Law: Vagrancy Law and the Regulation of Harvest Labor, 1912-1924." *University of Colorado Law Review* 75 (Summer 2004): 674-677.
- White, Richard. "The Nationalization of Nature," *Journal of American History* 86 (3) 1999: 976-83.
- White, W. Thomas. "Main Street on the Irrigation Frontier: Sub-urban Community Building in the Yakima Valley, 1900-1910." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (1986): 94-103.
- Wright, Mary C. "The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 24 (1) 2003: 1-18.
- Wynn, Graeme. "'Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?': Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick." *Journal of Forest History* 24 (1980): 168-187.
- Yarmie, Andrew. "'I Had Always Wanted to Farm': The Quest for Independence by British Female Emigrants at the Princess Patricia Ranch, Vernon, British

Columbia, 1912-1920." *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 16 (2003): 102-125.

Young, W.R. "Conscription, rural depopulation and the farmers of Ontario, 1917-1919." *Canadian Historical Review* 53 (3) 1972: 289-320.

**Books:**

Anderson, H. Allen. *The Chief: Ernest Thompson Seton and the Changing West*. 1st ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986.

Anderson, Nels, and Raffaele Rauty. *On Hobos and Homelessness, Heritage of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Atwood, Kay. *Blossoms & Branches; a gathering of Rogue Valley orchard memories*. Medford, Oregon: Gandee Printing Center Inc., 1980.

Badger, Reid. *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition & American Culture*. Chicago: N. Hall, 1979.

Barman, Jean. *Growing up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984.

———. *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*. Rev. ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

Barnes, Trevor J., and James S. Duncan. *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1992.

Bass, Herbert J., and Organization of American Historians. *The State of American History*. Chicago,: Quadrangle Books, 1970.

Bunce, M. F. *The Countryside Ideal : Anglo-American Images of Landscape*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1994.

Burstyn, Varda. *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Careless, J. M. S. *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada before 1914*, The Donald G. Creighton Lectures ; 1987. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

Carstens, Peter. *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Carter, Sarah. *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*.

- Montreal ; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.
- . *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West through Women's History*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005.
- Cavanaugh, Catherine Anne, and Jeremy Mouat. *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996.
- Cavanaugh, Catherine Anne, and R. R. Warne. *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.
- Ching, Barbara, and Gerald W. Creed. *Knowing Your Place: Rural Identity and Cultural Hierarchy*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Clarke, Ida Clyde. *American Women and the World War*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918.
- Clayton, Daniel. *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.
- Committee on Western Water Management. *Water Transfers in the West: Efficiency, Equity, and the Environment*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1992.
- Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
- . *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- Danbom, David B. *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- . *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930*. 1st ed. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979.
- Dendy, David and Kathleen M. Kyle. *A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association 1889-1989*. Kelowna; BCFGA, 1990.
- Deverell, William Francis. *A Companion to the American West, Blackwell Companions to American History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004.
- Dubinsky, Karen. *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooners, Heterosexuality, and the Tourist Industry at Niagara Falls*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

- Dubofsky, Melvyn. *We Shall Be All; A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969.
- Dunae, Patrick A. *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier*. Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981.
- Duncan, James S. *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom*, Cambridge Human Geography. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Ekstrom, George Frederick. *Historical Development of Agricultural Education in the United States Prior to 1917*. [Washington]: U.S. Office of Education, Bureau of Research, 1969.
- Evans, S. M., Sarah Carter, Bill Yeo, and Glenbow Museum. *Cowboys, Ranchers, and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000.
- Evans, Sterling. *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-Ninth Parallel*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.
- Felske, Lorry W., and Beverly Jean Rasporich. *Challenging Frontiers: The Canadian West*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004.
- Fiege, Mark. *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Findlay, John M. and Kenneth Coates. *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies*. Seattle/Montreal: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
- Fisher, Irving D. *Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Planning Movement in the United States*, Architecture and Urban Design; No. 15. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1986.
- Fisher, Robin. *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992.
- Francis, R. D., and Howard Palmer, eds. *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*. 2nd ed. Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992.
- Friesen, Gerald. *The Canadian Prairies: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- Frykman, George A. *Creating the People's University: Washington State University, 1890-*

1990. Pullman, Wash.: Washington State University Press, 1990.
- Gamboa, Erasmo. *Mexican Labor & World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. London: Hutchinson, 1975.
- Gibson, Belle. *Teacher Builder: The Life and Work of J.W. Gibson*. Victoria: Morris Printing, 1961.
- Goble, Dale, and Paul W. Hirt, eds. *Northwest Lands, Northwest Peoples: Readings in Environmental History*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Hall, Greg. *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930*. 1st ed. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2001.
- Harris, R. Cole. *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2002.
- Harvey, David. *Paris, Capital of Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Headrick, Daniel R. *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- . *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Heaman, Elsbeth. *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Heuterman, Thomas H. *The Burning Horse: Japanese-American Experience in the Yakima Valley, 1920-1942*. Cheney, Wash.: Eastern Washington University Press, 1995.
- Higbie, Frank Tobias. *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform*. New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 1960.
- Hoshizaki, Bill, ed. *The Vision Fulfilled: Historical Sketches of Central Okanagan Japanese Canadian Families & Community Organizations, 1894 – 1994*. Kelowna, BC: Kelowna & District Association of Japanese Canadians, 1995.
- Howell, Colin D. *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995.

- Hyde, Anne Farrar. *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920*. New York: New York University Press, 1990.
- Iacovetta, Franca, and Wendy Mitchinson. *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Iverson, Peter. *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.
- Jackson, Peter. *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986*. 2 vols, Theory and History of Literature ; V. 48-49. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- Jasen, Patricia Jane. *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Jones, David C. *Midways, Judges, and Smooth-Tongued Fakirs: The Illustrated Story of Country Fairs in the Prairie West*. Saskatoon, Sask.: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983.
- Kain, R. J. P. *Planning for Conservation*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.
- Knobloch, Frieda. *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Kolodny, Annette. *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Konrad, Victor ed. *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1991.
- Koroscil, Paul, ed. *British Columbia: Geographical Essays In Honour of A. Macpherson*. Burnaby: Dept. of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 1991.
- Leier, Mark. *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson, Clyde A. Milner, and Charles E. Rankin. *Trails: Toward a New Western History*. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1991.
- , *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: Norton, 1987.

- Liversedge, Ronald. *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.
- Logan, Harry T. *Tuum Est; a History of the University of British Columbia*. Vancouver,: University of British Columbia, 1958.
- Lyotard, Jean François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- MacKenzie, John M. *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*. London: V&A Publications, 2001.
- Malin, James Claude, and Robert P. Swierenga. *History & Ecology: Studies of the Grassland*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- Mangan, J. A. *The Cultural Bond : Sport, Empire, Society*. London; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1992.
- . *Making European Masculinities: Sport, Europe, Gender*. Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 2000.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden; Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McKinsey, Lauren S., and Victor A. Konrad. *Borderlands Reflections: The United States and Canada*, Borderlands Monograph Series, #1. [Orono, Me.]: Borderlands, 1989.
- McManus, Sheila. *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands, Race and Ethnicity in the American West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Miller, Angela L. *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Miller, J. R. *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*. 3rd ed. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Mitchell, W. J. Thomas. *Landscape and Power*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

- Monod, David. *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Muccigrosso, Robert. *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893*. Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1993.
- Murton, James. *Making a Modern Countryside: Liberalism and Land Resettlement in British Columbia*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
- Ormsby, Margaret A. *British Columbia: A History*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1958.
- . *Coldstream – nulli secundus*. Vernon, BC: District of Coldstream, 1990.
- Oregon State University. Agricultural Experiment Station. *100 Years of Progress: The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, 1888-1988*. Corvallis, Or.: Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agricultural Sciences, Oregon State University, 1990.
- Owram, Doug. *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Patin, Thomas. *Discipline and Varnish: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, and Counter-Memory in the Museum*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Pisani, Donald J. *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the West, 1850-1931*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- . *Water, Land, and Law in the West: The Limits of Public Policy, 1850-1920*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996.
- Pomeroy, Earl S. *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
- Porter, Glenn and Harold C. Livesay. *Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth-Century Marketing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971.
- Purbrick, Louise. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays, Texts in Culture*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Riebert, Paul William. *From Arsenic to DDT: A History of Entomology in Western Canada*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980.

- Riley, Glenda. *Women and Nature: Saving the "Wild" West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Robbins, William G. *Landscapes of Promise : The Oregon Story, 1800-1940*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.
- Roy, Patricia, and John Herd Thompson. *British Columbia: Land of Promises, Illustrated History of Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Roy, Patricia E. *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989.
- , *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003.
- Rybczynski, Witold. *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Scribner, 1999.
- Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the American Meal*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Schwantes, Carlos Arnaldo. *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.
- Scudder, GGE and IM Smith. *Assessment of Species Diversity in the Montane Cordillera Ecozone*. Burlington, ON: Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, 1998.
- Short, Brian. *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land; the American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge,: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Steigmeyer, Rick. *Washington Apple Country*. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing, 1995.
- Thompson, John Herd. *Forging the Prairie West, The Illustrated History of Canada*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Valverde, Mariana. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991.
- Vaught, David. *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

- Vibert, Elizabeth. *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- Von Baeyer, Edwinna. *Rhetoric and Roses: A History of Canadian Gardening, 1900-1930*. Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984.
- Wadland, John Henry. *Ernest Thompson Seton: Man in Nature and the Progressive Era, 1880-1915*. New York: Arno Press, 1978.
- Walden, Keith. *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- White, Richard. *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
- . *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992.
- Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl : The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- . *Rivers of Empire : Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.
- Wrobel, David M. *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002.

### **Dissertations and Theses:**

- Dendy, David. "'A Cent a Pound or on the Ground': Okanagan Fruit Growers and Marketing, 1920-1935." M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981.
- Garrish, Christopher. "Okanagan Growers and the Abandonment of Orderly Marketing: Land Use Change, Single Desk Selling and the Coming of the Agricultural Land Reserve." M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2002.
- Greene, Kristen Jane. "The Macdonald Robertson Movement, 1899-1909." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2003.
- Heaman, Elsbeth. "Commercial Leviathan: central Canadian exhibitions at home and abroad during the nineteenth century." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996.

- Hetch, Robert William. "Nature's 'Cunning Alphabet': Pastoral Landscapes and Politics in Nineteenth-Century American Literature." Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 2002.
- McManus, Sheila. "'The line which separates': Race, Gender, and the Alberta-Montana Borderlands, 1862-1892." Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 2001.
- Merriam, Willis Bungay. "Rogue River Valley and Associated Highlands." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1945.
- Murton, James Ernest. "Creating a Countryside in British Columbia: An Alternative Modernity, 1919-1935." Ph.D. Dissertation, Queen's University, 2002.
- Ormsby, Margaret Anchoretta. "A Study of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia." M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1931.
- Parnaby, Andrew. "On the hook: Welfare capitalism on the Vancouver waterfront, 1919-1939." Ph.D. Dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2002.
- Scroggs, Joseph Campbell. "Labour Problems in the Fruit Industry of the Yakima Valley." M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1937.
- Sproule, Jane. "The Polarization of Okanagan Farming Communities and the 1955 Packing House Workers' Strike." M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1991.
- Thomson, Duane David. "A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1985.
- Wilson, Kenneth Wayne. "Irrigating the Okanagan: 1860-1920." M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989.
- Wong, Lloyd L. "Migrant seasonal agricultural labour: Race and ethnic relations in the Okanagan Valley." Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1998.

**Websites:**

- Mather, Ken. "During Colonial Times," *Bunchgrass and Beef: Bunchgrass Ecosystems and the early Cattle Industry in the Thompson Okanagan*, <http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/thomp-ok/article-LL/pre-history-beef.html> <3 September 2007>.
- Liberty Hyde Bailey: A Man for All Seasons*, <http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/bailey/commission/index.html> <2 Sept. 2007>