

A USABLE PAST:
THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT'S USE OF HERITAGE DURING TIMES OF CELEBRATION

by

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DEDICATION PAGE

To my parents, who never let me quit.

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ABSTRACT

The creation of a founding myth during times of celebration enabled the Alberta government to use heritage for its contemporary agenda. Although the myth was intended to be unifying, various divisions emerged such as a hinterland/metropolis dichotomy and a north/south divide. Combining the pioneering heritage with culture, the provincial government recognized the juxtaposition of the two yet was content for it to remain. Examining postwar Alberta's use of the pioneer and his heritage, it becomes clear how important a myth can be to a government's political rhetoric.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The more tawdry a legacy, the more popular it is.”¹ I did not realize I had internalized archetypes of legacies about my home province, but it quickly became apparent upon my arrival at university – that is, a university in *another* province. Although I was thoroughly a city girl, I took pride in my cowboy boots, and my abilities to ride a horse and milk a cow. Why did I take on redneck, rural, hick attributes when I came from a cosmopolitan, well-educated family in a metropolitan area? Why did I embody and celebrate an archetype that had no relevance to my upbringing? What was it about Alberta that made me believe these stereotypes were representative of the province? These questions led me to discover how heritage has been used by the provincial government of Alberta to the extent that the stereotypes had permeated everyday society.

Moments of celebration such as historical milestones give governments opportunities to become actively involved in culture and heritage. This thesis examines three such moments in postwar Alberta – 1955, 1967, and 1980 – and finds that successive provincial governments actively promoted a version of heritage that complemented their respective political agendas. The Social Credit and Conservative governments of Premiers Ernest Manning and Peter Lougheed did not see culture in and of itself of value, nor even as a means to assert the province’s standing within the Canadian federation at a time when the balance of power within that federation was consistently questioned by the premiers. Instead they, like other provincial and federal governments of the postwar era, saw the jubilee and centennial years as requiring a new

¹ David Lowenthal, The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 89.

role for government in sponsoring cultural activities. But in Alberta, the provincial government saw this new expectation of the state as an opportunity to create a “face” for the province, and so appropriated a Western Canadian historical identity and aggressively used it as a rationale for their contemporary political persona. This suited the province’s politics, was fuelled by its economy, and was buttressed by its historical heritage – a heritage that successive provincial governments were actively involved in creating.

GO WEST YOUNG MAN

Alberta was born in 1905. Prior to the *Alberta Act* (S.C. 1905 c.3), what would become Alberta and Saskatchewan were part of the North West Territories. The creation of new provinces from federal territory brought with it more than new boundary lines. Sir Frederick Haultain, premier of the Territories from 1897 to 1905, opposed the two-party system in place in eastern Canada and preferred the system still in place in the Northwest Territories today whereby the premier and speaker are elected from the Assembly. Perhaps Haultain’s concerns were well-founded: the result of the party system has been unique to the province. Instead of electing governments for a few terms with healthily varied majorities, Albertans elect dynasties: only four parties have governed and never has a party returned to the premier’s office after being removed.

The final piece of true provincehood was granted to Alberta in 1930 when it was given control over its natural resources. Alberta was greatly affected by the Great Depression as the prairies turned into a dust bowl and bread lines stretched down the streets of its towns and cities but it soon prospered after the Second World War thanks, of course, to the remarkable growth of the oil and gas industry. Fuelled – literally – by this

economic confidence, Alberta would emerge by the 1960s as one of the most assertive of the new generation of provincial governments campaigning for provincial rights and a recalculation of Confederation. It is the period of this upswing in Alberta's economic and political fortunes that this thesis examines.

COWBOY STORIES

All thirty-one pounds of primary source materials used in this thesis come from the Alberta Provincial Archives. The sources are made up of various newspaper articles, meeting minutes, internal memos between bureaucrats and politicians, Orders in Council, press releases, letters, and official reports. To varying degrees, each year had similar compositions of primary sources although the volumes of each differed greatly. 1955 had a large and varied volume of sources whereas 1967 had strangely very few, considering it was the year the archives were built. 1980 had by far the greatest and the most diversified amount of primary sources. The relative lack of 1967 sources probably can be attributed to 1967 being a national celebration where many decisions were made in Ottawa and may not have been relayed to the province in an easily preserved manner. In contrast, 1955 and 1980 were distinctly provincial celebrations and therefore all of the documentation was created and remained in the province. The near trebling of sources from 1955 to 1980 signals a proliferation of bureaucratic communications and an increasingly formalized government archival policy. Whatever the cause, it has provided for a large number of finds that have been useful in researching this thesis.

The scope and source of the primary sources require their legitimacy to be questioned and a maintenance of a reserved analytical approach, as many of the sources

were created by the governments this thesis investigates. This is, of course, the purview and practice of the historian. Although official reports do admit certain faults and indicate some problems with the planning and execution of the celebrations, the overwhelmingly positive spin put on the primary sources, particularly final reports, makes it difficult to separate facts from propaganda. Also of note, in 1980 there was a larger assortment of newspaper articles included in the fonds. While 1967 included some articles, those selected and preserved were favourable to the government celebrations. In 1980, there were a number of archived articles that seem almost like a press release about an event reprinted in newspaper form, but there were others that were critical of the administration. This inclusion of critical materials demonstrates a maturity on both the part of the media and the government. That said, as this thesis shows, the creation of the provincial archives as a centennial project in 1967 has proven invaluable for consolidating a sense of provincial history.

There has been a forest worth of conjecture written about the idea of Canada. However, separating out Alberta's historiography from the larger entity is not a difficult task because there is not a large body of literature specifically with regards to Albertan history. Rather, the older histories tied Alberta to its region – the prairies. Most of the literature that does exist specifically on Alberta was published over a rather restricted time period. It appears that Alberta became academically interesting with the natural resource boom and accompanying political discontent of the 1980s into the late 1990s and early 2000s. This block of about twenty years produced a body of work focused on the political and economic issues facing Alberta. There was little actual history studied that was not used to buttress the political and economic focus.

The twenty years that advanced the interest in Alberta was characterized by a boom in the oil and gas industry and political discourse about the West wanting in.² The literature reflects the contemporary concerns of Alberta scholars. Mimicking the political concerns of the provincial government, the focus of scholarly work was on the province's contention with the central government and included a range of authors from former Member of Parliament David Kilgour to David Elton.³ One of the most prolific writers is political scientist Roger Gibbins. His works run the gambit from regionalism to western alienation to Alberta's place within Confederation, making his work invaluable to this thesis. Gibbins has also continued his contribution to the literature on Alberta through his tenure at the Canada West Foundation up to his retirement earlier this year.

Since this thesis is concerned with the politics of commemoration, it also looks to the literature in Canada's cultural history and theory. Two key works for this thesis have been Paul Litt's analysis of the Massey Commission and its effect on Canadian culture and Ryan Edwardson's survey of Canadian culture as it relates to questions of national identity in the latter part of the twentieth century.⁴ However there has been a shift from cultural history to cultural theory and studies. Frances Kaye's work is indicative of an approach to analyzing culture by examining the interaction between settler and

² Reform Party of Canada's slogan.

³ David Kilgour, Uneasy Patriots: Western Canadians in Confederation (Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 1988); David K. Elton, "Alberta and the Federal Government in Historical Perspective, 1905-1977," in Society and Politics in Alberta, ed. C. Caldarola, (Ontario: Methuen Publications, 1979).

⁴ Paul Litt, The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Ryan Edwardson, Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

indigenous groups, the environment, and institutionalism.⁵ Kaye's work examines how culture imported with settler society must adapt to the environment as well as to the indigenous population. Not only what culture will be created but how it is created must take into account the new environment the creators find themselves in. An important theme is now the two peoples (occident and orient) come together to create a unique culture. However it is not the history of culture nor cultural theory that provides the backbone to this thesis although they will play a part.

Instead, it is heritage and how it interacts with culture, politics, and economics that this thesis will examine. The pre-eminent scholar on heritage is David Lowenthal.⁶ His work examines the malleability with which heritage uses and appropriates history and the potential ends heritage can accomplish. Although he does not focus on Canadian heritage, his work is applicable to the country and Alberta specifically, and his definition of heritage will be used throughout this thesis.

This thesis will occupy the space between the three blocks of literature. Cultural endeavours supported the building of heritage which in turn buttressed the political and economic agenda of the provincial government. This thesis will look at the history of how these three spheres came together and interacted with each other. It will also provide an analysis of what choices the provincial governments made in order to further their contemporary agendas. This thesis is far more about the history of heritage-building; however, because of the available body of literature, the influences of culture

⁵ Frances Kaye, Hiding the Audience: Viewing Arts & Arts Institutions on the Prairies (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2003).

⁶ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade.

theory and political and economic science do colour both the literature used and the arguments made within the thesis.

The place of the prairies within the larger Canadian landscape has progressed through various theories. From American Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis of the 1890s to the "Laurentian School's" theories of continental trade and economic relations, the approach most appropriate to this thesis is W.L. Morton's hinterland/metropolis dichotomy. Morton's theory is that in Canada, a metropolitan economy with a political imperialism and cultural unity, disperses its culture and priorities throughout the hinterland.⁷ As J.M.S. Careless argued, the metropolitan theory does not only include the economic relation of the hinterland supplying resources and labour but extends to things like political organization, social patterns, traditions, expertise, technology, and cultural values.⁸ The traditional use of the metropolitan/hinterland theory is of the West as the hinterland to Central Canada's metropolis. This interpretation of the theory was resurrected during the economic and political tensions of the 1980s and was used, although not explicitly, by political economists in their arguments. This thesis recognizes that hinterlands can produce metropolises of their own and shrinks the theory's geographical reach into the province of Alberta.⁹ The metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary rely on their rural hinterland not only for economic reasons but also as the inspiration to create a founding myth.

⁷ W.L. Morton, "Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History," The University of Toronto Quarterly 15 (1946): 231.

⁸ J.M.S. Careless, "Metropolitan Reflections on 'Great Britain's Woodyard,'" Acadiensis 3 no.1 (1973): 107.

⁹ Ibid., 105.

TERMS

The term “pioneer” has a dual meaning that is important to this thesis. On one hand, the pioneer is, in the stereotype of popular North American culture, an oldtime settler of a bygone era representing a simpler time with upstanding morals and values. At the same time, the adjective “pioneering” is often applied to social or technological advancement. A theme throughout this thesis is how the duality of the pioneer is used – at once looking back to the past for a particular identity rooted in *historic* pioneer associations of individual morality and effort, while cultivating a *contemporary* and even forward-looking language of profiting from hi-tech achievements and proposed economic growth to be gained from technological innovation and resource exploration. Within Alberta, ‘pioneering’ has traces of both the past and the future and the provincial government is content to allow the two meanings to sit next to each other throughout the three commemorations examined.

The most influential document in the 20th century on culture in Canada is the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences.¹⁰ The Massey Commission was the first major, cross-country survey of the state of culture in Canada. The report from the Commission had far reaching effects as governments took action on the recommendations. But whereas the Massey Commission was a “spectacular moment of cultural articulation,” it was an articulation of a particular kind of culture.¹¹ T.S. Eliot argues that as society becomes more complex and differentiates, the

¹⁰ This Royal Commission is commonly referred to as the Massey Commission after the English co-chair of the Commission Vincent Massey,

¹¹ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 76.

emergence of several cultural levels can be expected.¹² This stratification of culture was identified by the Massey Commission and an outcome of the report was a desire to expose “a greater number of Canadians to a higher level of culture” as a means to “stimulate cultural self-improvement.”¹³ High culture, mostly identified as the arts, was to be applied for the “improvement of the human mind and spirit.”¹⁴ This elite idea of culture did trickle down to the Alberta government and can be seen throughout the celebrations examined. However, it is mixed with what Kaye calls regional culture – the combination of “[h]istory, landscape, climate, cultural heritage, and individual eccentricity.”¹⁵ Both the Manning and Lougheed governments subscribed to a small ‘c’ definition of culture: incorporating all kinds and levels of culture and the idea of culture without endorsing a specific theory of it. The bundling of these things together as a cultural embodiment that has a recognized history and constituency also comes with a recognized spokesman and carrier of the creed.¹⁶ The creed, and who carries it, is heritage.

As Lowenthal writes: “Heritage is not history, even when it mimics history. It uses historical traces and tells historical tales, but these tales and traces are stitched into fables that are open neither to critical analysis nor to comparative scrutiny.”¹⁷ Heritage

¹² T.S. Eliot, Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 25.

¹³ Litt, The Muses, 202.

¹⁴ Eliot, Notes, 21.

¹⁵ Kaye, Hiding the Audience, 259.

¹⁶ Roger Gibbins, “Western Alienation and the Alberta Political Culture,” in Society and Politics in Alberta, ed. C. Caldarola (Ontario: Methuen Publications, 1979), 145.

¹⁷ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade, 121.

takes memory and makes it an “interactive, interpretive process.”¹⁸ Instead of relying on rational proof as history does, heritage is built on revealed faith and moral zeal.¹⁹

Heritage is very selective in what it puts together: it “exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets... [it] thrives on ignorance and error.”²⁰ Although there are grains of truth to it, heritage is not history. Heritage is instead an imagined past that creates an imagined community.

The use of the past in this way is dictated by present or contemporary concerns.²¹ Heritage is moulded into what suits current needs. It is gauged by its current potency and is often refashioned over time to better reflect the self-serving myth needed at the time. Activists use heritage to affirm identities, claim legacies, celebrate collective bonds, and, perhaps most importantly to this thesis, traduce rivals.²² Heritage contributes to the creation of foundational myths by passing on ideas of origin and common purpose. The myth created by heritage enables a diverse populace to buy into a singular idea of identity and intention. The ideas and images of Alberta’s heritage established in 1955 and 1967 will be very important to the provincial government by 1980: thereby fulfilling the ultimate purpose of heritage.

TRAIL MAP

¹⁸ John R Gillis, “Remembering Memory: A Challenge for Public Historians in a Post-National Era,” in *The Public Historian*, 14 (1992): 99.

¹⁹ Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

²¹ David Lowenthal, “Roundtable: Responses to David Glassberg’s “Public History and the Study of Memory”,” *The Public Historian*, 19 (1997): 35.

²² *Ibid.*, 32.

The focus of this thesis was narrowed to times of celebration because anniversary years provide governments with “episodes in which state participation was not only acceptable but expected.”²³ The first celebration – Alberta’s Golden Jubilee in 1955 – occurred not long after the Great Depression and only a decade after the close of the Second World War. The province was beginning to experience exponential economic growth due to the oil and gas industry and the celebrations of 1955 reflected the capability of the government coffers. Much of the jubilee had a populist emphasis on the sod-busting pioneer of early settlement, and yet, the provincial government also supported more sophisticated or “Masseyite” culture by building Jubilee Auditoriums capable of hosting cultural offerings that “enriches the mind and refines the taste.”²⁴ Throughout the government-directed jubilee celebrations, the two kinds of culture, mass and class, sat next to each other but any incongruencies were ignored by the government. In addition to mixing levels of culture, regional divisions were created within the province. Here we see reference to Morton’s metropolitan/hinterland dichotomy. While the pioneer was imagined and situated in a rural setting, he was celebrated in the metropolis and the urban nature of the province was ignored. 1955 was the first opportunity in the postwar period for the Alberta government to make decisions about what aspects of the province were representative enough to be incorporated into the province’s heritage.

The second chapter is set in 1967 during Canada’s centennial celebrations. The Centennial was itself a confusion of national narrative and local initiative, of federal

²³ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 35-36.

²⁴ Albert A. Shea, *Culture in Canada: A Study of the Findings of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (1949-1951)* (Toronto: Associated Printers Limited, 1952), 13.

funding for local projects. Once again the Alberta government was given an opportunity to further build upon what was done during the Golden Jubilee. Ignoring the stratification of culture was repeated in 1967: a provincial museum and archives was built, yet the main national showcase of the province at the Montreal Expo featured the heritage narrative of the pioneer and his iteration as a cowboy. Sprinkled throughout the celebratory year are other instances of the Alberta government's heritage assertions about the province and the duality of pioneering. The divisions of 1955 were further entrenched during 1967. How Alberta celebrated Canada's centennial was reminiscent of 1955's celebrations. However, 1967 had a stronger heritage identity and program that was marketed to both the province and the nation.

The final chapter takes place during a celebratory year with an intense political and economic background. 1980 was Alberta's 75th anniversary and it was also the year of the National Energy Program – a federal grab for revenue of provincially-controlled natural resources. Constitutional discussions were also taking place during 1980 and much of the Alberta government's focus was on the place of provinces within the federation. Understandably, much of the government's attention was directed outside of the province; however, a celebration was organized and executed. 1980 lacked the colour and flair of the two previous celebrations and its organizers missed the opportunity to build a lasting institution. The divisions from 1955 and 1967 were still present during 1980 but were reversed. Of the three celebrations examined, 1980 is the odd one out: it did not follow the same narrative arc as 1955 or 1967. However, the groundwork laid in the previous anniversary years helped the provincial government in its political and

economic agendas. Building heritage was not as essential to the Alberta government in 1980 as it was in previous celebrations.

CONCLUSION

Commemorations provide governments the opportunity to engage with their citizens in a period of identity reification and to celebrate their existence.²⁵ By latching on to heritage as the main method of commemoration, governments signal “the blessings (and curses) that belong to and largely define a group.”²⁶ A foundational myth created through heritage gives an opportunity to unite people through a common understanding of their past.²⁷ When a government spends a great deal of taxpayer money, what it chooses to commemorate must be something that everyone can buy into. Often this reflects a trait of character or circumstance that is deemed to be peculiar to the celebrating people.²⁸ When a trait or circumstance is used to define and symbolize the values of a people, the people can unite behind that common myth.

This thesis will occupy the space between the old history of the region and political and economic science. It will update the metropolitan/hinterland theory to the point where the metropolises of Alberta are capable of challenging the metropolises of central Canada to be seen as equals instead of a hinterland. However, miniature replications of the theory are created within the province and remain in place. It will demonstrate the use of heritage through historical appropriation. Through the experience

²⁵ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 16.

²⁶ Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, 60.

²⁷ Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 106.

²⁸ Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, 4.

of Alberta, this thesis will show that using the past for present ends can facilitate the creation of a founding myth. This founding myth becomes a usable past.

CHAPTER 2: THE GOLDEN JUBILEE 1955

“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year... it shall be a jubilee unto you.”²⁹ This biblical edict to celebrate the fiftieth year was taken as the inspiration for Alberta’s Golden Jubilee in 1955. There was little precedent within Canada’s history for celebrating such a milestone but the Alberta government decided that a celebration was in order. However, questions arose: what should be celebrated? What was worthy of the government’s money and support? How would the elements chosen by the government provide an adequate celebration? Was there anything more to the Golden Jubilee than just a celebration of Alberta or a number of years? Reflecting back on 1955, what were the outcomes of the Golden Jubilee?

In fact, the Alberta government’s only motive in celebrating the Golden Jubilee was to provide a celebration of Alberta for Albertans. However, in doing so, the government did lay the foundation of a unifying myth. The government chose the pioneer as the focal point for the Golden Jubilee; the cult of the pioneer was woven throughout the celebrations. Although the pioneer myth was meant to be universal, the government created divisions of the archetype within the province to fit along north/south and metropolis/hinterland lines. Moreover the celebrations of 1955 prompted the government to become actively involved in creating a heritage and an identity for the province. This heritage would become increasingly useful as the province’s political and economic agenda transformed due to the oil boom of the postwar years. Initially

²⁹ Leviticus 25:10. Also the opening page of both the Alberta Golden Jubilee Book and the Anthology.

however, it was simply a celebration of Alberta's fifty years as a province and the pioneers who built it.

This chapter examines what the Alberta government did to create a heritage for the province during the Golden Jubilee. Beginning with the background of the political and economic conditions of Canada and Alberta in 1955 and the impetus for celebrations, the chapter will then delve into the main focus of those celebrations, the cult of the pioneer itself. The myth of the pioneer was recognized and romanticized throughout the Golden Jubilee, but the juxtaposition of the hinterland pioneer within a frontier environment against a high culture of the arts worthy of a modern metropolis was not reconciled in 1955. Although there was an attempt to construct a unifying myth, divisions within the province and its founding myth were also created.

BACKGROUND TO 1955

Postwar Canada took on a very different style of federalism. Instead of the classical federalism forced onto prewar Canada by the “wicked stepfathers of Confederation” in which the provincial and federal levels of government carried out their respective constitutionally assigned responsibilities, there was a move to cooperative federalism.³⁰ Donald Smiley described cooperative federalism as “consultations between provinces and the federal government prior to the latter committing itself to policies

³⁰ Referring to the Law Lords (particularly Viscount Haldane) of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council that often ruled for a strict interpretation of the division of powers sections of the Constitution Act 1867. Peter Hogg attributes this phrase to Eugene Forsey: Peter W Hogg, Constitutional Law of Canada, 20th ed. (Toronto: Carswell, 2010), 5-18; Donald V Smiley, “Constitutional Adaptation and Canadian Federalism Since 1945,” in Documents of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1963), 81.

directly affecting provincial interests.”³¹ After the Second World War, however, there was a demand within the Canadian population that the federal government become more involved in economic and social areas due to the federal government’s fiscal capabilities and a growing expectation of state services (the “welfare state”).³² As the federal government began to become more and more entangled in ostensibly provincial jurisdictions such as health care, the era of big government began.

Gibbins acknowledged this shift in federal government growth and its connection to the provinces, observing that prairie society’s socio-economic character fundamentally changed following the Second World War.³³ As the prairie regional economy diversified and the wheat economy declined, the shared economic community of the west as a region became unstitched and each province emerged from the region of the prairie west into provincial regions with distinctive economic profiles.³⁴ When the oil well at Leduc No. 1 blew in in 1947, Alberta’s economy was transformed in a period of growth which heralded ‘the new west.’ Although the three prairie provinces had “shared experiences, characteristics, and frustrations of an agrarian frontier,” postwar Canada changed so radically that “while contemporary prairie society has deeply embedded roots in the agrarian frontier of the past the resemblances between the two [were] becoming fewer and fewer.”³⁵ What would be the jubilee’s major theme – and Alberta’s founding myth – was quickly becoming an antiquated ideal that no longer existed in postwar Alberta.

³¹ Ibid., 82.

³² Ibid., 19

³³ Roger Gibbins, Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline (Toronto: Butterworth and Company, 1980), 115.

³⁴ Roger Gibbins, Conflict and Unity: An Introduction to Canadian Political Life (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1985), 83.

³⁵ Gibbins, Conflict and Unity, 83; Gibbins, Prairie Politics and Society, 65.

The government of Alberta during the Golden Jubilee was led by Ernest Manning of the Social Credit party. Social Credit came to power in 1935 by wiping out their predecessor – the United Farmers of Alberta. Social Credit was founded on a mixture of the economic philosophy developed by C.H. Douglas and conservative Christian values. The party was headed by William “Bible Bill” Aberhart until his death in 1943 after which Manning was chosen by the party to become premier.³⁶ The election held in June of 1955 saw Manning’s Social Credit lose 16 seats but maintain a majority within the legislature with 37 of the 61 seats. The opposition party consisted of 15 Liberals while the Progressive Conservatives held three seats. It is in this political climate, one of mass majority governments, that the jubilee was set.

Alberta’s fiftieth year as a province did not loom large in the consciousness of the Manning government. In fact, had Saskatchewan not started planning its own jubilee, Alberta would have been even less invested in the event. In addition to a difference in foresight, the twin provinces displayed differences in their organizational approaches. David Smith observed that Saskatchewan’s planning had been initiated from within a public agency and tended towards organized celebration, whereas Alberta’s response was marked by “indecision, shifting objectives and a desire to trim.”³⁷ The different organizational structures that emerged suggest that the two provincial governments approached grassroots engagement and public organization very differently. Whereas the provincial government in Saskatchewan reached out to communities, Alberta waited for localities to come to the Jubilee organizers who would then make the funding decisions.

³⁶ Legislative Assembly of Alberta Website – www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/PREMIERS/manning.htm

³⁷ David Smith, “Celebrations and History on the Prairies,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 no.3 (1982): 52.

This passive approach on the part of the Alberta government, Smith argued, led to a disjointed planning process in Alberta.

Historians, though, disagree on the extent to which the decentralization of the Alberta approach was a lack of organization or the result of favouring bottom-up, community-driven events. Smith argued in 1980 that Alberta planning “remained from first to last in the hands of the provincial executive” which led to both a lack of “popular sanction” of the Jubilee and limited creativity in its planning.³⁸ Nearly thirty years later, James Opp read the situation differently, suggesting that Alberta expected local communities to participate in commemoration to whatever degree the communities decided.³⁹ These two interpretations reflect how disjointed the government’s planning actually was. Regardless, a celebration would not have occurred had Saskatchewan’s preparation not goaded Alberta into planning. It also appears from a review of the activities planned for 1955 that the Alberta Jubilee organizers had no single philosophy about public engagement in or state responsibility for heritage, or any real sense of its political significance in postwar Canada. The inconsistent and lackadaisical organization suggests that in 1955 the Manning government had no ulterior motive and made no conscious effort to use the Golden Jubilee as anything other than a particular celebration of fifty years of Alberta history.

The immediate post war years witnessed a rising concern about Canada’s culture. This concern was caused by the perceived need to offset American cultural dominance in

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

³⁹ James Opp, “Prairie Commemorations and the Nation: The Golden Jubilees of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1955,” in *Canada of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century*, ed. N. Hillmer and A. Chapnick, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 219.

an age of mass media.⁴⁰ The St Laurent government charged Vincent Massey with “investigating the federal government’s role in broadcasting, national cultural institutions, and patronage of the arts and scholarship.”⁴¹ The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences responded to fears of ‘lowbrow’ American culture with recommendations for more ‘highbrow’ arts and culture to cultivate an explicit cultural nationalism.⁴² The state was to spend money and support culture in an effort to cultivate an enhanced national identity. The Massey Commission opened the door to government interaction in culture that was extraordinarily influential on the federal government in the later twentieth century. Although the Massey Commission had reported only a few years prior to Alberta’s Jubilee, the effects of the report had already trickled down to the provincial level.

1955 prompted the Alberta government to become seriously involved in heritage for the first time since becoming a province. What emerged was the idea of presenting a universal heritage for all Albertans, one distinctly connected to place and specifically the rural west.⁴³ As Northrop Frye writes, it is not who you are, but where you are that matters in the creation of a foundational myth.⁴⁴ The government created and promoted a singular heritage using a celebratory event where state participation was expected and

⁴⁰ Paul Litt, “The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Canadian Cultural Nationalism,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 98 no.2 (1991): 379.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 377.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 381.

⁴³ B.Y. Card, “Perspectives on Rural Western Canada in the 1950s,” in *The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1984), 145.

⁴⁴ Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden* (Toronto: Anansi Press 1971).

acceptable.⁴⁵ In concentrating on this one theme in heritage, the government created a foundational myth for the province and its people. It is a foundational myth that still exists.

THE CULT OF THE PIONEER

The myth of the pioneer was the central focus in 1955. As Gibbins wrote, the “‘last best west’ had been crossed by the shadows of Depression and drought, and the image of the region held by residents and outsiders alike was never to be the same.”⁴⁶ It is this idea of surviving in a dry, harsh, rural landscape that permeates the pioneer myth. A.B. McKillop’s argument that an “old foundational myth” recounts a colony’s story of “triumphing over physical circumstance on its way to autonomy and maturity as a nation” is applicable to Alberta: Alberta had already gained autonomy when it became a province, by 1955 the worst of the physical circumstances of the prairie had been overcome.⁴⁷ The cultural maturation of the province began when the Manning government started to develop the myth of the pioneer to unite these stages of the province’s history. In 1955 the cult of the pioneer was exemplified by recognition of various demographic groups within the province, postal promotion, the *Anthology*, and travelling caravans.

Of the three main audiences targeted by the organizing committee – founders or the pioneers proper, schoolchildren, and First Nations – the founders of the province

⁴⁵ Ryan Edwardson, Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 35-6.

⁴⁶ Gibbins, Prairie Politics and Society, 85.

⁴⁷ A.B. McKillop, “Who Killed Canadian History? A View from the Trenches,” Canadian Historical Review 80 (1999): 295.

garnered the most government attention. The actual pioneers, those that had participated in breaking sod and lived through the Great Depression, were members of the golden age – a theme that threaded throughout 1955. This golden age fits with Calvino’s “rhetoric of nostalgia” as it “juxtaposes the past – a golden age of simplicity, comfort, harmony, stability, and epistemological and moral certainty” against the present.⁴⁸ By promoting the pioneer, Jubilee organizers sought to cement a collective myth of origin, one of hardworking people inheriting – indeed, making – a specific territory. It was a story that most ethnic groups in Alberta could relate to and served as a common denominator to all Albertans during the Jubilee. It must be noted that the indigenous population was markedly missing from the celebrations. It is instead a settler pioneer that features throughout 1955.⁴⁹

The distinct lack of indigenous Albertans is most likely due to one of two reasons or a combination of both. The first being that it was politically easy for the provincial government to dispense with mentioning Aboriginal peoples because they were a federal jurisdiction. The second is that the noble savage of the vanishing race did not accomplish heritage goals. Whatever the reason behind the Manning government’s exclusion of indigenous Albertans, it is a glaring omission.

⁴⁸ Peter Hodgins, “A Truly Comic History: Central Canadian Nationalism and the Politics of Memory,” *Civic Discourse and Cultural Politics in Canada: A Cacophony of Voices*, ed. SD Ferguson and LR Shade (London: Ablex Publishing, 2002), 253.

⁴⁹ The only real moment where First Nations peoples are included in the jubilee is the awarding of medallions. The same medallions were given to Aboriginals that were given to school children. Equating these two groups together demonstrates the attitude of governments towards Aboriginals. Noel Dyck argues this is part of the “Indian Problem” and the image of Aboriginal incapacity. Further, Dyck asserts that “it was unusual for Indians to be the object of public attention.” The golden jubilee takes place before Aboriginals began to assert themselves as a people with a right to sit at the table. Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian ‘Problem’* (St John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research Memorial University, 1991), 11.

Lowenthal asserts that “[d]iaspora are notably heritage hungry” and the Alberta government gave the various diaspora within the province one singular, unifying heritage: the pioneer appearing as a lone male.⁵⁰ In addition Edwardson argues that for cultural pursuits to appeal to a wider social base, the elite domination of culture creation and valuation needed to be removed.⁵¹ The pioneer is quintessentially not elite. Moreover, the pioneer suggests a universality that easily applied to all strata of settler society making it a relatable icon of identity as a collective experience of western settlement. The pioneer represented hard work, self-reliance, and a connection to the land. Because Alberta was young, the likelihood that any non-native member of the population had some connection to an actual pioneer was high, thereby giving the myth credibility and strength.

To recognize the contributions pioneers made to the province, the government presented illuminated scrolls to any ‘pioneers’ who had been living in Alberta in 1905. According to the Department of Economic Affairs, the scrolls were considered a “very worthy product and will long be treasured by Alberta’s senior citizens.”⁵² But this approach was also strangely private – mailing scrolls to individuals meant there was little public celebration of individual pioneers and, once applied for, they were delivered with a distinct lack of any form of ceremony. In some cases the scrolls did not make it to the intended pioneers.⁵³ Further, rustic arches welcoming tourists were planned (but

⁵⁰ Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, 9.

⁵¹ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 17.

⁵² “Department of Economic Affairs 1955 Year End Report,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.0180 p.10.

⁵³ “Letter from J.E. Plewes to Mr. Wm. Kovach, MLA,” October 26, 1955, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1973.21 Box 1. The letter shows that one scroll mailed to Vilbon

unfortunately did not materialize) while the Department of Highways established picnic sites to encourage exploration of the province.⁵⁴ The tourism efforts encouraged a wider range of people to experience the jubilee and, again, suited the government's preferred strategy of having individuals choose their form of participation. Municipalities also created local tributes with a tourist flavour: the Fort Macleod Tourist Information Bureau furnished rooms as they would have been in 1905 and 1955 and included mannequins dressed in both modern and historical Mounted Police uniforms.

Throughout 1955 there was a romanticization of the past demonstrated by the emphasis placed on the phrase 'Golden Years.' All Alberta government mail used specific Golden Jubilee 'slugs' which carried the message "1905-1955, Alberta Jubilee, 50 Golden Years." These slugs were used particularly on mail directed to out-of-province addresses.⁵⁵ A second emblem was approved by Order in Council: the regular Alberta crest and the wild rose sitting atop the words '50 Golden Years' and the dates 1905-1955. This emblem was used by the government on all Jubilee Committee publications and medallions presented to Aboriginals and school children. It also fuelled the creation of collectable souvenir items.⁵⁶

Perhaps the best demonstration of the quest to identify the settlement era as a golden age – and the limitations of that quest - was the *Anthology*. Proposed by the Edmonton Branch of the Canadian Authors Association, the Jubilee Committee took up the idea, and the result included works by more than one hundred Albertans. Within the

Dupuis had been returned to the Post Office marked "deceased." The administrator Plewes forwarded it on to the MLA for the area in hopes of a possible delivery.

⁵⁴ "Department of Economic Affairs Annual Report 1955," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.0180 p.12.

⁵⁵ "Alberta Golden Jubilee Book 1," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1974.202 p.26.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Anthology was a section dedicated to the ‘Golden Decade’ of breaking sod and settling the province. However, while the *Anthology* was one of the few projects initiated that “sought to unify and symbolize the province as a definable community” the *Anthology* reflected imported standards.⁵⁷ Celebrating the glorious past was difficult given the embryonic state of Alberta’s cultural facilities. Alberta lacked a publishing infrastructure and so not only was the *Anthology* published outside of the province, but the adjudication of what works to include was also done by outside cultural experts. The *Anthology* exemplified a colonial mentality that “art” could not yet be produced in Canada, let alone the Great Plains region.⁵⁸ In many ways the *Anthology* embodies both the concerns of cultural nationalists in mid-century and the new, however limited, efforts at state-funded cultural promotion that emerged as a result. In 1955 Alberta did not have the capability to produce a work such as the *Anthology* but that would change by the 75th anniversary of the province.

Perhaps the closest the Jubilee organizers came to ‘grassroots’ engagement or public outreach was the decision to kit out two caravans to tour the province in the summer of 1955. The caravans depicted life in Alberta in the early days of the province and included historic relics such as pioneer tools, artefacts, early photographs from the Ernest Brown collection, and they were capable of screening films. However, the Jubilee caravans differed slightly in content according to the area they were touring (that is to say, the southern caravan had a distinct cattle theme while the northern caravan focused

⁵⁷ Opp, “Prairie Commemorations,” 220.

⁵⁸ Kaye, *Hiding the Audience*, 255.

more on farming).⁵⁹ The divided circulation of the caravans enabled a wider outreach but having two different displays meant that the two halves of the province did not become familiar with each other.

The cult of the pioneer was created in 1955 as a means of providing a singular point in time to celebrate. The pioneer reflected settler society and demonstrated how much more work was needed to bring the cultural infrastructure up to a level where Alberta could begin producing culture of its own. But as the pioneer was a singular point in time, his persona was split in accordance with geography. This early division of the idea of the pioneer would have a greater impact as the years went.

JUXTAPOSITION OF PIONEER HERITAGE AND HIGH CULTURE

Although the government's focus on a popular, folksy heritage was paramount in 1955, two of the most expensive and influential investments built to celebrate the Golden Jubilee were, by contrast, quintessential pieces of high culture. As already discussed, the Massey Commission placed an emphasis on cultivating high culture as a means to protect Canadians against the scourge of mass produced or popular culture. This translated into a push by cultural intelligentsia for government support of high culture. The idea of state funding for cultural production had significant implications at the provincial level.

Premier Manning announced on May 4, 1954 that the government was considering making a gift in the form of auditoriums in Edmonton and Calgary to the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 58. Kaye notes the penchant for touring products within Alberta by splitting them into two geographic groups. This is especially constituent under the direction of the Extension Division of the University of Alberta in the 1930s.

sum of \$1,250,000 each.⁶⁰ The Auditoriums were designed in a heavy, modern architectural style. Brennan suggests that the Manning administration considered what ultimately became a nine million dollar project a “one-time only gesture” in terms of spending whereas the Massey Commission and its supporters advocated continued government support in cultural areas.⁶¹

Along with the artistic performance needs the Jubilee Auditoriums were built to fulfill, the organizing committee committed to making the Auditoriums as multi-functional as possible. This is demonstrated by the multiple ancillary rooms including additional display and exhibition space, modern television equipment, a small theatre, and a practice stage that various arts groups requested. In addition to functionality, aesthetic requirements, notably near-perfect acoustics, were paramount regardless of cost.⁶² The Jubilee Auditoriums were meant to be available to a wide variety of performers and audiences, to maximize use as well as to “foster and refine Albertans’ artistic taste.”⁶³ As a result, the facilities and the activities they hosted reflected a wide range of activities in which Albertans participated; by way of example, in October, the Southern Jubilee Auditorium bookings included a band concert, fashion show, the Calgary Philharmonic, a film showing and a motor show all in the main theatre.⁶⁴ The multipurpose versatility of the Auditoriums and the near tripling of the costs of their

⁶⁰ “Alberta Golden Jubilee Book 1,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1974.202 p.19.

⁶¹ Brain Brennan, *The Good Steward* (Red Deer: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008), 137-8.

⁶² “Alberta Golden Jubilee Auditoriums,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1971.0055 Box 1 p.4.

⁶³ Opp, “Prairie Commemorations,” 220.

⁶⁴ “Alberta Golden Jubilee Auditoriums,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1971.0055 Box 1 p.4.

construction was justified on the basis of mass, as it were, as well as class. For when the Jubilee Auditoriums were ready to be opened, they were dedicated to the pioneer:

He Found The City Built of Brick

Left It Built of Marble

Suetonius

*May this structure endure as a monument to the Alberta pioneer. In these stones is our tribute to those who formed our province. – Dedicated in the year 1955 – the fiftieth year of the Province of Alberta.*⁶⁵

It is clear that, as a lasting “memorial to the oldtimers of the province” the founding of the Auditoriums invoked the pioneer theme, thereby demonstrating how ubiquitous the theme had become.⁶⁶

Can the heritage of the pioneer be reconciled with high culture? There is an explicit juxtaposition here but it does not necessarily need to be reconciled nor did the Manning government attempt to reconcile it. The present cannot exist without the accomplishments of the past even if that past sits uncomfortably next to the present. The auditoriums – which remain the single greatest legacy of the 1955 Jubilee - signaled the unwillingness of the provincial government to fully endorse the Massey vision of culture, or more to the point, the paradox the Manning government faced in 1955. In the post-Massey era it would be reasonable to present Alberta as a sophisticated, urbane, and modern community; yet the province had already committed to a public identity of historic, rural, individualism in the cult of the pioneer.

DIVISION OF THE PROVINCE

⁶⁵ The dedication plaque on the North Jubilee Auditorium.

⁶⁶ Newspaper Article January 7, 1955. “Alberta Golden Jubilee Book 2,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1974.202

Although the theme of the pioneer was woven throughout 1955 as an attempt at creating a unified and unifying sense of heritage among settlers and their descendents, the shape of the jubilee did create divisions within the province, between the metropolis regions and their hinterlands. Further, a north/south division was carved into the province. The Golden Jubilee attempted to bring Albertans together with a founding myth but that myth had divisions within it that undermined a truly universal creation of the pioneer as founding myth.

The most obvious method by which the metropolis/hinterland dichotomy was endorsed was the construction of the Jubilee Auditoriums. Importing the metropolis/hinterland relationship from greater Canada was unintentional on the part of the Manning government but led to later repercussions in how future provincial governments approached the two urban centres and the surrounding rural hinterland. The focus on the urban centres was pragmatic: a larger portion of the population would have access to the facilities, and Calgary and Edmonton also had rudimentary cultural infrastructure on which to build.⁶⁷ The decision reinforced the urban/metropolitan tendencies gaining ground in government policy. The focus on building central, permanent facilities was bound to reinforce an urban/hinterland relationship by making Calgary and Edmonton the two necessary ‘destinations’ for arts events.

To the government’s credit, they were aware that the Jubilee Auditoriums created the perception of favouritism toward the two main urban centres. In an effort to rectify this, the organizing committee recommended changes to the per capita grants program.

⁶⁷ “Alberta Golden Jubilee Auditoriums,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1971.0055 Box 1 p.2. This report outlines that the City of Edmonton attempted to pass a money by-law to raise fund for a civic auditorium after being “hard-pressed by a public embarrassed at attending cultural functions in a building devoted primarily to the sale of livestock.”

The public servant in charge – Deputy Minister Moore – suggested that the per capita grants be doubled from twenty-five to fifty cents in an effort to quell rural discontent. Moore believed this would make up the difference in the cost of the auditoriums compared to the \$100,000 that was allocated to the rest of the province.⁶⁸ However, even with the increase of per capita grants, the fact that the two main cities in Alberta – supposedly frontier Alberta! – boasted performance facilities superior to those in other and bigger Canadian cities did not assuage the metropolitan/hinterland division being emphasized in the province.⁶⁹ Alberta was raising its cities to national levels but was importing metropolitan/hinterland tensions and assumptions into the province by doing so.

A second metropolitan/hinterland division became apparent during the week-long celebration in September to commemorate the Alberta Act of 1905. The events attended by dignitaries were concentrated in Edmonton and Calgary. Edmonton, being the capital city, made sense as the main site of celebration; however, locating all of the major commemorative events there still reinforced that the urban centre was valued more than the hinterland. The Inauguration Day ceremony demonstrated the original hinterland/metropolis dichotomy that the province emulated in 1955. The re-creation of Inauguration Day events from fifty years prior served to remind Albertans that the federal

⁶⁸ “Alberta Golden Jubilee Book 1,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1974.202 p.19. The cost of the Jubilee Auditoriums may have skyrocketed but the original price was \$1.25 million each.

⁶⁹ “Other and bigger Canadian cities still struggle along listening to symphony concerts in cold hockey arenas with poor acoustics, [while] Edmonton and Calgary suddenly find themselves with two magnificent and identical concert halls.” “Twin Halls That Oil Built,” Stephen Franklin and Louis Jacques. July 13, 1957, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1988.157 Box 1.

government had granted provincial status to a federal territory.⁷⁰ Even as Alberta celebrated fifty years of past achievement and pioneering effort, the “federal government maintained its role in defining the very act of inauguration.”⁷¹ The province, in turn, was positioned as subordinate within the larger context of federalism and not as an individual entity capable of commanding respect on its own. Although Alberta was creating metropolitan/hinterland divisions within the province at the same time as it constructed a unifying myth, Alberta was very much still the hinterland to Ottawa’s metropolis.

Another division that began in 1955 and would influence future celebrations is the east/west line bisecting the province just south of Edmonton. This is best demonstrated by the two caravans sent to the north and the south of the province to tour pioneer relics. Because the themes of the two caravans were different with distinct cowboy artefacts in the southern caravan and farming artefacts in the northern one, they instilled a different pioneer myth specific to each area. While the government was funding a unifying pioneer myth, what actually occurred were two slightly divergent manifestations of the pioneer myth. The different content of the two caravans was not meant to have a larger significance than simple reflection but this unintended consequence laid the foundation for a north/south division that would have greater significance in later celebrations.

CONCLUSION

⁷⁰ “Alberta Golden Jubilee Celebrations: Province of Alberta – City of Edmonton Official Program,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1973.21 Box 7 pp.3-4. The celebrations of 1905 were re-created or referenced in 1955. This included Vernon Barford who was in charge of music for both celebrations and presenting Anthologies to five original members of the North West Territories administration who continued on as the first civil servants of Alberta.

⁷¹ Opp, “Prairie Commemorations,” 225-227.

The Alberta government did achieve the goal of providing a celebration for Albertans of the fifty year of the province in 1955. It was the first major celebration and provided unprecedented opportunities to create a heritage identity for the province. Before 1955 Albertans had been preoccupied with the hardships of the Depression, war and readjustment to life in peacetime. The oil strike at Leduc had, literally, remade the province's foundations, but its implications were only beginning to be understood economically just as the Massey Commission's recommendations were only just beginning to influence state involvement in heritage. 1955 came on the cusp of great change in both the province and the country; however, a heritage frozen in time did not reflect the changing lives of Albertans.

A foundational myth was created through the Manning government's support of heritage during the Golden Jubilee. However, there was no conscious motive to the creation of this heritage beyond the need to honour something, anything, because 1955 was a milestone year. There was no long-term planning to any parts of the Golden Jubilee. The Auditoriums nicely fit the Masseyite concept of government involvement in the cultural sector, but there was no commitment to them beyond their construction. The government gave no thought to how a cultivated heritage could prove useful to the province's future agenda and rhetoric. A foundational myth was created in 1955 but its usefulness to Manning's government was undermined by different interpretations of it depending on the geography of the province and the government's lack of consciousness that the use of the myth could have in future endeavours. The pioneer may have built Alberta, but his most useful current function in 1955 was to give the descendants of pioneers and other immigrant Albertans a romanticized idea of their heritage.

The organizing committee prioritized provincial history, especially the pioneer, to emphasize a common (and unintentionally exclusively settler) heritage. While the government endowed the Jubilee Auditoriums and distinctly Albertan creations such as the *Anthology*, they were not the main focus of 1955. The concentration on the pioneer allowed for a collective reaffirmation of values and a unifying myth.⁷² Unfortunately, even while actively promoting the pioneer, the government failed to create a strong myth because it relied on localities to engage in the Golden Jubilee and it could not avoid divisions embodied within the pioneer myth. The pioneer was the unequivocal message of the Golden Jubilee, however, the myth did not achieve its full unifying function in 1955.

⁷² Smith, "Celebrations and History on the Prairies," 45.

CHAPTER 3: CANADA'S CENTENNIAL 1967

Canada's centennial marked a year of great celebration throughout the country. The celebration of Canada's 100th birthday had an obvious national focus, but in Alberta it echoed the Golden Jubilee celebrations that had taken place just over a decade before. But how were those pioneer myths from 1955 built upon in 1967? How did Alberta celebrate Canada? Was there a Canadian celebration in Alberta or an Albertan interpretation of Canada? Evaluating the centennial year, what were the outcomes of 1967? How did this national celebration compare to 1955's provincial celebration?

Essentially, the Canadian centennial in Alberta was a national anniversary celebrated on a provincial scale. Canada's centennial broke regional blocks into provinces laying the groundwork for future Alberta governments to appropriate the image and concept of 'the west' for their own uses. Alberta's centennial celebrations solidified the pioneer myth as a romanticized heritage created and exported by the government. However, the divisions within the province, begun in 1955, resulted in two pioneer myths – the farming Klondike pioneer of the north and the cowboy pioneer of the south. Centennial events within Alberta further emphasized this duality, as well as the hinterland/metropolis division of the province. 1967 was the provincial celebration of a national milestone in which Alberta's government continued to celebrate the pioneer while divisions within the province became more pronounced.

BACKGROUND TO 1967

By Canada's centennial the welfare state was well on its way to being firmly established. In contrast to the federal government's expanding powers, the various iterations of the country's highest court had played an active role in delineating the jurisdictions and therefore protecting provincial powers.⁷³ Even with the provinces agreeing to have the federal government encroach upon provincial jurisdiction by creating such programs as a national unemployment insurance program and Medicare, there were still very strict and contested divisions of power between the two levels of government although a new era of cooperative federalism was beginning. David Elton notes that the relative calm of the 1950s – with its emphasis on “nation-building” projects - would not be long-lived as “Alberta's discontent over increased Dominion government activity within areas of provincial jurisdiction... resulted in open confrontation between the two levels of government during the early 1960s.”⁷⁴ In addition, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was in the midst of proposing national bilingualism policies which, as Gibbins points out, “found an unsympathetic and at times hostile audience in the multicultural West, a reaction that was in large part symptomatic of a more general frustration that Ottawa's preoccupation with national unity problems stemming from Quebec pushed western concerns off the nation's political agenda.”⁷⁵ The decade of the 1960s witnessed increasingly defensive provincial governments asserting their agendas in the cultural as well as economic realms, while the federal

⁷³ Smiley, Donald V. The Federal Condition in Canada Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1987, 190. Gerald Baier, “The Courts, the Division of Powers, and Dispute Resolution,” in Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy ed. H Bakvis and G. Skogstad, 24.

⁷⁴ David K Elton, “Alberta and the Federal Government in Historical Perspective, 1905-1977,” Society and Politics in Alberta ed. C. Caldarola, 120.

⁷⁵ Roger Gibbins, Conflict and Unity, 103.

government was attempting to maintain an overarching vision of national(ist) sentiment. Canada's centennial provided the opportunity for the federal government to impose a sense of nationhood as the federal government attempted to overcome divisions in the face of regional and provincial power blocks.

Edwardson argues that 1967, and the years immediately surrounding it, was a "period of national reification" when Canadians celebrated their national existence through state-funded events.⁷⁶ Canadians engaged in issues of identity and nationhood.⁷⁷ However, there was a fundamental polarity to centennial celebrations because they were necessarily a celebration of a national event done on a local scale to thousands of different audiences. There was a search for national community and institutions that were "capable of dealing effectively with common problems and common purposes."⁷⁸ But this was undermined even by the federal initiative itself with its desire to promote regional diversity, community organizing, and permitting local communities to pursue their own purposes.⁷⁹ Ironically, the federal government's programs allowed events to undermine the national characteristic of the centennial and instead gave 1967 a distinctly provincial feel.

The construction of Canada's confederation was always along regional blocks. Peter Hogg writes that the "term 'region' has no precise meaning in Canadian political

⁷⁶ Ryan Edwardson, Canadian Content, 16.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ RA Young, Philippe Facuher, and Andre Blais, "The Concept of Province-Building: A Critique," Perspectives on Canadian Federalism, ed. RD Olling and MW Westmacott; Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1998, 151.

⁷⁹ Ibid. It is interesting to note that the term "province-building" was coined in a 1966 article by Black and Cairns. The 1960s was a decade of concerted efforts of province-building.

discourse, but the idea of region has been influential."⁸⁰ Regionalist governance has been entrenched in Canada in a variety of ways, from the composition of the Senate and the Supreme Court to J.A. MacDonald's National Policy of the 1870s and 1880s which had become a "watchword for Ottawa's heavy-handed governance" of the western hinterland.⁸¹ The federal policies that favoured the populous and industrializing central Canadian provinces were reflected in tariffs, transportation policies, and federal control of oil and gas.⁸² However, as P.A. Buckner argues, regionalism "ultimately begins with the proposition that geographic location - or sense of place - matters in shaping identities."⁸³ Western regionalism – a *sensibility* of belonging to a certain region - is based on a distinctive economic base of grain, wood, metals, oil, and gas. But it is the shaping of identity in a growing regionalist sentiment that Claire Campbell argues was articulated in academic, literary and political circles during the 1960s and 1970s.⁸⁴ However, critically, at this period the discussion of regionalism was being outpaced by the transformation of regional blocks to individual provincial blocks. In 1967, provinces were favoured over regions. 1967 marked the beginning of the progression from region to province as the influential sub-national power blocks within Canada. By 1988, Garth

⁸⁰ Hogg, Constitutional Law, 5-10. The regions in Canada up to this point in the country's history can generally be classed as Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, the West, and the North.

⁸¹ Claire Campbell, "'To Free Itself and Find Itself': Writing a History for the Prairie West," in National Plots: Historical Fiction and Changing Ideas of Canada, ed. A. Cabajsky and B.J. Grubisic, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010), 156.

⁸² Hogg, Constitutional Law, 4-36.

⁸³ P.A. Buckner, "Limited Identities' Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History," Acadiensis 30 no.1 (2000): 12.

⁸⁴ Campbell, "To Free Itself," 151.

Stevenson could write that "the only challenge to the supremacy of regionalism is provincialism."⁸⁵

More than a decade and a half had passed since the Massey Commission had reported on the state of arts, letters, and sciences in Canada. At the time of the Commission's report, Albert Shea noted that the Massey Commission was primarily concerned with what the national government could do to contribute to the "cultural unity and greatness of Canada."⁸⁶ The Liberal government of Lester Pearson heeded the Massey Commission's national call to arms during the centennial by funding culture and community projects to an unprecedented degree. However, as Litt writes, "the policy of extending federal cultural service was susceptible to the criticism that it was a form of authoritarianism which imposed centralist and elitist cultural norms upon popular preferences and distinctive local communities."⁸⁷ To the federal government's credit, the proposed centennial celebrations were in line with the Masseyite vision of national cultural unity, yet in a quintessentially federalist fashion: they imagined provincial governments participating in a national celebration program while encouraging localized participation. It was a decentralized approach from the central government that managed to diffuse the Masseyite ideals of the Commission's report – that is, state funding for culture and, ideally, the arts - while recognizing the constitutional limits of the federal government in this area of provincial jurisdiction.

⁸⁵ Garth Stevenson, "Canadian Regionalism in Continental Perspective," in Perspectives on Canadian Federalism, ed. RD Olling and MW Westmacott (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc, 1988), 122.

⁸⁶ Shea, Culture in Canada, 12.

⁸⁷ Paul Litt, The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 201.

The effects of the Massey Commission were also reflected in the changing structure of the Alberta government. The Cultural Activities Branch matured into the Cultural Development Branch in the early 1960s. Certain parts of the old Cultural Activities Branch such as the Film and Photographic Branch were moved to the Department of Industry and Development denoting the recognition that culture was becoming an industry to be exploited.⁸⁸ Specific to the centennial celebrations, a Museums Branch was added in 1962 and a Centennial Branch in 1964. The Alberta government, whether directly or indirectly, acknowledged culture as an industry with growing influence and restructured accordingly. The expanding bureaucracy for culture mirrored the co-existence of culture: on one hand recognizing there are culture endeavours worth subsidizing and on the other that certain aspects of culture can be profitable.

The federal government's willingness to collaborate with the provincial governments in the name of cultural support and in anticipation of the Centennial was best demonstrated by the Centennial Memorial Project and Alberta's Museum and Archive. That said, centennial commemorations also often exacerbated the metropolitan/hinterland dichotomy between Alberta's urban and rural localities. For example, contrast Edmonton's Museum and Archives – a project perfectly suited to the goals of the Massey Commission – with the unidentified flying object landing pad in St. Paul.⁸⁹ Not only did the urban area get the expensive institution supported by a separate,

⁸⁸ Leslie Latta-Guthrie, An Administrative History of the Government of Alberta 1950-2005, Edmonton: Provincial Archives of Alberta, 2006, 513.

⁸⁹ "Centennial Bulletin June 1967," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1967.0029 Box 2 pp. 4-5. St. Paul's flying saucer landing pad was officially opened by the Minister of National Defense on June 3, 1967. The pad featured a map of Canada made up of stones

unique funding program but it received an institution that met the lofty goals of the Masseyites. The rural areas, however, did not have the same access to funding, which may have inhibited building institutions on a similar scale. But because the localities were not tied to the specific funding, they were free to create whatever commemorations they chose. The urban areas, in contrast, were expected to build something worthy of the Masseyite ideal in the more esoteric sense and in “making a vital contribution to national unity.”⁹⁰ The metropolises in Alberta were expected to mirror the metropolises of the Canadian hinterland/metropolis dichotomy. Enforcing the Masseyite conception of national celebrations worked to reinforce the metropolis/hinterland trend that was developing in Alberta.

CURATING THE PIONEER

The federal government made a gift to each province in the form of the Centennial Memorial Projects (CMPs). The CMPs were developed to create a lasting province-wide memorial worth \$2.5 million each. The federal Centennial committee decided each project would be built in each province’s capital.⁹¹ A condition of the

from each province and was equipped with electronic sounds to attract visitors from outer space. The Minister noted that the landing pad “will stand as a monument to the imaginative people of St. Paul.”

⁹⁰ Shea, *Culture in Canada*, 17.

⁹¹ “Letter from John Fisher, National Centennial Commissioner to E.R. Hughes, Alberta Deputy Provincial Secretary,” April 23, 1963, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1971.276 Box 3 File 19. “Special ’67 Grant Studied By Ottawa” *Edmonton Journal*, December 27, 1963, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1971.231 Box 9.

A letter between John Fisher, the National Centennial Commissioner and E.R. Hughes, the Deputy Provincial Secretary of Alberta elaborates that in April of 1963 no “clear policy relating to the general grants outside the policy governing grants for local Centennial projects” had been articulated. While a December *Edmonton Journal* article

CMPs was that each province would match the federal funding in order to build “an important memorial of outstanding cultural value.”⁹² How the CMPs were structured allowed the federal government to appear to have fulfilled the Masseyite ideal while not impugning provincial jurisdiction: a singular federal program in the “nation-building spectacle” which nonetheless allowed for a distinct provincial focus in the autonomy given to each province to decide the nature of their CMPs.⁹³ Although the federal and provincial partners were equal in funding, the autonomy of the provinces was paramount. Such autonomy implied federal sanction of provinces as equal partners in Confederation. The CMPs also indicated the break down of regional blocks into provinces. What was seen by the federal government as nation-building in fact supported a fractured sense of the country as the provinces used the CMPs to their individual benefits rather than to the national benefit.

The Manning administration decided Alberta’s CMP would be a Museum and Archives.⁹⁴ The Museum and Archives was intended to “portray Alberta by collecting, preserving and exhibiting significant natural and historical items and providing educational services in order to create a greater awareness of Alberta’s heritage.”⁹⁵ It would feature exhibits such as Early Industry and Commerce, Exploration, Fur Trade and

confirmed that the federal government had “not yet committed itself definitely to the... additional grant.”

⁹² “1967 Centennial Branch Annual Report,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.150 p.2.

⁹³ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 116.

⁹⁴ Alberta’s twin province Saskatchewan had reversed the order of building commemorative institutions – in 1955 the Saskatchewan government built a provincial museum and in 1967 Saskatchewan’s CMP was an auditorium.

⁹⁵ “Confederation Memorial Project: Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, A Brief Review of Major Features,” September 15, 1966, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1967.29 34a p.1.

Settlement, Religious Life and Creative Activities, and Politics and Organizations in the Human History collections.⁹⁶ The collections sought to illustrate the entire range of life within the territory that became modern Alberta regardless of whether the province existed or not. It had a heritage category that was bigger than the province but this category was smaller than a full array of the past. The state of the art facilities signaled the Manning government's desire for the Museum and Archives to serve as an all encompassing educational tool as well as a means to preserve everything of a heritage nature within the geographical, if not temporal, boundaries of Alberta. Robyn Gillam argues that museums were "once systems for transmission of elite culture to the general population, many museums now reflect the culture of the communities they serve."⁹⁷ The Alberta Museum and Archives outwardly fit into the Masseyite ideals that the federal government promoted during 1967 by being a comprehensive educational institution filled with "Canadian content." However, the contents of the Museum reflected the pioneer heritage of the community it was built to serve: on the surface the Museum served Masseyite goals but because it was focused on the pioneer it actually served province-building goals.

ROMANTICIZING THE PIONEER

Just as the pioneer had been established as the central theme for Alberta's Jubilee year, he became further entrenched, promoted, and romanticized in 1967. Amidst a national presentation of the country's history and identity, Alberta chose to portray the

⁹⁶ "Preservation of Your Heritage," November 22, 1967, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1967.29 pp.1-3.

⁹⁷ Robyn Gillam, Chapter 4: "Museums in Canada from 1945-1993," Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public (Banff Centre Press, 2001), 82-3.

pioneer as its romantic ideal, finding “pioneer” qualities in the stoic fur trade and the bright wild west, as well as the settler of the agricultural prairie west – as had been emphasized in 1955. The Centennial Voyageur Canoe Pageant, for example, began in Alberta at Rocky Mountain House, presented as a tribute to the voyageurs and the fur trade that opened up the west to greater settlement. Here again, though, provincial agendas surfaced. Harkening back to well-known names in Canada’s nation building past was undermined by the fact that the canoe teams were divided along provincial and territorial lines and each team had the opportunity to showcase its territory during the many stops along the way to Montreal.

The gifts the Alberta canoe team presented to dignitaries en route emphasized the past while alluding to the future fitting with George Lyon’s double meaning of the pioneer as representing a bygone time period and “high tech achievement.”⁹⁸ The pioneer dichotomy is best demonstrated by bolo ties made from dinosaur bones. Not only do the bolo ties signal the geological age of the province but also the wealth the dinosaur bones had created beneath the province’s soil. The province of Alberta had been thriving from the revenue generated from extracting the oil and gas that had been created by the decomposition of dinosaur bones and, as will be seen later in this chapter, Alberta was about to witness one of the biggest booms in black gold with the opening of the oil sands. Not only did the bolo ties reference the age of the province and its large source of wealth, but the connection of the bolo tie to cowboys foreshadowed the cowboy city of Calgary’s connection to the oil patch.

⁹⁸ George Lyon, “‘Others Like Him’: The Alberta Pioneer in Popular Culture and Folk Poetry,” *Folklore Studies Association of Canada*, 15 no.1 (1993): 26.

In addition to the bolo ties and various other small gifts, the Alberta canoe team presented split cowhide scrolls cut in the shape of Alberta and a tartan-lined buffalo cape. The cowhide married the antiquity of scrolls with the explicit reference to Alberta's signature and historic source of wealth – the ranching industry – in a romanticized way. The buffalo cape illustrates Kaye's settler colonialism whereby "they suppressed Native peoples then appropriated their culture."⁹⁹ The Alberta government appropriated the buffalo and wedded it to British tartan in an attempt to portray the province as a happy marriage between the two cultures. However, the buffalo cape was a part of the larger issue in which the difficulties of the relationships between the two cultures is ignored while celebrating the era of Canadian history that brought the two cultures into conflict.

The Voyageur Canoe Pageant thus emphasized the heroic and territorial legacy of the fur trade while not recognizing the myriad of complicated issues inherent in exploration and economic colonialism. By appropriating symbols, Alberta's pageant organizers glossed over the historical realities of western settlement but created a heritage that enabled Albertans and Canadians to engage with the Voyageur Pageant in a celebratory manner. The multiple pasts that were used provided a mixed presentation of heritage. However the buffalo cape and the dinosaur bolo ties demonstrate the emphasis placed on the geological past while assuming a prosperous future that was key to creating Alberta's blend of heritage.

How did this translate into Alberta's presentation at Expo '67 (the international Exposition in Montreal, themed to "Man and his World")? The City of Calgary kicked off Alberta's showcase three days on October 6 with Calgary Day, a joint project

⁹⁹ Kaye, Hiding the Audience, 9.

between the city and the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede Limited. Not surprisingly, then, Calgary was shown primarily in association with its summer exhibition, ennobling the cowboy lifestyle. Chartered planes carried dignitaries including Mayor J.C. Leslie and Stampede president A.T. Baker along with the Calgary Stampede Queen and two Princesses; meanwhile dozens of citizens, horses, chuckwagons, saddles, stoves, stage-coaches, and other western paraphernalia including the official Calgary Stampede Parade Float, were shipped to Montreal by rail.¹⁰⁰ Calgary's organizers recreated traditional stampede events including White Hat ceremonies and a pancake breakfast in the Chateau Champlain served from the tailgates of chuckwagons.¹⁰¹ These two opening events served as a method for inducting Expo attendees into the cowboy myth. Not only did people eat like cowboys, they were given the quintessential cowboy attire – the cowboy hat. To further replicate the mythical cowboy lifestyle, a display of square dancers and aboriginal dancers before official Calgary Day ceremonies took place at Place des Nations. During the ceremonies, Calgary's mayor presented Commissioner-General Pierre Dupuy with mounted steer horns. Calgary Day also marked the opening of the Great Western Rodeo, a ten-day Expo show with \$70,000 in prizes.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ "Calgary Day at Expo" from Assistant Centennial Publicity Officer, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 p.1; Robert M Seiler and Tamara P Seiler, "Ceremonial Rhetoric and Civic Identity: The Case of the White Hat," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (2001): 32. Seiler and Seiler recount the incredibly similar Grey Cup celebration in 1948 that took over Toronto before the big game.

¹⁰¹ Seiler and Seiler, "Ceremonial Rhetoric," 30. The White Hat ceremony consists of presenting a white cowboy hat to visiting dignitaries as a sign of welcome to the City of Calgary. As Seiler and Seiler note, it serves as a unifying image that is "sufficiently resonant and inclusive for diverse individuals to accept, and even identity with."

¹⁰² "Calgary Day at Expo from Assistant Centennial Publicity Officer," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 p.2.

What Calgary brought to Expo is indicative of the southern Alberta variant of the pioneer myth that had been cultivated since 1955. Even though scholars have shown that large scale cowboy-ing was relatively peripheral to both the province's history and any "pioneer" experience (large-scale ranching ended in the first decade of the twentieth century, and few of the population practiced the occupation even for a relatively short time within the province's history), it was (and still is) immortalized by the Calgary Stampede.¹⁰³ Stampede events are grounded far more in entertainment than in an actual history specific to the province or city.¹⁰⁴ Stampede and its accompanying myth – a myth that implies the rancher is on par with the farmer in "pioneering" in Alberta - had been ingrained in the imagination of southern Albertans for over fifty years, and the city of Calgary, already invested in the event and the image, assumed responsibility for promoting that image in 1967.

Edmonton did not have one unifying theme to its Expo presentation, but it exemplified the province's philosophy in bringing both a colourful past and a statement of future wealth. Like Calgary and ranching, Edmonton chose a romanticized historical moment through which to present the city even though its factual claim or historical basis

¹⁰³ Seiler and Seiler, "Ceremonial Rhetoric," 31.

¹⁰⁴ Robert M. Seiler and Tamara P. Seiler, "The Social Construction of the Canadian Cowboy: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Posters, 1952-1972," Journal of Canadian Studies 33:3 (1998): 51-82; Lorain Lounsberry, "Wild West Shows and the Canadian West," in Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History ed. S. Evans, S. Carter, and B. Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 151. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was clearly about entertainment and not historical accuracy but the Wild West Show was eventually converted into the Mild West show although it maintained its entertainment value but again was not completely historically accurate.

was tenuous.¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the fact that Edmonton acted as little more than a supply stop for prospectors on their way to Yukon, the city had latched onto a narrative and theme of the Klondike Gold Rush and made it into a summer festival. Like Calgary, then, Edmonton brought its premiere summer festival to Expo 67. Klondike Days featured women in “gay nineties” outfits and “high-stepping hijinks [of] the Golden Garter dance hall girls.”¹⁰⁶ In addition to the showgirls and Klondike Kate (Edmonton’s answer to Calgary’s Stampede Queen), the celebration lent an air of a time gone by and the thrill of making it rich by panning for gold. Here again, then, we see the connection between a romantic and colourful past and the implication for Alberta’s present wealth. This latter would be even more apparent in the final staging of the province at Expo. Deborah Witwicki argues that Calgary had already claimed the image of “the West” which left only one direction for the compass needle to point: north.¹⁰⁷ Not only did Edmonton appropriate a distinctly northern history for its own ends, the northern theme was threaded throughout parts of the Edmonton Expo showcase.

As seen in 1955, Alberta’s oil wealth was increasing. The oil sands were just becoming productive in 1967 but the province had been benefiting from exponential growth in standard oil extraction for over two decades. Edmonton Day drew attention to the resources and industrial wealth of Alberta by characterizing the city as the “Gateway to the North” and the “Oil Capital of Canada.”¹⁰⁸ Caldwell Manufacturing of Edmonton supplied an \$85,000 oil well service rig towering seventy feet high. The servicing crew

¹⁰⁵ Ted Byfield, Alberta in the 20th Century: A Journalistic History of the Province in 12 Volumes (Edmonton: United Western Communications, 1998), 10:212.

¹⁰⁶ “Edmonton Day at Expo,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 File 2 p.1.

¹⁰⁷ Byfield, Alberta in the 20th Century, 10:212.

¹⁰⁸ “30 second Radio Ad Promotion,” 25 September, 1967, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 File 3.

of the rig was an atypical group – “a bevy of beautiful girls, clad in gold bikinis and gold hard hats.”¹⁰⁹ The oil rig and crew promoted an industry theme at Expo’s La Ronde amusement park throughout Edmonton’s time at Expo. The rig further served as an obvious symbol of Alberta’s growing wealth and signaled the beginning of the long shift west of Canada’s economy. Ironically, the two main cities could share in this message: Edmonton presented itself as the gateway to oil when Calgary would become the city of oil conglomerates’ headquarters. As the capital city, Edmonton was demonstrating to Canada that Alberta’s oil would play a very important role in the country’s economic future.

The final part of Edmonton’s Expo triumvirate was the presentation of a baby buffalo by the mayor of Edmonton to his Montreal counterpart. The exchange happened in a replica of Fort Edmonton and the buffalo had ties to signatories of the 1876 treaty.¹¹⁰ The symbolism of the buffalo was ironic. Once the lifeblood of the prairies, the buffalo had long been essentially extinct; losing control of traditional buffalo hunting grounds had been one of the main consequences of the Aboriginal peoples signing treaties. And yet, Edmonton gave a buffalo to the Montreal zoo as a way of bringing Aboriginal Peoples into the myth that the Expo showcase was reinforcing. The economic components of Edmonton Day at Expo represent the duality of the pioneer.¹¹¹ The

¹⁰⁹ “Press Release from Public Relations of the Edmonton Day at Expo Committee,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 File 3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* The woman who named the buffalo was the great-great-granddaughter of Mistawasis, the chief who signed the 1876 treaty on behalf of the northern Alberta Cree.

¹¹¹ Lyon, “‘Others Like Him’,” 26. George Lyon notes that pioneer has two meanings that are embodied in Alberta. On one hand it represents a time period, a type of settler to the province. On the other it signals “high tech achievement.”

representations of wealth, both the oil rig and the buffalo, demonstrate the riches the province has had to offer and continues to offer.

The farming pioneer of the northern half of Alberta from 1955 was not as visible in 1967. In addition to the pioneer of old, Edmonton brought the pioneer of the future with the oilrig. This meant that of the two cities, Calgary's pioneer figure was more clearly and consistently represented. Edmonton's pioneer myth was diluted and slightly confused, though the oilrig served as a greater political symbol of the province's advancement economically. As the Seilers argue, the "degree to which the tropes in this rhetoric are sufficiently resonant and inclusive for diverse individuals to accept... may well determine whether a community is able to achieve a balance between unity and diversity."¹¹² Sue Donaldson writes that myth's purpose is not to make direct statements about "the nature of reality" but to give "expression to deep and commonly held beliefs and ideals in a culture."¹¹³ Instead, the heritage that the cities' myths represent "lumps together all of the past, commingling epochs without regard to continuity or context."¹¹⁴ Heritage need only have a basis in history and still provide the foundation for a myth that enables a community to build collective pride and purpose.¹¹⁵ Alberta Days at Expo enabled the two major urban centres to colourfully showcase quasi-historical moments from their past within the general context of a pioneer myth while promoting to a national audience of potential tourists and investors their sense of confidence in their economic and political futures.

¹¹² Seiler and Seiler, "Ceremonial Rhetoric," 30.

¹¹³ Sue Donaldson, "Monumental and Other Purposes," Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology 15 (1983): 23.

¹¹⁴ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade, 137.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 248.

DIVISION OF THE PROVINCE

As in 1955, a north/south division of Alberta existed during Canada's centennial. At the outset of the planning stages in Alberta for the Centennial the structure of the planning committee solidified the separation of the province on a north/south boundary - as had also happened in 1955. This was also evident during the province's Expo days where the two major urban centres extended their idea of the pioneer out to their respective halves of the province. Once again, Edmonton and Calgary were the epicentres of the two halves.

In addition to the north/south division, there was a contradictory gender element between the two cities. The masculine cowboy of Calgary symbolized the hardness of the environment in the south in combination with the danger and excitement associated with the rodeo. Edmonton brought a more feminine persona to Expo with the emphasis on Klondike Kate, the dancing girls, and the female oilrig workers. The contrast between the two cities raises questions: was Alberta attempting to present the image of a united province through a marriage of the two genders or did it actually show a province divided along geographical and gender lines?¹¹⁶ Stampede and Klondike Days at Expo exposed an uncomfortable juxtaposition of contrasting Alberta cultures while ostensibly demonstrating a shared experience or set of values. The marriage of masculine south and

¹¹⁶ Catherine A Cavanaugh, "No Place for a Woman': Engendering Western Canadian Settlement," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 28 (1997): 498. Cavanaugh argues that the West was constructed as a manly space primarily for an eastern audience. As Calgary had taken the West as representative of the city it had taken on the masculine construction of the West as masculine.

feminine north presented Alberta at Expo as one unified province while at the same time enabling the many heritages within the province to be showcased.

The two major urban centres were the only features of the three Alberta days at Expo – the third day devoted to Alberta as a province featured a conglomerate of the two cities in a “Wild West Parade.”¹¹⁷ Even outside of the province, the metropolis/hinterland dichotomy was emphasized as no rural localities of Alberta were represented in Montreal. The hinterland/metropolis division that had begun in 1955 continued in 1967. However, instead of staying within the province the division was exported to the national stage.

Both the federal and provincial governments contributed to the urban/ rural divide. The federal government’s choice of using the capital city for the CMP favoured the metropolis and extended the greater Canadian hinterland division into each province. As a complement to the infrastructure of the CMP an extensive set of touring performances called Festival Canada was brought to Alberta throughout the centennial year. Max Foran points out that Alberta was the only province to avail itself of all of the available cultural opportunities of Festival Canada.¹¹⁸ However, most of Festival Canada’s offerings used the Jubilee Auditoriums and did not reach rural Alberta. The building of the Auditoriums in 1955 created a metropolis/hinterland division in the

¹¹⁷ “Expo 67 ‘The Day the East Was Won,’ Bill Bantey,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.333 File 3. Heralded as the largest parade in Montreal’s history, Alberta Day paraded horses, mule trains, stagecoaches, chuckwagons, cowgirls, and costumed dance-hall hussies.

¹¹⁸ Max Foran, “1967: Embracing the Future... at Arm’s Length,” in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, ed. M. Payne, D. Wetherell, and C. Cavanaugh (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2006), 616. Examples of Festival Canada acts include Twelfth Night and Inspector General from the Stratford Festival Company; W.O. Mitchell’s “Wild Rose”; the National Ballet Company’s Nutcracker Suite; and Anne of Green Gables.

province's cultural economy that mirrored its productive one; in 1967 the use of the facilities reinforced that division.

While the federal government's program enabled those in the metropolitan centres to be exposed to both a pan-national culture and cultures from abroad, this opportunity was not extended to rural Alberta.¹¹⁹ Instead, the Manning government recognized the rural dilemma of not having the facilities to host Festival Canada and created the Alberta Performing Arts Tour – a program mimicking its federal equivalent.¹²⁰ The performers and artistic organizers of the provincial tour were explicitly Albertan and demonstrated the maturation of the province's cultural sector. Yet in some ways this “parallel” program merely furthered the difference between the two main cities and the rural hinterland around them.

Divisions that were seen in 1955 were reinforced and expanded upon in 1967. The metropolis/hinterland division created a strong rural and urban divide. This division was further emphasized by the geographical division of the province into north and south halves with each of the two major cities at the centre. The province of Alberta was not presented as a unified territory again during the centennial. The pioneer myth of 1955 had diverged further along these divisions.

CONCLUSION

¹¹⁹ Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.311 Box 1 File 2. Festival Canada's international offerings included the Roland Petit Ballet from Paris; the New York Philharmonic; and Sir Laurence Olivier performing a number of times.

¹²⁰ “Alberta's Performing and Visual Arts Program to Celebrate Canada's Centennial,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968.332 Box 5 p.1.

The pioneer was not heavily emphasized by Alberta's centennial organizers during 1967; however, echoes of him were present in the Museum and Archives and the presentations made by Edmonton and Calgary at Expo. The concept of 'pioneer' offered a collective heritage to overcome the diverse and individual ethnic heritages of the people within the province – a heritage that was preserved by the provincial government in the Museum and Archives. The pioneer images used in 1967 reflected the domination by Alberta's two urban centres that "stressed stereotypical rural themes of a bygone era and glorified romance."¹²¹ The divided romanticized and ahistorical pioneer myth was reinforced throughout the centennial as Albertans used the "polysemic symbol of the pioneer to celebrate diversity alongside unity."¹²² Many centennial projects "encouraged an indulgent view of the past" and the pioneer myth representations were no exception.¹²³

In addition to the pioneer myth of the heritage of the province, 1967 served to demonstrate the dichotomy between the West as

a site of cultural and technological innovation, the land of promise and possibility, the land of the future; and the West as a paradise fit for "natural" man, forever lost to barbed wire and machinery, the land of the idealized past.¹²⁴

In addition, the Manning government flaunted the wealth that was filling the province's coffers. While 1955's pioneer was presented in the context of the Great Depression, 1967's pioneers were shown as belonging to a happier, carefree era which, while juxtaposed with the oil wealth, was in keeping with Foran's assertion of "Alberta's penchant for moving forward while standing still."¹²⁵ While Alberta was actually

¹²¹ Foran, "Embracing the Future," 615.

¹²² John R. Gillis, "Remembering Memory: A Challenge for Public Historians in a Post-National Era," *The Public Historian* 14 (1992): 96.

¹²³ Kaye, *Hiding the Audience*, 5; Foran, "Embracing the Future," 615.

¹²⁴ Seiler and Seiler, "Ceremonial Rhetoric," 34.

¹²⁵ Foran, "Embracing the Future," 613.

moving forward economically and technologically, the image and myth of Alberta was frozen in time although this time period had morphed from the hardy settler pioneer of 1955 to the wilder, carefree wild west pioneer.

The outcome of 1967 was a provincial divide further reinforced along a north/south as well as a rural/urban boundary. This is best demonstrated by the two pioneer myths that emerged during the centennial year. There was an emphasis on heritage preservation in 1967; however, this heritage was becoming more and more diverse. What had started in 1955 was built upon in 1967 and divisions were solidified. At a time of national reification, Alberta's pioneer myth reflected the divisions within the province and the heritage that had been celebrated in 1955 was commemorated in 1967. Alberta's provincial identity was in flux as the pioneer myth changed from celebration to celebration and the oil wealth of the province was increasingly promoted. Canada's centennial witnessed a change in Alberta's pioneer myth to reflect a stronger provincial heritage.

CHAPTER 4: ALBERTA'S 75th BIRTHDAY 1980

The province of Alberta celebrated its 75th birthday in 1980. But compared with the celebrations of 1955 and 1967, 1980 looked different. Did the pioneer myth of 1955 and 1967 carry on into 1980? As the resource revenues of the 1970s oil boom gushed into provincial coffers, did the Alberta government use this income to best previous celebrations? How, during a time of economic and political intergovernmental instabilities, did Alberta present itself? What outcomes did Alberta's 75th birthday have and how did this year compare to the two previously evaluated?

In fact, 1980 was a flashpoint between the Albertan and Canadian governments. The National Energy Program that targeted Alberta's booming oil economy resulted in lasting damage to the intergovernmental relationship. Yet at a time when we might expect that heritage to be even more assertively presented, the 75th milestone conspicuously lacked many features of or diverged from the more political elements of heritage found in the previous anniversaries. The pioneer was almost absent; no active myth-building occurred. In matters of funding celebration events, the hinterland was favoured over the metropolis reversing previous provincial divisions. Instead of celebrating Alberta, the government funded a Canadian encyclopaedia. Thus the context of this celebration is quite different than the previous two: a political fight over the economic engine of the province came to a head during the jubilee year while the constitutional debates were nearly finished. In a year when the Alberta government was aggressively asserting itself politically and economically at the national level, the government did not capitalize on the 75th or consolidate through new provincial celebrations a politically useful Albertan myth.

BACKGROUND TO 1980

One of Alberta's rare changes in governing party had occurred, almost a decade before the 75th anniversary. Peter Lougheed's Progressive Conservatives had ousted Ernest Manning's Social Credit government in 1971. During Lougheed's tenure, there had been a restructuring of government departments and several new departments were created. Two of these would be significant. One of them, the Department of Culture demonstrated recognition of the growth of government activity in this area; this was the department that would staff the year's celebrations.¹²⁶ The other, Energy and Natural Resources, was responsible for the administration and management of Alberta's energy resources, among other things.¹²⁷ By creating a separate department for this area, Lougheed signaled the importance of natural resources to the province – specifically, that oil was going to play a major role in the province's economy.

It is the windfall from oil that enabled the budget for 1980 to be so exorbitant.

Rumours swirled as to the size of the allocation to the 75th anniversary: the budget was

¹²⁶ "Alberta's 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Vol. I, Executive Summary," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1986.178 Box 1. A Special Cabinet Committee formed an interdepartmental committee to be known as the action committee. The action committee was chaired by the Department of Culture and included representatives from departments such as Social Services and Community Health, Education, Business Development and Tourism and Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, and Agriculture. Memorandum: Alberta's 75th Anniversary Celebrations, from James F Dinning, Acting Secretary to Cabinet Committees to Hon. H.A. Schmid, Minister of Government Services, also responsible for Culture dated October 27, 1978. The action committee's responsibilities were taken over by the 75th Anniversary Commission headed up by a Commissioner and hired staff outside of the government apparatus. The Commission was made up of the Special Cabinet Committee, the advisory committee, the action committee, a general manager, and three divisions: programs, publicity and communications, and administration. A full flow chart of the Commission's structure can be found as Appendix A to the Executive Summary.

¹²⁷ Latta-Guthrie, Administrative History, 121 and 183.

tabled by the Minister of Culture, Mary LeMessurier in the dying weeks of 1979. The rumours proved to be within a million dollars of the actual budget at approximately \$74 million, and included expenditures such as per capita grants, advertising, cultural programs, Homecoming 1980, and special ceremonies.¹²⁸ Paradoxically, a stated objective of the 75th anniversary was to facilitate a “program with a recommendation as to scope and quality, without detracting from the significance of the celebrations, nor is *overly extravagant*” (emphasis added).¹²⁹ Spending almost a million dollars for every year in Confederation does not lend itself to frugality; nor does doubling the budget of the federal government’s centennial spending in 1967 or spending twelve times that of Saskatchewan for the same anniversary.¹³⁰ According to Don Braid in the *Edmonton Journal*, the proposed budget allowed for \$37.50 to be spent for every Albertan.¹³¹ The size of the budget indicated that one thing the Lougheed government wanted to celebrate was the province’s wealth. Such an extravagant expenditure demonstrated both the province’s considerable expendable income and flaunted Alberta’s control over the resource.

At the same time, however, control over the resource was highly controversial.

1980 saw the zenith of years of energy wars between the Albertan and Canadian

¹²⁸ For the sake of simplicity and an easily readable number, the actual spent budget of \$73,897,759 will be round up to \$74 million. The final budget number is from “Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Volume I, Executive Summary,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1986.178 Box 1 p.11.

¹²⁹ “Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Volume I, Executive Summary,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1986.178 Box 1 p.2 and with similar wording in “75th Anniversary Action Committee: Recommendations and Considerations Relative to Three Alternatives for the 75th Anniversary Celebrations,” January 12, 1979, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1981.0416 p.2.

¹³⁰ “Birthday funding overblown – NDP” *Edmonton Journal*, 16 November 1979; “Alberta’s big bash may bring hangover,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 December 1979.

¹³¹ “Alberta’s big bash may bring hangover,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 December 1979.

governments. The OPEC oil crisis prompted the Trudeau federal government to artificially alter the domestic market through the National Energy Program (NEP). The legislative goal of the NEP was to “share the benefits of expansion in the energy industry among Canadians by increasing the federal share of oil and gas revenues and by establishing a uniform nation-wide price for petroleum and natural gas.”¹³² However, as the minister in charge of the program confessed, the “determinant factor was the fiscal imbalance between the provinces and the federal government... Our proposal was to increase Ottawa’s share appreciably, so that the share of the producing provinces would decline significantly and the industry’s share would decline somewhat.”¹³³ The federal tax imposed on a provincial resource was unprecedented.¹³⁴

Not surprisingly, scholars have focused much attention on the dramatic reach and impact of the NEP, and especially on the response it provoked from the western provinces and particularly Alberta. Smiley notes that there may never have been a point in Confederation’s history where the peripheries so effectively challenged the economic dominance of the centre and by extension challenged the national hinterland/metropolis dichotomy.¹³⁵ David Smith observes that, viewed from the prairies, the federal government was turning its gun and not its ear westward.¹³⁶ Gibbins accuses the Trudeau government as being “one of the opposing players” in the fight over the point at which a

¹³² Donald Smiley, The Federal Condition in Canada, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1987, 180.

¹³³ David Kilgour, Uneasy Patriots: Western Canadians in Confederation, Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 1988, 97-98.

¹³⁴ Byfield, Alberta in the 20th Century, 11:12-13.

¹³⁵ Smiley, The Federal Condition, 161.

¹³⁶ David E. Smith, “Western Politics and National Unity,” Canada and the Burden of Unity, ed. D.J. Bercuson, 142-168 Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1977, 143.

province's resources belong to all Canadians.¹³⁷ The reaction within Alberta to the NEP - which forced Alberta to sell its oil at less than half the world price with new taxes going to the federal government - was swift. The province's minister for Energy described the NEP as a "massive, discriminatory and direct attack on the resources owned by the people of Alberta," and Lougheed responded by slowly turning down the taps and slowing oil production until a resolution was agreed.¹³⁸ While the conflict lasted less than a year, its legacy has entered the provincial imagination to such an extent that the NEP has become part of the foundational political myth of the province.

While the energy wars were ramping up, a constitutional debate – in some ways a parallel debate over government jurisdiction - was coming to a close at the beginning of the decade. Trudeau's desire to patriate Canada's constitution provoked a reimagining of Canada's federation. A major part of the conversation was what place and power the provinces were to have in relation to each other and to Ottawa especially concerning constitutional amending formulas. The Lougheed government's position on this fundamental point reveals how the government of Alberta saw the province's position in relation to the rest of Canada. In a speech to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Lougheed made it clear that his version of federalism had moved from one based on region to one based on equal provinces.¹³⁹ Lougheed was adamant that any amending formula was to respect the principle of provincial equality and in fact it was the Alberta

¹³⁷ Roger Gibbins, "Political Change in the 'New West'," The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1984, 40. Trudeau asked when the resources of one province would belong to all Canadians during a campaign stop during the 1979 federal election: Byfield, Alberta in the 20th Century, 11:65.

¹³⁸ Byfield, Alberta in the 20th Century, 11:227.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 213-214.

government that originated the foundation for the finalized amending formula.¹⁴⁰ The idea of provincial equality within Confederation reflected the growing strength of provincial governments as the principal voices for regional interests.¹⁴¹ Even as Alberta was asserting provincial equality as paramount, however, it also readily wrapped “the broader Western Canadian region around provincial dreams and aspirations”: appropriating to itself the responsibility and authority for “the West,” so that to address Alberta’s place within Canada came to be seen, appropriately or not, as addressing the place of the West in Canada.¹⁴² At the same time as the Lougheed government was strongly advocating to eliminate region from constitutional structures to be replaced by equal provinces, region was still to play a role in the rhetoric employed by Alberta’s Progressive Conservatives.

THE DISAPPEARING PIONEER

During 1980 the Alberta government was fighting on both an economic and political front for what the government saw as the province’s rightful place in Confederation. These fights did trickle into the 75th anniversary celebrations, which differed significantly from similar earlier events. In both 1955 and 1967 there had been an overt and consistent connection to the pioneer, but in 1980, the pioneer all but disappeared, apart from its influence on some tourism advertising. The 75th was marked by a rural, grassroots populism that did not coalesce around a single image of the pioneer.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 247. The amending formula being the “7-50” formula of s.38 Constitution Act 1982.

¹⁴¹ Roger Gibbins, *Prairie Politics and Society*, 214.

¹⁴² Roger Gibbins, “The Rich Kid: Where does Alberta fit in the Canadian Family now?,” *Literary Review of Canada* 13, no.4 (2005): 4.

As in previous anniversaries, the government sponsored a Festival of Arts but the focus was changed. While the per capita grants program was again the main conduit for providing funding to localities, there was no provincial government funding specifically targeted to an institution along the lines of the Jubilee Auditoriums or the Museum and Archives.

The pioneer motif appeared only in the tourism aspect of the 75th anniversary. Stamp Around Alberta, the Department of Tourism's three year promotion culminating in 1980 with Homecoming 1980, had a return-to-the-pioneer theme. Stamp Around Alberta encouraged Albertans to visit attractions in fourteen tourism zones within the province. Homecoming 1980, which was to "provide a significant climax" to Stamp Around Alberta, sought to further the tourism reach by bringing in tourists from outside of the province.¹⁴³ The Tourism department asked Albertans to send in names of family and friends that then received an invitation from the Premier to "come home" during the anniversary year.¹⁴⁴ The Department generated 23,000 holiday passports and awarded 86,600 medallions with one in every three adults participating in stamping around Alberta.¹⁴⁵ Thus unlike 1967, when the province exported the pioneer myth, the goal in 1980 was to import people to return to the site of the pioneer homestead. The imagery was similar: the promotion material used was reminiscent of the cowboy lifestyle and fostered the myth that the Canadian West had yet to be fully settled and leave the century

¹⁴³ "A Tourism Proposal: Homecoming 1980, In Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Alberta, Executive Summary from Travel Alberta," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1981.0416 p.1.

¹⁴⁴ "Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Volume III, Book 3: Homecoming, Sports & Recreation, Education, Agriculture," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042 p.606.

¹⁴⁵ "Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Vol. III, Book 3," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042 pp.609, 668.

of settlement.¹⁴⁶ But the message was slightly different, because it emphasized inviting people *into* the frontier of potential and showcased Alberta as a place to be. The logotype was a covered wagon drawn by a galloping team meant to represent the eagerness of visitors coming to Alberta and to echo the high hopes of early settlers while the rays were supposed to lead the eye from the “storied past into a bright future.”¹⁴⁷ The promotional materials played on the mythical heritage of the province and on the dual meanings of the word pioneer – at once harkening back to an earlier time and pushing into the future.

But Homecoming 1980’s pioneer symbol was one of the only overtures to the pioneer as a part of the foundational myth. In the two previous anniversary years, the pioneer was predominantly featured: this trend did not continue in 1980. The pioneer myth had morphed into a focus on rural Alberta. The provincial government’s rural emphasis characterized the celebrations of 1980.

The rural ideal that was promulgated was a very vague thing. It was based on populism. Populism not only meant disavowing expert opinion but eschewing anything that could be considered urban and elite. What was considered urban and elite was anything that happened in the metropolises of central Canada particularly of the Masseyite persuasion. It played into the idea that what was good enough for the hinterland was good enough for the metropolises. This rural populism was in line with Lougheed’s political positions: what was good enough for hinterland Alberta was good enough for metropolis central Canada.

¹⁴⁶ “Alberta’s big bash may bring hangover,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 December 1979.

¹⁴⁷ “Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Vol. III, Book 3,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042 p.627.

The 75th Anniversary Commission did copy some programming from previous celebratory years, notably by funding the Festival of the Arts, under the Department of Culture's guidance. But the Lougheed government's emphasis on rural populism was the dominant force behind the structuring and targeting of many Department of Culture celebratory programs and it was reflected in the offerings.¹⁴⁸ There was a variety of offerings spanning from the Alberta Festival for Young People, to a play written by W.O. Mitchell, and to various visual arts exhibitions and musical offerings such as folk festivals, Stan Rogers concerts, and jazz festivals. The professional level of these projects on both the production and facilities sides demonstrate a maturation in both the state infrastructure for cultural production and the arts proper within Alberta since 1955. The populist philosophy of the Lougheed government was reinforced through the funding scheme, where professional arts organizations were given access to funds relative to the cost of production as reflected in the organization's annual budget.¹⁴⁹ The organizing department mounted an effort to ensure that the majority of those participating in the Festival of the Arts were Albertans.¹⁵⁰ This encouragement contravened a recommendation to "pick the best performing arts groups – and go outside the province to

¹⁴⁸ Blaik Kirby of the *Globe & Mail* reported that "Alberta tastes do not lean toward elitism" – "Alberta arts fest: pointe shoes among the cowboy boots," *Globe & Mail*, 21 June 1980. Whereas the leader of the Opposition Grant Notley charged that Albertans looked "like the Beverly Hillbillies of Canada." "Alberta's birthday celebration a 'flaunting of wealth': Notley," *Calgary Herald*, 1 February 1980.

¹⁴⁹ "Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Vol. II, Book 2," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042 Box 1 p.439.

¹⁵⁰ "Alberta 75 News Release," December 14, 1979, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042.

get some of them if you have to, for what we need is quality, and we can afford it.”¹⁵¹

The government’s ultimate concentration on home-grown talent signaled that the 75th anniversary would be a celebration of Alberta, for Albertans, by Albertans.¹⁵²

The same per capita grant system seen in both previous celebrations was used to enable localities to celebrate the milestone as determined at the local level. The rural focus of the provincial government was indicated by the \$20 per capita grant as a recognition that smaller communities may have difficulty staging a function or building a facility if the population size was insufficient.¹⁵³ A balancing act was once again maintained as the government raised the grant so that rural localities were given enough capital yet the urban municipalities did not feel short changed by receiving less than their rural counterparts. The projects that localities undertook in 1980 were very similar to those in 1955 and 1967: playgrounds, seniors’ complexes, recreation centres, etc. While the Lougheed administration ensured the smaller, rural localities had the needed funds to create something commemorative, the government did not provide, as had been done previously, for a large, centralized, institutional building. The reasoning, according to Minister LeMessurier, was that ‘centrepiece’ monuments were constructed in the two main cities and that the “province’s rural population had not had much access to

¹⁵¹ “The 75th Anniversary Commission, Letter from Dr. John Lunn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Historical Resources to Hon. Mary J. LeMessurier, Minister of Culture,” July 3, 1979, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1986.178 Box 3.

¹⁵² “Memorandum from John Reid to Colleen Mead,” October 16, 1980, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1983.175 Box 5. A memo from John Reid to Colleen Mead had the statistic that 81% of Festival of the Arts participants had been Albertans circled with “A double scotch!” handwritten in.

¹⁵³ “Memorandum: Alberta’s 75th Anniversary Celebrations, From James F. Dinning, Acting Secretary to Cabinet Committees to Hon. H.A. Schmid, Minister of Government Services, also responsible for Culture,” October 27, 1978, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1981.0416.

them.”¹⁵⁴ This was an explicit rejection of the earlier argument for the logistical advantages of nurturing culture in a metropolitan core in favour of a more ideological deference to the rural demographic. Ironically, whereas the Social Credit administration had spoken of the rural pioneer while building for the elite, the Progressive Conservatives ignored the pioneer, abandoned the two main urban areas, and clung to a rural populist ideal of the province.

DIVISION OF THE PROVINCE

The previous anniversaries imagined and perpetuated a division of the province and 1980 was no different. However, the predominant hinterland/metropolis dichotomy was reversed during Alberta’s 75th birthday; now the hinterland was revered and the metropolis nearly dismissed. Unlike 1955 and 1967 where there was a very distinct division between the north and south of the province, this division was not emphasized to the same extent in 1980.¹⁵⁵ The divisions of 1955 and 1967 had heritage building elements whereas the 75th anniversary in 1980 made no contribution to the division.

As has already been noted, the Lougheed government emphasized a ruralized populism. This insistence did not accord with census data: the 1971 census classified 73% of Alberta’s population as urban. Of that 73%, 55% lived in Edmonton and Calgary alone.¹⁵⁶ Twentieth-century Alberta had always trended towards urbanization, even in

¹⁵⁴ “Alberta cake-slicing blueprint coming,” Calgary Herald, 10 December 1979.

¹⁵⁵ One of the only examples of the north/south division in 1980 is the continuance of the circulating caravans: The Alberta Art Foundation Caravan featured works by Robert Carmichael, John K Esler, Doug Haynes, Illingworth Kerr, Luke Lindoe and others and travelled in specially designed trailers.

¹⁵⁶ Roger Gibbins, Prairie Politics, 68.

the early 1950s when 50% of the population was urban.¹⁵⁷ The urbanization was even reflected in the election of Peter Lougheed as premier: a “Harvard trained corporate lawyer from an old Alberta family, Lougheed represented the ‘new’ Alberta.”¹⁵⁸ Lougheed, according to David Breen, represented a break with the rural traditions of Social Credit and the emergence of a predominantly urban society with an aggressive outward look.¹⁵⁹ However, even though Lougheed was of the urban elite, Jack Masson argues that Lougheed was concerned about urbanization’s adverse effects. Lougheed established a caucus committee focused on decentralization of economic activity by encouraging government departments to decentralize to out-lying municipalities. This was to allay fears that Alberta’s small towns were dying while Edmonton and Calgary grew rapidly.¹⁶⁰ Lougheed’s focus on rural Alberta was threaded throughout the celebratory year.

While most Albertans had adopted an urban lifestyle not unlike that experienced in Toronto, there was a rapid loss of the regionally distinctive rural character.¹⁶¹ Even before the oil boom of the 1970s, Albertan governments had viewed the image of the province as a hinterland as a handicap to full maturation within Confederation. However, Lougheed’s government turned the supposed liability into an asset as the hinterland

¹⁵⁷ Peter J. Smith, “Urban Development Trends in the Prairie Provinces,” in The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1984), 134.

¹⁵⁸ David Breen, “A Peripheral Mentality: The Case of Alberta,” Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien 9 no.1 (1989): 17.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Jack Masson, “Provincial-Municipal Relations,” in Government and Politics in Alberta, ed. A. Tupper and R. Gibbins (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1992), 167-170.

¹⁶¹ Gibbins, Prairie Politics, 70.

became the focus of 1980's celebrations.¹⁶² The traditional hinterland/metropolis dichotomy that was imported from the national discourse into the province in 1955 and 1967 was reversed in 1980. A prime example of this reversal is the musical "Alberta" written especially for the 75th anniversary. There was supposed to be two versions of the show, one to tour smaller communities and one to play in the two metropolitan centres – not unlike the parallel between Festival Canada and the Alberta Performing Arts Tour in 1967. However, the urban show never happened in 1980 reversing previous trends of ensuring the urban areas received the premiere cultural offerings.¹⁶³ The Lougheed Progressive Conservatives seemed unconcerned with courting the two main urban centres – a direct reversal of the previous celebrations.

The idea that the Progressive Conservatives defeated Social Credit because of the socio-economic changes of urbanization and increasing geographical mobility and affluence was not reflected in the 75th celebrations, which seemed intent on rural audiences.¹⁶⁴ Ironically, while the 1955 and 1967 events *featured* the rural in their pioneer themes, the 1980 program did not emphasize the pioneer but was consumed with celebrating rural Alberta. As B.Y. Card observes, the rural west as a symbol system "tended to be non-functional for country and small community people, but of direct use to those in a dominant power relationship to those on the land."¹⁶⁵ What use did the Lougheed government have in ignoring the metropolitan centres and concentrating on the rural hinterland, or by hanging onto the idealized rural, dying west? As Royden Loewen

¹⁶² Kaye, *Hiding the Audience*, 260.

¹⁶³ "Alberta 75th Anniversary Celebrations Report, Vol. II Special Events Book 2," Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1984.0042 p.430.

¹⁶⁴ Gibbins, *Prairie Politics*, 137-138.

¹⁶⁵ B.Y. Card, "Rural Western Canada," 162.

argues, prairie historiography was quickly becoming obsessed with “decline.”¹⁶⁶ This flies in the face of the economic growth the province was experiencing.

Why did Lougheed and his government revel in the rural? Gibbins points out that the prairies were an economic and cultural frontier in the early part of the century but that, by Lougheed’s time, the frontier had been replaced by a “complex, multifaceted and predominantly urban society.”¹⁶⁷ He argues that, in this context, Lougheed’s rural focus was not only politically smart due to the gerrymandering of electoral districts giving the rural population a strong voice, but it harkened back to a “region of the mind, a nostalgic image of the beliefs and values of an earlier agrarian society.”¹⁶⁸ By helping Lougheed to win massive electoral victories in rural Alberta as well as in its major cities, the imagined idea of the Alberta frontier strengthened the Lougheed government in its external battles. In serving the government’s contemporary priorities, Lougheed’s emphasis on an idea of Alberta as a rural province was doing what heritage is meant to do.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA

Moving away from heritage and into the realm of subsidized culture, there was an echo of the *Anthology* from 1955 during the seventy-fifth anniversary that manifested itself in the *New Canadian Encyclopaedia*. In partnership with Mel Hurtig of Hurtig Publishers Ltd, the provincial Commission funded the creation of a comprehensive Canadian encyclopaedia that was to be of the highest quality and content. The budget of

¹⁶⁶ Royden Loewen, “On the Margin of In the Lead: Canadian Prairie Historiography,” *Agricultural History*, 33.

¹⁶⁷ Gibbins, *Prairie Politics*, 92.

¹⁶⁸ Roger Gibbins, “Western Alienation and the Alberta Political Culture,” in *Society and Politics in Alberta*, ed. C. Caldarola, (Ontario: Methuen Publications, 1979), 164.

four million dollars took up 5.4% of the total anniversary budget and enabled the *Encyclopaedia* to be distributed to every school, university, and library in Canada.¹⁶⁹ Negotiations were even undertaken to produce a French language edition for those schools and libraries in Quebec.¹⁷⁰ This anniversary project was met with warmth in some media and credited as the “only one good idea from the government” and the “BEST idea the Jubilee Committee has come up with so far.”¹⁷¹ However, there was criticism that a “filthy-rich province like Alberta” was not making a gift of the *Encyclopaedia* to those not able to access it through schools and libraries, and that it was scheduled to be completed four to five years after the jubilee.¹⁷²

The *Encyclopaedia* is significant for two reasons. The first is that it demonstrates the maturation of the province’s cultural infrastructure since 1955. With the Golden Jubilee *Anthology*, adjudication of the work and the production had to be sourced outside of the province; in contrast, the 75th anniversary *New Canadian Encyclopaedia* was produced within Alberta. This shows not just an expansion of cultural infrastructure within Alberta but a new confidence that the province could fund and in some sense assume responsibility for the writing of the *nation*’s story. This is a reversal of 1967, which was a Canadian celebration which allowed for an Albertan slant, while in 1980 the

¹⁶⁹ “Interim Report on the 75th Anniversary Celebrations Tabled by Hon. Mary J. LeMessurier, Chairman of the 75th Anniversary Cabinet Committee,” November 19, 1980, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1982.0066 Box 1 File 68.

¹⁷⁰ By publishing in French, the Alberta organizers showed a dedication to bilingualism – something that wasn’t demonstrated in the province when bilingualism became an official national policy or during the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission. The French edition may have been an overture to Quebec in a time of tense political relations between Quebec and the rest of the country during the separation referendum.

¹⁷¹ “Alberta’s big bash may bring hangover,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 December 1979; Frank Hutton, *Edmonton Journal*, 17 November 1979.

¹⁷² Frank Hutton, *Edmonton Journal*, 17 November 1979.

Albertan celebration was given a Canadian slant. It demonstrates that the Lougheed government considered Alberta able to contribute to the national collective culture in research, writing, publishing, and distribution. The *Encyclopaedia* was an opportunity to cement the heritage and myth-building of the province that had occurred in both 1955 and 1967. However, the 75th anniversary *Encyclopaedia* organizers rejected a purely Albertan agenda and focused instead on a project national in scope thereby skirting the political and economic issues that were the backdrop to 1980. The federal government may have argued that Alberta was only in it for itself however the *Encyclopaedia* directly contravenes such rhetoric. Further, it demonstrates that while Lougheed's government was not willing to compromise on Alberta's provincial powers, the federal government was wrong to describe the province as not caring about the country as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The celebration in 1980, while continuing some of the trends set during previous celebrations, differed in significant ways from the other two. While 1955 and 1967 provided a flamboyant pioneer myth, this was not perpetuated in 1980. Unlike the two previous years, Alberta's 75th anniversary did not even pretend to celebrate a heritage with little grounding in history. The pioneer was sprinkled throughout 1980 but he was not used to the same extent as previous celebrations for myth-building. 1980 saw a switch from the mythical, lively pioneer to a vague idea of a rural hinterland.

The withdrawal of the pioneer demonstrates that heritage creation is concerned primarily with contemporary needs – heritage is the “past manipulated for some present

aim.”¹⁷³ In 1980, the Alberta government was consumed with the external battles over control of its natural resources and constitutional issues. The symbolic construction of Alberta as the West during 1980 relied heavily on the myths already created in 1955 and 1967. Lougheed drew on the more aggressive aspects of the pioneer/cowboy in the “mythical masculine renewal” of the frontier in a manner that bolstered his political and economic confrontations.¹⁷⁴ In order to create a politically savvy, fighting identity, the lone male was a choice made by the Manning government that served Lougheed’s political and economic agenda. The idea of the pioneer was not actively developed during the 75th but aspects of him were used by Lougheed in the very way heritage is designed to be used.

The emphasis the provincial government placed on the rural hinterland reflected a change from the previous celebratory years as well. Instead of the Manning government’s focus on the two thriving cities bolstered by the pioneer of old, Lougheed’s government rejected the urban centres and the colourful pioneer. The hinterland/metropolis dichotomy that had been imported in 1955 still existed but the priority in funding was removed from the metropolis and replaced with the hinterland. Again, as in both 1955 and 1967, this division of the province was still actively encouraged by the provincial government but it was the mirror image in 1980.

1980 was the year of missed opportunities to develop and contribute to a founding myth. In the two previous milestone years the provincial government built infrastructure that left an indelible mark on the province. The budget for the 75th anniversary was record setting yet the Lougheed administration did not allocate any monies to make a

¹⁷³ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade, 102.

¹⁷⁴ Cavanaugh, “No Place For A Woman,” 499.

similar contribution to the provincial fabric as the Manning government did. Once again, during a year that should have built upon the provincial heritage of 1955 and 1967, the Lougheed government was lacking. Where the Lougheed government did make a lasting contribution was not in a provincially contained project; instead the provincial government funded the creation of a national encyclopaedia. The internal focus of the golden jubilee and Alberta's contribution to the national centennial did not have the same presence during Alberta's 75th anniversary. No cultural infrastructure that could maintain a legacy of the pioneer was built as had previously occurred and instead, the provincial government chose, in its high culture project to celebrate the national instead of the provincial.

While the pioneer and a strengthened heritage were not outcomes of the 75th anniversary there was one outcome that would have ramifications for decades to come. This outcome was not included in the Commission's 75th plans however successive Progressive Conservative governments have perpetuated it ever since. The main outcome of 1980 was a political myth that would enter the collective imagination of the province and shape the province's relations with the rest of Canada until the present day. The NEP's legacy would outlast everything from the 75th anniversary.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The rural West of the 1950s was created and maintained symbolically as a fiction during times of celebration.¹⁷⁵ This is true to an extent. In the 1950s it was the rustic pioneer that broke the sod and settled the province. By the late 1960s the cowboy had emerged on the (inter)national stage. Together these two characters represent the duality of pioneering: the pioneer himself looks back to a golden age of new territorial discovery and occupation, while the cowboy's masculine energy and location near the oil headquarters of Calgary suited the growing economy led by high tech development. The pioneer and the cowboy provide a relatable iteration of the founding myth of the province.

Heritage and commemorations go hand in hand as both reflect the historical values of the commemorators.¹⁷⁶ The Manning government was so successful at using heritage to provide a generalized founding myth that the Lougheed government did not need to further add to or substantially edit that myth but instead was able to use it to further its political and economic agenda. (Indeed, these have remained the preeminent symbols of Alberta in political discourse through to the present day.) The ultimate point of heritage is not that the "public should learn something but that they should *become* something."¹⁷⁷ By the time the political issues of 1980 arose, Lougheed was able to embody the persona of the founding myth and use it to his government's advantage.

¹⁷⁵ B.Y. Card, "Perspectives on Rural Western Canada," 162.

¹⁷⁶ Christina Cameron, "Commemoration: A Moving Target?" The Place of History: Commemorating Canada's Past, ed. T.H.B.Symons (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1997), 27.

¹⁷⁷ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade, 23.

Underneath the simple pioneer myth is a complex system of balance. The two kinds of pioneers – the farmer and the cowboy – represented two geographical sections of the province. This was as much for political strategy as for historical accuracy. Ensuring equal balance between Edmonton and Calgary meant both cities enjoyed large injections of funding for cultural advancements and built capital projects for the benefit of their citizens while shoring up the heritage myth such as dedicating the Jubilee Auditoriums to the pioneer. In addition, this balanced the two main urban areas against the hinterland that was in fact the source of inspiration for the founding myth. This balancing act, however, manifested as divisions within the province.

The two main divisions of hinterland/metropolis and the geographical north/south division are present in each celebration. Morton's theory of the metropolis using the hinterland for economic resources is expanded through the anniversary years to the metropolis expropriating the hinterland's heritage for its own use. Further, the two metropolises used their hinterlands to create two different pioneer myths. The north/south division enforced throughout the celebrations continues to this day: most notably through sports matches between Edmonton and Calgary teams, often deemed the 'battle of Alberta'; but also through the materials used to promote tourism in north and south and the rivalry between the two metropolises of government town and oil city.

It has been demonstrated that the attachment to a rural idea of the province that runs throughout the years examined, runs contrary to the demographics of Alberta. From the Golden Jubilee to the 75th anniversary, Alberta's population became increasingly urban. Lowenthal argues that rural life heritage is exalted because it is at risk if not

already lost.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, he asserts that what is chosen to be remembered is what is needed to be remembered to “preserve our individual and collective identities.”¹⁷⁹

Although Alberta’s population largely lived in urban areas, the provincial governments lauded the rural. Because of the simplistic pioneer myth, all Albertans regardless of demographic could identify and relate to the myth. Further, as has been examined, politically the provincial governments needed the rural population to maintain their grip on power.

In the twenty-first century Alberta is one of the most urban provinces in Canada. Thanks to modern technology such as the internet even the farm is less rural now than it was in 1955. However there are still holdovers of the rural lifestyle. The 100th anniversary of the Stampede was celebrated this year in all of its cowboy glory and remains one of the biggest stops on the political circuit. One only has to look at pictures of politicians wearing, with various degrees of comfort, cowboy hats to realize that the heritage created during the celebrations examined still has a hold on the province and plays an important role in the province’s politics. There is, however, an indication that the rural focus of the government is diminishing.

In the 2012 provincial election, the governing Progressive Conservatives won a majority of the seats but lost a number of rural seats in southern and central Alberta. This election signaled that a political party no longer needs to pander to rural interests to form government. As Dave Cournoyer observes, this shift may allow for a new,

¹⁷⁸ Lowenthal, Heritage Crusade, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Lowenthal, “Roundtable: Responses,” 34.

demographically relevant, urban agenda.¹⁸⁰ The rural ideal of Alberta is no longer relevant to the everyday lives of most Albertans, and it appears that it is no longer relevant to the politics of the province. Certainly at the 125 anniversary of the province cowboys will still be roping calves and eating pancakes. But what will be interesting is how much of the rural pioneer will still be celebrated.

¹⁸⁰ Dave Cournoyer, “Alison Redford and Her New Cabinet Could Lead a New Urban Agenda,” daveberta (blog), May 8 2012, <http://daveberta.ca/2012/05/alison-redford-cabinet-ministers/>

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