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Evangelism for Democracy and Social Engineering: The Origins of Social Studies Curriculum in Alberta, 1919-1935

by

Adrian John Wouts

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

Cooperation was the animating feature of the United Famers and Farm Women of Alberta (UFA/UFWA) and was reflected in their reform initiatives during their tenure in the Alberta Legislature between 1921 and 1935. It was the United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta who instigated the reform of grade school curriculum leading to the shift from history to social studies beginning in 1935. With the advent of social studies in Alberta, gone was a study of the past; social studies worked to establish a democratic and cooperative society in the future.[1]

It is the objective of this thesis to contextualize the shift from history to social studies curriculum by considering the cooperative ethos expounded by the UFA/UFWA in Alberta between 1919 and 1935. At the same time, my objective in this thesis is to expand the understanding of the origins of social studies beyond a widely held view among some historians that it was brought to Alberta from the United States by a select group of educational elites. This narrow perspective ignores the local roots of this momentous curriculum development. The shift from history to social studies took place amidst a rising tide of prairie populism sweeping Alberta during the first three decades of the twentieth century. During these decades, UFWA leaders, rural women school teachers, and their interactions with an emerging educational bureaucracy in Alberta contributed significantly to the emergence of social studies. The onset of social studies involved a wider cast of characters and local movements than has been accounted for to date.

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[1] Alberta Department of Education, "Program of Studies, Social Studies" (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1935), 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project was partly conceived during my experiences teaching high school social studies in a number of Calgary schools. Students often asked the hard-nosed question at the beginning of the semester, what was the point of social studies? I wondered the same thing. Or, more precisely, I wanted to know where social studies came from and why it replaced history curriculum in schools throughout Alberta. I thank students for precipitating my interest to follow up on such questions in a concentrated way for the past few years.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. David Marshall for taking an interest in this project and providing direction and support at every stage. I would also like to thank archivist Maggie Shane from the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) in Edmonton. Maggie supported my research by way of suggestions, guidance, and leaving the lights on in the archives long after their regular closing hours. I am grateful to her. I must also thank my brother Tim Wouts for always being interested in my work and inspiring me to learn more every time I speak with him. And thank you to my dear friend David Sol, who always makes himself available to listen, but demands of me clarity of mind in all that I do.

Finally, I must thank my parents who have supported all my endeavours and enabled me to devote the necessary time required to complete this thesis. I would also like to thank the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the History Department at the University of Calgary for their generous financial contributions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORIOGRAPHY 6

CHAPTER TWO: CITIZENSHIP TRAINING, THE SOCIAL GOSPEL, AND THE UFA/UFWA AT WORK 32

CHAPTER THREE: THE FORMALIZATION PERIOD OF SOCIAL STUDIES 62

CHAPTER FOUR: CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AND SOCIAL STUDIES: THE FULLFILLMENT OF THE UFA/UFWA'S COOPERTIVE MOVEMENT 102

CONCLUSION 139

BIBLIOGRAPHY 143

INTRODUCTION

Social studies curriculum, taught throughout Canadian schools, regularly garners heated public criticism.[1] Take, for example, the *MacLean's Magazine's* October 2012 cover story, "Why are Schools Brainwashing our Children?"[2] The article criticizes social studies curriculum for emphasizing ill-defined social justice activities such as organizing student strikes against the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline project.[3] A focused study of history is all but absent in Canadian classrooms, according to the author, Cynthia Reynolds. Her argument echoes much of what Canadian historian, Jack Granatstein, has said for years, namely, that social studies does not provide students with an adequate knowledge of Canada's past, contributing to what he claims is historical amnesia among our youth.[4]

The above-cited article alludes to what educational historians refer to as the so-called "social studies wars."[5] The battle is between history and a citizenship-focused social studies for dominance in the classroom. A healthy debate continues to take place regarding which histories should be included in school curriculum and what kinds of citizenship skills students should learn in classrooms. [6] Rarely, however, are more fundamental questions asked regarding what exactly social studies is and how it differs from its predecessor, secondary history. And why did social studies replace history

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[1] Penny Clark, *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), xv.
[2] Cynthia Reynolds, "Why Are Schools Brainwashing Our Children?" *MacLean's Magazine*, 31 October 2012: 9-15.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1997), 5.
[5] Alan Sears, "Historical Thinking and Citizenship Education," in Penny Clark, ed., *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 313.
[6] Ibid.

curriculum at all grade levels in Alberta schools beginning in 1935? Alberta was one of the first provinces to introduce social studies in Canada, followed by Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Maritimes, and Ontario.[7] Thus, an examination of the factors leading to the curriculum shift in Alberta makes it a particularly relevant jurisdiction to investigate.

My hope in this thesis is to move beyond a typically polarized or charged debate regarding the rightful place of either history or social studies in classrooms. Instead, I will examine the conditions and movements that precipitated this curriculum transition in Alberta in the first instance. Because education is a provincial responsibility, enshrined in Section 93 of the British North America (BNA) Act,[8] it should come as no surprise that curriculum reform reflects the atmosphere of a province at a given point in time.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Alberta's rural society was on the march, and cooperation was their main weapon. Amidst rural degeneration, the economic exploitation of farmers by corporate interests, and fluctuating climactic conditions, farmers organized and cooperated to ensure their interests were heard by government.[9] The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta (UFA/UFWA) took direct political action in 1919 and assumed control over the Alberta Legislature in 1921. Thus, a previously unrepresented group in society, farmers, had come to power, and they remained there for fourteen years. The UFA/UFWA rode a wave of prairie populism,

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[7] Lemisko Speer and Kurt Clausen, "Connections, Contrarieties, and Convolutions: Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform in Alberta and Ontario, 1930-1955," *Canadian Journal of Education,* 29, No.1 (2006): 1097.
[8] F. Henry Johnson, *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada Limited, 1966), 105.
[9] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 7.

nourished by the social gospel and political activism that worked to rid society of greed, competition, and violence. Curriculum reforms during the 1920s and 1930s came to reflect the UFA/UFWA's larger objective to inaugurate a cooperative and democratic order in the future. Just as the UFA/UFWA presented a bold vision for the future, so too did social studies. The same year that this new curriculum was introduced in high schools in Alberta, H.C. Newland, a most ardent promoter of social studies, proclaimed that teachers must be "evangelists for democracy and social engineers."[10] Social studies became the vehicle by which the UFA/UFWA expanded their movement by emphasizing cooperative forms of organization and active political citizenship.

In 1935, Alberta's Department of Education introduced social studies, claiming that "as its name implies [social studies] is socially directed, dealing with the 'here' and 'now', subordinating the 'there' and 'then'."[11] A study of the past became secondary to the need to prepare students for active political service in the present. For example, students were asked how cooperative forms of organization such as the Alberta Wheat Pool could combat contemporary crises of economic depression and international conflict.[12] History students in 1919, on the other hand, were expected to memorize the facts of the British Empire and Canada's role in it.[13]

Despite the rich rhetoric of reform surrounding this momentous curriculum revision in Alberta, historians have largely overlooked its local roots. Scholars have tended to

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[10] H.C. Newland quoted in "Teachers Told To Preach Democracy," *Education Bulletin*, 9, (1941): 2.
[11] Alberta Program of Studies for Elementary (Edmonton: The King's Printer, 1935), 2.
[12] See W.D. McDougall's and Gilbert Patterson's social studies textbook authorized for use at the secondary level in Alberta: *The World of Today* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), 147.
[13] Program of Studies for History, Alberta Department of Education, 1918.

discuss its genesis primarily in terms of a larger category of educational reform originating in the United States, progressive education. The American influence of progressive education in Canada and Alberta is not contested in this thesis, but to imply, as some scholars do, that progressive education and social studies were imposed upon Albertans wholly from the outside and by a select few, ignores the influence of local leaders, movements, and conditions that precipitated educational reform. I will argue that social studies was not the invention of a single man, women, or government department. Rather, it was the culmination and result of various social and political forces sweeping Alberta throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

The UFA/UFWA and rural school teachers worked at a grassroots level to alter teaching methods and curriculum to better suit the isolated and relatively improvised state in which rural schools operated during the 1920s. These local innovations to teaching methods and curriculum were in fact consistent with what educational experts later termed progressive education and social studies in the 1930s. Ultimately, what I intend to demonstrate is that UFWA leaders and women teachers were vanguards of curriculum change in Alberta and that their roles have yet to be accounted for in the historical record. This is largely because curriculum reforms of the 1920s were usurped by an emerging cadre of educational elites in the 1930s as a means to legitimize and elevate their careers. In this way, social studies was a formal term given to what UWFA and female teachers had informally delivered prior to the arrival of educational elites.

Because social studies curriculum was introduced in the same year that Aberhart's Social Credit Party ousted the UFA government from the provincial legislature (1935), I

must clarify my decision to focus exclusively on the role of the UFA/UFWA in formulating social studies. It is true that William Aberhart's Social Credit government promoted and enacted this curriculum change in the legislature, and because of this some may conclude it was the Social Credit that led in the reform of history curriculum. However, most scholars of educational history in Alberta and Canada acknowledge that the momentum for educational change had been developed by the UFA government.[14] The research I conducted in this thesis, involving a thorough review of Department of Education documents between 1934 and 1935, confirms this assertion. The reform of history curriculum was initiated and promoted by the UFA/UFWA, long before the Social Credit's assumption of power in 1935.

[14] J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis Philippe Audet, *Canadian Education: A History* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1970), 375.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Between 1921 and 1935, the Alberta Department of Education introduced significant reforms to primary and secondary curriculum under the authority of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) government.[15] A major pillar of the new curriculum was social studies, the subject that replaced history at all grade levels beginning in 1935.[16] As stated in the Alberta Program of Studies, social studies was to introduce students to the "problems of modern civilization."[17] According to the report, social studies, "as its name implies is socially directed, dealing with the 'here' and 'now', subordinating the 'there' and 'then'.''[18] Despite this dramatic change in curriculum focus few scholars have provided a broad-based analysis of the social, political, and intellectual roots of this curriculum revision.

Educational Historiography

First, I will broadly outline some trends in educational historiography and identify opportunities for examining curriculum change at a provincial level. In the 1970s and 1980s historians focused primarily on the development of public education in Ontario in the nineteenth century, a system later adopted by most of the western provinces.[19] Of particular interest to these historians' examination of the establishment of state education was how schools came to mould citizens amidst shifting social and political values. My perspective is in line with many of these scholars and I consider curriculum in this thesis

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[15] Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 8.
[16] Alberta Department of Education, "Program of Studies for the Intermediate Grades" (Edmonton: King's Printer), 1935, 2.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] J.D. Wilson, "The New Diversity in Canadian Educational History," *Acadiensis,* 19, No. 2 (1990): 149.

as something that transmits culture from one generation to the next, while also meeting the demands of social change.[20]

An example of a study that examines curriculum in this way is *The School Promoters* (1977) by historian Alison Prentice. In this work, Prentice highlights how Ontario school reformers worked to improve society through public education in the mid-nineteenth century. Against the backdrop of rapid industrialization and the scramble for wealth and power in cities and factories, Upper Canadians such as Egerton Ryerson expressed concern for the moral and spiritual degeneration of mid-nineteenth Victorian society.[21] Historian Bruce Curtis expands on Prentice's early work in his *Building the Educational State* (1986), which examines the shift from schooling as an elective activity organized by parents to a project directed and controlled by government in the nineteenth century. Curtis argues that as Ontario emerged into the industrial age schools were designed to protect upper-class interests against the threat of disruption from those perceived to be "dangerous classes."[22] Missing from these works is an examination of how school curriculum changed within a particular social, political, and economic context.

This idea is developed in George Tomkins' seminal study on Canadian curriculum, *A Common Countenance, Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum.*[23] He shows, for example, how school curriculum was used to educate future Christians and citizens in

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[20] Tom Tomkins quoted in J.D. Wilson, "The New Diversity in Canadian Educational History," *Acadiensis*, 19, (1990): 157.
[21] Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), 5.
[22] Bruce Curtis, *Building the educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 7.
[23] George Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 2.

the nineteenth century, and how it was used to promote temperance and mental hygiene in the twentieth century.[24] In his introduction, Tomkins admits that few scholars have concerned themselves with curriculum issues but encourages others to seek out developments in curriculum by unearthing official and unofficial sources that influenced curriculum policy, curriculum guides, and textbooks.[25] While Tomkins produces a landmark study of curriculum change in a national context over two centuries, less attention is paid to curriculum reform in a more regional or provincial context. In this thesis, I intend to show how social studies became a medium to engage citizens in the cooperative movement emerging in Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s.

The trend in the late 1980s and 1990s towards alternative histories, those that require sources of a non-official nature, including teacher memoirs and oral interviews, emphasized the roles played by non-elite members of society. Thus, studies focusing on historical actors, institutions, and communities traditionally relegated to the margins of state power and authority, namely women, rural schools, and farm communities, have become more commonplace since the late 1980s relative to studies of education of a decidedly national focus, such as those focussing on the establishment of public education in Canada.[26] Paul Stortz's and J. Donald Wilson's study, "Education on the Frontier" (1993), is a good example of this shift in focus. They explore the experience of remote one-room schoolteachers in North Central B.C. and unearth their relationship to the community and Department of Education. Their point is to show that rural schools,

[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] Ibid., 6.
[26] J.D. Wilson, 155.

along with the political and social conditions particular to this region, were markedly different from schools in urban centers.[27]

Scholar Amy von Heyking has recently published on the contributions made by rural school teachers towards reforming education in Alberta. She argues that rural teachers, mostly women, were pioneers of progressive education and that their pragmatic teaching methods, born out of necessity, were in fact consistent with what educational experts later termed "progressive education."[28] While von Heyking's argument relates to an issue I raise in chapter three, namely that rural teachers were implementing curriculum reforms that found expression in social studies curriculum in subsequent years, her article does not consider the professionalization of teaching and its relationship to the advent of social studies. I argue that so-called educational "professionals" utilized curriculum reform in Alberta to assert control over the teaching force in the 1930s. Female teachers were never considered "professionals"; they were given prescribed gender roles typical of the period, thus downplaying their innovations as inconsequential relative to those of their male professional counterparts.[29] I intend to carefully examine the territory left unexplored by von Heyking, analyzing not only the role that women played in curriculum innovation in the 1920s but also how educational professionals used social studies as a tool to legitimize teaching as a profession and as a way to elevate their own status within Alberta's growing educational bureaucracy in the 1930s.

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[27] Paul Stortz and J.D. Wilson, "Education on the Frontier: Schools Teachers, and Community Influence in North-Central British Columbia," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 26, (1993): 265.
[28] Amy von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural Schools," *Historical Studies in Education* (2012), 93.
[29] Mary Kinnear*, In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995), 18.

In the mid-1980s educational historians Chad Gaffield and Paul Axelrod claimed that the study of education must continue to mature as a field of social history. They argue that "historians must examine the actual ways in which factors such as gender, class, and ethnicity have determined significant educational change."[30] But this approach drew criticism from scholars such as Queens University's Donald Swainson. He laments the demise of the "classical historian" who left one with a feeling that Canada was, at least potentially, an integrated unit.[31] For Swainson, the local and regional historian or the "new historian" leaves one with an atomistic view of the country.[32] But Canada is indeed an amalgam of regions, not to mention a country of limited identities defined by class, gender, and ethnicities, explains historian J.D. Wilson.[33] It is thus not surprising that some historians tend to write of communities, regions, and classes of people rather than the nation as a whole. And because education is indeed a provincial responsibility enshrined in Section 93 of the British North America Act,[34] it should not come as a surprise that reforms to school curriculum reflect, to a certain extent, social and political attitudes particular to a province at a given point in time.

Gaffield suggests that one reason for the relatively few number of examinations of curriculum in terms of shifting social, political, and economic values within a province could be a result of the explosive growth of educational departments in the mid-twentieth century. He claims historians may have assumed that studies of curriculum are

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[30] Chad Gaffield, "Coherence and Chaos in Educational Historiography," *Interchange*, 17, No. 2 (1986): 112.
[31] Donald Swainson, "Tribal Drummers," *Books in Canada* (1980): 3-6.
[32] Ibid.
[33] J.D. Wilson, 158.
[34] F. Henry Johnson, *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada Limited, 1966), 105.

sufficiently covered by those education departments.[35] In part, he is correct. There are a significant number of M.A. and PhD theses on social studies curriculum at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta.[36] But many of these examinations treat social studies more in terms of pedagogical change and the few bureaucratic individuals involved in the shift. Less attention is paid to how curriculum transitions are tied to regional shifts in social and political values in the province. An important exception is Amy von Heyking's PhD dissertation, which examines citizenship training in Alberta between 1908 and 1965. Still, von Heyking focuses less on the actual transition from history to social studies and glosses over the grassroots leaders involved in the curriculum change.

Despite Swanson's lament that regionalized studies of education compromise a national outlook, a social historical approach to curriculum reform, including regional and gender analysis, is in fact extremely relevant to educational matters at a national level. For example, Alberta was one of first provinces in Canada to introduce social studies, and in subsequent years, Ontario, the Maritimes, and other prairie provinces adopted the same program as implemented in this province.[37] Thus, an examination of the origins of social studies in Alberta may in fact bear relevance to larger national debates on its genesis in other jurisdictions. While matters of education are technically a

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[35] Gaffield, 116.
[36] See Robert S. Patterson's "The Establishment of Progressive Education in Alberta" (PhD. Dissertation: University of Alberta, 1968) or Scott Bennett, "Progressive Education and High School Social Studies in Alberta in the 1940s" (M.A. Thesis: University of Calgary, 1999) and Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World: A History of the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, 1905-1965" (PhD Dissertation: University of Calgary, 1996).
[37] Lynn Lemisko and Kurt Clausen, "Connections, Contrarieties and Convolutions: Curriculum and Pedagogic Reform in Alberta and Ontario, 1930-1955," *Canadian Journal of Education, (*2006): 1097.

provincial responsibility in Canada, scholars have focused more on the international and national contexts and less on the regional origins of curriculum.

George Richardson, author of "The History and Social Studies Curriculum of Alberta at the End of Empire," examines curriculum within an imperial framework.[38] He argues that school curriculum emphasized the fundamentally British character of the nation and was the sustaining force of the imperial connection long after the colonial period.[39] Richardson acknowledges that after the First World War Canada developed a more autonomous sense of self and that this was reflected, somewhat, in curriculum. However, by and large curriculum continued to be grounded in the political and cultural heritage of Britain.[40] This imperial tone is evident in the curriculum objectives for history and social studies in Alberta, at least at the level of prescribed ministerial objectives, Richardson's primary source of research. However, there also exists a significant regional, or Albertan, point of view in the curriculum objectives and textbooks authorized for social studies curriculum after the First World War. This Alberta perspective conveys social, political, and economic concerns particular to Alberta in the 1920s and 1930s and is evident not only in curriculum objectives and textbooks published in Alberta but also in sources not consulted by Richardson. These include the UFA/UFWA education committee meeting records. I will use the latter to show that the UFA/UFWA influenced a shift away from students assuming British values as essential to their national identity towards curriculum goals that emphasized values essential to Alberta's populist agrarian movement,

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[38] George Richardson, "The History and Social Studies Curriculum of Alberta and Ontario at the End of Empire," in Philip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).
[39] Ibid., 184.
[40] Ibid., 188.

particularly the belief that cooperation must replace the degenerative effects of imperialism, greed, and competition.

Popular rhetoric critical of progressive education in Canada suggests progressive reforms undermined a well-functioning educational system. Ministries of education are not impervious to the polemics of Hilda Neatby's *So Little For the Mind (1953)* or Jack Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History* (1998).[41] Neatby and Granatstein argue that progressive education, an educational reform movement that migrated from the United States, was an attack on a so-called Canadian approach to education, characterized by rigorous teaching methods and academic subjects such as history.

W.J. Dunlop, the Minister of Education in Ontario after WWII, agreed with Neatby's rail against progressive education. He declared a war on "fancy subjects, frills and fads" and resolved to "improve our educational system until the last shreds of this so-called progressive education are gone."[42] Jack Granatstein similarly took aim at progressive educators, particularly those who have come to dominate ministries of education, arguing that they "remain fixated on remedying societal ills such as sexism and racism and on making students feel good about themselves."[43] For Granatstein and Neatby, teaching must return to being an "intellectually rigorous" activity.

Neatby's and Granatstein's attacks have certainly been tempered by contemporary Canadian historians who have demonstrated well that the advent of progressive education

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[41] See Hilda Neatby, *So Little For the Mind* (Toronto: Clarke and Irwin and Company, 1953) and Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998).
[42] W.J. Dunlop quoted in Paul Axelrod, "Beyond the Progressive Education Debate: A Profile of Toronto Schooling in the 1950s*, Historical Studies in Education,"* 16, No. 2 (2004): 228.
[43] Granatstein, 35.

and social studies in Canada did not mean a wholesale loss of traditional teaching methods or curriculum. Paul Axelrod, for example, attributes much of Neatby's hysteria to her use of sources, predominantly progressive education literature and department of education documents, undoubtedly filled to the brim with startling rhetoric. In "Beyond the Progressive Education Debate" (2004), Axelrod suggests that school teachers and administrators pragmatically used emerging tools to address their instructional needs together with traditional methods of instruction.[44] Amy von Heyking confirms Axelrod's amalgamation thesis for Alberta. She argues that history and traditional teaching practices were not totally abandoned outright with the advent of social studies. Based on her sources, which include student exams and oral interviews with teachers, she concludes that educators incorporated the old with the new.[45]

R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar's recent research on how schools worked examines the extent to which the educational reform agenda of the 1920s and 1930s translated into routine practices in the schools.[46] According to Gidney and Millar's *How Schools Worked*, the school experience across the country between 1910 and 1940 was not as profound as the debate between traditional and progressive education has suggested.[47] They challenge those who tend to characterize the early twentieth-century educational experience as academically rigorous and where students learned by rote and drill. Instead, Gidney and Millar seek to provide a more nuanced portrait of the transition from the

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[44] Axelrod, 228.
[45] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 10.
[46] R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012).

[47] Gidney and Millar, xix.

early twentieth-century educational experience to the "new education" or "progressive education" of the 1920s.[48] However, my thesis argues that when specific curriculum transitions in a province are examined, such as history to social studies in Alberta, the lofty rhetoric of progressive education presents itself explicitly in textbooks and curriculum objectives, a revelation not abundantly clear when a more national and curriculum-wide survey is employed.

Both Neatby and Granatstein suggest that progressive education and social studies displaced an educational system that in their view was representative of Canada. But this argument ignores that social and political values were shifting in various regions and provinces of the country, particularly in Alberta during the 1920s. Their viewpoint overlooks that some Canadians envisioned a traditional educational framework, one that was largely a product of nineteenth-century Ontario, as ill-suited to shifting conditions and attitudes in their home provinces. Neatby's and Granatstein's attack on the advent of progressive education in Canada also perpetuates an ill-defined notion that progressive education and social studies were somehow alien to Canada – that they infiltrated and broke down a Canadian tradition of education.

While Granatstein and Neatby overlook important developments in progressive education, so too have some scholars in Alberta. For example, Robert Paterson overlooks local aspects of curriculum reform when he claims that progressive education came from emerging educational and philosophical theories originating in the United States.[49] These

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[48] Ibid., xviii.
[49] R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Education," in Nick Kach, Kas Mazurek, Robert S. Patterson, and Ivan DeFaveri, eds., *Essays on Canadian Education* (Calgary: Detslig Enterprises, 1986), 61.

ideas, according to him, were imported into Alberta by a select few, primarily elite educators that had studied progressive education at Chicago and Columbia universities in the 1920s and 30s, both leading centers of progressive education in North America at the time.[50] Confirming this notion is a graduate student of Patterson's in the 1970s, Patricia Oviatt, who characterizes H.C. Newland, a key architect of Alberta social studies curriculum in the 1930s, as a "one-man curriculum machine" ultimately responsible for bringing social studies from the United States and into Alberta.[51]

The American influence on Alberta's educational landscape is well documented and admittedly justified, given the high number of public officials that attended Chicago University and Columbia University between 1920 and 1938.[52] But to imply, as Neatby, Granatstein, Patterson, and other scholars do, that progressive education and social studies were brought to Albertans wholly from the outside ignores the influence of the local movement. The UFA/UFWA promoted and authorized curriculum reform based upon broad-based support for school revisions beginning in the 1920s, long before social studies was formally adopted in 1935. The seeds for reforming history curriculum were sown in Alberta soil and harvested by educational elites years later. UFA/UFWA leaders and rural school teachers worked at a grassroots level to create teaching practices and curriculum that better reflected the conditions in which rural schools operated.

As already mentioned, Chad Gaffield and David Axelrod suggest that educational history must continue to evolve into the realm of social history. With this in mind, I

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Patricia Oviatt, "The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland" (M.A. Thesis: University of Alberta, 1970), 12.
[52] Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Education," 64.

intend to expand the understanding of social studies by relating it to a number of key social and political movements: the progressive movement, progressive education, the social gospel, and the UFA/UFWA. I will highlight how scholars have typically analyzed these movements in political and economic terms alone, thus overlooking their interconnections with education and, specifically, curriculum reform.

The Progressive Movement

In a general sense, the progressive movement is a term used to describe a host of political, economic, and social reforms that flourished throughout North America from the 1890s to the 1930s. According to American scholar Michael Meir, the roots of progressivism lie in the transformation from a gilded age of nineteenth-century Victorianism to an industrialized age that generated extremes of wealth and poverty, new pleasures, and alien cultures.[53] He also claims that progressives carried out their agendas, not in clearly defined policies or in conventional government offices of authority, but in settlement houses, churches, schoolrooms, and unassuming day-to-day activities.[54] In the Canadian context, the progressive movement is described in similar terms. Historians R. Douglas, Richard Jones, and Donald Smith claim the movement encompassed the various social reforms precipitated by massive industrialization, rapid urbanization, and their degenerative effects on Canadian society.[55] However, scholars have focused more on progressive reformers' work in cities, including campaigns to alleviate urban poverty and

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[53] Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.
[54] Ibid., 6.
[55] R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian History Since Confederation*, 3rd Ed. (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 130.

implement prohibition and workers' rights, while the movement's rural nuances have been given less attention. What scholars do focus on in the rural Canadian context is the early twentieth-century agrarian revolt, the rise of prairie farmers who mounted a concerted attack on the political and economic structures of their province and nation.[56] The political and economic roots of the agrarian revolt have been given significant attention by historians. Less examined are the more social aspects of the movement, particularly the role of UFWA leaders and teachers in educational matters, a gap I intend to fill.

The progressive movement also contained an important religious component. For American scholar Robert Crooned, progressive reformers, writers, politicians, and thinkers were never members of any one movement, but shared common moral values and tended to agree that the nation required a spiritual reformation to fulfill God's plan for democracy on earth. The movement aimed to directly apply Christianity to the collective ills of society to create a perfect "Kingdom of God on Earth."[57] This religious impulse or revival as it is referred to by some historians is also known as the social gospel movement, which I will argue fuelled a range of social political reforms in Alberta in the 1920s and 1930s, including in education. Social studies is an important but largely overlooked site of expression of the social gospel influence.

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[56] Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," in R. Douglas Francis and Howard palmer, *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992), 562.
[57] Robert Crooned, *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization*, *1899-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 7.

The Social Gospel Movement

The social gospel developed partially in response to a crisis in religious beliefs precipitated by the rise in popularity of the Darwinian concept of evolution. Ramsay Cook claims that with scientific criticisms came a crisis of faith, instigating criticisms of the bible and its monopoly on truth as well as criticisms of the existing social and political order.[58] Faith in the bible as the unquestioned assumption on almost every topic – human nature, science, politics, and so on – was called into question. The result was a profound intellectual revolution, which, according to Cook, affected not only traditional religious feelings or outlooks on dogma, but also led to a transformation of society itself. Critics of religious orthodoxy reinterpreted Christianity to make it more relevant to the everyday lives of Canadians. For them, when properly interpreted, Christianity should provide that standard against which society should be judged.[59]

For scholars of religious history in Canada such as David Marshall and Ramsay Cook, the irony is that these reformers of the social gospel unwittingly made the church increasingly irrelevant in a world in which other institutions had eclipsed the social roles played by the church. The secular professional replaced the religious shepherd as society's guide.[60] However, the secularization thesis put forth by Cook and Marshall is not universally accepted among religious historians. For example, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, Richard Allen, and Phyllis Airhart see the work of the social gospel

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[58] Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 22.
[59] Ibid., 22-23.
[60] See Ramsay Cook and David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

as the apogee of Christianity, not as evidence of its decline. For historians who argue against Marshall's and Cook's secularization argument, the socially directed work of reformers gave religion a new beginning, albeit in a different form, rather than leading to its eclipse, as Cook and David Marshall assert.[61] Aligning myself with one side or the other of the secularization debate is not something I intend to do in this thesis, as it would divert attention away from my particular topic at hand, the origins of social studies. My interest in the social gospel in this thesis lies only insofar as it is able to provide insight into the popularization of cooperation in society as a vehicle to regenerate society, a key feature of social studies. Hence my examinations of the social gospel will focus less on religious decline or revitalization and more on how changes to traditional religious orthodoxy shifted to more practical and popular messages of social and political reconstruction, which I argue fuelled Alberta's agrarian movement and their educational reforms.

William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* argues that in order to understand significant educational reforms in Canada, one must first appreciate the pervasiveness of Christian ideals in politics and society in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada. He suggests that school reformers in Ontario could instigate significant educational reforms "because they justified public education by appealing to a popular version of the basic story of Christian redemption."[62] Since all people bore the weight of original sin, society must sustain public order by

[61] See this debate outlined in Christy and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 6.
[62] William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989), 7.

supporting schools…which moderated the anti-social repercussions of human nature."[63] Although Westfall was writing about school promoters in Ontario in the nineteenth century, Alberta reformers used a similar Christian message of social redemption to justify reform in the 1920s and 1930s.

Historians have also overlooked the possibility that rural manifestations of the social gospel were distinct from those in urban centres. Often, scholars insinuate that the social gospel migrated into the prairie West as a "metropolitan concoction that the hinterland came to share."[64] But as scholar Richard Allen points out, when the social gospel came to the countryside, its proposals were not merely the extension of the amenities and social features of urban life. Rather, the social gospel both adapted to and shaped the particular social and political environment of farmers in the 1920s and 1930s.[65] An important manifestation of the unique rural strain of the social gospel was the advent of social studies, which sprang from rural communities and not the cities.

The social gospel fuelled the construction of the agrarian movement in Alberta, one of the most successful movements in North America, argues historian Bradford Rennie, a movement that toppled the provincial Liberal government in a landslide victory in 1921.[66] Education, particularly citizenship training, became a key building block for the UFA/UFWA movement and was formalized in social studies curriculum. Educational

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," 563.
[65] Ibid, 564.
[66] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 4.

reforms that brought about social studies curriculum in Alberta are best understood by closely examining the fusion of the social gospel and the UFA/UFWA movement.

The UFA/UFWA

Many historians such as J.M. Careless describe the UFA/UFWA in specific political and economic terms. The UFA began first as a lobby group that initially focussed on pushing government for legislation that better reflected the political and economic needs of farmers. However, during the agony of social upheaval that accompanied the First World War, the UFA became motivated to take direct political action. In the 1921 provincial election, the UFA won the majority of seats, and it stayed in the Alberta Legislature until 1935. With this victory, a previously unrepresented group in government had come to power: farmers.[67]

Historian Richard Allen points out that, politically, farmers had been unrepresented in parliament at both provincial and federal levels. While the West was perceived as the stepping stone of nation building, it stood on the sidelines of the federal power structure. Economically, the prairie farmer was disadvantaged by policies of industrialization, which forced him to buy in a protected market and sell in an open one far from the site of production and through agencies entirely unaccountable to him.[68] However, Allen also argues that the varied phenomena of the agrarian revolt cannot be explained in economic and political terms alone.

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[67] James M. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, 1953), 360.
[68] Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," 562.

Historian Bradford Rennie takes up Allen's challenge in *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, arguing that the UFA/UFWA was infused with a Christian ethic that forged a cooperative ethos, an ill-defined notion that cooperation should replace competition in economic, political, and social affairs.[69] Rennie examines, as few others have done, the rise of the UFA/UWFA in terms of social and spiritual factors, with particular emphasis on the role that gender and education played in constructing the movement. Similarly, in "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," Allen suggests that the conditions of farmers were perceived and evaluated in explicitly or implicitly religious terms.[70] I intend to build on these scholars' work by showing that the citizenship training initiated by UFWA leaders helped to build their movement and that this training was the foundation upon which social studies was built. Also, social studies reflected a popular message, its crucible being the social, political, and spiritual environment of rural Alberta, a message of social redemption based on cooperative values.

For the UFA, education was essential for building their movement. According to Rennie, most educational initiatives were left to the UFA's women section, the UFWA, which was established in 1913. Women of the movement wanted greater autonomy and a name that indicated they were an integral part of the movement rather than a mere auxiliary.[71] The UFA did not grant women equality throughout all of the organization, but as Rennie points out, the UFA did endorse a number of the UFWA's proposed reforms, particularly those on educational matters deemed to be a natural extension of

[69] Rennie, 8.
[70] Allen, 563.
[71] Rennie, 112.

women's maternal role as caregivers of children.[72] Men, on the other hand, attained positions of political authority in order to protect the interests of farmers through formal legislation. But how men and women of the movement interacted in the case of curriculum reform remains unexamined. This thesis intends to address that void.

A key educational aim of the UFWA, according to scholar Leroy Wilson, was to popularize the study of social, political, and economic questions by various informal means.[73] Doing so would provide rural youth with the tools to improve the conditions in which farmers lived. Wilson examines the UWFA leadership in these matters, but primarily according to broad statements made by leaders in the farmers' official publication, the *Grain Growers Guide*, and also in terms of what I would suggest was the informal delivery of citizenship training by the UFWA. The UFA's Farm Youth programs, the Better Farming Trains, and the Library on Wheels were campaigns led and organized by women of the UFWA and were intended as opportunities to raise awareness of the social and economic conditions particular to rural communities and to build the necessary skills to improve farmers' political and economic circumstances. The UFWA's involvement in citizenship training in the early decades of the twentieth century became the foundation of social studies curriculum decades later, but this connection between the informal delivery of citizenship training and social studies remains unexamined by historians.

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Leroy Wilson, "The Education of the Farmer: The Educational Objectives and Activities of the UFA and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, 1920-1930 (PhD. Thesis: University of Alberta, 1975), 91.

Few scholars have discussed the university extension education initiatives beyond the level of factual description. Ralph J. Clark's study of the Extension Department at the University of Alberta appears to be the only scholarly account of some of these activities.[74] UFWA leaders and women teachers, often one and the same, extended access to educational materials in rural communities through partnerships with universities and the railways, delivering citizenship training at an informal level. This type of citizenship training directed towards improving rural communities became the foundation of formal social studies in subsequent decades. The informal delivery of citizenship training, led by UFWA leaders, predates the formal arrival of progressive educational experts to Alberta and the formalization of social studies curriculum in 1935. Social studies was a formal term given to what UWFA women were informally delivering throughout rural communities in the 1920s.

Gender historians such as Dianne Miller are also providing new insights into curriculum reform initiated by rural teachers in isolated communities. Based on a series of oral interviews with rural teachers from the 1920s, she argues that traditional history and Latin were of little utility to increasing numbers of rural students flooding classrooms after the First World War (largely the result of mandatory school legislation and the Great Depression, which saw many returning to school in the wake of high unemployment).[75] Similarly, scholar Amy von Heyking argues that rural school teachers struggled to accommodate expanding classroom sizes, a short supply of textbooks, inadequate teacher

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[74] Ralph J. Clark, "A History of the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta, 1912-1956," unpublished report, 1986, University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton.
[75] Dianne Miller (previously Hallman), "Twentieth-Century Women Teachers in Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History*, 49, No. 2, (1997): 14.

training, and students' varying academic abilities. Amidst these challenging conditions, teachers made changes to curriculum and their teaching methods out of necessity. Teachers' practical innovations are examined by von Heyking and Miller as being consistent with what educational experts later called progressive education.[76] But less discussed by either is how the innovative teaching practices and curriculum adaptations became the foundation of social studies, formally adopted years later. While women teachers and UWFA leaders initiated curriculum change, men in places of public authority asserted control over the teaching force and curriculum reform in order to legitimize a man's career as a "professional educator."

The Professionalization of Teaching and Progressive Education

Most scholars of progressive education in Canada appear to be in agreement with leading authority Dr. Peter Sandiford, who contends that progressive education meant curriculum reform based upon the "progressive element in American education."[77] According to Sandiford, top American universities such as Chicago and Columbia, where many of Alberta's leading educational bureaucrats attended, challenged the established belief that education was synonymous with the acquisition of useful knowledge. Progressive education shifted the preoccupation with subject-centered learning by rigid discipline to more practical activities that allowed students to discover and learn more on their own terms. Expressions such as "learning by doing," "educating the whole child," "interest-based learning," and "democratic education" were typical of the rhetoric of

[76] Von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural Schools,": 93.
[77] R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Education" in Nick Kach, Kas Mazurek, Robert Patterson, and Ivan DeFaveri, eds., *Essays on Canadian Education,* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1986), 61.

reform and captured the support of educators and the public alike, claims educational historian R.S. Patterson. The new school subject social studies, introduced in the United States in the 1920s and supported by leading progressive educators such as William Kilpatrick and Harold Rugg, also captured the attention of Alberta's educational bureaucracy, especially those men who attended graduate school in the United States. [78]

The same year social studies was formally introduced in Alberta, 1935, teaching in Alberta was also recognized by Premier William Aberhart as a "profession."[79] This meant that the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) would henceforth have input into codes of conduct, salaries, and curriculum design.[80] The culmination of these two events, the introduction of social studies and the government's recognition of teaching as a profession, relates to a rarely examined topic in educational historiography in Canada or Alberta: the professionalization of teaching and the gendered dynamics inherent in the process. What is the relationship between the advent of social studies and the professionalization of teaching? The emergence of a teaching profession and progressive education in Alberta is tacitly described by historians such as E.S. Patterson and John Chalmers as an achievement by teachers in obtaining control over their trade.[81] This meant that teachers, for the first time, governed curriculum design, textbook writing, and

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[78] Ibid., 63.
[79] Premier William Aberhart quoted in the *ATA Magazine*, (Edmonton: November 1935), 15.
[80] John Chalmers, *Schools in the Prairie Provinces: The Story of Public Education in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 91.
[81] See R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Education," 60, and John W. Chalmers, *Schools in the Foothills Province: The Story of Public Education in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 34-42.

teacher training. No longer did university professors and ministries of education monopolize these areas.[82]

R.S. Patterson claims it was an "elite few" that brought progressive education and social studies to Alberta from the United States.[83] As previously discussed, this view is echoed by much of the secondary literature and primary record available, thereby overemphasizing the role of this select few – primarily men – and overlooking female educators. But this so-called achievement by professional educators in establishing progressive education in Alberta was not a gender-neutral or benign process. Because women dominated teaching in Alberta between 1911 and 1970,[84] a tension existed between practitioners in the field and the authority of men in bureaucratic positions. The contributions of women in curriculum design remained largely unacknowledged by those who asserted control over the teaching force and curriculum development as a means to elevate their own careers.

Allison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald explain that the under representation of females in the teaching profession is a result of women being stereotyped as an ancillary to male bureaucratic control, incapable of exerting influence on their own terms. Conversely, men are cast as those directing the political and professional activities on their own accord.[85] An important point raised by Prentice and Theobald is that the structure of the profession in fact mirrored gender relations in society at large. Just as

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[82] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 56.
[83] R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Education," 62.
[84] Mary Kinnear*, In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995), table 22, 180.
[85] Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 7.

mothers nurtured children and the family, women were responsible for teaching grade school. And just as men maintained positions of authority in family life, so too were they the primary figures of authority in public life, including in ministries of education.[86]

I will highlight the lesser-examined role that women played in educational reforms leading to social studies curriculum. At the same time, I will employ a relational approach to understanding interactions between men and women in matters of educational change. Gender historian Joan Scott reminds scholars that the term gender is not to be understood as synonymous with women. Instead it is a relational category of analysis used to explore relationships of power between both men and women.[87]

My objective is not to deny men's important contributions; rather, it is to balance their influence with women, who have been all but absent from much of the primary and secondary record. A more nuanced picture of the relationship between the hands-on or grassroots approach of rural women teachers and the influence of men in public positions of authority is warranted. Thus, a relational approach to gender analysis offers insight into the ways in which social studies curriculum was created through interactions of male-dominated governance and female innovation and delivery of education.

Building on Prentice's, Theobald's, and Kinnear's call for further inquiry into the contributions made by female educators is Patricia Coulter's work on Donalda Dickie. An Alberta rural school teacher, scholar, and one of Canada's first female historians,

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[86] Ibid., 123.
[87] Joan Scott, "A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, 91, No. 5 (1986): 1074.

Dickie authored a significant number of textbooks for social studies curriculum.[88] Coulter champions the unexamined role of Dickie in curriculum reform in Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s. I will push Coulter's argument further by suggesting that Donalda Dickie was a preeminent figure in introducing social studies in Alberta. Notwithstanding, her accomplishments remain muted in the primary and secondary record by those in higher positions of authority, mainly men. Also, I intend to show that Dickie's experience with male authority figures was typical of the experience of many other female school teachers who interacted with educational bureaucracy.

In his introduction to *Approaches to Canadian History*, Carl Berger reminds readers that "there are hidden factors behind any historical interpretation" and that these need to be raised so that the character of an age in which its authors wrote can be taken into account."[89] However, Alberta's authors of social studies and the textbooks they penned have yet to be contextualized into their time and space. In order to expand our understanding of social studies and reveal those hidden factors motivating historical interpretations, social studies must be brought into the fold of social history. To explore the origins of social studies curriculum is to examine the progressive movement, progressive education, the UFA/UFWA, interactions between rural female teachers in the field, and male educators in positions of authority. Alberta educators, including female teachers, who wrote social studies curriculum and textbooks in the 1920s and 1930s revised the way in which Canadian history was taught throughout Alberta and in many

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[88] Patricia Coulter, "Getting Things Done: Donalda Dickie and Leadership Through Practice," *Canadian Society for the Study of Education* (2005): 637.
[89] Carl Berger, *Approaches to Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 1.

other classrooms across Canada. They too should be considered alongside historians as important authors of historical interpretation.

CHAPTER TWO: CITIZENSHIP TRAINING, THE SOCIAL GOSPEL, AND THE UFA/UFWA AT WORK

Historian Richard Allen argues that the social gospel was the religion of Alberta's agrarian revolt. Building on this, I suggest that citizenship training in the 1920s was the agrarian revolt's primary tool for building its religio-political movement. Citizenship training delivered by the United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta (UFA/UFWA) in the first two decades of the twentieth century called for the reconstruction of society based on cooperative and democratic Christian values. Through citizenship training, farmers learned that their political and Christian responsibilities were one and the same – to establish a cooperative ethos in society. My objective in this chapter is to show that citizenship training is a unique expression of the fusion of the social gospel and UFA/UFWA movements. And, as I will argue, citizenship training, delivered by the UFA/UFWA in the 1920s, became the foundation for social studies in Alberta in the mid-1930s. To expand our understanding of the origins of social studies is to imagine social studies as a formalized container for the religio-political movement of the UFA/UFWA in Alberta in the 1920s.

By examining citizenship training, the social gospel, and the farm movement in this chapter, I hope to achieve a broader objective in my overall thesis: to decenter the predominant view among educational historians that social studies was an educational experiment imported from leading American universities, by an elite few, and imposed upon Albertans in the mid-1930s.

The UFA was established in 1909 to address the social, economic, and political grievances of farmers.[90] A movement concerning itself with grievances similar to those articulated by organized farmers at the turn of the century was the social gospel. The social gospel movement worked to apply Christian ethics to social, economic, and political problems.[91] Both demonstrated a remarkable degree of consistency with each other in their criticisms of society and their solutions to those criticisms. According to the leaders of both the social gospel and the farmers' movement, there was a fundamental evil at work in politics, economics, and society that had to be eradicated: competitive individualism. For leaders of the social gospel, the solution was to establish the "Kingdom of God on earth," conceived as a cooperative and democratic order.[92] For farmers, infusing cooperation and equality throughout society was their Christian obligation for improving Alberta's political, social, and economic environment.[93]

The Christian principles of cooperation and democracy formed the basis for the delivery of citizenship training by various formal and informal means. Infusing Albertans with these ideals was crucial to ensuring the survival and vitality of the farmers' social and political movement. The *Grain Growers Guide*, the official publication of the UFA/UFWA, as well as Sunday schools, UFA/UFWA union meetings, the University of Alberta Extension Department, and UFA/UFWA Youth conferences, served as channels

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[90] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 9.
[91] Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of Agrarian Revolt," in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 1992), 562.
[92] Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 64.
[93] Provincial Archives of Alberta, Accession No: 77.114, File No: 15, Voice of Youth, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1934, 6.

for educating citizens about how to engage politically and how to work as apostles delivering the province and nation from the evils of greed, competition, and violence. These forums of engagement allowed the social gospel movement to simultaneously achieve its aims. The social gospel's association with the UFA/UFWA and their educational initiatives helped guide the transmission of Christianity to a wider audience, a broadcast that was not possible from the pulpit of a single prairie church.

Before 1919, the UFA remained a lobby group only. It was after the war that the UFA mobilized to take direct political action, winning a landslide victory in the Alberta Legislature in 1921.[94] The war and the Great Depression intensified the UFA/UFWA's long-established grievances about competition, imperialism, and greed and affirmed their conviction that they were in the best position to inaugurate a better society. The slow response of governments and traditional political parties in addressing their concerns catapulted the UFA into direct political action. Farmers, a previously unrepresented group in provincial politics, had come to power and remained there until 1935. Prominent social gospel leaders such as E.A. Partridge and Salem Bland were surely happy with the UFA's landslide victory, since they saw the possibility of having their convictions and initiatives implemented on a provincial scale. A decade earlier, Partridge had encouraged farmers in a 1909 *Grain Growers' Guide* editorial to "take your love of God…into politics," arguing that there was "no abler chamber" than politics for achieving the principles of organized Christians.[95]

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[94] Rennie, 5.
[95] E.A. Partridge, *The Grain Growers' Guide*, August 28, 1909, 24.

With the rise of the UFA/UFWA from a lobby group to a political party, the social gospel found new life through its intricate connection with the UFA/UFWA. Citizenship training became a unique expression of this union between the UFA and the social gospel. I intend to show that citizenship training was the vehicle used by the UFA to evangelize citizens throughout Alberta's rural communities.

The Social Gospel Movement

The social gospel movement applied Christian ethics to social problems such as wealth disparity, poverty, alcoholism, poor schools, and violence. It was a phenomenon that began in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and climaxed around the 1920s.[96] The social gospel was not allied with one specific church or institution; associations between Protestant denominations, social reformers, universities, and political leaders were informal.[97] However, there were prominent disseminators of the social gospel such J.S. Woodsworth, a church minister, and Salem Bland, a professor, both of whom provided influential and powerful leadership of the social gospel throughout Canada and especially in the West. Both leaders reworked such traditional Christian doctrines as sin, atonement, and the Kingdom of God to emphasize a social content relevant to Canadian society at the turn of the century. Materialism, political corruption, economic distress, and urban disorder were by-products of an increasingly industrialized, modernized, and urbanized society in the early decades of the twentieth

[96] Allen, *The Social Passion,* 22.
[97] Paul T. Phillips*, A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880-1940* (State College: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), xiv.

century. Amidst the social, political and economic challenges society faced in this new century, Bland and Woodsworth attempted to restate the objectives of Christianity.[98]

An evangelical and persuasive pulpit manner was employed by leaders such as Bland to encourage discussion and action in resolving public issues. According to Bland, preaching in evangelical tones involved inspiring and reaching audiences by addressing themes that held universal relevance. This was achieved, for example, by relating the gospel to pressing social, economic, and political issues, while avoiding religious dogma and intellectualism that may detract audiences.[99]

The problems of a modernizing nation in the twentieth century were met by a new generation of ministers who claimed that "An old age has passed and a new day has dawned." The nineteenth-century Victorian-era church, with its adherence to strict theological doctrines such as individual salvation, seemed out of step with the social ills plaguing the nation in the twentieth century. Many critics of the Victorian-era church agreed with Alice Chown, a feminist and social reformer, when she asserted that it was indeed a "dead organism."[100] New spiritual leaders emerged and devoted themselves to uniting the Christian heritage of the nation with social service to ensure that their brand of Christianity adapted to, and dynamically interacted with, changes in modern society.[101] According to Reverend Samuel D. Chown, cousin to Alice Chown and a prominent social gospel leader, "the ill-fitting garments of doctrine and dogma" had eroded the authority

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[98] Allen, *The Social Passion,* 4.
[99] Ibid., 5.
[100] Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996), 3.
[101] Ibid., 1.

of the church by severing it from popular culture and the wider social experience.[102] J.S. Woodsworth condemned theology's "intellectual standpoints, with its historical creeds, confessions, and standards…a theology whose phraseology is antiquated and its terminology most unintelligible."[103] Woodsworth insisted that a new generation of ministers and social reformers must "run the theologs out of power…and enable society to do more effectual work among those who need it."[104] The only way to rescue the church from irrelevancy among growing numbers of Canadians, in his view, was to destroy theology so that Christianity could once again command an authority founded upon direct popular appeal. To this end, the Reverend C.W. Gordon encouraged ministers to eschew dogma and sectarianism and to "look for new channels of access to the life of the world and to win the mass of humanity to a more uniform religious faith and purpose in life."[105]

Most historians propose that the social gospel movement stemmed from the late nineteenth-century era of rapid urbanization and industrialization. The negative effects of modern industrial society such as materialism, drunkenness, greed, and poverty were met with calls for a "new Christianity." Social problems required the "incarnation of God in human relations and institutions."[106] This "new Christianity" offered the potential for improvement by elevating the goodness of man to the highest power."[107] Similarly,

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[102] Ibid., 9.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 4.
[105] Ibid., 10.
[106] Richard Allen, *The Social Passion,* 6.
[107] Ibid.,7.

institutions such as the state and business were to "serve mankind as a whole."[108] Christianity became, according to historian Ramsay Cook, the benchmark by which to measure society's wellbeing. A concern for the moral health of society compelled leaders of the social gospel to interact with other movements and institutions. Indeed, their interest in political, economic, and social reform reflected a belief that there were no barriers to the regenerative influence of Christianity.[109]

Although Richard Allen disagrees with the claim that the social gospel was alien to the West and that it migrated into the prairies from urban centers in the East, he acknowledges the pervasiveness of this viewpoint among some scholars of religious history in Canada.[110] But as Ramsay Cook suggests, the social gospel was just as much a response to religious doubt in general as it was a response to urban and industrial conditions.[111] Thus, the social gospel need not be considered an urban import alone; it should also be considered in its local Alberta context. Doing so reveals that citizenship training in the 1920s was born from conditions unique to Alberta in that decade. These conditions included shifting religious attitudes amidst increasingly diverse prairie inhabitants and the spiritual nourishment the UFA/UFWA received from the social gospel movement, both of which effectively boosted the transmission of the organized farmers' social and political message throughout the province.

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Phillips, xv.
[110] Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," 570.
[111] Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators, Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 5-6.

The prairies presented two regionally specific types of problems for a church intent on expanding into the West with the aim of ensuring that the Christian heritage of the nation was maintained among settlers, immigrants, and bachelors flooding to the region. Chief among these was population dispersal and dwindling numbers of supporters for rural churches.[112] Rural populations, when compared with urban ones, were sparser, and for many people churches were not accessible. As the *Church Guardian* noted in 1896, many prairie Methodist families were "located eight or ten miles from church," and "regular attendance at Sunday school was quite impossible."[113] Also, because of diversity in rural communities, which included non-Anglo Saxons, bachelors, and immigrants with a wide range of church backgrounds, few areas had sufficient numbers of adherents to a particular denomination to form a single congregation.[114] Historian Paul Voisey similarly examines population dispersal in the prairies and its impact on church attendance and leadership. He argues that settlers overcame distance and low population density through interdenominational cooperation and church union. Parent churches struggled to supply every rural district with preachers on a weekly basis.[115] One result was that Sunday services were administered by clergymen from any one of half a dozen denominations. Voisey also claims that when census takers arrived in Vulcan in 1910 many settlers could not accurately report their religious affiliation. For example, some listed their traditional faith, despite the fact that they more often attended services of a different church, while

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[112] George Emery, *The Methodist Church on the Prairies, 1896-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001), 8.
[113] *Christian Guardian*, May 27, 1896, in George Emery, 9.
[114] Emery, 10.
[115] Paul Voisey: *Vulcan*, *The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 184.

others named the church they usually attended. According to Voisey, many settlers suggested that they belonged to an interdenominational Christian faith – a category missing from the census checklist.[116] A key feature of this interdenominational practice was that preachers often took a passage from the bible and treated it as an allegory or parable that revealed some universal moral truth relevant to contemporary society.[117] Theological discussion rarely crept into any sermon. This approach to religion ensured that its multi-denominational audience could easily digest a message that would unlikely offend any one listener.

Although Voisey avoids labeling these non-sectarian church sermons as representative of a distinct social gospel outlook, he does point out that the social gospel was better suited to the progressive attitudes of this prairie region.[118] As Richard Allen has pointed out, agrarian reform organizations crusaded for economic and political change with a moral fervor often specifically Christian in nature.[119] In 1916, a Union preacher in Vulcan spoke on the subject of "Applied Christianity" for a special UFA Sunday service.[120] An applied approach to Christianity, as opposed to serious theological discussion, was surely more captivating for Alberta farmers given their preoccupation with social, political, and economic reform.

The social gospel provided support to farmers' causes by framing an emerging agrarian revolt in Alberta in terms of a familiar Christian narrative: a David and Goliath

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid., 186.
[118] Ibid.,187.
[119] Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," 563.
[120] Voisey, 187.

battle between the disenfranchised and suffering farmer on the one hand and eastern corporate interests representing greed and tyranny on the other. By doing so, religion spoke to the daily realities of farmers and advocated for improvements through cooperative action and political association. In this way, the social gospel transcended the narrowness and increasingly unpopular prairie church sermon preoccupied with rules, personal salvation, and intellectual theology. Its synergy with the UFA/UFWA not only helped to build the farmers' movement, but the union of the two created a more popular Christian message throughout Alberta.

Alberta Farmers' Protest and the Social Gospel

From 1908 to 1920, the population of Alberta quadrupled, and nearly sixty-five percent of the population was rural.[121] Agricultural settlement in the prairie provinces represented a golden age for national growth. Nation-building based on agricultural development and farming took on mythical conceptions among politicians and migrants alike. Farms in the West were to become the "breadbasket for the world."[122] Despite these mythic notions of riches flowing from farms in Alberta, the region remained handicapped by national policies and tariffs that served the interests of big capitalists and big government. For farmers, corporate greed and federal government policy created a new kind of feudalism, or a plutocracy, based on the seizure of natural resources and the monopolization of farmers' labor.[123] As well, essential infrastructure such as schools, highways, and medical facilities remained underdeveloped relative to that in Eastern

[121] Emery, xx.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Rennie, 7.

Canada. In the decades leading up until the First World War, farmers perceived themselves as alienated from federal and provincial government decision-making.[124]

Amidst these hardships, prairie grain growers took up cooperative action on a large scale, according to historian Ian MacPherson.[125] It was only natural that they should, suggests MacPherson. They had demonstrable power in an entire region; a generally shared experience of immigrating, homesteading, and struggle; a common challenge of dealing with few crops; and identifiable groups apparently exploiting them.[126] The charges imposed by bankers, grain merchants, and manufacturers and the costs inflicted by the tariff frustrated and enraged farmers. A 1909 *Grain Growers Guide* editorial spoke to farmers' frustration and their calls for greater cooperation as a tool to combat their perceived enemies:

> The spirit of cooperation is in the air and is rapidly spreading throughout the West. Western Canadians have bowed to corporate rule nearly since the country was settled. The time for emancipation has come and there will need to be some able leaders to head the campaign. Cooperation is the only possible avenue of complete emancipation and the sooner the farmers settle themselves towards perfect cooperation the sooner they will begin to secure a fair reward for their toil.[127]

Farmers believed that cooperation was the animating principle of all relations – between classes, churches, regions, nations, and the sexes.[128] UFWA leader Margaret Gunn envisioned the substitution of a cooperative endeavor instead of competition as the

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[124] Ibid., 8.
[125] Ian MacPherson, *Each for All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1979), 9.
[126] Ibid.,10.
[127] *Grain Growers' Guide*, September 22, 1909, 13.
[128] Rennie, 159.

dominating factor in society. Molded by Christian beliefs, "cooperation" was for farmers a fundamentally moral principle; its defining essence was "unselfishness," which, according to Irene Parlby, was the only hope for the protection of farmers and the redemption of a political and economic system fraught with greed and competition.[129] A *Grain Growers' Guide* article from 1914 went so far as to assert that "cooperation is a religion pure and simple."[130] Farmers used this spiritual conception of cooperation to articulate their grievances and rally support for their movement.

At the same time, despite the UFA/UFWA's rallying principle of cooperation, mass immigration, particularly from Eastern Europe, placed limits on cooperation and treating all farmers as one equal entity.[131] Nativism likely motivated the UFA/UFWA to emphasize citizenship training in schools, as it was regarded as means of assimilating newcomers to become "good" Canadian citizens.[132] But citizenship training can also be

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[129] Ibid., 159.
[130] *Grain Grower's Guide*, October 18, 1911, 20.
[131] Emery, 10-1, and Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of the Rise of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985), 592. Emery shows that although a cooperative ethos emanated from Alberta politics in the 1920s, it did not necessarily treat all farmers equally. Eastern European immigrants in particular were met with a mixture of inclusiveness and hostility in Alberta at this time. As the immigrant population of the Canadian West rose from 26 to nearly 40% of the population between 1901-1911, concerns about foreigners and their very "low standards of morality and decency" were prevalent among many Christian leaders. For Principal J.W. Sparling of Wesley College, the foreigners represented a danger for which "we must educate and elevate the incoming multitudes or they will drag us and our children down to a lower level." Also, because "aliens" were eligible for Canadian citizenship after three years of residence, immigrants, warned Reverend A.E. Smith, "gave the foreigners a controlling influence." Thus, the UFA/UWFA's effort to draw all farmers and Alberta citizens into the fold of collective association and action were resisted by other forces in society that worked to exclude some people, asserting that not all were equal. Indeed, the bulk of the UFA's support was derived from regions of Alberta of primarily Anglo-Saxon Protestant backgrounds and less support was given to the UFA/UWFA in Eastern European-settled regions. On the other hand, Palmer highlights that it cannot be ignored that the UFA/UFWA delivered to the House of Commons the first MP of Ukrainian descent (in 1926) and that the UWFA demonstrated considerable concern for the welfare of immigrant families in prairie communities.
[132] Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905-1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 29.

seen in the context of the UFA/UFWA's attempt to garner support for their movement, specifically by increasing their membership.

Still, it is not surprising that farmers found in the social gospel a spiritual framework to address their political and economic oppression. UFA/UFWA politics and the social gospel worked towards a common end of implementing social justice and the Christian ideal of cooperation and democracy. This fusion of politics and religion allowed for the UFA/UFWA movement to gain broad appeal among an audience needing practical solutions to their immediate circumstances. The politics of the UFA became the new vessel by which religion restated its relevance for society.

The extent to which politics in Alberta intermingled with the social gospel is exemplified by how farm leaders and spiritual authorities became virtually indistinguishable from one another. For example, UFWA leader Leona Baritt argued that two-thirds of Alberta's rural communities had no church service and that most others had irregular service.[133] She suggested that the UFA/UFWA fill this gap by becoming a quasi-religious institution. Baritt noted that "we are trying to do the social work that the church has been unable to do…and to raise an ethical standard where the church has been unable to obtain a footing."[134] At local hall meetings organized by the UFWA, members prayed, sang hymns, and read Scripture, and sermons were often delivered on applied Christianity, sermons that celebrated the growing farmers' movement from a distinctly religious viewpoint. In one of these sermons, Mr. Sheppard, a prominent UFA leader who

[133] *Grain Growers' Guide*, September 23, 1921, 7.
[134] Ibid.

lived near Edmonton, argued that the UFA was practically a Christian institution.[135] Referring to Ephesians 4 and 5, Sheppard went on to describe the community, the nation, and the whole earth as places where, "Christ being the head, we must all cooperate with, and in His spirit."[136]

Social gospel leaders such as Reverend Salem Bland demonstrated political leadership when he proposed the establishment of a new party led by farmers. His column, "The Deeper Life," published in the widely read *Grain Growers' Guide*, the official publication of organized farmers, related resources of Christianity and in particular the social gospel to a broad spectrum of agrarian needs and aspirations.[137] E.A. Partridge, preeminent leader of the social gospel and of the cooperative movement, made similar connections between religion and political organization of farmers when he claimed in the *Grain Growers' Guide* that it was necessary "to take your love of God…into politics."[138] Practical religion, he continued, is especially important for Election day until our legislative halls are purged of those who represent the most heartless and selfish instincts of the race."[139] Reverend Salem Bland proclaimed that it was the business of the church to profess the religion of Jesus, which "was in its inception a social gospel," and to help erect a socialist Christian state, "sweeping away those existing conditions which throw a pall over the lives of the larger population of our

[135] Ibid.
[136] *Grain Growers' Guide*, June 9, 1915, 12.
[137] Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," 564.
[138] Ibid., 562.
[139] Ibid., 565.

people."[140] This large population included huge numbers of farmers and a growing number of migrants to Alberta.

Historians regard Henry Wise Wood, president of the UFA from 1916 to 1931, as having been the UFA/UFWA's spiritual leader. Wood, according to scholar W.L Morton, was devoted to the Gospel according to Saint John. "John taught social reconstruction, and I am a disciple of John," said Wood.[141] His political work was informed by religion, although he was not a member of any one church. This, according to historian W.L. Morton, was an important aspect of his influence. It allowed Wood and the UFA/UFWA to deliver a message without religious sectarianism and theological dogma, thus in line with the social gospel's populist, non-sectarian, and non-doctrinal approach.[142]

Calls for a more pragmatic approach to theology were made directly by farmers in their official publication, the *Grain Growers' Guide*. A 1910 article titled "Training Preachers to Meet Real Challenges" proclaimed that "the preacher's role in society must change, given the condition that the farmer finds himself in today."[143] Theological schools, according to the article's author, must train preachers for social work. He argues that perfection in society can be achieved only when the preacher and the schools of theology become the "makers and menders of men."[144] To this end, they must study social science to find solutions to improving society's ills, including disease, poverty, and

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[140] Ibid.
[141] W.L. Morton, "The Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood: The Canadian Agrarian Leader," *Agricultural History,* 22, No. 2 (1948): 122.
[142] Ibid., 116.
[143] *Grain Growers' Guide*, June 1910, 16.
[144] Ibid.

intemperance. Preachers needed to improve the conditions in which men lived before the quest for personal and spiritual improvement could begin.

Leaders of both the UFA/UFWA and the social gospel movement took on political and social-reform activities. For farmers, spiritual leadership helped to unify the community by building bonds of "oneness," drawing farmers together for protection and action.[145] And for social gospel leaders, political leadership offered a new pulpit from which to Christianize society.

The Great War amplified organized farmers' well-established pre-war grievances and re-invigorated their commitment to political and social reform, based on a Christian conception of cooperation. Farmers became increasingly agitated with federal leaders such as Robert Borden and Wilfrid Laurier, whose policies merely exacerbated farmers' pre-war economic circumstances. In the early days of the War, a *Grain Growers' Guide* stated emphatically that:

> the present serious condition now prevailing in the rural West is very largely due to the unjust burdens which these two gentlemen [Borden and Laurier], in their capacity of political leaders, have laid upon the shoulders of western people for the benefit of a small group of individuals in the financial centers of Quebec and Ontario.[146]

For Canadian prairie farmers, the Great War created the transcontinental economy that the national policy had intended to create.[147] Farmers were forced to ship their wheat eastward and were required by government to sell on an open market while buying farm

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[145] Rennie, 44.
[146] *Grain Growers' Guide*, July 29, 1914, 7.
[147] John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1978), 72.

equipment from manufacturers who remained insulated by a protective tariff.[148] While the production of wheat increased during the war, farmers also accumulated unmanageable debt loads to expand production. Farmers blamed their aggravated economic situation and their region's lack of industrialization and development upon the imperialist policies and greed of Eastern Canada, greed that had become worse owing to wartime demand and overproduction.[149]

The war also accelerated the reform spirit and radicalism of Western Canadian farmers. The human sacrifice of war abroad amplified appeals for justice, democracy, and equality at home. As Nellie McClung argued, "if Canadian soldiers were giving their lives for liberty and justice in Flanders, was it not the duty of those who remained behind to see that these same things prevailed in Canada?"[150] If the sacrifice was not to be wasted, reforms programs had to be implemented. Even Clifford Sifton, hardly an ardent reformer, recognized that the Great War made it necessary for both "Eastern and Western Canada to cast out everything that threatens its moral health."[151] Thus, reform initiatives such as prohibition took on militaristic and regenerative overtones. The cause itself was "warfare waged against ignorance, selfishness, darkness, and cruelty," argued McClung.[152] Another reform campaign aided by the Great War was the movement for women's suffrage. Why, women asked, "could they not enjoy in Canada the same liberty for which their sons were fighting and dying for?" [153] If the war was to be the vindication

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Nellie, L. McClung, *In Times Like These* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1915), 161.
[151] Thompson, 97.
[152] McClung, 167.
[153] Thompson, 107.

of democracy, should not the same democratic rights of millions of Canadian women be vindicated at the same time?[154] Ironically, prior to 1914 the women's movement was staunchly pacifist and regarded war as one of women's greatest enemies. War was a scheme of masculine domination, one that denied women an effective voice in society.[155] History, wrote Nellie McClung, has "shown the masculine aspect of war and has surrounded it with a false glory and has sought to throw the veil of glamour over its hideous face."[156] The war challenged these pacifist assumptions among many women's groups, and the same spirit used to fight for democracy in Europe, they argued, could accomplish the purification of Western Canadian society.

Arguments made by the UFA/UFWA for creating a new kind of society based on cooperation, democracy, and equality were bolstered by the trauma Westerners experienced as a result of the First World War. The UFA/UFWA believed it was their duty to inaugurate this new society.[157] Between 1914 and 1919, the UFA was stymied by governments' and political parties' preoccupation with the war and their continuance of national policies that exacerbated farmers' deprived circumstances. In 1919, the UFA decided to allow direct UFA/UFWA political action, and it won a landslide victory in the Alberta Legislature in 1921.[158]

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[154] W.L. Morton, "The Extension of the Franchise in Canada: A Study in Democratic Nationalism," *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1943): 79.
[155] Thompson, 106.
[156] McClung, 169.
[157] Rennie, 110.
[158] Ibid.

The UFA/UWFA and Citizenship Training

While prohibition and the women's suffragist movement have been well examined by historians as important expressions of the social gospel movement,[159] the delivery of citizenship training by the UFA/UFWA in Alberta in the 1920s has received comparatively little attention. To establish a cooperative ethos in society, citizenship education was needed to transform the powerless citizens, farmers, into a group holding a strong collective voting power. One UFA/UWFA leader argued that education "is power…giving light, independence, and freedom. While lack of knowledge – ignorance – is weakness, darkness, dependence, and bondage."[160] Leading in the delivery of citizenship education were farmwomen of the UFWA.

Established in 1913, the women's section of the UFA, was responsible for much of the delivery of citizenship education. A key emphasis of the UFWA was education rather than politics.[161] The majority of rural schoolteachers were women, and they asserted their position as grassroots providers of citizenship education, essential in the alignment of UFA/UFWA and social gospel ideals.

UFA/UFWA unions throughout rural Alberta were the foundation of citizenship education. These unions were described as "schools of progress – the greatest little thinkeries you ever saw."[162] Here farmers secured educational information that would otherwise be out of their reach on subjects such as community relations, the law, cooperation, economics, the farm movement, and civics. Underlying these little thinkeries

[159] See Richard Allen's historiographical discussion in *The Social Passion*, 15.
[160] Annual UFA Convention Minutes, Alberta Glenbow Archives, 1912, 9.
[161] Rennie, 162.
[162] Ibid.

and the information they made available were spiritual and moral undertones. Often presentations would be prefaced with a sermon to provide guidance towards a moral and political end.[163]

Through citizenship education based on literature, seminars, books, and debates, members learned to "express themselves clearly, defiantly, and gained invaluable training for future leadership in the province."[164] Citizenship training provided "a continuous army of men and women trained to take up the responsibilities of leadership in the local communities and at the head of our organization."[165] All of these educational activities were underscored with cooperative study, cooperative work, cooperative play, and spiritual values. Men and women, boys and girls, trained in this way, according to Margaret Gunn, were building "for the future of a cooperative community."[166]

Various educational partnerships were forged by the UFA/UFWA in order to deliver education in rural communities and to help build their cooperative movement. For example, the UFWA initiated an important relationship with the University of Alberta's Extension Department, established in 1912. This department was the first in Canada to offer extension courses, non-agricultural in scope, and was formed to gain support for the university by showing its benefit for all Albertans – thus ensuring its survival. Since the department required public approval, its material had to be popular, and tied directly to the interests and needs of rural communities.[167] The content was not determined by elite

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[163] Ibid.
[164] *Grain Growers' Guide*, December 10, 1919, 18.
[165] *Grain Growers' Guide*, December 22, 1920, 23.
[166] Ibid., 24.
[167] Ralph J. Clark, "A History of the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta, 1912-1956" (PhD thesis: University of Toronto, 1985), 115.

university leaders and professors alone; rather, it was developed, in part, by leaders of the UFWA, who requested materials relevant to farmers' desire for political action in the province. In this way, the University of Alberta Extension Department gave farmers the broad education they wanted on a variety of subjects.

UFA/UFWA local unions were the "principal agency for serving the rural communities" with extension department materials.[168] News, books, and debate materials on subjects such as history, geography, and rural conditions were loaned to the locals and used by the UFA/UFWA to learn about and protest issues of vital concern to their interests, such as the unequal political status of women. The fourteen most important packages that were requested by local UFA/UFWA unions in 1916, in order of preference, were on women's suffrage, the war, rural life, the tariff, economics, debating, and cooperation.[169] Department of Extension materials were used by the UFA/UFWA to help politicize and radicalize farmers for direct political action. The use of state-funded education by the UFA/UFWA points to the Alberta government's direct involvement in building up the farmers' movement.[170] The ability of local UFA/UFWA leaders to shape the content and material provided by the department illustrates the grassroots strength of UFA/UFWA locals in constructing educational opportunities of vital importance to movement.

Another important educational tool for developing citizenship in rural communities was the annual Youth Conferences and their associated publication, *The Voice of Youth*.

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[168] Ibid., 8-9.
[169] Ibid., 114-17.
[170] Rennie,167-68.

The objective of these initiatives, which were organized and delivered by the UFA/UFWA, was to strengthen a network of young people for political action. Conferences were held annually in Ottawa where representatives from every part of Canada would participate."[171] Another key goal was to develop a Christian ethic in future leaders for the movement both provincially and nationally. These initiatives served as important channels for farmers to disseminate Christian ideals of citizenship. Developing the voice of youth in Alberta and in Canada, the UFA/UFWA built up a movement that worked to replace greed and competition with cooperation. In one *Voice of Youth* publication after the Great War, a writer claimed that cooperation "represents an attempt to put the Christian obligation into industry."[172] The author highlights that although the growth of the farmers' movement arose from an economic context of exploited producers, namely farmers, the movement also "involves what is essentially a Christian principle."[173] He concluded that "the working together of people for mutual benefit…has a great attraction for those who are demanding the application of the Christian ethic to our diseased social order."[174]

A primary goal for this author and for the youth conferences was to socialize workers and farmers with a Christian ethic that worked to replace greed and competition with cooperation and brotherhood. The author also makes a curious link between the competitive character of industry, Liberal governments, and the church. For him, "it is the Liberal who is afraid of rapid change and who, nine times out of ten, is a member of

[171] UFA/UFWA, *Voice of Youth Magazine*, 2, No. 2 (1934): 6. Accession No: 77.114, File No. 15, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.

the Christian church."[175] These institutions were thus interpreted as custodians of the status quo, obstacles to change that the UFA/UFWA and social gospel worked to overcome. The grassroots approach of the social gospel and UFA/UFWA movements helped popularize the message of reform by circumventing formal institutions resistant to change. This grassroots approach was particularly useful in building up the UFA/UFWA movement prior to their ascendance to political power in Alberta in 1921 when they had little authority to make sweeping changes to the established order. A major purpose, then, of youth conferences, Department of Extension debate packages, and travelling libraries was to socialize farming communities towards a higher conception of citizenship than that available through traditional political parties, industry, and established churches.

Grassroots democratic political power by farmers also necessitated working knowledge of the political process. UFWA leaders felt especially that citizenship education was necessary for women given their lack of electoral and political experience. One UFWA member asked,

> how were women to be educated to meet their responsibilities intelligently? Only by participating in public life and forming groups to discuss and consider matters of vital importance to them…here was the importance of training for citizenship training.[176]

It was only through learning how to participate in public life through forming groups to discuss public matters of vital importance that political action could bring in a new order. Henry Wise Wood described UFA/UFWA conventions and union meetings as "political

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[175] Ibid.
[176] *Grain Growers' Guide*, June 30, 1920, "The U.F.W.A.: The Organization for Alberta Farm Women," 29.

schools." Here citizens learned of the political problems and the cooperative methods necessary to solve them. Wood promised that "if farmers attended every year they would develop an understanding of political affairs and a capacity for dealing with them a hundred times more rapidly than they ever had done before."[177] Extension Department learning materials requested by the UFWA and their political schooling initiatives delivered and accessed at a grassroots level also helped to build the farmers' movement by increasing membership, particularly of women and youth. For the UFA/UFWA, "every additional member linked up with our great organization in another step towards success at the polls."[178] In this way, citizenship training served not only to prepare citizens for political action, leading up to and during the First World War, but it also served an important membership recruiting function by activating the voices of youth and women.

The UFA in Power, 1921-1935

Once the UFA formed the government in 1921, calls for the reform of formal public education, especially the subject of history, were made. The UFWA urged the UFA Executive to push the Alberta government to introduce curriculum that advanced "society towards a new form of social organization in which the principle of a struggle for private profit shall be displaced by the principles of equity, justice, mutual aid and social well-being."[179] These calls for reform, articulated at the grassroots level by the UFWA, were clearly heard by Department of Education officials. In 1924 the Department proposed a

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[177] *Grain Growers' Guide*, May 7, 1919, 7.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Margaret Ayelsworth, "A History of the High School Courses of Study for Alberta" (M.A. Thesis: University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1936), 17.

new course in response to major social and political shifts that had occurred in Alberta over the previous twenty years.[180] Margaret Ayelsworth, who wrote a thesis in 1936 regarding the revision committee work, argues that the UFWA played no small part in its development. She maintains that "a spirit of optimism pervaded the whole enterprise. The regeneration of the world was at hand, and all were eager to have a hand in framing the new course."[181]

A committee member in the development of a new program of study, Mrs. R.B. Gunn, insisted that a course was required to foster a spirit of service, truthfulness, courage, courtesy, and justice, a spirit that determines the value of a citizen in later life.[182] Irene Parlby, minister without portfolio in the UFA government and a longtime activist in rural education, argued for the development of a course for Alberta that emphasized cooperation. Cooperation, she claimed,

> was not only at the heart of an economic and political movement; it had its roots in the things of the spirit. Love, service, loyalty and honor are spiritual qualities that inform the cooperative movement and in time can transform a world made hideous by the competitive system, into a democracy of hope, justice and happiness for all.[183]

Mary Crawford, a rural Alberta schoolteacher whose thoughts were typical of the anti-war pacifist sentiments of the post-war period, criticized traditional history curriculum as dangerous and complicit in creating a violent citizenry that had taken the

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[180] Ibid., 42.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid., 161.
[183] Susan M. Gunn Letters, Gunn to Robinson, 1918, 285. Accession No. 83.507, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

world to war.[184] She advocated for using the state's control over school curriculum for the greater good of peace and cooperation. She argued that if "militaristic" regimes such as Napoleonic France and Prussia could mold youth according the state's purpose, then why "should it be unreasonable to contend that …education could…establish a rule of love?"[185]

Echoing this criticism was Margaret Gunn, then UFWA president. She emphasized the importance of citizenship training based on democratic and cooperative principles as a preventative measure against inequality and imposed tyranny by belligerent governments. In the development of democratic citizenship, "The seed of education will ultimately yield a harvest in the field of politics, though the grain may be slow in ripening."[186] She also criticized traditional history curriculum and its preferred style of teaching by way of regimented memorization of the facts of the British Empire. Such content and learning methods, Gunn argued, stifled the students' ability to think for themselves and inhibited their ability to question authority. Instead, for Gunn, education should engender democratic citizenship by teaching pupils to question, speculate, and cooperate with each other.[187] She criticized the existing history curriculum as something that glorified the conquests of imperial Britain and treated children as if they were "little jugs into which were to be poured the imperial gallons of facts."[188] This approach to learning history according to Gunn, destroyed the student's ability to question and inquire

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[184] See Thompson, 98.
[185] Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World: A History of the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, 1905-1965" (PhD Thesis: University of Calgary, 1995), 66.
[186] Margaret Gunn, UWFA Presidential Address, 1928, *ATA Magazine*, 6 (1928): 14.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

into the reasons for the Great War and the post-war depression, and thus would continue the present system of greed, competition, and violence. For Gunn, history's emphasis on British Imperial values was regressive and out of step with the post-war need for building a more democratic citizenry.

Margarett Gunn was not alone in her criticisms of an imperialist approach to writing Canadian history. Canadian historians such as Frank Underhill chastised those who overemphasized Canada's Imperial connections with Great Britain and neglected the influence of French Canada and the United States on the nation's development.[189] Carl Berger claims that a new history or progressive history emerged after the First World War in the United States and came to influence a number of Canadian historians. Proponents of progressive history believed that in an age of reform history itself must be reformed. Interestingly, Berger uses the same words to describe the shift from an imperial to a more pragmatic history as those used by Alberta's Department of Education in their introduction to social studies in 1935. Berger writes that it was necessary for historians "to subordinate the past to the needs of the present," to concentrate on the nature and origins of contemporary problems and to broaden the scope of history to include social, economic, and intellectual problems of the common man.[190] For UFA/UFWA leaders, British Imperialism was the manifestation of the forces of greed, individualism, competition, and violence. They felt that Eastern Canadian Imperialism, a close derivative of British Imperialism, had alienated farmers from the fruits of their labor and had caused economic and political hardship in pre-war Alberta society. UFWA leaders

[189] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900, S*ec. Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 61.
[190] Ibid.

and numerous Canadian historians advanced the idea that only a pragmatic approach to history, one that would illuminate the struggles of the common man, would allow laborers and farmers to begin the quest to improve their circumstances.

Many UFWA leaders perceived history curriculum as outdated and poorly suited to Alberta's shifting socio-political climate of the 1920s. The need for post-war reconstruction, and education's potential role in serving that end, was echoed in the educational committee work of the UFWA, who in turn informed the UFA executive and Department of Education of their proposed ideas. Although no formal course replacement was proposed in 1924, the consensus was that traditional history curriculum poorly served Alberta's post-war demands for social, political, and economic cooperation. Committee member Dr. Geneva Misner of the University of Alberta claimed that pre-war history curriculum was deficient because it was authored in a pre-war culture of imperialism and greed that had "culminated in the tragedy of WWI, a universal and crushing burden of debt and intolerable human suffering."[191] Committee members were in agreement that pre-war history curriculum required reform. Although social studies had not yet been discussed as a formal replacement of history, its groundwork was laid out in the revision committee work of 1924. The need for an updated secondary course to reflect Alberta society's desire to regenerate society through social, political, and economic cooperation was clearly articulated after the war.

The reform agenda of the UFA/UFWA movement was further stimulated by the Great Depression and encouraged the infusion of cooperative ideals into Alberta curriculum.

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[191] Ayelsworth, 144.

Regional and class loyalties already well established by the 1920s were deepened over the course of the Great Depression. Farmers in Alberta believed they were being exploited by Eastern Canadian corporate interests and doubly resented the organizations and people responsible for farmers' impoverished condition, real or imagined, in these times of intense adversity.[192] Thus, as historian Ian MacPherson argues, it was in the hinterland regions, including rural Alberta, where political and economic forms of cooperation flourished best and became more restless as the 1930s passed. It was also in the hinterlands and where restlessness inevitably nourished rural cooperative action.[193] In 1931, one UFWA member claimed that "the political and economic system of today has its roots in the educational system of yesterday" and, "if we wish to see service instead of profit as the purpose of our industrial or commercial institutions then we should assist the youth in building up a mental structure to do that."[194] During an annual convention in 1934, the UFA/UFWA called for sweeping changes to citizenship education so that schools would "advance society towards a new form of social organization, where the principle(s) of …equity, justice and social well being" replace competition.[195]

Much of the foundation for social studies had already been laid by the UFA/UFWA during the 1920s. Cooperation and active political citizenship, the basis of citizenship training, became the hallmark of social studies curriculum in the 1930s. However, the open dialogue between UFWA leaders, the UFA Executive, and the Department of

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[192] MacPherson, 42.
[193] Ibid.
[194] "1931 Resolutions of the Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Alberta," File 170D, Premiers Papers, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
[195] "1934 Resolutions of the Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Alberta," File 170D, Premiers Papers, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Education came to an abrupt end. Curriculum design for social studies, the course that would replace secondary history curriculum, was taken over by an elite and select few, mostly highly educated men from the Department of Alberta Education and the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA). The agrarian movement that had pioneered citizenship training for its rural inhabitants and initiated the reform of history curriculum was usurped by curriculum builders in the mid-1930s. Social studies was used as a tool for legitimizing teaching as a profession. The religio-political movement of farmers and the grassroots delivery of citizenship training became formalized and institutionalized in the form of social studies by 1935.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FORMALIZATION PERIOD OF SOCIAL STUDIES

If teaching was to be deemed a profession, then "the teacher ought to have a say in what he must do, and how he must do it," argued H.C. Newland, supervisor of Alberta Schools in the 1930s and chair of the committee responsible for the design of social studies in 1934-1936.[196] Teachers asserted influence in curriculum design in the 1930s as a tool to elevate the status of their trade to a profession. The connection between curriculum design and teachers' professional status became apparent in 1935. It was the year social studies was introduced and the year Premier William Aberhart recognized teaching as a formal profession by vesting power in the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) to control teachers with rules of conduct, including their adherence to curriculum objectives set forth by the province.[197]

Professional educators defended their right to control curriculum by claiming that they were "scientific experts" in the project of educating children. They obtained teaching expertise from graduate programs at Columbia and Chicago universities, leading centers of progressive education in the United States. A scientific approach to teaching allowed leading educators to replace subject experts, such as historians, with teaching experts to write curriculum.[198] Ambitious Alberta educators embraced progressive education as a means to legitimize their authority in educational bureaucracy upon their return to the province. In this way, social studies can be understood as the lever by which

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[196] H.C. Newland, *ATA Magazine*, 1 (1932): 34.
[197] William Aberhart, "Speech to the ATA by William Aberhart," *ATA Magazine* (1935).
[198] Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History & Identity in Alberta's Schools*, 1905-1980 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 69.

educators obtained professional status in Alberta. At the same time, this singular focus on the influence of the professional educator overlooks the work of rural school teachers.

While no concise history of the origins of social studies curriculum exists in Alberta, the few studies that address the subject overemphasize the role that a select cadre of "professional" elites played in its formulation between 1934 and 1935. Perpetuating the notion that social studies, a curricular manifestation of progressive education, was the achievement of the professional educator alone is historian R.S. Patterson, who argues that the "underlying philosophy of progressive education did not extend past a few professional educationalists."[199] Historian John Chalmers similarly implies the exclusive role of professionals in the development of social studies when he describes Newland as a "one-man curriculum branch."[200]

While scholar Amy von Heyking works to correct this oversight in her recent publication regarding the contributions of rural teachers in curriculum development at the primary grade level, she continues to emphasize the exclusive role of elite educators such as W.D. McDougall in creating social studies at the secondary level. She suggests it was McDougall alone who created social studies after being asked by Supervisor of Schools H.C. Newland to draft an outline.[201] I intend to show that curriculum reform at the primary and intermediate grades did not involve the separate spheres that historians such

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[199] R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Progressive Education," in Nick Kach, Kas Mazurek, Robert S. Patterson, and Ivan DeFaveri, eds., *Essays on Canadian Education* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1986), 62.
[200] John Chalmers, *Schools in the Prairie Provinces: The Story of Public Education in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 82.
[201] Amy von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural School," *Historical Studies in Education*, Special Issue (2012): 95.

as von Heyking have alluded to. The enterprise approach to teaching and social studies, pioneered by Alberta's Donalda Dickie, a rural teacher and Oxford graduate, occurred first at the elementary level and informed what McDougall later created for intermediate students.

The influence of H.C. Newland and W.D. McDougall is not contested in this chapter, but the notion that social studies was invented by a select few, or them alone, is. In the previous chapter, I argued that citizenship training, delivered by the United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta (UFA/UFWA) in the 1920s, would become an essential feature of social studies in the1930s. In this chapter I will continue to broaden understanding of the advent of progressive education and social studies in Alberta to include the pragmatic curriculum reforms initiated by rural school teachers in the 1920s. I will argue that these early practical initiatives, born of necessity, found expression in the formalized social studies of the 1930s. Von Heyking makes a similar point, namely, that teachers in rural communities pioneered teaching techniques that would become essential features of progressive education and social studies curriculum a decade later. I will examine how the professionalization of teaching worked to control the teaching force and formalize curriculum development, effectively placing progressive education and social studies in the hands of "professionals" only. In the professionalization process of the 1930s, teachers such as Donalda Dickie and Olive Fisher, both of whom were rural teachers and graduates of Oxford and Columbia universities respectively, were never considered professionals, thus concealing their involvement from contemporary historians. Ultimately, it was Dickie and Fisher who pioneered a new approach to learning, thereby

initiating the first social studies program at the elementary grade level. They also penned dozens of textbooks authorized for social studies curriculum.

The exertion of control by professionals over teachers in Alberta was enabled, in part, by the gendered nature of the teaching workforce. Nearly 70% of teachers in Alberta between 1911 and 1970 were female, and in rural communities this percentage was much higher.[202] Leadership positions and professional authority, on the other hand, were nearly exclusively reserved for men. While progressive education, promoted as science, provided the promise of advancing a man's career, it displaced the experiential knowledge and practical curricular innovations of women working in the field.

Just as church leaders and politicians in Alberta introduced pragmatic ways to deliver Christianity amidst challenging prairie conditions, so too did school teachers provide innovative ways to deliver curriculum in rural schools. Rural school teachers had to accommodate students' low academic ability, toil through teacher shortages, and make due with a limited supply of teaching resources. Rural classroom instruction, characterized by cooperative student-centered activities that made use of alternative learning resources and materials, was not only a way to expand student learning beyond the narrow walls of the classroom; it was also a matter of survival in isolated rural communities. Although educational historian E.S. Patterson is likely correct that many school teachers did not comprehend the intellectual underpinnings of progressive education, they most certainly understood the challenges that traditional curriculum posed in rural communities and the necessity for adapting curriculum accordingly. An

[202] Mary Kinnear*, In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995), table 22, 180.

examination of teacher and student memoirs sheds light on how curriculum was adapted by teachers and experienced by students, and both will be used to some extent in this chapter.

Progressive Education, the Professional, and Social Studies

Progressive education is a pedagogical movement that began in the late nineteenth century in both Europe and the United States as a reaction to the alleged narrowness and formalism of traditional education.[203] The term "progressive" was engaged to distinguish this education from the traditional nineteenth-century curriculum, which was rooted in classical preparation for the university. By contrast, progressive education finds its roots in present experience.[204]

The rejection of formalism in education at this time is reminiscent of the social gospel movement's rejection of Christian orthodoxy and formality. Social gospel leaders, politicians, and progressive educators shared a common conviction that social reconstruction, amidst rapid industrialization, urbanization, international conflict, and economic inequality, all of which characterized the early decades of the twentieth century in North America, required democratic action in the present.[205] Social gospel leaders proposed that the degenerative conditions that flowed from rapid change required the regeneration of society today. To this end, the social gospel infused various reform initiatives from prohibition initiatives to supporting organized Alberta farmers' campaign

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[203] William Hayes, *The Progressive Education Movement: Is It Still a Factor in Today's Schools?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2007), 12.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Karen L. Riley, *Social Reconstruction: People, Politics, Perspectives: A Volume in Studies in the History of Education* (Greenwwich, Conn.: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 5.

to replace greed and competition in society with cooperation and democracy.[206] Progressive education similarly worked to create a more democratic and cooperative order through public education. By replacing the top-down and authoritarian nature of traditional schooling with collaborative forms of teaching among students and teachers, democracy could be practiced, learned, and reproduced throughout society.[207] And just as the social gospel dethroned the bible as the sole authority in society, so too did progressive education dethrone the textbook as the dominant authority in a classroom.

A key figure in the progressive education movement in the United States was John Dewey, who believed that learning should be active and that traditional schooling was far too restrictive. Children came to school to live in a community that gave them real experiences that fostered their capacity to contribute to society. To achieve this, students needed to be involved in real-life tasks and challenges that fostered democratic and cooperative living.

The larger ideals of progressive education, firmly rooted in the United States at the turn of the century, but not yet in Canada, were indeed consistent with the ambitions of the agrarian movement in Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s and would soon be taken up by visiting Alberta educators at American universities. Progressive education, as it was formally taught at leading American institutions, offered visiting Alberta educators the opportunity to return to their province upon graduation as established experts capable of asserting control over the teaching force and curriculum design.

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[206] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 13.
[207] Riley, 9

Dewey's progressive approach to learning drew on many disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and economics. Progressive education, as it was taught by Dewey and at leading American schools, was grounded in science.[208] Historian Doug Owram explores how many university faculties in North America employed a scientific approach after the Great War to legitimize their research and influence in society. Those eager to reform society and legitimize their authority to do so uttered the word "scientific" to ground their solutions in well-founded authority.[209]

Albertans who attended Dewey's lectures at Chicago University and Columbia College in New York embraced the idea that educational problems could be approached scientifically. Graduate students were also being groomed for leadership while attending these prominent schools, which was evident in the encouragement they received from Columbia professors. George McNally, Alberta School inspector in the 1930s, comments that, while he attended Columbia, professors singled out Alberta's educational system as one of the most "old-fashioned" in North America.[210] The influence of Columbia College in moulding progressively minded Albertans for leadership in Canada was particularly significant given the large Canadian contingent attending. Between 1923 and 1938, the total number of foreign students at Columbia's Teacher College was roughly 3500, nearly half of which was Canadian.[211]

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[208] Amy von Heyking, "Shaping Education for a Modern World: A History of the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, 1905-1965" (PhD Dissertation: University of Calgary, 1996), 48.
[209] Doug Owram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 34.
[210] Patterson, "The Implementation of Progressive Education in Canada," in *Essays on Canadian Education*, 83.
[211] R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Progressive Education," in *Essay on Canadian Education*, 72.

While in the United States, Alberta educators were also exposed to an entirely new course that embraced the scientific and social concerns inherent in progressive education and especially social studies. Harold Rugg, Kilpatrick, and Edgar Dawson were among the most prominent American scholars of this subject and were highly influential with Alberta's educational leadership.[212] Dawson, a professor of history in New York, called for a more practical direction to the teaching of history, stating emphatically that it required progressively minded teachers to implement it. In his book, *Teaching the Social Studies,* Dawson delivered a call to arms among teachers to take history curriculum out of the hands of historians and to direct it towards their own immediate classroom needs.[213]

Professor Dawson argued that historians had failed to develop a vision and direction for delivering their work to students. Thus, it was the duty of progressive educators to develop a vision and direction on history's behalf. For Dawson, "if the average historian insists on giving narrow and visionless definition to his subject, members of the teaching profession must find another term to describe their work in this field."[214] For Dawson, the deficit of traditional history was its poor use by academics in cultivating a more democratic social and political order. He envisioned an opportunity for progressive educators to mould history for the purpose of social and political regeneration.[215] Dawson worked to empower teachers to articulate the value and role of history in the classroom and to define a broader scope for its use, namely, to emphasize peace, tolerance, and democracy among students.

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[212] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 64.
[213] Edgar Dawson, *Teaching the Social Studies* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1927), 4.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid., xi.

Of course, classroom needs were informed to a significant extent by the community and region in which curriculum was delivered. Here was the genius of social studies. The content of social studies could be adapted to the local environment, while its larger structure was framed by the popular rhetoric of progressive education. North Americans and Europeans shared a common reaction to the negative consequences of industrialization, urbanization, and competition around the turn of the century. They embraced and promoted progressive reforms designed to improve modern industrial society through educational, spiritual, and political changes.[216] Drawing on Marshall McLuhan's concept of the medium and the message,[217] I suggest that progressive education and the social gospel were the popular and widely received mediums of the day, while social studies was the message or content of that medium that required local input tailored to particular regional circumstances. While social studies was indeed devised in the United States and not Alberta, its content and form in Alberta came to reflect this province's particular educational environment and social and political attitudes in the 1920s and 1930s. Progressive education, touted as science at American universities allowed graduating Albertans to return to the province and begin to affirm control over teachers and curriculum design by claiming they had attained scientific and expert training in progressive education. These "expert educators" were part of the formalization stage of social studies. The practical innovations of rural schoolteachers and the grassroots movement in Alberta had created fertile ground for educational reform

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[216] Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.
[217] Marshall McLuhan and Quinton Fiore, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (Berkley: Gingko Press, 1996), 4-7.

and opportunities for experts to capitalize on these shifting social and political conditions as a means to advance their own careers.

The "Arrival" Storyline of Progressive Education and Social Studies to Alberta

A comprehensive examination of the transition from history to social studies curriculum in Alberta, or the professionalization of teaching in the province, has yet to be conducted. The following are the few key secondary and primary sources that do exist on the roots of social studies and the professionalization of teaching in the province. They include John Chalmers' *The Story of Public Education in Alberta,*[218] R.S. Patterson's PhD thesis, "The Establishment of Progressive Education in Alberta,"[219] and W.D. McDougall's personal papers, titled "Curriculum builders in Alberta between 1902-1945."[220] All these works were written between 1965 and 1970. Clearly they are dated, but because little has recently been written on the subject of professionalization of teaching in Alberta or on the advent of social studies except for Amy von Heyking's 1996 PhD dissertation on Modernizing Alberta's Curriculum), these sources tend to perpetuate a narrow understanding of the origins of social studies.

A predominant view among the above-mentioned sources is that progressive education arrived in Alberta in 1935 from the United States. But this "arrival" storyline ignores the involvement of teachers in the field and the extent to which progressive education and social studies functioned as wedge to separate teachers from professionals.

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[218] Chalmers, 18.
[219] Robert S. Patterson, "The Establishment of Progressive Education in Alberta" (PhD. Dissertation: Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1968), 22.
[220] W.D. McDougall, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta, 1902-1945", November 16, 1965, W.D. McDougall Papers, Accession No: 69-29, 3/1-File 1, Box 4, University of Alberta Archives.

The establishment of progressive education and its connection to professionalizing teaching by Alberta's predominantly male leadership was not a gender-neutral or a benign process. Asserting control over the implementation of progressive education justified men's leadership positions and demonstrated their control over the teaching force.

For W.D. McDougall, a key figure in the development of social studies in the 1930s, asserting control over curriculum also meant recording the story of his involvement in the process on paper. He made clear in his "Autobiographical Notes on the Development of Social Studies" that he alone wrote social studies curriculum. He claims that "although I did not realize at the time…social studies had its birth" when "H.C. Newland asked me to elaborate on the structure" of this course. He continues that he (McDougall) began to "elaborate on a project that consumed every moment of my free time."[221] In every secondary source that discusses the roots of social studies in subsequent years, McDougall's autobiographical notes are consulted, and his contention that social studies was his invention is essentially repeated by scholars. Later in this chapter, I will show that this assertion is inaccurate.

In *The Story of Public Education in Alberta,* historian John Chalmers similarly emphasizes the role of the few, primarily male educational leaders, such as McDougall in curriculum development in Alberta. Conversely, he presents teachers as passive subordinates to professional authority, incapable of altering curriculum or teaching

[221] W.D. McDougall, "Autobiographical Notes on Development of Social Studies Curriculum in Alberta, 1934-1938," W.D. McDougall Papers, Accession No: 69-29, 3/1-File 1, Box 4, University of Alberta Archives.

methods on their own terms. His book segregates the modernization of Alberta's education system into two distinct phases of development. The first was, as Chalmers refers to it, the pioneer phase.[222] This period includes the early decades of the twentieth century when women were presented as pioneer teachers, brave instructors of the lonely one-room school house. Chalmers describes this pioneer phase in paternalistic and romantic hues, describing female rural school teachers as "magnificent and dignified creatures," "stately in their shirt waist dresses…long hair piled magnificently on their heads under picture hats."[223] The second phase was the arrival from American universities such as H.C. Newland and McDougall, who began the process of implementing progressive education in 1934 through curriculum committee revisions.[224]What is neglected in Chalmers' historical account of progressive education in Alberta in the 1930s is that rural teachers were active agents of change in teaching methods and in curriculum design. Instead, he presents female teachers as passive pioneers of the rural school house, delivered from primitive practices by the progressive educator, a professional male figure.

While educational leadership in Alberta was exposed to progressive education and social studies in an American context, Alberta school teachers were in the field grappling with the realities of an out-dated curriculum poorly suited to shifting rural school dynamics.

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[222] Chalmers, 7.
[223] Ibid., 12.
[224] Ibid., 82-101.

Teachers Respond to Rural School Conditions

In 1910, nearly 70% of Albertans lived in rural communities.[225] Most Albertans were educated only to the eighth grade, while only a small minority, primarily those intending to continue to university or become teachers, continued to high school. In most cases, students that completed grades one through eight returned to farming. In the early decades of the twentieth century, access to high schools in Alberta was limited. Most high schools were only in major cities, and the curriculum they delivered was primarily academic, reflecting the needs of a relatively narrow segment of the population. [226]

However, between 1920 and 1934 school attendance nearly doubled. The growth in high school attendance was particularly dramatic, rising from 20,000 to over 30,000 in just ten years.[227] This increase was largely a result of older students returning to high school because of few employment opportunities in the midst of economic depression.[228] Scholar Margaret Ayelsworth also notes that Alberta classrooms overflowed in the late 1920s and 1930s as a result of improved physical access to schools, made possible by the UFA/UFWA. Between 1921 and 1935, the UFA government improved highways, thus giving better access to previously isolated schools. Also, scholarship opportunities for rural students wishing to continue on to high school were initiated by the UFWA.[229]

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[225] Chalmers, 42.
[226] Ibid., 42-63.
[227] Amy von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural Schoolsm," *Historical Studies in Education*, Special Issue (2012): 95.
[228] Chalmers, 50.
[229] Margaret Ayelsworth, "A History of the High School Courses of Study for Alberta" (M.A. Thesis: University of Alberta, 1936), 17.

However, increased enrolment created problems for rural teachers. Chief among these was the growing numbers of students with relatively weak academic ability. Compounding this issue was that curriculum in the 1920s and early 1930s was primarily academic, with few vocational or technical options.[230] As educational historian Neil Sutherland argues, a formal academic approach to curriculum prevailed throughout Canadian schools in the early decades of the twentieth century and was characterized by memory work and drill. "It was a system based on teachers talking and students listening, a system that discouraged independent thought, a system that provided no opportunity to be creative."[231] Historian John Chalmers similarly describes curriculum in Alberta at this time as "academic and bookish," whereby in memorization was deemed integral to students' success.[232]

In the midst of growing numbers of students attending schools, including many weaker academic students, both teachers and officials lamented the growing number of "dull" students, identifying large proportions of pupils as "retarded" in their educational development.[233] Scholar Margaret Ayelsworth claims that some teachers grappling with disparities in student abilities during the 1920s and 1930s described these shifts in the following manner: "Nearly 70% of students do not belong to that social class which considers school and more advanced education a matter of social necessity. Many

[230] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 13.
[231] Neil Sutherland, "The Triumph of Formalism: Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1960s," in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J Donald Wilson, eds., *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig, 1995), 106.
[232] Chalmers, 106.
[233] Ibid., 213.

students neither have the native ability, nor the desire to learn…academic subjects."[234] The combination of academic curriculum and increasing numbers of students with lower than average academic aptitude resulted in high failure rates on provincial examinations. In fact, nearly 50% of students working towards a high school diploma between 1920 and 1930 failed.[235]

Provincial examinations at the secondary level (intermediate and high school) were rigorous and included three-hour written tests on composition and grammar, arithmetic, Milton and Shakespeare, Tennyson and prose, trigonometry, physics, Horace and Cicero, Latin Grammar and prose, and constitutional and industrial history.[236] The University of Alberta appears to have had tremendous influence over high school standards and examinations. Textbooks, curriculum, and exam standards were written almost exclusively by University of Alberta professors for the Department of Alberta Education. This tight-knit relationship between the University of Alberta and secondary school curriculum characterized Alberta's secondary educational system throughout the early decades of the twentieth-century. The dominant feature of secondary education in Alberta at this time was the setting of standards and curriculum by an authority outside of the school system itself. [237]In 1929, Minister of Education Perren Baker exclaimed, "Without a doubt we are the most examined people in Canada and perhaps the world."[238]

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[234] Ayelsworth, 17.
[235] Chalmers, 194.
[236] Ibid., 222.
[237] Ibid., 210.
[238] Ibid., 185.

It was not until 1913 with the passing of the federal Agricultural Assistance Act that provinces were encouraged by grants to promote agricultural, vocational, and technical forms of education in high school.[239] With this federally sponsored initiative, some high schools in the early 1920s adjusted their narrow diploma schemes for normal school and university entrance to include agricultural and industrial high school diplomas. But despite the Department's recommendations for these expanded programs, many school boards dismissed the recommendation, largely because of costs associated with offering vocational and technical training, and continued to stress university and normal school entrance.[240] And even if students had the option of vocational training, albeit in a limited number of schools, the majority of students arduously worked towards a high school matriculation for university or normal school entrance. Historian John Chalmers suggests the reason was because of the perceived social and economic status to be gained by obtaining this more academic diploma. He claims, in a rather patronizing tone, that "the matriculation program was a first choice for every self-respecting, middle – class Albertan, rural or urban in the 1920s."[241] Thus, high school students, regardless of interest or aptitude, had little choice in the 1920s and 1930s beyond normal school and university matriculation.

Higher student enrolment, however, was not met with a corresponding increase in the supply of teachers or resources. Teacher shortages, inadequate teacher training, and a limited supply of textbooks plagued Alberta's rural schools in the 1920s and 1930s. In annual reviews Alberta's Department of Education regularly criticized teachers'

[239] Ibid., 205.
[240] Chalmers, 110.
[241] Ibid., 204.

instruction and their limited supply of resources to adequately teach students during these decades.[242] In times of teacher shortages it was difficult for the Department to justify a more extensive program for training teachers. Thus, teachers were fast-tracked in a four-week program instead of the usual eight-week program.[243] Regardless of the length of program, it seems that few teachers felt prepared for teaching in isolated rural school rooms. A series of oral interviews with rural school teachers in Saskatchewan in the 1920s offers some insight as to how Alberta's rural teachers may have also experienced the inadequacies of teacher training. Teacher Hilda Rennie could not recall "learning anything practical" in her teacher training. Instruction at normal school consisted of classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and, according to Rennie, there were no method courses on preparing a teacher to teach a particular subject, and there was no practice in teaching in a rural setting.[244]

As a cost-saving measure, some school boards dealt with increased student enrolments by simply increasing the sizes of existing classrooms, thus shifting the responsibility onto teachers to deal with varying student abilities. Another cost-saving method was to squeeze multiple grades into a single classroom. In an interview with a rural teacher in Alberta in the 1920s, Doris Mae recalls that rural classrooms were

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[242] Department of Education, *Annual Review*, 1927, pg. 22. See also, *Annual Reviews* for 1928, 1932.
[243] John Chalmers, 88.
[244] Debra Baker Renton, "Establishing the Links Between Past and Present: An Oral history with Hilda Rennie" (Unpublished paper, University of Saskatchewan, 1993), 22, in Dianne Miller, "Telling Tales In and Out of School: Twentieth-Century Women Teachers in Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History,* 49, No. 2 (1997): 13.

composed of students of various grades and that it was the job of the teacher to plan for each group at the same time.[245]

Cooperative learning strategies and project-based activities using available resources, such as newspapers and magazines, were among the myriad ways teachers overcame these challenges. Many of these techniques, borne out of necessity, were essentially echoed by the new curriculum released by professionals in 1935. For predominantly female teachers of rural schools, adapting curriculum was a practical matter, while for Alberta's educational leadership, overhauling curriculum was a means of asserting authority over the teaching force and curriculum development – key to the professionalization of teaching.

As historians Don Wilson and Paul Stortz demonstrate in their examination of rural school teachers in north-central British Columbia in the 1920s, rural teachers were active and innovative in their delivery of curriculum amidst the challenges they faced. They argue that teachers exerted a degree of autonomy and independence in curriculum delivery owing to their relative isolation.[246] Teachers' control over curriculum, in the midst of isolation, is a recurring theme in the memoirs of rural teachers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Yet historians overlook the initiatives that took place in these school settings, suggesting instead that they continued to teach in unchanging ways until professional educators delivered them from turmoil with new curriculum and progressive teaching practices. But as teacher memoirs, oral interviews, and Wilson's and Stortz's

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[245] Chalmers, 88.
[246] Paul J. Stortz and J. Donald Wilson, "Education on the Frontier: Schools, Teachers, and Community Influence in North-Central British Columbia," *Histoire Sociale/Social History,* 26, No. 52 (1993): 265.

examination demonstrates, rural teachers were adapting their methods to their local circumstances long before progressive education formally arrived in the 1930s. In this way, rural teachers can be seen as active agents of change in their trade.

Critiques of the academic nature of secondary curriculum in Alberta and demands to make curriculum more practical to rural students did not go unnoticed by UFWA leaders or rural school teachers. (Often UFWA leaders were also school teachers.) Making curriculum more practical for rural youth and adopting more pragmatic teaching methods was the subject of numerous articles in the *Grain Growers' Guide*, the official publication of the UFA/UFWA. For example, in 1920 a rural school teacher, Mary Crawford, argued "that the era of general education is passing away."[247] The study of classics, such as Latin and history, were deemed unsuitable to the practical needs of farmers. The curriculum needed to move from the "abstract to the constructive."[248] Another article in the same publication described how rural school teachers were deviating from academic curriculum and making it constructive. The article includes the accomplishments of rural teachers such as Ms. Wyman, who claimed that the existing curriculum "contained nothing that could be put to practical use in their rural students' everyday lives."[249] Wyman took progressive steps in rural school houses to improve this situation. According to Wyman, children wanted to learn by doing things rather than to repeat what others had done. She set up committee work for students to take charge of their learning and to improve the material conditions of the school. Students of Ms. Wyman profiled their own paintings and poetry throughout the room and applied their

[247] Mary Crawford, "Education for the Farm," *Grain Growers' Guide*, April 14, 1920, 20.
[248] Ibid.
[249] *Grain Growers' Guide*, "Some Prophesies of a Women," September 18, 1919, 17.

mathematical and scientific learning towards the construction of school gardens.[250] These initiatives applied learning in a cooperative fashion and taught youth that they could take charge of their own learning and the conditions in which they learned. Indeed, these ideas were in line with strands of progressive education that would be formally introduced in Alberta decades later.

Teachers' and students' memoirs in Alberta and British Columbia from the 1920s and 1930s indicate some of the ways in which rural teachers pragmatically adapted curriculum in light of limited resources, inadequate training, and large classrooms with diverse student needs. Although some of these memoirs are based on teachers' experience in other provinces, it is likely that many of Alberta's rural teachers acted in similar ways. Teacher Hazel McKenzie claims that her Lethbridge school circumvented a lack of teaching resources by utilizing *National Geographic* magazines for research projects. "That box of material bailed me out time after time," claimed this teacher.[251] For teachers dealing with students from multiple grades, one adaptation was to organize the whole group around a single theme that all students could work on at the same time. Common themes used by rural school teachers included "Indians and Eskimos" and "Taking a Trip to Europe."[252] Penelope Stephenson's study of rural school teachers in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s claims that "rural teachers learned to utilize the natural resources on their schools' doorstep to provide interesting lessons for pupils."[253] Roberta Volker remembered her experience in a rural school at Wood Lake with her teacher

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[250] Ibid.
[251] Von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Rural Alberta," 101.
[252] Ibid., 102.
[253] Ibid., 101.

Margaret Campbell. She remembers a unit on pioneer life: "We used pioneer tools to build and float a raft one week. In a science class we went on nature finds to see wild orchids growing near the school and acorns gathered by squirrels for winter. Our teacher had the ability to make every lesson come alive."[254] Volker remembers that "we all came away doing well in math because of her love of the subject and the fun projects she would create to make real life experience for us."[255]

Rural teachers also seemed capable of creating relevant history lessons for their students. Mildred Rasmussen remembered projects she developed that required her pupils in Dickson, Alberta, to interview their parents in order to write a history of the Danish community in the area.[256] Gordon Little, a former student in the Alberta community of Hither during the inter war years, describes how his instructor divided the six intermediate grade students into two teams to debate the topic: "Resolved, that Japan is a threat to the British and American possessions in the Pacific."[257] Students worked on the debate at school and at home, gathering newspapers where they could find them. Some teachers also ordered special maps and early war broadcast news to prepare students for the debate.[258] Thus, theme-based activities utilizing available resources were employed by rural teachers as practical measures to overcome classrooms with multiple-graded students and limited supply of formal teaching materials such as textbooks. School teacher Edith Van Kleek's published memoirs speak to teachers' pragmatism in the 1920s

[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid., 104.
[257] Ibid., 107.
[258] Ibid.

and 1930s. Her memoirs are aptly titled, *The Way things Were*.[259] Because of shortages of teaching materials, Van Kleek encouraged students to use what they could find, including dictionaries and encyclopaedias – anything that could develop students' ability to research and think.[260]

These practical innovations were consistent with what progressive education professionals in the 1930s would call "child-centered learning," "discovery-based learning," and "constructivist" approaches to teaching. These approaches emphasized the need for teaching and content to become more practical and applicable to the everyday life experience of students.[261] Leading intellectuals such as John Dewey disseminated these progressive ideas from American universities such as Columbia in New York and Chicago University. This is not to say that all rural teachers in Alberta were unaware of such pedagogical innovations emanating from United States in the 1920s. Some had read John Dewey's widely circulated book, *The School and Society*, and in the exceptional cases of Donald Dickie and Olive Fisher, had attended Columbia to educate themselves in the methods and philosophy of progressive education.[262] But for the average rural school teacher, adapting teaching practices was a practical matter of survival and not a pedagogical or intellectual exercise. A series of oral interviews from the 1970s conducted at the University of Saskatchewan with practicing rural school teachers from the 1920s confirms this assumption. The interviewer asked a number of former teachers if they had

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[259] Ibid., 102.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Patterson, "The Canadian Response to Progressive Education," 61.
[262] Patricia Coulter, "Getting Things Done: Donalda Dickie and Leadership Through Practice," Canadian Society for the Study of Education (2005), 637.

referred to themselves as "progressive educators."[263] The most common response to this question was that they "did not know what this word meant."[264] They emphasized that what they had done in the classroom was a matter of necessity. Scholar Dianne Miller goes further, claiming that rural school teachers did not need to read John Dewey to alter their teaching methods. Rather they understood the impoverished conditions in which they operated and made practical adaptations.

By the early 1930s, the Department of Education outlined key problems that plagued Alberta's schools which were already well-known to the rural school teacher. The department identified the problem of teacher shortages, lack of teaching materials, the inability of students to access high school programming, and high failure rates on provincial exams, and it concluded that the existing academic curriculum was largely irrelevant to many rural students.[265] One solution proposed by the UFA government to resolve the issue plaguing Alberta's schools was to defer to an "expert" curriculum committee which would rewrite school curriculum with the intention of "lightening the academic" nature of the programs of study.[266]

In charge of supervising the entire re-working of primary, middle-school, and secondary education in 1935 was Dr. H.C. Newland, a Ph.D. graduate of Chicago University and the Alberta Teachers' Alliance President between 1920-1922.[267] Dr. Newland dedicated much of his effort to introducing an entirely new course that could

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[263] Oral Interview with Caroline Robins, "Pedagogical Pioneers: A History of Education in Saskatchewan," Audiotape, R-1518, Saskatchewan Archives.
[264] Ibid. See audiotapes R-A1499 with Mildred Baldwin and R-A1500 with Florence Bennee.
[265] Von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural School," 95.
[266] Chalmers, 194.
[267] Patricia Oviatt, "The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland" (M.A. Thesis: University of Alberta, 1970), 5.

infuse curriculum and teaching with strands of progressive education emanating from leading American universities.

Professionalization as the Masculinization of Teaching in Alberta

To put teaching on par with other professions and to obtain a greater degree of control over teaching conditions and curriculum, Hubert C. Newland worked to increase organization among teachers and publicize their arguments for professionalization. A key tool in this endeavour was establishing the Alberta Teachers' Alliance in 1918, precursor to the Alberta Teachers' Association. [268]He outlined the following as major objectives of the collective teacher organization: raise the status of teaching in order to secure better salaries; obtain greater teacher representation on curricular committees; and improve professional qualifications for teachers by securing funding for post-graduate training in education.[269] However, the benefits of collective teacher organization were not allocated equally across gender lines. For example, Donalda Dicker and Olive Fisher, both female teachers who obtained graduate training abroad, were not granted funding for their studies as their male counterparts were.[270] While the *ATA Magazine* served the function of promoting the teaching profession, the *Grain Growers' Guide* continued to be a forum for populist discussion of educational reform. The *ATA Magazine* featured mostly male contributors, while educational forums in the *Grain Growers' Guide* were primarily authored women.

[268] Ibid., 23.
[269] Ibid., 22.
[270] Coulter, 687.

As mentioned earlier, between 1911 and 1970, over 70% of Alberta's teaching force was female, and in rural communities this number was higher.[271] Mary Kinnear provides two explanations for the overrepresentation of women in rural schools. First, in the early twentieth century there existed few paid opportunities for women in the labour market other than teaching, and, second, few men wanted to work in isolated communities for relatively low wages.[272] Kinnear also points out a number of gender role assumptions, typical of the early twentieth century, that informed men's and women's career paths. For example, men would enter a profession assuming they would not have to work in other occupations to support themselves or their families. As the "normal breadwinner," a man needed to earn a respectable, even a superior, living for himself and his family.[273] Teaching in the 1910s and 1920 was a poorly paid position and not a career that a man could follow to maintain the status of a "normal breadwinner."

Conversely, the assumption for women in the early decades of the twentieth century was that they would manage the home, children, and their husbands' emotional well-being. Because of this assumption that women were caregivers in the home, women were also deemed well-suited to teach children, perceived by many as an extension of motherhood.[274] Amidst these early twentieth-century gender roles, the expectation of women was that they were not supposed to be ambitious beyond the bounds of their family and certainly not for themselves. Thus, according to Kinnear, a woman could never be considered an actively engaged person in her workplace and most certainly

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[271] Kinnear, 180.
[272] Ibid.,150.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Dianne Miller, "Telling Tales in and Out of School," 16.

could not be considered a professional.[275] In the sources available on the development of curriculum and professionalization in Alberta, women teachers are presented as merely symbolic of the private sphere of the home, incapable of fulfilling public roles as agents of institutional and political change. Because these gender roles dictated that only men could be professionals and women maternal caregivers, social studies continues to be framed as the achievement of men. Absent from this predominant view is the role of the practitioners, female rural school teachers who altered teaching methods, thereby contributing to curriculum reform.

The official publication of the ATA, *The Alberta Teachers' Alliance Magazine*, established by Newland in 1920, rallied support by publicizing the efforts, progress, and achievements of educators who raised the collective status of teachers in society. Throughout the 1920s the magazine, under the editorship of Newland, produced indulgent political rhetoric. In fact, scholar Patricia Obviate, author of the "Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland," claims the *Magazine* was Newland's instrument of propaganda in how it made emotional appeals to its readers.[276] The front page of the first published issue of the *ATA Magazine* in 1920 reads in Latin, "Magistri Neque Servi, or "masters not slaves."[277] Newland certainly benefitted personally from his ambitious involvement with the professionalization of teaching in Alberta, as he rose meteorically in Alberta's educational ranks from high school teacher to educational scholar, obtaining

[275] Ibid.
[276] Oviatt, 12.
[277] *Alberta Teachers' Alliance (ATA) Magazine*, 1 (1920): 1.

a PhD from Chicago's graduate school of Education in the 1920s. He also served as ATA president and, in 1935, became Schools Supervisor for the Department of Education.[278]

Just as the lawyer or doctor controlled aspects of his trade, so too did teachers need to control their trade, stated an *ATA Magazine* article form 1920, and this involved asserting control over the teaching force and curriculum design.[279] The act of professionalizing teaching was analogous to the masculinization of teaching, at least at the level of creating leadership and bureaucratic positions in Alberta education. Teachers, a majority of whom were female, were merely practitioners or an extension of bureaucratic control.

The masculinization of teaching in Alberta certainly squares with the literature available on the subject. For example, men dominated the administration of the *ATA Magazine*, dedicated to the cause of professionalization. The *Magazine* regularly featured jubilant articles on male appointments to positions of authority in the ATA or Department of Education. One *ATA Magazine* article, from 1935, regarding the election victory of Premier Aberhart, a former school teacher himself, reads as a call to arms among male teachers to engage politically and demand professional recognition by their government. "Teachers have received less recognition for their work than other classes. The Premier himself had to leave the classroom to get recognition, and in a few months succeeded in having the highest award conferred upon him."[280] The success story of Aberhart is presented as an inspiration to teachers, particularly men, to affirm themselves in

[278] Oviatt, 15.
[279] *ATA Magazine*, 1 (1920): 3.
[280] *ATA Magazine* (1935): 15.

curriculum design, to "get busy and prepare textbooks."[281] As will be outlined below, men asserted themselves in curriculum design and textbook writing, but primarily at the level of committee leadership and supervision. But the actual work involved in writing curriculum and textbooks was left to women such as Olive Fisher and Donalda Dickie. The author suggests a political calling for teachers and equates their work with that of the politician. "Teachers must demand…. professional status, similar to that enjoyed by lawyers and doctors."[282] The *ATA Magazine* and its content reflect a predominantly male perspective, preoccupied with establishing authority and leadership in the design of curriculum and control over teaching in the province. Also, in the early 1930s, as the depression shrank the labour market across the Canadian Prairies, calls for men to assume teaching positions held by women throughout the nation were vocalized by education officials. A Saskatchewan Department of Education official suggested that the country's unemployment problems could be solved if the "55,000 lady teachers in Canada were eliminated from their positions, making way for men who are walking the streets."[283] While this radical proposal was never implemented, many leaders of Alberta's education system travelled to the United States in hopes of advancing their careers and legitimizing their authority in curriculum design.

The ways in which progressive education was internalized by men and women attending graduate school in the United States may have differed considering the job prospects available to them upon their return to Alberta. Appointments to leadership and

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[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Cited in Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), "A History of Women in Education," 1988, 4, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Archives, Saskatoon.

other lofty positions awaited men, while women such as Donalda Dickie and Olive Fisher, who also obtained advanced degrees from Columbia, returned to the only employment option available to them, teaching in rural communities. In this way, Dickie and Fisher may have been more concerned with the social implications of progressive education than the professional implications. An interview with W. D. McDougall, also a student of Columbia University, confirms this notion. He claims that a number of graduates of Columbia, including Donalda Dickie, were "more closely associated with the social aspects of Alberta's agrarian movement" and were "highly motivated by the social implications inherent in progressive education."[284]

Beyond McDougall: The Contributions of Dickie and Fisher

If female teachers were to be denied opportunities to lead and secure formal positions of authority, some would shape education in other ways, including in textbook design and curriculum committee work. Donalda Dickie was an Alberta rural school teacher, a normal school instructor, a Columbia and Oxford scholar, and the recipient of a PhD in history at the University of Toronto in 1929. Earning a PhD made her one of only six women to be conferred with a University of Toronto PhD in history prior to 1960.[285] Despite her stellar academic record, she was never considered for a post in a history department. No doubt this was because the hiring of new faculty was done informally by department chairs seeking "good men."[286] As Donald Wright argues, "Sexism not only protected the status of history as a masculine discipline but protected the academic labour

[284] "Interview with W.D. McDougall and R.S. Patterson on reform to Alberta education in the 1930s," 3. University of Alberta Archives, Accession no. 69-29, 3/1, File 1, Box 4.
[285] Ibid., 677.
[286] Ibid., 680.

market for men."[287] Although it is possible that Dickie did not wish to teach at a university and never sought a position, the aversion to female professors in history departments in general suggests more than personal preference was at work. Perhaps, as scholar Rebecca Coulter suggests, Dickie was motivated to overcome overt sexism by achieving exceptional academic excellence.[288]

In any case, gender pushed Dickie to the margins of male-dominated authority, leaving her to employ a strategy of "practical action."[289] Admittedly, Donalda Dickie is an exceptional figure in Alberta's educational history. But her situation as a practitioner with influence upon curriculum matters despite a lack of professional status was common to many other rural teachers. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, rural teachers "got things done" as a matter of survival. While getting things done certainly benefited rural school communities, it was not a tactic that could be used to advance a women's career, especially given the rigid gender roles typical of the period. However, both Dickie and Fisher acted as liaisons between educational authority and practical matters in the field. As established teachers in rural Alberta and as progressive education experts, Dickie and Fisher straddled two worlds. As progressive education experts they played a key role in implementing the theories of progressive education in an intelligible way to teachers. At the same time, Dickie and Fisher also ensured that Alberta's agrarian movement's cooperative and democratic values found tangible expression in curriculum reform.

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[287] Donald A. Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 31.
[288] Coulter, 695.
[289] Ibid.

When Dickie returned to Canada from Oxford in 1917, she resumed her teaching post at Camrose Normal School, one of three of Alberta's teaching preparations schools. Here she found the history textbooks used by Alberta students to be "literally incomprehensible to most...young readers."[290] As a result, Dickie began writing and publishing student textbooks that would be used until the 1960s. If she were denied the opportunity to lead from a formal position of authority, she would shape education in another way: by promoting a more practical reading of history along with a child-centered approach to teaching through textbook writing intended for history and its successor, social studies.

Dickie, a rural school teacher herself, realized that teachers had few resources to rely upon other than a textbook. She also understood that the textbook shaped the ways in which teachers taught. If history textbooks focused on the facts of history, with particular attention to dates and events, then teachers, she claimed, would follow suit by demanding memorization from their students. Furthermore, because the majority of students did not complete high school in the early decades of the twentieth century, what they learned in the primary grades was recognized by Dickie as particularly important in shaping the political consciousness and notions of citizenship among Alberta's youth. Dickie's involvement in textbook design and curriculum writing ensured that the implementation of progressive education would be firmly connected to rural communities' need for practical educational reforms. [291] Thus, Alberta's agrarian movement, determined to elevate the social and political consciousness of rural students, and the process of

[290] Ibid., 679.
[291] Ibid, 680.

professionalizing teaching, came together though the work of Dickie and Fisher, who worked as practicing teachers in rural Alberta and as progressive education experts.

Alberta's educational authorities, specifically Fred McNally, the Provincial Supervisor of School in 1934, recognized Dickie's proven ability for producing teaching and student materials. McNally invited Dickie into the curriculum writing process in 1934. Dickie's proven expertise in writing textbooks for teachers and students moved her closer to the center of male-dominated authority. There is no indication from the primary or secondary record that she was seen as a threat to the existing relations of power.[292] It would have been difficult for Dickie to be considered a threat, given that she was never appointed to a prominent position of authority or ever referred to as a professional in the primary record. Instead, Dickie is referred to only as a teacher, albeit a very capable one, at the Camrose Normal School.[293]

McNally, like Dickie, attended Columbia's graduate school, but admits that he "found John Dewey's lectures incomprehensible."[294] Possibly because of his confusion regarding practical implementation, he invited Dickie to speak at a conference of school inspectors about the methods of progressive education. Well received by the inspectors, Dickie was assigned to the task of drafting a curriculum that reflected strands of progressive education.[295] While the committee work was supervised by H.C. Newland, much of the actual work was accomplished by two women: Dr. Dickie, and Olive Fisher, a Normal

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[292] Ibid.
[293] See "Donalda Dickie," Accession No: 69-29, 3/1-5, Boxes 4-8, University of Alberta Archives.
[294] H.T. Coutts and B.E. Walker, *The Story of G. Fred McNally* (Scarsdale: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1964), 42.
[295] Donalda Dickie and Olive Fisher, "Some Events Leading to the Re-Organization of the Curriculum of the Department of Education of the Province of Alberta in 1933." Accession No. 69-29, File C-23, 4, University of Alberta Archives.

School instructor in Calgary, also a PhD graduate of Columbia. Central to the plan for this committee was to create an interdisciplinary, child-centered, activity-based curriculum for the primary through to the high school levels. Dickie envisioned this approach as "the cooperative achievement of a social purpose that a teacher presents to her class with a view to having them use it as an experience in intelligent social behaviour."[296] Perhaps because of Dickie's and Fisher's experience as practicing rural teachers and progressive educational experts, they were better positioned than others to translate theory into practice. Scholar Rebecca Coulter argues that Dickie was always interested in using education to promote social improvement and thought that this could be best achieved by offering students active, purposeful learning activities designed to prepare them for democratic citizenship.[297]

W.D. McDougall's unpublished memoirs, *Social Studies in Alberta,*" reflects a clear desire to highlight his independence in authoring social studies in the province. He claims that social studies curriculum was without "precedence," bestowing him alone with the "overwhelming task" of creating a new course.[298] He writes that "social studies had its birth in Alberta" when, in 1935, H.C. Newland invited "me to elaborate on ideas for a new course at the secondary (intermediate and high school) school level."[299] McDougall claims that from this date forward he was to "live, breath, and sleep social studies."[300] I do not contest McDougall's singular role in writing this new course for the intermediate

[296] Rebecca Coulter, 685.
[297] Ibid., 686.
[298] W.D. McDougall, "Autobiographical Notes on Development of Social Studies Curriculum 1934-1938." Accession No. 69-29, 3/1 – File 1, Box 4, 3, University of Alberta Archives.
[299] Ibid., 3.
[300] Ibid.

and high school grades. I do contest, however, historians' tendency to celebrate McDougall's independence in writing social studies without reference to the work of others, including Donalda Dickie, Olive Fisher, or rural Alberta school teachers. A singular focus on McDougall also disconnects social studies' development from the religio-political environment in Alberta, led by the UFA government, that enabled curriculum writers such as McDougall to participate in the first instance. My objective in this chapter has been to put McDougall's singular role in writing social studies curriculum into a wider context.

While H.C. Newland oversaw the revision and writing of curriculum at the elementary and secondary grades in Alberta between 1934 and 1936, including social studies, the actual work was delegated to others. At the elementary level, Donalda Dickie, Olive Fisher, and William Hay were responsible for writing a new program of studies, which included the introduction of social studies in 1935. [301]In the following two years, McDougall introduced social studies at the intermediate and high school levels. Therefore, the elementary program of studies, which included social studies, represents the very first attempt to formalize and infuse progressive education into Alberta's curriculum. The elementary program involved teaching around "purposeful activities" that "revolved around central themes" or "enterprises."[302] Enterprise education involved a chosen theme such as "Foods," and students would draw upon various disciplines such as health and science to explore the chosen theme. The enterprise program also included activities such as organizing a student council or investigating safety rules in

[301] Von Heyking, "Implementing Progressive Education in Alberta's Rural Schools," 95.
[302] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 71.

communities. The point was that students were to be active investigators and researchers of problems that they confronted in their communities, and they were to draw upon multiple disciplines to solve them. A list of community resources, books, and magazines was included in the program of studies that teachers and students could utilize.[303]

The integration of content was also key to the enterprise approach. The fusion of history, geography, and civics – social studies – reflected this integration. It encouraged students to see how history, geography and civics were interrelated and useful to think about when enquiring into a theme such as "government and law."[304] History, geography, and civics were not the only subjects that were integrated for the purpose of exploring broad themes. Science and health, literature and art, were similarly combined. Other subjects that were integrated were not given new titles. The enterprise approach was to engender appreciation for complexity as opposed to being strictly informational.[305] While some educational experts expressed concern that the quality of curriculum and instruction would suffer, the elementary program was positively received by parents, students, and the general public. In five elementary schools in which this progressive reform, including social studies, was piloted in 1935, the results and reactions of pupils and parents was recorded: "children are more keenly interested in their work; cooperation rather than envy-engendering competition tends to make schools happier places for all."[306]

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[303] Ibid.
[304] Von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World: A History of the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, 1905-1965" (PhD dissertation: University of Calgary, 1996), 221.
[305] Ibid.
[306] W.D. McDougall, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta Education 1902-1945," 20.

The enterprise approach to education offered rural school teachers relief from two key problems. For teachers with students from multiple grades in their classroom, the enterprise method provided a single theme which could be taught to all students regardless of grade, and students could draw from relevant material to address the theme. Also, teachers could utilize supplies and resources that were at their doorsteps for theme-based activities rather than being tied to a single textbook (that they may not even possess) to guide the learning of specific material. In these ways, Dickie's and Fisher's elementary curriculum represents the first formal attempt to deal with the problems of rural school teachers. At the same time, the enterprise approach merely formalized what many rural school teachers had already discovered in their isolated conditions, years before formalization occurred.

Social studies and the enterprise approach to education at the elementary level thus replaced the tradition of drill and memorization with activities, projects, and problems to be collaboratively worked on by pupils. It instilled the notion of cooperation and inquiry, rather than conclusions dictated by the teacher or textbooks.[307] The lack of general opposition to the enterprise approach, including social studies, points to the fact that social studies was not entirely revolutionary or without precedence, as Mr. McDougall and other historians suggest.

Although Newland asked McDougall to write social studies curriculum independently in 1936, it was widely and publically discussed at the Edmonton and Calgary educational clubs from 1933-1935, dismissing that which Dickie, Fisher, and McDougall were privy

[307] Von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World," 221.

to.[308] The extent to which Dickie, Fisher, and McDougall collaborated on social studies at the elementary level is unclear. What is certain, however, is that social studies was not introduced at the junior and senior high levels until after a review of the elementary enterprise curriculum was done by a subcommittee established by Newland in 1935. It was after this review that Newland appointed McDougall to author social studies at the secondary levels, independent of collaboration.[309] Clearly, an examination of Dickie's and Fisher's progressive reforms at the elementary level, including social studies, served, to some extent, as a benchmark for what McDougall would devise at the secondary grade levels. Based on McDougall's work, there is a clear continuity of ideas and objectives flowing between social studies at the elementary and secondary levels.[310] More than likely, McDougall borrowed from the elementary experiment. The links, however, between the elementary enterprise curriculum and social studies at the secondary level were largely ignored by McDougall and have been ignored by historians.

In a forty-page report written in 1965, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta 1902-1945," McDougall inserts a miniscule three-page document by Dickie and Fisher on their curriculum writing involvement at the elementary levels, but distances their work from his own. In his prefacing remarks to their report, he discredits its factual basis at the outset, implying its inaccuracy. He writes that their report "was written twenty years after the event without the writers having access to documentary materials," ignoring the fact

[308] Donalda Dickie and Olive Fisher, "Some Events Leading to the Re-organization of the Curriculum of the Department of Education of the Province of Alberta in 1935," 4.
[309] McDougall, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta Education, 1902-1945," 35.
[310] Ibid.

that his reports and memoirs were written thirty years after the fact.[311] McDougall notes that he had penciled in corrections of the supposed errors. One change is particularly significant, considering the existence of circumscribed gender roles separating professionals from practitioners along gender lines. Newland's official title, "Alberta Schools Inspector," is absent in Dickie's and Fisher's report, but was penciled in by McDougall,[312] perhaps to emphasize that Dickie and Fisher's work was accomplished under his authority and not collaboratively as their report may have suggested without this inclusion.

In his report, McDougall also disregards the expertise of Dickie and Fisher as leading progressive educators, both of whom possessed PhDs from leading American centers of progressive education. At this time, McDougall possessed only a Master's degree in education from the University of Alberta, which may have compelled McDougall to distinguish himself from the Dickie and Fisher based on gender norms that preserved the designation "professional" for men only.[313] McDougall compliments Dickie and Fisher, commenting that "elementary education in Alberta appreciates the contribution to education by these two distinguished teachers."[314] The short document that follows narrowly focuses on the efforts made by Dickie and Fisher to infuse classrooms with practical activities as a means to relieve teachers of the difficulties confronting rural schoolteachers. This selective and short reference to Dickie's and Fisher's work

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[311] Ibid., pg. 11.
[312] Ibid., 2.
[313] R.S. Patterson, "The Implementation of Progressive Education in Canada," in *Essays on Canadian Education*, 81.
[314] McDougall, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta Education 1902-1945," 3.

demonstrates McDougall's attempt to frame both women as merely practitioners in the field, thus ignoring their role in formalizing progressive education in Alberta.

Surely, McDougall was not alone in appropriating social studies as his own invention. It is likely that H.C. Newland, who appointed McDougall to write the curriculum, reflected Newland's desire to ensure that the development of social studies was credited as an achievement of professionals – men – as a means to justify their influence and authority in Alberta's Education Department. A shared and collaborative project between teachers in the field and professionals would likely tarnish the constructed myth that the professional delivered the Alberta educational environment from backwardness.

Social studies was not the invention of a single individual. The relgio-political environment shaped by the UFA/UFWA instigated curriculum revision in the first instance, rural school teachers were pioneers of what was to become progressive education, and the role of teacher/progressive education experts such as Dickie and Fisher was at the forefront of progressive education and social studies' formalization in Alberta schools. Echoes of each of these developments and contributors can be heard when reading the forward in one of the first social studies textbooks authorized for use in Alberta, *The World of Today:*

> The pupil of today is not living in an individualistic society. He is living in a society where men must work together, where men must pool their knowledge and experience if the crucial problems of today and tomorrow are to be coped with successfully. It becomes the duty of the school to furnish the pupil with a variety of experiences in group living. The school must assume responsibility for meeting the particular needs of each pupil in order that he may

> thereby be better equipped to contribute to the successful functioning of the social group to which he belongs.[315]

Alberta's farm movement, rural school teachers' innovations as a result of shifting social dynamics, the precedent-setting elementary curriculum of Dickie and Fisher, and the masculinization of the teaching profession in Alberta, all contributed to the advent of social studies. It was not the invention of a single man.

[315] McDougall and Gilbert Patterson, *The World of Today* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), 38.

CHAPTER FOUR: CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AND SOCIAL STUDIES: THE FULLFILLMENT OF THE UFA/UFWA'S COOPERTIVE MOVEMENT

In the previous three chapters I have attempted to place the origins of social studies into a wider context than has been provided by historians to date. In this chapter, I will examine Department of Education's files as well as history and social studies textbooks, authorized for use in Alberta classrooms between 1880 and 1960, to determine how the shift from history curriculum to social studies manifested itself at the level of prescribed instruction.

Social studies curriculum in Alberta can be understood as the fulfillment of the UFA/UFWA's desire to create politically active citizens capable of transforming society according to their own cooperative and democratic values. The animating principle of the Alberta farmers' movement amidst social, political, and economic adversity was cooperation. [316] Alberta farmers believed they carried the burden of national growth without adequate compensation or political representation. John A. MacDonald's National Policy, which effectively exploited the West for Eastern Canada's benefit, was still in place in the early 1920s. For example, farmers in the West established a market for eastern manufactured farm equipment that was more expensive for them because of the national tariff. However, farmers were being forced to buy equipment protected by the tariff while not being afforded the same protection as Eastern manufacturers.[317] At the same time, basic infrastructure such as highways and schools was undeveloped in the

[316] Ian MacPherson, *Each For All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd.,1979), 42.
[317] Ibid., 43.

West compared to that in Eastern Canada's urban centers.[318] And to make matters worse, climactic drought ravaged the landscape of farmers during the 1920s and 1930s, turning crops into dust.[319]

It was in this context that farmers wished to improve their immediate economic and political situation. But doing so required altering basic social attitudes. The UFA/UFWA believed that this could best be accomplished through education because an educated and involved citizenry would keep political leaders fixed on the interests of the people – interests informed by the movement itself.[320] As discussed in previous chapters, various informal educational initiatives, such as the better farming trains and UFA/UFWA youth camps, served the UFA/UFWA's objective of raising awareness regarding economic and political issues vital to farmers, while preparing citizens for active political duty in order to sustain the movement in the province and the nation at large.

Once the UFA/UFWA took direct political action and formed the provincial government in 1921, a more direct educational approach was employed. Now provincial curriculum would be used to align Alberta students with the active political duties of the cooperative UFA/UFWA movement.

History curriculum taught in Alberta before the Great War taught students to be passive citizens who absorbed British values. After the War, active political citizenship, based on Alberta's cooperative experiment in group government, came to define post-war curriculum reform. In textbooks and curriculum documents, the concept of cooperation

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[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid., 44.
[320] Bradford Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 161.

frequently appeared as a social studies objective. But it was framed predominantly in the context of Alberta' experience with cooperative organizations such as the Wheat Pool and the UFA/UFWA movement. This regional bias distinguishes social studies textbooks written in Alberta from those authored in other regions of Canada, particularly Ontario.

Citizenship training in the 1920s became the foundation of social studies in the 1930s. Citizenship training became a formalized public school course that replaced history curriculum at the elementary grade level in 1922, and emphasized the need for cultivating cooperative and politically active citizens through practical learning activities, which often replaced the memorization and regurgitation of facts. It is important to note, however, that citizenship and social studies did not liberate students from having values imposed on them by government authorities; rather, it replaced passive learning with active learning and replaced the learning of British values with the prescribed cooperative values of the UFA/UFWA.

How history curriculum was delivered in the classroom is difficult to know, but because textbooks were often the singular resource for students and teachers they represent a key window into the actual content and approach to teaching history. Values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions can be teased out of books through an examination of the major themes and events that had to be covered in textbooks on Canadian history, according to historian Jose Igartua's analysis of textbooks used in Ontario after the Second World War. Igartua shows how definitions of Canadian identity were transmitted to the next generation of Canadians through history textbooks used in schools, and he claims that textbooks represent authors' attempt to fashion history and

ways of perceiving the world that they believed should be shared by society at large.[321] On the other hand, a key difference between history curriculum and social studies was the latter's dismissal of textbooks as the primary tool of instruction. As the Alberta Program of Studies introducing social studies in 1935 states, "the pupil's textbook will be the community in which he lives."[322] This grassroots approach to curriculum; making the community the pivot around which curriculum revolved, was reminiscent of the social gospel movement's tendency to dethrone the bible and religious doctrine as the main authorities, replacing them with active community service based on Christian ethics. Doing so allowed the principles of Christianity to expand beyond the confines of the church, finding practical application in social and political service in Alberta in the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, with the advent of social studies, historical inquiry expanded beyond a student's textbook and the narrow walls of a classroom, permeating social and political service in Alberta through active citizenship. As a result of this shift in focus away from a single textbook, various books and resources were used to teach social studies. The change from history to social studies in Alberta reflects the shifting social, political, and economic values in Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s and will be highlighted through textbook and educational document analysis.

Textbooks and provincial programs of study files reflect, as Iguarta suggests, authors' attempt to fashion history and mould students in ways consistent with the authors' beliefs. This is not to say that the authors of social studies textbooks and curriculum were UFA/UFWA leaders; they were written by leading educators such as Donalda Dickie and

[321] Jose E. Iguarta, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 63.
[322] Alberta Department of Education, *Alberta Program of Studies*, 1935, 1.

W.D. McDougall. But it was the UFA/UFWA who applied pressure on the Department of Education to include in school curriculum information about cooperation, as well as social, political, and economic issues particular to Alberta.[323] Thus, the authors of social studies curriculum and the textbooks they authored cannot be entirely separated from the larger movement that instigated reform. Social studies is accurately understood as the fulfillment of the UFA/UFWA's desire to shape citizens for active social and political duty.

Imperial History in Alberta Prior to WWI

It is important to note that although education was a provincial responsibility, as defined in Section 93 of the British North America Act (BNA), history curriculum prior to WWI in English-Canada was intensely nationalistic and imperial.[324] Inspiring patriotism for the nation based on British imperial values is something historian Carl Berger has identified as Canadian imperialism.[325] Curriculum writers and textbook authors depicted a glowing future for Canada, but one solidly grounded within the British Empire. Prior to the First World War, Canadian nationalism and pro-British imperialism were two sides of the same coin. A textbook used throughout Canada for teaching history, titled *Canadian Civics,* captures the essence of pre-war Canadian nationalism. The book's author, J.S. Jenkins, stated that "the word colony we do not like, and we

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[323] "UFA Annual Conference Resolutions, 1931," File 170C, Premiers' Papers, Provincial Archives Alberta.
[324] Adele Perry, "Nation, Empire, and the Writing of History in Canada," in Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson, eds., *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History* (London: Institute for the Study of Americas, 2009), 1.
[325] Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 16.

usually speak of ourselves as a 'nation.' Some object to the name 'nation' because it ordinarily means an 'independent nation' or 'sovereign state,' and we do not claim to be that, but desire to be part of the Empire." A Canadian nationalism based on the idea of pride and imperial membership was something challenged after the war by farmers. They interpreted British imperialism as an instigator of greed, violence, and competition. It was these forces, according to western farmers, that had reduced them to political and economic subservience.

A national and imperial orientation to history curriculum reflected, in part, the nation's demographic, particularly that of the oldest and largest English-Canadian province, Ontario. According to Canadian census data in 1881, 80% of the population of Ontario was of British stock, that is, English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh. By 1931 this number had dropped to 75%, a result of increased immigration from Eastern European countries and the United States.[326] Critics and the Department of Education in Ontario were visibly concerned about immigration from non-British countries, fuelling their campaign to use history to establish loyalty to Canada and the British Empire. George Wrong, one of Canada's first professional historians, articulated concern for the "daunting task of assimilating the vast hoard of newcomers" from continental Europe.[327] While few historians openly subscribed to the fashionable Edwardian theory of racial degeneration, these pre-war textbook authors were clear about racial assumptions.[328] They rarely intimated that Eastern Europeans or Americans had sullied Canada's British

[326] Larry A. Glassford, "Citizenship Literacy and National Self Identity: The Historical Impact of Curriculum and Textbooks in Shaping the Character of Ontario," in Active History.ca, http://activehistory.ca/papers/history-paper-5/, (accessed June 16, 2012).
[327] George W. Wrong, *Ontario Public School History of Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1921), 342.
[328] Glassford.

heritage, but instead focused on groups such as the French and First Nations as groups incapable of advancing the material and political development of Canada.[329] For example, in *The Canadian West*, authorized for use in Ontario and Alberta schools, Alexander McIntyre asks a series of rhetorical questions regarding why the "Indian" chose not to develop the material and resource potential of the land, thus leaving it up to the British to exploit. McIntyre asks:

> Why did the Indian not tame the wild animals about him? Why did he not cultivate plants? Why did he not make greater use of the metals found in the country? Has he [Indian] done any good then? He [Indian] was only a worker in stone and in bone, and these cannot be compared with the iron and steel of today.[330]

The author proceeds to celebrate British fur traders, fisherman, railway men, and politicians as the generators of progress. For these authors, British ethnicity was inherently progressive, while non-British groups in Canada were backwards and incapable of advancing Canada to her true potential.

Like Ontario's history curriculum prior to WWI, Alberta's program for history reinforced Canada's connection to Britain through textbooks that emphasized the material benefits that flowed from the advance of British civilization. Also, because Canadian regional markets for textbooks were too small for publishers to offer province-specific textbooks, those published in Ontario were essentially English-Canadian texts, used by provincial education departments throughout the country, including Alberta.[331]

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[330] Alexander McIntyre, *The Canadian West* (Toronto: Morang & Co. Ltd., 1904), 8.
[331] John Gray, *Fun tomorrow: Learning to be a Publisher and Much Else* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), 16.

It is also important to note that Alberta's ethnic makeup was becoming increasingly diverse, even more so than Ontario's, as a result of mass immigration before the outbreak of war. The influx of newcomers to Alberta highlighted for some the need to assimilate immigrants. In 1911, Alberta was overwhelmingly made up of new immigrants; only 20 per cent of the population was actually Alberta-born.[332] Almost half the population was made up of German, Scandinavian, and Eastern European minorities.[333] Political leaders, clergymen, and educators had to come to grips with fact that Alberta's population was indeed ethnically diverse. Most Anglo-Albertans, including many clergymen, politicians, and educators, agreed that European immigrants were in need of an intensive "Canadianization" policy.[334] The focal point for all those concerned with assimilating immigrants in Alberta, according to historian Howard Palmer, was the school system.[335]

Prior to the war, the goal of the Alberta school system was Anglo-conformity. The values to be inculcated by the schools and the curriculum were those of British-Canadian nationalism, citizenship, and the Protestant work ethic.[336] The Department of Education in Alberta claimed that for students of history "the state should ultimately emerge as the highest of human institutions and loyalty to the state as the first virtue of the citizen."[337] History, Alberta's Department of Education continued, "was the most important subject

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[332] Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice, A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982), 18.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid., 46.
[335] Ibid., 48.
[336] Ibid.
[337] "Report on the Committee on School Curriculum," 1911-1912, File 26, Box 1, Legislative Papers, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 2.

in developing citizens; it was through the study of history that students would identify themselves as Canadians and as members of the British Empire."[338]

Textbooks authored at the turn of the century and used in Ontario and Alberta schools before the war emphasized stories of discovery, order, and progress – accomplishments intrinsically tied to the apparent racial superiority of the British. For example, William's Swinton's *Outlines of the World's History* asks readers to consider, "What have been the great steps in human progress – the discoveries, social and political changes, advances in thought and skills, that have carried forward civilization and the 'betterment of man's estate'; and what is the series of events that has brought the world up to its present standard of enlightenment and knowledge?"[339] The answers to these questions are found in his detailed descriptions of improvements to education, transportation, industry, and politics brought about under British rule.

Historical textbooks also presented a largely teleological interpretation of historical events. Scholar Herbert Butterfield in his 1931 *Whig Interpretation of History* criticized this approach to writing history.[340] Butterfield argues that the tendency among historians, to draw straight lines between historical events, charting an unbroken narrative of progress that results in the present, is rooted in the turn-of-the-century conviction that the era of progress brought about under Queen Victoria's reign was exceptional.[341] This narrative of continual progress was seen as a direct result of British monarchical rule,

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[338] Ibid.
[339] William Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History* (Halifax: A & W MacKinlay, 1883), iii-iv.
[340] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1950), 5.
[341] Gerald Friesen and Douglas Owram, "Progress, Science, and Religion: Exploring Victorian Thought in Canada," in *Thinkers and Dreamers: Historical Essays in Honour of Carl Berger*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 238.

claims historian Carl Berger, and the spokesmen for this certitude included early Canadian historians.[342] George Wrong, one of Canada's first professional historians, wrote textbooks for grade-school students of history, depicting Canada as a peaceful and progressive march from colonial status to responsible government.[343] This progressive trajectory, Wrong claims, was best learned by paying close attention to the facts.[344]

Despite their insistence on the importance of learning the facts of the past, historians did not hesitate to make strong moral judgments about those facts in order to shape character and conduct among Canadian students. For example, W.D. Lighthall, a late nineteenth-century Canadian historian, claimed "the seeds of English-Canadian progress were deliberately sewn by strong and intelligent men, who brought with them those principles and customs, acquired through centuries by their island forefathers, that their descendants still cherish as their most precious heritage."[345] Consistent with the kind of history being written in the early twentieth century, historian George Wrong incorporated a moralistic and empirical approach to history, claiming the historian's role was guarding truth and also using truth to express appropriate "standards of conduct and character."[346]

An important standard of conduct was loyalty among citizens to Britain. Pre-war history texts condemned those who were disloyal to the British Crown. For example, the rebellions of 1870 and 1885 were dismissed as outright treasonous by authors A.B. Buckley and W.J. Robertson in their text, *A High School History of England and*

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[342] Ibid., 239.
[343] Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 82.
[344] Ibid.
[345] W.D. Lighthall in Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 17.
[346] Wright, 45.

Canada.[347] Both stressed that Louis Riel had "captured men loyal to Canada," including "Thomas Scott, a brave, outspoken loyal subject."[348] They described the Métis Rebellion of 1885 as a "treasonous and barbaric act," while celebrating the British forces, which fought with "valour, bravery, and allegiance to the Crown."[349] The British conquest over the French was described as a welcome change from the "fatherly despotism" and corruption, which, according to W.H.P Clement, had plagued French colonial administration and was the reason for the British victory.[350] D.M. Duncan goes further, suggesting the conquest was a development welcomed by the French, liberating them from political backwardness, and he claims the French "became reconciled to the change which had taken place."[351]

Canada, according to these pre-war textbooks, should be defined by its relationship with the British Empire. If students somehow missed this point in books, the physical classroom environment reinforced the same message. One schoolteacher described his Edmonton classroom in 1909 in the following manner:

> On the end, facing the door is a picture of King and Queen, with neat little Union Jacks and Canadian Flags, surmounting each to loyalty by association…on one side are life-sized portraits of Shakespeare and Milton to inspire admiration and appreciation of our literary inheritance.[352]

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[347] Arabella B. Buckley and W.J. Robertson, *High School History of England and Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1891), 259.
[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid.
[350] W.H.P. Clement, *The History of the Dominion of Canada* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1897), 122.
[351] D.M. Duncan, *The Story of the Canadian People* (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, 1913), 219.
[352] Michael A. Kotek, "A Century and Ten: A History of Edmonton Public Schools," 1922, 192, File 32, Box 4, Edmonton Public School Archives.

A shared belief among provincial educational authorities and historians who wrote textbooks and historical curriculum prior to WWI was that learning the facts of history cultivated one's intellectual and moral character. Knowing the key facts of British history and Canada's role in it would engender British character and respectability. In the introduction to *The History of the Dominion of Canada*, E.M. Sims and G.M. Wrong claim that a "simple narration of events" would enable students to engender the notion of unfettered progress associated with the advance of British civilization.[353] Historian George Stanley recalled this approach to history lessons as a grade-school student in Calgary, noting that it "involved copying notes off the blackboard and repeating them verbatim on the examination."[354]

In a speech to the American Historical Society in 1898, historian George Wrong claimed that "not enough class time was devoted to instruction in history and that textbooks were inferior in quality."[355] Wrong's criticism was directed primarily at amateur historians who authored numerous historical textbooks used in grade school throughout Canada before the turn of the century. Wrong and many other university historians worked to professionalize the writing of Canadian history as a means to secure work for themselves, argues historian Donald Wright. [356] Their successful efforts in professionalizing the writing of history in English Canada resulted in a flurry of textbook writing by historians intended for secondary schools, following the turn of the century

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[353] E.S. Symes and G.M. Wrong, *An English History* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1905), 17.
[354] George F.G. Stanley, "School Days! School Days," in Max Foran and Sheila S. Jameson, eds., *Citymakers* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, Chinook Country Chapter, 1987), 11.
[355] Wright, 46.
[356] Ibid., 47.

and up until the Great War.[357] Provincial authorities of education in Alberta supported professional historians' work at this time, claiming that it was they "who are best in a position in society to provide expert status to both teachers and students."[358] In classrooms, textbooks became the dominant voice whereby teachers recited facts from the books and students memorized them until the exam. This led one Alberta school inspector in 1915 to report that history instruction "loaded the pupils' memories with bald facts" recited from the textbook, leading to boredom among most students.[359]

History textbooks, authored largely by eastern Canadian historians, remained the singular authority for historical instruction in Alberta schools until the late 1920s. Students' adoption of the facts of history, which meant learning about British superiority and its innate ability to spawn material progress, would lead to what department officials in Alberta called "good character" and the "right ideals of citizenship." The good citizen was one that knew the facts of the British Empire and absorbed them consciously or unconsciously as their own, claimed J.J. Tilley, who authored training manuals for teachers prior to the war. For him, and early historians such as Wrong, "history abounds in examples of courage, patriotism, devotion to duty…in short all of those higher qualities which ennoble mankind." For Tilley, when the student properly considers these qualities, the mind will be led to form the correct judgments and will influence the character of the student.[360]

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[357] Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press), 10.
[358] Alberta Department of Education, Program of Studies, 1912, quoted in Ibid., 9.
[359] Alberta Department of Education, *Annual Report of the Alberta Department of Education*, 1907, 43.
[360] J.J. Tiley, ed., *Methods in Teaching* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Co., 1899), 243.

Ken Osborne, an expert on history and social studies curriculum in Canada, has pointed out that this passive view of citizenship training was typical of the pre-war textbooks used for history curriculum. He argues that "citizenship education at this time was seen in prophylactic terms, as a way of preventing the spread of political radicalism."[361] Alberta adopted Ontario's intellectual and political opinion that the bulwark against foreign influence and political radicalism was public education and that the active agent for establishing British loyalty and political harmony was history.[362] Inculcating British values among Canadian youth, including increasing numbers of Eastern European and American immigrants, would presumably ensure Canada's British heritage and political stability. It was not until the 1920s that Alberta exerted influence over curriculum design, challenging a national-imperial history curriculum deemed ill-suited to Alberta's shifting social and political climate.

After the First World War, the UFA/UFWA mobilized the rural populace in order to foster the growth of its social-political movement. History curriculum and the method by which it was passively taught were targeted as out-dated and ineffective for dealing with contemporary political and economic conditions particular to Alberta. For example, the UFA Committee on Education claimed that the economic crisis of the 1930s stemmed from the educational system of years past.[363] The passive nature of citizenship that had characterized the pre-war era, based on promoting British values, was replaced by active

[361] Ken Osborne, "Voices From the Past: Teaching History through Sources," *Canadian Social Studies*, 38, No. 1 (2003), 5.
[362] Ibid.
[363] *The U.F.A.*,"Report of the Committee," 10, No. 3 (1931): 22.

social and political service in one's community based on cooperative values moulded by the UFA/UFWA.

Citizenship Training after WWI

Historian Carl Berger argues that in the post-war atmosphere of reform, history itself was reformed to concentrate on the nature and origins of contemporary political and economic problems of the common man – the problems of the individual and not the British empire.[364] In 1921, the year the UFA took power, the Alberta Department of Education recognized the importance of revising formal school curriculum to respond to the economic and political challenges facing the province. The cataclysmic events of the First World War, interpreted by the UFA/UFWA as evidence of a world made hideous by competition, imperialism, and greed, spawned the idea among educationalists and textbook authors in Alberta that harmony, tolerance, and cooperation must be learned and fostered in formal school curriculum.[365] For UFA/UFWA leaders and educationalists alike, schools should no longer convince students of the material progress and harmony established by British civilization in Canada; rather, students were to be given the skills that would allow them to actively create political and economic stability. The pre-war narrative of progress, as it appeared in historical curriculum and textbooks authorized by Alberta's Department of Education, was challenged by UFA/UFWA leaders and teachers.

In 1921, the year the UFA took power, the Department of Education undertook an extensive public opinion survey regarding Alberta's school curriculum. Questionnaires

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[364] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900,* Sec. Ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 61.
[365] Rennie, 54.

were sent to a wide range of groups, such as the UFA and UFWA locals, women's institutes, the Teachers' Alliance, school boards, social clubs, and labor unions. The survey made apparent Albertans' desire that education should "unite the public in a commitment to community service and social improvement… and should create a sense of group consciousness.[366]

This survey formed the basis for a major curriculum revision for the entire program of study for Alberta curriculum in 1922, as discussed in chapter two. But it is worth emphasizing again the electric atmosphere that surrounded this reform project, an atmosphere scholar Margaret Ayelsworth referred to as "spiritually charged."[367] Those involved in the project seemed to believe that the regeneration of the world was at hand. Indeed, many teachers and curriculum writers appeared to support a concept of citizenship that had much in common with the understanding of Christian service that was such an integral part of the social gospel. Teacher W.B. Poaps captured this Christian service sentiment in an *ATA Magazine* article in which he reminded fellow teachers that they cared for children's souls, stressing that "the school should be a society with interests common to all, and it should promote, as no other agency can do, those altruistic virtues which are characteristic of a righteous people."[368] The Department of Education committee in charge of the revision took this advice to heart. In its final report it emphasized "the urgent need for citizenship training…among the children of Alberta."[369]

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[366] Margaret N. Ayelsworth, "A History of the High School Courses of Study for Alberta" (M.A. Thesis: University of Alberta, 1936.), 77.
[367] Ibid.
[368] W.B. Poaps, "The Teacher," *A.T.A. Magazine*, 2 (1921): 34.
[369] Alberta Department of Education, "Report of the General Committee on the Revision of the Elementary School Curriculum," 1921, Legislative Papers, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

The committee unanimously agreed, despite its diverse membership, that every effort must be made "to strengthen the school as a great agent for the development of virtuous self-reliant citizenship with right habits and right ideals."[370] Developing character through citizenship training was the ultimate purpose of schooling, and the committee recommended "using the material of the course in history for this purpose."[371]

Although social studies was not created by this 1921revision committee, a new citizenship course was devised and replaced history at the elementary grade levels by 1922. This course would provide opportunities for elementary students to practice the specific virtues of citizenship, defined as helpfulness, sympathy, tolerance, justice, and fair play.[372] The citizenship course objectives in grades I and II, as described by the Department of Education in 1922, were to "develop group consciousness."[373] It was the teacher's duty to "provide suitable work-like activities in the classroom as a medium through which the citizenship experience obtained by children naturally in family and play-groups will take form and meaning in accordance with what is implied in living as an adult member of present-day organized communities, social and political."[374] Students were to "cultivate experience in organization" by participating in "pupil-group" discussions, debates, and competitions or by organizing the school's Junior Red Cross or Junior Civics League activities.[375]

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[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Alberta Department of Education, Part I of the *Course of Studies for the Elementary Schools of Alberta, English and Citizenship* (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1922), 128.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid., 130.
[375] Ibid., 138.

When historical content was introduced into the citizenship course it was used only in so far as it could inform how to live cooperatively "in social groups."[376] For example, the citizenship course objectives stated that when studying the fur-trade era of explorers, traders, and missionaries, teachers must emphasize how these groups built trade relationships and communities in new lands. The Alberta Program of Studies for 1922 instructs that Indian tribes, families, classrooms, and rural towns were to be examined as specific examples of the benefits of group organization.[377] When incorporating historical content, teachers were directed to avoid the memorization of facts. Rather, students were to incorporate group activities alongside specific historical material that reinforced the benefits to be realized through cooperation.[378]

The writers of Alberta's citizenship course were highly educated teachers such as Fred McNally and Donalda Dickie. As discussed in the previous chapter, both graduated from leading centers of progressive education in the United States or Britain. In part, it was there that McNally and Dickie learned how classrooms could incorporate practical activities to unite the public in a commitment to community service and social improvement.[379] At the same time, these authors did not act on their own accord. They were enabled, in part, by a UFA government eager to bring Alberta's educational system in line with their own cooperative and democratic values.

Historian Jose Igurata's analysis of historical textbooks in Ontario includes those that were published in Alberta by Donalda Dickie. However, he makes little mention of the

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[376] Ibid
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.,140.
[379] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens*, 34.

differences between her books and those of earlier Ontarian authors. He acknowledges that Canadian history was depicted by Dickie in more positive terms, but suggests that her portrayal was not drastically different from the racial or Euro-centric judgments typical of earlier works.[380] To be sure, Dickie, like her predecessors, did not refrain from declaring the superiority of British institutions. For example, she describes "Democracy as clearly a British invention and believed that French Canadians would enjoy the progress and economic prosperity brought about by the conquest."[381] But Iguarta misses the significance of the cooperative and democratic ethos that underscores Dickie's re-imagining of Canada's past. This tendency by Dickie is overt, not subtle, and is a significant departure from earlier writers. Her reinterpretation of Canadian history includes the introduction of citizenship training, consistent with what the UFA/UFWA had implemented in various informal ways to build their movement. Dickie's interpretations also reveal a distinct Alberta bias, reflecting Alberta's shifting social and political environment. Alberta's curriculum writers implemented a formalized citizenship-training course based on social and political action deemed essential to the survival of the UFA/UFWA movement.

In over twenty textbooks, including the *Dent Series Canadian History Readers*, Dickie described cooperation as intrinsic to all Canadian ethnic groups, emphasizing that it is the duty of Canadians to ensure that they continue into the future. The Department of Education in Alberta echoed this objective, identifying the following as a key objective of the new citizenship course: "students must learn mutual understanding, tolerance and

[380] Igartua, 66
[381] Donalda Dickie, *The Great Adventure: An Illustrated History of Canada for Young Canadians* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1950), 12.

cooperation, as the unity and prosperity of our common country depend upon it."[382] The impulse to create unity throughout Canada was spurred on by fears over the division between French and English exposed by the war, motivating educators and historians alike to deal more kindly with French, English, and Aboriginal Canadians. Historian Carl Berger has identified the tendency among historians in the 1920s to establish a sense of unity and cooperation in their interpretations of Canadian history. Renowned Canadian historian, Arthur Lower, for example, worked to develop a sense of national community among Canadians, united by unspoken assumptions such as the stable bonds that unite a family.[383] Lower identifies cooperation as the most powerful motive for action among men from which the greatest benefits flow. Berger also notes that Lower's inclination towards cooperation and national unity prompted his interest in the League for Social Reconstruction and in the ideals of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a federal political party founded in Calgary in 1932 by prominent UFA/UFWA leaders such as William Irvine.[384] At the same time, historians such as Lower did not go as far as Dickie in suggesting that examples of cooperation in Canada's past should be a guiding principle for Canadian citizens in the future.

When Canada was Young, published in 1922, Dickie emphasizes commonalities between French and English Canadians, highlighting their unity in purpose in pursuing common social and economic objectives. For example, Dickie describes the life of early French settlers in Quebec as analogous to farmers in western Canada. Quebec settlers,

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[382] Alberta Department of Education, *Course of Studies for the Elementary Schools of Alberta: English and Citizenship*, 1922, 144.
[383] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing, 1900-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 112.
[384] Ibid., 112.

she claims, toiled through isolation and climactic hardships, as famers in the West had. Also, habitant homes in Quebec were of a similar condition and familiar to those in the West, explains Dickie. They contained families similar in size to those in every other part of the country, and just like the English Canadians, French Canadians took Sunday off for church. [385]

Dickie describes French habitants and English settlers as sharing common economic aims such as the fur trade and agriculture. She describes how the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company merged successfully and peacefully because of shared objectives to cooperatively develop the fur trade industry.[386] Dickie's romantic interpretation of Ukrainians, Chinese, Finns, and First Nations as inherently cooperative was less an historical revision of the past as it was a guide for action in the future. Dickie is emphatic throughout her textbooks that active cooperation between groups is a condition upon which social improvement for all can be realized. If cooperation was the animating principle of the UFA/UFWA, it was also the dominant theme in textbooks authored in Alberta for use in citizenship training classes.

Dickie also criticized historical events that lacked cooperation between groups. While her book, *The Great Adventure*, published in 1950,[387] was released after the period being examined in this section, it illustrates Dickie's tendency in her earlier works to emphasize cooperation as an historical truth that should be engendered by students. In this textbook, she argues that Aboriginals have not always been treated well and

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[385] Donalda Dickie, *When Canada Was Young* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1925), 101.
[386] Ibid., 101-104
[387] Dickie, *The Great Adventure,* 110.

identifies a lack of cooperation between government and First Nations as the primary cause. She criticizes the Canadian government's unilateral actions as unwise and maintains that they created "many difficulties and problems for Indians, problems which have not yet been met successfully."[388] Dickie also condemns the Canadian government's trial and execution of the Métis leader Louis Riel without consideration for Metis claims to cultural preservation.[389] In conjunction with her critical assessment, Dickie establishes a cooperative path forward between Aboriginal and Anglo-Canadians by citing examples of profitable cooperative action between these two groups. She describes how a woman from a Mohawk settlement in Ontario worked out an agreement with English settlers to prohibit alcohol in order to remedy what Mohawk women claimed was the degeneration of their men by the white man's drink. Dickie provides a vignette of a British settler, who corresponded with the Mohawk regarding their request and agreed to communicate with his government regarding prohibition, a request she claims was agreed to.[390]

Dickie also establishes parallels between Anglo-Canadian and Aboriginal forms of social and political organization. She claims that First Nations peoples have enjoyed "the products that flow from cooperation" and that most Aboriginal groups "did all things cooperatively and so had the comfort of company in hardship."[391] Dickie points out that "the natural products of the tribe's hunting ground belonged to all in common...the hunter shared his game with all."[392] Dickie also claims that the "Red Men were democratic."[393]

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[388] Ibid., 112.
[389] Ibid.,110.
[390] Ibid.,114.
[391] Ibid.,15.
[392] Ibid.
[393] Ibid.,13.

Each chose a leader, according to Dickie, "but the others followed him only when they thought his plan was good."[394] She states that tribes were governed by councils of leading men, drawing parallels with British concepts of responsible government.

Textbooks authorized for use in Alberta's citizenship course, but produced in Ontario, did not emphasize cooperation and common cultural pursuits among Canada's ethnic groups with the same frequency or emphasis as Dickie. For example, while W.L Grant's *The History of Canada For High Schools* showed a more sympathetic stance towards French Canadians and Aboriginals than texts produced before the war it still maintains a tone of condemnation. Grant suggests that blame for the Riel Rebellion should be distributed more evenly, but insists Riel was rash, vain, and deserving of his fate. Grant also acknowledges the contributions of French exploration, discovery, and culture in Canada, but reaffirms that British rule was fair and welcomed by most French Canadians.[395] Alberta's curriculum designers who devised Alberta's citizenship training course to replace history, and Dickie who reimagined Canadian history as inherently cooperative, were far more bold and explicit than writers in other provinces in adjusting curriculum and textbooks to reflect the shifting social and political climate of their province in the 1920s.

The Advent of Social Studies in 1935

Just as Alberta and Ontario drew selectively upon British history to instill the "right" ideals of citizenship before the war, so too did Alberta draw upon rosy and cooperative

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[394] Ibid, 17.
[395] W.L. Grant, *The History of Canada For High School* (London: William Heinemann, 1923), 27.

interpretations of Canadian history after the war. It was this spirited era of educational reform in Alberta's history that led to the introduction of social studies in 1935.

The new citizenship course that emerged in Alberta elementary schools in 1922, described as intrinsically cooperative, demanded that teachers promote activities that reinforced the values of cooperation in their classrooms and communities.[396] The tendency of history to be downgraded as secondary to the priority of training students in cooperative behavior was a phenomenon that accelerated in the 1930s, the years of the Great Depression. For example, in 1931 a UFA/UFWA Conference Convention agreed unanimously to pressure the Department of Education to introduce "a special course on cooperation … in schools, and requested that high school teachers be given "a better understanding of the principles underlying our experiment in democratic government, with a view to gaining a more sympathetic attitude on the part of teachers towards this effort."[397] The UFA/UFWA argued that school curriculum must "advance society towards a new form of social organization in which competition and individualism be replaced by the principles of equity, justice and social well-being."[398]

The Department of Education responded to UFA/UFWA's demands by producing social studies curriculum, which eventually replaced history at all grade levels in Alberta by 1937.[399] Curriculum writers and textbook authors such as H.C. Newland and W.D. McDougall echoed the appeals of the UFA/UFWA for a new course. McDougall

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[396] Alberta Department of Education, 1922, *Course of Studies for the Elementary Schools of Alberta, English and Citizenship*, 145.
[397] "UFA Annual Conference Resolutions," 1931. Premiers' Papers, File 170C, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
[398] "Resolutions of the Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Alberta," 1934. Premiers' Papers, File 170D, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
[399] Alberta Department of Education, *Program of Studies for Secondary Level*, 1937.

proclaimed that "in the midst of a world-wide depression and in a period when the war drums were again throbbing in Europe, it did not seem realistic to study the problems of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome."[400] And H.C. Newland, the supervisor of the committee that created social studies at the secondary level, concluded that "The present aura of despair caused by the depression required action in the present based on cooperative and democratic principles."[401]

Social studies curriculum embodied the citizenship training that emerged in Alberta curriculum during the 1922 school revision by subordinating a study of the past to the need for cultivating cooperative citizens in the present. To this end, social studies integrated individual subjects such as history, civics, and geography under the banner of social studies. The point was that learning the facts from various disciplines "must be integrated by a social purpose…and be ready for future" use than are isolated facts, argued Dickie in her teacher manual on progressive education, *The Enterprise in Theory and Practice,* which was the foundation for teaching social studies curriculum. Dickie claimed that subject matter is supplementary and secondary to the need for social training, which is intended to provide experience in living and working together cooperatively.[402]

The Enterprise in Theory and Practice, Dickie highlights the potential of schools to meet the aspirations of the UFA/UFWA movement to create politically active and

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[400] W.D. McDougall, *In and Out of the Classroom, 1914-1964*, unpublished manuscript in McDougall Papers, University of Alberta Archives.
[401] H.C. Newland quoted in "Teachers Told To Preach Democracy," *Education Bulletin* 16, (1941), Edmonton Public School Archive.
[402] Dickie, *The Enterprise in Theory and Practice* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1940), 12.

engaged citizens. The rural school, argues Dickie, is ideal for training in social adjustment.[403] For her, "the classroom is composed of various age groups, mental abilities and interests and tastes. Thus it produces the same elements and presents many of the same problems as those arising in adult groups."[404] She believed that an opportunity existed in classrooms for learning that dependence on each other is good for all, and she concluded that "the rural school classroom can be built into a close-knit model community in which each is loyal to all, a nucleus of cooperation."[405]

The Department of Education in Alberta agreed with Dickie regarding the use of the classroom as a training ground for moulding social behaviour. As of the mid-1920s, promotion to a higher-grade level was based on a "credit" system, whereby one credit equalled a certain amount of instructional time. This meant that students could no longer successfully complete courses by simply writing the departmental examination.[406] Students were required to be in the classroom for instruction. With the introduction of the credit system, students presumably experienced important cooperative learning activities to a greater extent than before. The newly devised credit system reinforced the importance of the classroom as an incubator for creating social change, and it was supported by the UFA/UFWA government and by textbook authors such as Donalda Dickie.

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[403] Ibid.
[404] Ibid.,14.
[405] Ibid., 274.
[406] John W. Chalmers, Schools in the Foothills Province: The Story of Public Education in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 464.

Social Studies Textbooks

It is interesting to note two key differences between social studies textbooks penned in Alberta versus those published in the United States or Ontario. For example, in *The History of Canada for High Schools,* authored in Ontario, or R.O. Hughes' *The Making of Today's World*, the concept of cooperation is not employed with nearly the same frequency as it is in Alberta textbooks. In fact, when examining the index of these non-Alberta books, cooperation is cited only in the context of the League of Nations after the First World War. In Dickie's and McDougall's books, the term is cited in over 40 separate instances and almost always in association with Alberta's political and economic experience. Based on this experience, Alberta's version of cooperation is promoted as the basis upon which solutions to national and international conflict could be resolved.[407] Another distinguishing feature of Alberta textbooks versus those published in Ontario and the United States was the academic background of the authors. Alberta's social studies textbook authors, such as Dickie and McDougall, were, first and foremost, progressive educators and teachers in rural communities, not historians. They envisioned, as Dickie suggests, education as a tool for moulding social behaviour.[408] Eschewing their newly obtained professional status in 1935, they devised social studies curriculum and wrote textbooks with the goal of creating cooperative and democratic citizens. Highlighting the extent to which the populist agrarian notion of cooperation had been adopted by the professional educational establishment in Alberta, a 1936 *ATA Magazine*

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[407] See index of W.L. Grant, *The History of Canada*, George Brown*, Building the Canadian Nation* (Toronto: J.M. & Sons, 1942); Donalda Dickie, *When Canada Was Young and* W.D. McDougall and Gilbert Patterson, *The World of Today* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937).
[408] Dickie, *The Enterprise in Theory and Practice*, 121.

article claimed that "the accomplishment of educational engineering...[is] comparable in social importance to those great feats of mechanical engineering of which the present age is justly so proud."[409] The science of teaching was left to progressive educators, and their laboratory was the social studies classroom.

Textbooks published outside of Alberta and authored primarily by historians did not share the same enthusiasm for creating cooperative and democratic citizens as progressive educators demonstrated. They remained committed to traditional conventions of history. For example, R.O. Hughes, a professor of history in New York, writes in his preface to *The Making of Today's World* that history "gives to us an acquaintance with the past, enabling us to think about the problems of today."[410] Similarly, Canadian historian George Brown envisioned history as an endeavour of appreciation. The study of history, according to Brown, enables us to appreciate the progress Canada has made from the past up until the present. In Building *the Canadian Nation*, Brown claims that students must learn to appreciate the historical output of eminent Canadian historians, and he gives explicit examples of eminent historians, including Donald Creighton and W.L. Morton.[411] For Brown, history is not something that can be used for solving contemporary problems as social studies authors in Alberta envisioned. Rather, "history should be used to seek truth by discovering the facts of about events."[412] Alberta's social studies textbooks concerned themselves less with teaching the facts of history and more with the use of history to guide students towards active political service.

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[409] "Are Our Objectives in Education Valid?" *A.T.A. Magazine,* 13 (1933): 2.
[410] R.O. Hughes, *The Making of Today's World* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1944), 2.
[411] George Brown, 2.
[412] Ibid.

Because many social studies textbooks were written by Albertans, it should not be surprising that these texts made clear Alberta's particular political and economic grievances. For example, W.D. McDougall, together with a representative from the publisher Ryerson Press, Gilbert Patterson, present Alberta's regional complaints in a particularly provocative manner in *Our Empire and its Neighbors*. The book equates Canada's prairie provinces with the agricultural South of the United States before the Civil War.[413] The authors suggest that Canada's agricultural regions have been negatively affected by tariffs supporting industrial producers of the East, tariffs that have placed financial burdens upon Western farmers. The authors then ask students to consider, would "Canada be better off today if there had been no tariff barrier to trade between Canada and the United States during the past fifty years?"[414] Despite the supposedly open-ended question, the authors make Alberta's position on the issue abundantly clear. They claim that Eastern manufacturers pressured the Canadian government to place heavy customs on goods arriving from abroad, thus raising the price on products that were much needed by western farmers. The author states that the Canadian government could regulate prices on implements of production that were necessary for farmers, but had made no attempt to do so. McDougall and Patterson summarize this exploitative practice as the "economic imperialism of the East over the West," which has "caused a great deal of discontent throughout Alberta, but because the population of the province is

[413] W.D. McDougall and Gilbert Patterson, *Our Empire and its Neighbors* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), 236.
[414] Ibid.

small, it has not very many members in the Dominion Parliament, and the East continues to control the government."[415]

To overcome the eastern subjugation of the Alberta farmer, direct political action and economic cooperation were presented as the primary solutions for Albertans. For example, in *The World of Today*, McDougall and Patterson claim that "when the farmer feels he is being exploited, he always expresses his resentment in two distinct ways: by entering politics directly to control government, which will regulate business more in the interests of the producer, and by developing his own cooperative selling and buying organization." For example, the Alberta Wheat Pool (AWP), established in 1923, allowed farmers to pool their grain, sell it at opportune times, and share equally in the profits. The AWP would end the exploitation of farmers, they believed, by business and banking interests, who benefited most from high grain prices, leaving farmers with little to none of the profits.[416] Thus, farming cooperatives such as the AWP served to reduce the power of capital and elevated the role of farmers in the production, selling, and distribution of grain.[417] McDougall and Patterson clearly guide students to realize the benefits of cooperation, as they are asked to list the "beneficial changes… as a result of the farmer's political and economic movement."[418]

Alberta's textbook authors, like many UFA/UFWA leaders, were also willing to consider particularly radical measures to alleviate the economic woes plaguing the

[415] Ibid., 236-37.
[416] MacPherson, 35.
[417] Ibid.
[418] McDougall and Patterson, *The World of Today*, 147.

province during the Great Depression, as evidenced in the following statement. McDougall argues that:

> some people feel that the capitalist (competitive) system is out of date in this modern world, and should be modified or replaced entirely by a system better fitted to deal with the problems of today. Three of these plans are especially interesting: the Communist (as in Russia), the C.C.F. and Social Credit.[419]

The author asks students to "be careful in judging Russia, and consider which lessons Canada might learn from the Russian experience.[420] McDougall's consideration for various forms of state intervention leads directly into an endorsement for the efficacy of state involvement and a clear rejection of rugged individualism. He argues it is the duty of a society to provide support to those unemployed:

> But perhaps the commonest and most heart breaking of all the causes of poverty are lack of employment. There are few things more terrible than the situation of an honest, able-bodied, and hardworking man, with a family dependent on him, who cannot make a living because, through no fault of his own, he cannot find employment. To provide for such victims of misfortune and to try to prevent their misfortune is the plain duty of society.[421]

Donalda Dickie similarly supported government intervention based on a higher conception of politics, a belief influenced, in part, by the social gospel's commitment to social welfare. In her textbook *The Great Adventure*, she criticizes rugged individualism and competition between persons as regressive and refers specifically to Alberta's experience with cooperative forms of government, claiming that once "farmers and

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[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid., 321
[421] Ibid., 303.

churches who had quarrelled for centuries began to cooperate" society functioned for the betterment of the larger community.[422] She sites three political parties in Alberta that embodied this cooperative ethos that defined the political atmosphere of Alberta in the 1920s and 1930s: the UFA, The Social Credit, and the C.C.F., parties made up of people who believed that politics must assume greater responsibility for the welfare of Canadians and a better distribution of Canada's natural resources.[423]

In the Great Adventure, Dickie provides historical context to the roots of Alberta's flare for political and economic innovation relative to Eastern Canada. She claims that Western Canada developed its own unique social, political, and economic institutions, independent of those of Eastern Canada, because of European and American immigrants "who had no loyalty to nation or province, as was the case in Eastern Canada."[424] She argues that Western Canada is thus, much less province-minded than Eastern Canada, and, supports her claim by citing American-born Henry Wise Wood, who became the president of the UFA, and a founder of the Alberta Wheat Pool.[425] For Dickie the cooperative association of farmers, led by Wood, raised the prices of wheat that farmers laboured for, protecting the interests of farmers against corporate exploitation. Dickie then generalizes this cooperative experience of farmers in Alberta to society at large, claiming that "forming a cooperative society works much the same way as a wheat pool; its ultimate aim is raising the quality of life for all members."[426] Alberta's experiment in direct political action and economic cooperation served, according to Alberta authors, as

[422] Dickie, *The Great Adventure*, 393.
[423] Ibid., 404.
[424] Ibid., 394.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid.

an example of how political and economic problems of the inter-war years could be successfully addressed.

Alberta textbook writers' proclivity for expounding the virtues of cooperation led them to consider past enemies of Canada with tolerance. For example, in *The World Of Today,* McDougall and Patterson acknowledge that the First World War was the fault of all the Great Powers and not just one nation.[427] Furthermore, the authors claim that the harsh conditions of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1919 placed an unfair burden upon the German people. For these authors, tolerance and cooperation went hand in hand and were values necessary if international peace was to be maintained. For Donalda Dickie, students must learn the power of co-operation through activities in the classroom. The way to accomplish this, according to her, was that students must be provided with opportunities for experience in cooperation. To this end, teachers would facilitate discussion, student inquiry, and group projects that taught students how to cooperate with one another and improve the lot not only of the individual but also of the entire group. Furthermore, teachers helped students organize committee work and student councils as prescribed in the Alberta program of studies guide for Social Studies in 1935.[428] The goal was to develop in students those skills necessary for living cooperatively and peacefully with each other.

Alberta's social studies curriculum and related textbooks were criticized inside and outside of the province. For example, McDougall's sympathetic treatment of Germany

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[427] W.D. McDougall and Gilbert Patterson, *The World Of Today*, 242.
[428] Alberta Department of Education, "Program of Studies for Social Studies for the Primary Level" (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1935), 2.

and communist Russia resulted in public scrutiny. In the 1939 municipal election, independent candidate E.H. Starr held McDougall's book up as an example of the "propaganda being taught in Alberta schools under the title of social studies."[429] Other critics demanded the withdrawal of the text, *The World of Today*, because of its "leftist tendencies" and apparent justification for the Nazi regime, pointing to McDougall's assertion that "the harsh peace treaty of 1919 punished the Germans too severely."[430]

Although Alberta School Inspector H.C. Newland and W.D. McDougall defended *The World Of Today*, arguing that social studies must "raise controversial issues and it is the great value of education in a democratic society that such issues can be raised," the public and government pressure demanded the textbook be revised.[431] A committee was set up to revise their work, and not surprisingly McDougall was not invited to participate. The Committee concluded, "The text tended to disparage Canada's political and economic system too severely."[432]

Alberta's Department of Education appears to have reacted to mounting public criticism over Alberta's controversial curriculum and textbooks in the interwar years by using books published in the United States and Ontario that were indeed less sympathetic than McDougall's textbook regarding Germany. For example, in *The Making of Today's World*, R.O. Hughes assigns responsibility for the First World War to the Germans and her allies "who will never admit [that it was they] who were entirely responsible for

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[429] See "Nazi Propaganda in Alberta School Book?" *Calgary Herald*, November 15, 1939.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Letter of H.C. Newland to Jackson, Nov. 1939. Premiers Papers, File 740b, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
[432] Committee on Social Studies, December 2, 1939. Premiers Papers, File 740b, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

it."[433] It is interesting to note that after this criticism the Department of Education in Alberta significantly increased the number of textbooks authorized outside of the province, drawing heavily on those published in the United States. This decision may suggest an attempt by Alberta Education to temper public criticism of Alberta textbooks by providing alternative points of view from authors outside the province.[434]

Regional differences in school curriculum and textbooks also gained national attention though the Committee for the Study of Canadian History Textbooks of the Canada and Newfoundland Education Associations in 1943 and through a Senate debate on a National History Curriculum in 1944. Both the Committee and the Senate debate expressed concern about differences in content between textbooks authorized throughout the country, calling for a pan-Canadian curriculum that emphasized consistency in agreed-upon facts by leading national and professional historians. During the Federal Senate debate on history textbooks, a number of senators singled out school teachers for creating history that was "sometimes bad and sometimes false and created too many quarrels and too much friction."[435] The solution, according to Liberal Senator Athanese David, was to have professional historians oversee textbooks authorized for grade schools. It was only they, argued David, who could agree on the "truth of history" and avoid regional biases.[436] He continued, "Just as no one in his right mind would challenge the axioms of mathematics, so no one should be able to legitimately challenge history, at

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[433] R.O. Hughes, 736.
[434] See the University of Alberta's catalogue of "textbooks authorized for Alberta's social studies curriculum between 1935 and 1945" at: http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/content.php?pid=55342&sid=437258. (Accessed on June 21, 2012).
[435] Ken Osborne, "Voices From the Past," *Canadian Social Studies*, 36 (2002): 2.
[436] Ibid.

least at the level of established facts.[437] Criticism of David's motion came in a statement that asserted it "matters little what is contained in a textbook since the atmosphere and interpretation is derived from the classroom."[438] A teacher from Manitoba echoed this statement, claiming "it would be undesirable to prescribe one textbook for the nation given that modern teachers are getting away from the old idea that one text is the bible."[439]

Despite criticism directed at social studies and Alberta textbooks, these controversial statements capture the very essence of Alberta's social studies curriculum. Alberta teachers and curriculum writers were less concerned with historians' preoccupations with debating the nature of factual history and more with the potential of these facts to encourage active political citizenship based on cooperative values. As H.C. Newland claimed, teachers were not historians; they were "evangelists for democracy and social engineers."[440] As progressive educators, they possessed the scientific know-how and established provincial authority based on this knowledge to realize a higher social objective for education than historians articulated. In fact, social studies allowed teachers to emancipate themselves and their students from the paralyzing hold of history by using social studies to promote active social and political citizenship.

The aura of despair caused by WWI followed by the Depression required action in the present based on cooperation and democratic principles. Citizenship training, the driving force of social studies curriculum, provided students with skills for cooperation and

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[437] Ibid.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid.
[440] H.C. Newland quoted in "Teachers Told To Preach Democracy," *Education Bulletin*, 9 (1941): 2.

tolerance that could be used as the basis for social activism in the future. The importance of active citizenship and nurturing social responsibility among youth, as prescribed by the UFA/UFWA throughout their reign in the provincial Legislature, was fully realized by 1937. Social studies was implemented at all grade levels in Alberta's schools by this time.[441] Alberta's Department of Education emphatically stated in 1942 that "training for citizenship in a democracy, or in other words, training for social responsibility, is one of the most important, if not the most important objective, of the high school curriculum."[442]

Alberta's students were no longer led to a discovery of who they were through the veneration of British history; rather cooperation, as presented by the UFA/UFWA's social/political movement, textbook authors, and curriculum writers, would enable students to actively participate in social, political, and economic regeneration after the trauma of the First World War and into the Great Depression.

[441] W.D. McDougall, "Curriculum Builders in Alberta, 1902-1945", November 16, 1965, University of Alberta Archives, W.D. McDougall Papers. Accession No 69-29, 3/1-File 1, Box 4.
[442] Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1942, 14.

CONCLUSION

Alberta witnessed unprecedented social, political, and economic change during the 1920s and 1930s. The cataclysmic events of the First War followed by the Great Depression hastened what farmers saw as the wholesale degeneration of their rural environment and strengthened their sense of political alienation from established centers of power. Against this backdrop, school curriculum faced drastic changes. With the advent of social studies, active political citizenship replaced the passive nature of historical curriculum by 1935. Gone was a study of the past, or at least the memorization and regurgitation of gallons of imperial facts by students. Instead, students of social studies in Alberta were taught that active political citizenship was necessary for establishing a more cooperative, democratic, peaceful, and equitable future. Indeed, these principles were the pillars of organized farmers in Alberta. They were also seen as necessary for improving a political and economic order made hideous by war, greed, and competition.

The social gospel movement concerned itself with problems similar to those articulated by organized farmers, and both worked to apply Christian ethics to social, economic, and political issues.[443] The Christian principles of cooperation and democracy infused the UFA/UFWA movement and their educational initiatives, including their delivery of citizenship training by various formal and informal means. Through citizenship training, rural citizens learned that their political and Christian responsibilities were one and the same – to establish a cooperative ethos in society.

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[443] Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of Agrarian Revolt," in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 1992), 562.

Social studies is part of the legacy initiated by the UFA/UFWA. As I have shown, the principles of the farmers' movement, namely, cooperation and active political citizenship, were deeply embedded in the citizenship training delivered by farmers throughout rural communities. This training became an essential feature of social studies in the 1930s. At the same time, I have argued that social studies was not the invention of the UFA/UFWA alone and involved a larger cast of characters than has been accounted for by historians to date.

Rural teachers, mostly women, met the challenges of overcrowded school houses with practical and innovative approaches to curriculum and teaching methods. It has been central to my argument that their pragmatic innovations were consistent with what professionals would call progressive education years later. The professionalization of teaching involved the assertion of control over grassroots developments in education by professional educators who were eager to elevate their status in provincial bureaucracy, which was, significantly, male-dominated. And while male bureaucrats such as H.C. Newland oversaw committees responsible for developing social studies, much of the curriculum and textbook writing was left to prominent female educators such as Donalda Dickie and Olive Fisher.

I have argued that social studies emerged as the religio-political movement of the UFA/UFWA gained momentum and influence over Alberta education in the 1920s, as UFWA leaders and rural teachers pioneered innovative and practical approaches to teaching and learning, and as the professionalization of teaching ultimately formalized changes to curriculum in teaching in the 1930s.

Because of the close allegiance between organized farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, an examination of the conditions giving rise to social studies in Alberta may be similar to those in other provinces. The extent to which social studies was born out of similar circumstances throughout Canada would be an interesting line of inquiry to further pursue. Also, the Americanization of Canadian education should be further analyzed given the high proportion of early Canadian professional educators who attended leading American institutes of progressive education. And given that Alberta's program of studies for 1935 credits the state of Virginia as producing an early template for social studies in North America,[444] the American application of these same ideas should be compared and contrasted to the Canadian context to fully understand the conditions under which they emerged.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly to me as an avenue for further research, is examining how the advent of social studies coincided with the emergence of third parties in both provincial and federal politics in Canada. The United Farmers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario each adopted social studies around the same time frame,[445] and a major national party, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), composed of radical farm elements, emerged at the federal level (and would later become the NDP).[446] While neither the UFA nor the CCF exist as political parties any longer, their central tenants of cooperation and direct political challenge to Conservatives and

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[444] Alberta Department of Education, "Program of Studies", 1935.
[445] Lemisko Speer and Kurt Clausen, "Connections, Contrarieties, and Convolutions: Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform in Alberta and Ontario, 1930-1955," *Canadian Journal of Education,* 29, No.1 (2006): 1097.
[446] Robert Bothwell, Ian M. Drummond, John English, *Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 199-210.

Liberals continue to persist in political parties such as the New Democratic Party (NDP). In this way social studies might have strengthened support for third party ideals that continue to permeate Alberta society specifically and Canadian society in general. An important area of research remains to be completed as to the extent and effectiveness of this permeation.

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