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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Shawna Lea Gandy for the Master of Arts in History were presented March 5, 2004, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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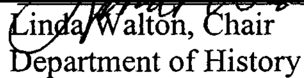

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Shawna Lea Gandy for the Master of Arts in History presented March 5, 2004.

Title: Fur Trade Daughters of the Oregon Country: Students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, 1850.

Ethnicity, religion, class, and gender are important elements in determining the cultural texture of a society. This study examines these components at an important juncture in the history of the Pacific Northwest through the lives of students enrolled in two girls' schools established by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDN) in the Willamette Valley in the 1840s. These girls, predominantly métis daughters of fur-trade settlers and their Indian wives, along with their Irish and Anglo-American classmates, represent the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of the region as the mixing that gave rise to the unique intermediary culture referred to as "fur-trade society" succumbed to American political and social domination. The primary interest of this study is the process of acculturation facilitated by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the effect of this acculturation on the métis students.

By using a sample of students drawn from the *1850 United States Federal Census of the Oregon Territory,* documents relating to the fur trade, Catholic missions,

and early settlement, and standard genealogical and biographical sources, this study compares the two SNDN schools through an analysis of their academic and cultural purposes and the ethnic lineage, socioeconomic class, and religious affiliation of their students. Furthermore, as a test of the success of their religious training and acculturation, this study examines the socioeconomic and ethnic characteristics of marriage partners and the students' religious affiliation as adults, and looks for evidence of a métis ethnic identity.

The resulting analysis uncovers a two-tier system of education that mirrored the bipartite social structure of the fur trade: the SNDN tailored the educational offerings at the two schools to serve the different needs of their discrete populations of settlers. Subsequent to their schooling, servant class métis girls most often retained paternal religious and ethnic ties, while officer class daughters showed less attachment to their Catholic religious roots and chose more ethnically diverse spouses. Finally, the exogamous marital patterns of both groups discount the presence of a strong métis ethnic identity.

FUR TRADE DAUGHTERS OF THE OREGON COUNTRY: STUDENTS OF THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR, 1850

by

SHAWNA LEA GANDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in
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I am grateful for the financial support of the Rose Tucker Charitable Trust, who sponsored me as a Rose Tucker Graduate Fellow at the Oregon Historical Society, and to the Portland State University Friends of History for a travel grant to visit the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Archives in Belmont, California in December 1998.

To my colleagues at the Oregon Historical Society, past and present, and the many archivists and librarians who helped me track down valuable information and sources, and bolstered me with their enthusiasm for this project, especially Sister Janet Egan of the California Province Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Heidi Senior of the University of Portland, Anne Morton of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Scott Langford of Fort Vancouver, and David Kigma of the Jesuit Oregon Province Archives at Gonzaga University, I owe a tremendous debt.

I have been slow to grasp the depth of my passion for history, and so my list of mentors is long. Professors Walter Lowry of the University of Puget Sound, the late George Downing of Seattle, and Dominique Agostini of Middlebury College and the University of Paris-St. Cloud all recognized the spark within me before I had the courage to abandon another course to claim it. Jane Schulenburg kindled my fascination with women religious and lavishly encouraged my scholarly pursuits while

sharing with me her novel and brilliant approach to women's history. An apprenticeship with M.-C. Cuthill transformed me into a student of Pacific Northwest history and inadvertently introduced me to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Without their excellent example, insight, and encouragement I would not be where I am today.

Finally, my husband, Steve Walton, with whom I share a love of world cultures, and *la francophonie,* encouraged a mid-life career change and cheerfully endured the consequences. His unfailing support and loving devotion has carried me through to the end of this project, despite the interference of our two major joint projects, sons Noah and James, who are the real reason this thesis took so long to write but who make its completion all the more worthwhile.

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who taught me that it is never too late to turn in a new direction.

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MAP 1: Fur-Trade Posts and Settlements

MAP 2: French Prairie Settlements and Missions

INTRODUCTION

Since the opening of the West to Euro-American exploitation, no time in Oregon's history has exhibited as much change as the 1840s and 1850s. This time of rapid American settlement and displacement of Native peoples sparked the creation and swift evolution of fundamental social and political institutions. Treaties resolved long-disputed national boundaries and the character of a new society emerged as Euro-American immigrants moved into the Willamette Valley between the Cascade and Coast Ranges in western Oregon. These new settlers displaced the original Native American inhabitants by dividing the land into a grid of private and "public" (but not communal) ownership. The Native population dwindled dramatically due to diseases introduced by European contact, and those remaining found themselves increasingly marginalized and secluded on land inadequate to support their traditional way of life. American settlers also soon overshadowed the diverse group of peoples brought to Oregon by the fur trade, who had maintained peaceful relations with the Indians in order to ensure continued commerce. Before covered wagons rolled over the Oregon Trail, a number of fur-traders had, in fact, already settled in the rich riverine land of the Willamette Valley and were raising families with their Native American or métis wives. The early settlers created social and economic institutions specific to their needs that would be altered by the settlement of American farmers and merchants.[1]

[1] *Métis* refers to people of mixed AmerIndian and White parentage. In the Pacific Northwest, it was also used to refer to a mixture of local Indian and Iroquois ("Iroquois Métis") or Hawaiian ("Hawaiian Métis"). To be discussed in further detail below.

Until the 1840s, the sole Euro-American enterprise in the Pacific Northwest was the fur trade and its related activities. The trade brought the first white men to the region and was the foundation for further commercial and agrarian development. The traders encountered a well-developed Indian trade network and quickly became a part of a complex web of social and economic relationships that pre-dated their presence in the area. Traders entered into dynamic Native social systems, conforming to them and altering them as needed. This included relationships as intimate and as economically important as marriage.

In the absence of white or métis women, traders enjoyed the company of local Indian women, forming casual relationships that eventually evolved into more formal arrangements referred to as "country marriages" or *mariage à la façon du pays.* Social relations between men and their female companions in the Pacific Northwest in the first half of the nineteenth century resembled those of other fur-trade frontiers: a trader's selection of a helpmate cemented economic relationships with local tribes. In turn, traders benefited from their female partners' knowledge of the land, its resources, its people and their languages, which facilitated their survival in a remote and

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John Unruh estimates that from 1840-60, 53,062 Americans journeyed overland to Oregon. John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 119-20. By contrast, from his 1841 visit to the Willamette Valley, Charles Wilkes estimated that there were only 600 Calapuya Indians remaining there, a dramatic reduction from the nearly 9000 counted little more than a decade earlier. Diseases such as measles and smallpox decimated Northwest Indian tribes, with the Chinooks hardest hit. Lewis and Clark estimated almost 15,000 Chinooks in 1806; only 238 survived into the mid-1850s. Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842,* vol. 4 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 354; Robert T. Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline Among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 324-7. Estimates vary as to the number of early fur-trade settlers in the valley, but James Gibson fixes the number of Canadians at about 350 around the time of Wilkes's visit. James R. Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846,* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 136.

sometimes unfriendly area. By the early nineteenth century, when the land-based fur trade began in the Pacific Northwest, tradesmen in other more established trading regions such as Hudson's Bay no longer needed to form alliances with Indian women for strategic commercial or diplomatic purposes. Instead, they married more acculturated métis daughters born within the fur trade when they became available to wed, while men in the Oregon Country were re-initiating the old practice of partnering with Native women.

In the Pacific Northwest the fur trade started relatively late and ended a short time later (1792-1848). Where in other areas, such as central Canada, the trade lasted for more than three hundred years, here it was condensed to about sixty years. Accordingly, the rise and decline of fur-trade society were equally precipitous. Furthermore, fur-trade peoples were forced to deal with a rapid change in social standards which was accompanied by the breakup of the fur trade's commercial monopoly and challenges to its legal authority over non-Indian inhabitants.

The 1840s ushered in two changes in government, preceding and following the settlement of a regional boundary dispute between the United States and Britain in 1846 which had held the region under uncertain political jurisdiction for decades. First, American settlers organized to form a provisional government in 1843 as a challenge to the judiciary powers held by the Hudson's Bay Company as an agent of the British government. Five years later, the United States set up territorial governance in its newly-secured Oregon Territory, south from the forty-ninth parallel to the California border and east to the Continental Divide.[2]

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[2]John Hussey provides a detailed account of the establishment of provisional government by Willamette Valley residents. John A. Hussey, *Champoeg,* 150-72. Some French Canadians voted in favor of the new government.

The Hudson's Bay Company was given limited civil and criminal jurisdiction over British subjects by a 1821 Act of Parliament. Dorothy O. Johansen, *Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest,* 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 122-23.

Prior to the advent of these changes and the influx of American settlers in the 1840s and 1850s, many fur-trade employees settled at French Prairie, an area bordered by the Willamette River to the west and the Pudding River to the east, a few miles north of present-day Salem, Oregon. The men settling there and in a few other places in the northern Willamette Valley with their Native wives included trappers left behind from John Jacob Astor's defunct Pacific Fur Company and retirees from the North West Company (NWC) and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). Some continued to work occasionally for the HBC while also trying to establish farms. All relied on the Company's stores for supplies and suffered the economic consequences of its monopolistic control of commerce.

The region's first urban center, Oregon City, also got its start from the fur trade. Its most influential early inhabitants, however, came from the educated professional class of the fur trade, including the city's founder, Fort Vancouver Chief Factor John McLoughlin. Both the low-level former fur-trade employees of French Prairie and the higher-status inhabitants of Oregon City had to make the transition from fur-trade to American society, and both groups sought help in preparing their children for the changes to come.

Preparing for "civilization"

Changes in political jurisdiction and the rapid American settlement of the Oregon Country created a need for fur-trade families to adjust quickly to a different way of life, one not wholly unlike their own, but absent the strong influence of Indian

culture and folkways. Preparation for a "civilized life" included a Euro-American style education, but the institutions were not yet in place when the first trappers settled at French Prairie. In response to the need to prepare their offspring for the transition from fur-trade to agrarian white society, these predominantly French Canadian fur-trade settlers in the Willamette Valley beckoned Catholic religious to cater to their families' religious and educational needs. They found support for their petition from John McLoughlin, who shared and even fostered their religious convictions.

Six Belgian women religious responded to the call to instruct the native-born daughters and wives of the French Canadians in the Willamette Valley. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDN) were the first congregation of women religious and the first organized group of women performing benevolent work in the Pacific Northwest. These Belgian mediators of change brought the refinements of European culture and Catholic morality to the wilds of western Oregon. Just four years after founding an isolated rural mission school at St. Paul in 1844, the SNDN mother house in Namur sent more recruits from Belgium and the Oregon nuns expanded operations into the first emergent urban area in the Pacific Northwest, Oregon City. Their two schools, the Ste. Marie du Willamette at the Saint Paul mission (French Prairie) and the Young Ladies Academy of Oregon City, alas, were short-lived: the nuns departed from Oregon in 1853 to begin their missionary work all over again in California. Even in this short time span, the two schools show significant differences, reflecting their particular rural and urban locations, with a corresponding contrast in their constituencies, which included both fur-trade daughters and American and Irish overland immigrants. A comparison of the two schools and their students is at the heart of this study.[3]

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[3]Details about the history of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon are contained in Sister Mary Dominica McNamee, *Willamette Interlude.* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1959), and in the

The first students were Native Americans and fur-trade daughters exclusively. They were joined later by girls of the new immigrant class of Anglo-Americans and Irish. Next to the French Canadians, the Irish were the most numerous of the early Catholic immigrants to Oregon, and a number of Irish girls enrolled in the Sisters' Oregon City academy. Among other overlanders, however, only a few sent daughters to study with the nuns at Oregon City. Even in 1850, when Oregon was firmly under American control and the fur trade had shifted its center from nearby Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Victoria, in British territory on Vancouver Island, fur-trade daughters still dominated the Oregon SNDN schools.[4]

Virtually all of the SNDN students in the Willamette Valley were Catholic. This was unusual; elsewhere, American Catholic secondary schools enrolled mostly Protestant girls whose parents could afford to pay the full cost of their daughters' education. Like other teaching sisters in the United States and its territories, the Sisters in Oregon hoped to use the tuition from academy students to fund exemplary education for these girls, to supplement the cost of schooling for lower-income Catholics, and to care for orphans. Their inability to attract tuition-paying Protestant students factored into the Sisters' decision to leave Oregon in 1853. Strong anti-Catholic sentiments fueled by local events likely resulted in fewer Protestant enrollees,

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Sisters' own published letters, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *Notice sur Territoire, et Sur La Mission de l'Orégon: suivi de Quelques lettres des Soeurs de Notre-Dame établies à Saint Paul du Wallamette,* (Brussels: Bureau de publication de la Bibliothèque d'éducation, 1847).

All translations from the French in this thesis are the author's unless otherwise noted.

[4] Irish came to the United States in great numbers during the potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s, and many found their way West. They made up three-quarters of the Catholic immigrants coming to America during that time. Malcolm Clark, Jr., "The Bigot Disclosed: 90 Years of Nativism," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 75 (June 1974): 118. The other significant early Catholic immigrant groups, the Germans and Italians, came to Western Oregon later, in the 1860s and 1890s, respectively. [M. J. Tully and Wilifred P. Schoenberg], *Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon: 150th Anniversary 1846-1996* (Editions du Signe, 1996), 18.

Statistics on students in SNDN schools will be presented in table form in the appendix.

making it difficult for the Sisters to fund their dual operations at St. Paul and Oregon City. Prejudices against Catholics in the Oregon Country had intensified following the murder of Presbyterian missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and twelve others at the Waiilaptu mission in November 1847, just as the Sisters prepared to open their academy at Oregon City. Protestants placed the blame for "Indian troubles" upon the Catholics, whom they implicated in the Whitman murders by accusing them of inciting the Cayuse against the Protestant missionaries. In fact, the Catholics helped secure the release of the remaining hostages. Years of unrest followed the incident, including the Cayuse Indian War (1848-49), which forced all non-Indians, including Catholic missionaries, out of much of the eastern portion of the Oregon Territory. Tensions ran high enough to bring a bill to a vote in the territorial legislature, which, had it passed, would have expelled Catholic clergy from the territory.[5]

The mass exodus of settlers to the gold fields in California, beginning in 1849, compounded the SNDN's problems, as many families left their daughters behind in the Sisters' care. Faced with epidemic disease and scarce economic resources, the nuns closed the St. Paul school in 1852, consolidating operations at Oregon City. Lured to California themselves by Jesuits who promised to help them found a college near San

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[5]On funding Catholic schooling with Protestant-paid tuition, see Barbara Misner, *"Highly Respectable and Accomplished Ladies:" Catholic Women Religious in America 1790-1850.* The Heritage of American Catholicism Series, ed. Timothy Walch (New York: Garland, 1988), 177-8, 189; Mary Ewens, *The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Arno, 1978), 140-4; Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 147.

Although particularly fierce in Oregon at this time, anti-Catholicism found wide support in other parts of the United States, in large part due to the ten-fold increase in the Catholic population between the years 1830 and 1860 (from 300,000 to 3,000,000), when Roman Catholics represented nineteen percent of the total U.S. population. Clark, "The Bigot Disclosed," 118. See also [Tully and Schoenberg], 16-7. Rev. J. S. Griffin took up the anti-Catholic cause with zeal in his newspaper *The Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist,* accusing Catholic missionaries of using any means "to secure the vast middle district of Oregon to the exclusion of all Protestants." Rev. J. S. Griffin, ed., *The Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist* (Tualatin Plains), vol. 1 no. 3 (1848), p. 37, microfilm, Oregon Historical Research Library, Portland.

Francisco, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur closed their academy in 1853, sold the school and its contents, and sailed southward, where they continue their educational mission today.

Multiple and seemingly disparate strands come together in the schools of these Belgian nuns in frontier Oregon. But of what specific interest are their students? Historians Carol Coburn and Martha Smith have recently argued for further academic studies of women religious in the far west: "The experiences of nineteenth-century women religious are critical to understanding the interaction of gender, ethnicity, religion, and class in the American West." So too are the experiences of their students, who greatly outnumbered their teachers. Whether and how they put into practice (or ignored) the principles put forth in Catholic schools should be of great interest to social historians, for it illustrates how notions of gender, race, religion, and class are perpetuated or altered in the course of everyday life. These are the themes to be explored in this study of young women enrolled in Oregon SNDN schools.[6]

Fur-trade social history

The main emphasis of this paper is on the métis students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The use of the term "métis" will follow Canadian Historian Jennifer

[6]Coburn and Smith,, 98. It should be noted that the "West" of *Spirited Lives* includes St. Paul, Minnesota in 1851, Kansas City, Missouri in 1866, Arizona and California in 1870, and Colorado mining towns of 1877, each unique but quite different from the Pacific Northwest of 1844-53 seen by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. (pp. 96-127)

On the need to study Catholic women religious, their role in education in America, and the students they influenced, see also Joseph Mannard, "Protestant Mothers and Catholic Sisters: Gender Concerns in Anti-Catholic Conspiracy Theories, 1830-1860," *American Catholic Studies* 111 (Spring-Winter 2000): 2-3. 20.

Brown's broad definition of small "m" métis: "all people of dual Amerindian-White ancestry." This stems from the French usage of the word, which means "mixed", and is not attached to a particular political or ethnic ideology. Another term commonly used is "mixed-blood."[7]

Brown reserves the use of the term capital "M" Métis to describe those communities in Manitoba, especially in the Red River region, who displayed distinctive social characteristics and who had as free agents established an independent economic base that served the needs of the regional fur trade. A number of events in the nineteenth century gave root to a political movement that gave great visibility to the Métis, the likes of which were not replicated in other fur-trade areas. In the Pacific Northwest, a clear ethnic identity among métis peoples has not been demonstrated.[8]

Métis political activity in Canada in the 1970s broadened the usage of the term "métis" to include mixed-blood persons beyond the Red River area and sparked scholarly investigation into the social and cultural history of the fur trade. The two seminal works on women and the fur trade, Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* and Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties*, appeared in print over twenty years ago. Both Brown and Van Kirk have continued to contribute to knowledge in this area, and are part of a small cadre of social historians studying the fur-trade and the métis. These scholars explore various aspects of what they call "fur-trade society," a distinct culture created from the mixing of fur-trade men with Native women and the mingling of diverse European and Indian cultures. The presence of women and children in the

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[7]Jennifer S. Brown, "Métis, Halfbreeds, and Other Real People: Challenging Cultures and Categories," *The History Teacher* 27, no. 1 (1993): 20; Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, Manitoba Studies in Native History Series (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 6.

[8]Jennifer S. H. Brown, "The Métis: Genesis and Rebirth" in Bruce Allen Cox, ed., *Native Peoples, Native Lands* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), 136, 139-40.

trade helped mold trade policies and practices, and factored significantly in the settlement of the vast fur-trade region. This study draws on the work of fur-trade social historians as it explores these and similar issues in the chapters to follow, and extends the field of study by considering class and religion as important factors in the integration of métis offspring into the dominant society.[9]

As influential as they have been, Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk are not without their critics. British Columbian historian Juliet Pollard classifies Brown and Van Kirk's initial work on women and the fur-trade as "vulnerable to the whig label" because they take an overly broad view of the fur trade in North America without carefully considering regional differences. Arthur Ray also criticizes Van Kirk for over-generalizing her findings in *Many Tender Ties* and implying that fur-trade society was uniform throughout its vast landscape. As much as this thesis relies on the work of Brown and Van Kirk, its author agrees with Pollard and Ray on this point, with one additional complaint about these and other studies of women in the fur trade: that too little attention is paid to women of the servant class. Brown, for example, insists that her focus on the officer class is of greater theoretical interest because "[t]he study of social ranking is perhaps most interesting when focussed on those whose rank is ambiguous, changing, and variously defined within their social order." The social standing of servants, she asserts, changed little during the time of her study. While that may have held true for the active trade following the merger of the North West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, the social position of servants as

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[9] Peterson and Brown, 5-7; Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Sylvia Van Kirk, *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980).

they left the rigid structure of the fur trade was less certain and is therefore worthy of closer examination.[10]

This argument finds support in Arthur Ray's 1982 review of fur trade social history and métis history in Canada, wherein the author pointed out the need to "broaden our view of the society" by including the lower rank of the fur trade in our analysis, and to look at "the growing numbers of Métis and others who sought economic opportunity outside of the company after 1821." In a later review, Dennis F. K. Madill asserted that more attention needed to be paid to the "lowest rung of 'fur trade society,'" to regional differences, and to the influence of the many different Indian cultures that came in contact with the trade. As a result of this present effort to uncover the lives of fur-trade servants and their daughters in the Pacific Northwest, however, their omission in the scholarly literature is understandable. In the understated words of one Hudson's Bay Company archivist, "information on the families of employees, other than the officers, can be hard to come by."[11]

Although scholars have begun to tease out regional differences within fur-trade society, the Pacific Northwest has drawn considerably less attention than the Red River and Great Lakes regions. Juliet Pollard and John C. Jackson's works are the exceptions to this rule. In her doctoral dissertation, Juliet Pollard constructed a history of childhood of the Fort Vancouver métis, laying much of the groundwork for further

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[10]Juliet Thelma Pollard, "The Making of the Metis in the Pacific Northwest Fur Trade Children: Race, Class, and Gender," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1990), x; Arthur J. Ray, "Reflections on Fur Trade Social History and Métis History in Canada," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6 (1982): 95; Brown, *Strangers*, xxi.

[11]Ray, 99-100; Dennis F. K. Madill, "Riel, Red River, and Beyond: New Developments in Métis History," in *New Directions in American Indian History.* The D'Arcy McNickel Center Bibliographies in American Indian History Series, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) 73, 57. Personal communication with Anne Morton, Head, Research and Reference, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archive of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 28 July 2003.

investigations into the lives of métis sons and daughters. John C. Jackson concentrates his efforts on a small offshoot of the trade, immigrants from Red River brought to the Oregon Country by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1841 to help establish the Puget Sound Agricultural Company.[12]

Jackson devotes one chapter of *Children of the Fur Trade* to the women of this small party of immigrants who represent just one minor aspect of métis life in the Pacific Northwest. Although his research includes nothing about the métis women who were born in the Oregon Country and the many others living there, Jackson boldly reduces the fate of fur-trade daughters to a single paragraph:

> The experience of the daughters of the fur trade who settled in the Pacific Northwest was not that much different from that of other pioneer women. White and Métisse faced the same drudgery of household chores and farmstead duties and shared the same concerns for their children. If the Métisse are overlooked in the historical documents, it is because they left no written records; generally, only urbanized, educated women had the leisure time to write diaries and letters.[13]

Indeed, historians have until recently failed to see métis women in the historical record, but they cannot be dismissed so lightly. Recent social historians have shown that where firsthand accounts are lacking, other sources must be drawn upon to fill in the gaps. Although fur-trade daughters do not figure prominently in the historical literature and in primary documents, they do appear and, with some effort, much useful information can be gained by consulting standard sources. Furthermore, Jackson fails to notice the existence of urbanized and even rural educated métis

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[12]Pollard, "The Making of the Métis" and Juliet Pollard, "A Most Remarkable Phenomenon - Growing Up Métis: Fur Traders' Children in the Pacific Northwest," in *An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, (Vancouver, B.C.: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, 1984), 120-40; John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade: Forgotten Métis of the Pacific Northwest* (Missoula: Mountain Press, 1995) and "Red River Settlers vs. the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, 1854-55," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 85 (1984): 279-89.

[13]Jackson, *Children*, 211-2.

women whose lives, however obscure, *are* revealed through letters, interviews, and other sources. Three decades of diligent scholarship in women's history have shown us that women need not be invisible, even if they have not told us their stories directly.

Clara Sue Kidwell, speaking here of Indian women, offers some encouragement:

> If women did not explain their actions in documents, we must attempt to recreate the cultural context of their actions and to move beyond the myths that have been woven around their lives. . . . Women, perceived as powerless by European men and voiceless in the historical records, are nevertheless powerful in the roles that they play in their own cultures, and even more powerful in the impact that they have on their husbands or consorts and on the children of those liaisons.[14]

This could apply to women universally, white, Indian, or métis, for women's history comes to us largely piecemeal, and must be extracted from sources that often ignore their presence.

Methodology

As the métis themselves are the products of cultural mixing, scholarly work regarding them is, by necessity, interdisciplinary. Historian Dennis F. K. Madill extols the "holistic approach" of the social history of the fur trade as responsible for "overcoming the 'Red River myopia.'" That is, scholars no longer concentrate their efforts on the métis of Red River and blindly apply their findings to all métis communities. Indeed, to understand métis history, one must reach into many areas of study, and also uncover and understand regional differences. This particular foray into

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[14]Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory*, 39 (1992): 98.

this branch of scholarship encompasses fur-trade, educational, and religious history; gender studies and ethnology; and both the new and old western histories. It employs their collective wisdom to scour local and regional primary sources. This study also spans several cultures: American, Canadian, British, French, Belgian, and countless Indian groups, and encounters many of them at a time of significant change.[15]

The multidimensionality of this field of inquiry also inevitably leads to gaps in what can be covered by a single study. Perhaps the most glaring omission in this one is the absence of much discussion of the maternal heritage of fur-trade daughters, many of whom are daughters of local Native women. It is difficult enough to sort through scant and often conflicting information in fur-trade and church records to identify these mothers, but the record is mute on any details about their family of origin or status within the tribe. Since trade, intermarriage, and slavery were well-established practices among Pacific Northwest Indians even prior to the advent of the fur trade, the web of relations among the various groups was complex. Much of the documentation regarding the region's Native peoples was created retrospectively, and is not nearly as detailed as the records we have for métis and whites at the same time. Therefore, any comprehensive discussion of this aspect of fur-trade society would be largely speculative. Moreover, the Indian world of the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineteenth century was a world falling apart. As Richard White demonstrated for the Indians of the Great Lakes region, a world in crisis is complex and dynamic, with groups reconfiguring and relocating to adjust to changes wrought by war, disease, and

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[15]Madill, 50.

other stresses, creating a very untidy puzzle for scholars. It is one puzzle that will not be put together here.[16]

Any interdisciplinary study brings the scholar to new ground. In the field of educational history, examples of studies of students in nineteenth-century North America are few. Although many have chronicled the structural and mechanical aspects of education (institutions, textbooks, curricula, administrators, key educators, and the like), until recently, educational historians have shied away from studying the students themselves, and thus have ignored a fruitful subject for social history. If education is formative, then how can one examine the effectiveness of social formation without looking for evidence of it in students' lives? A few of these studies are, coincidentally, emerging alongside renewed interest in the academy movement.[17]

Among the more recent studies of the academy, Devon Mihesuah's examination of the students of the Cherokee Female Seminary most closely resembles this study. Mihesuah follows the students through the years of schooling at the seminary, and profiles their married and professional lives. The prevalence of racial mixing in the Rosebud Reservation allows Mihesuah to touch on many of the same issues as this study, such as race, class, gender, and acculturation, albeit in a slightly different context. His is, however, a broad study of many students over a longer time period (1851-1909), with many more direct sources, such as interviews and a student

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[16]Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815.* Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History, ed. Frederick Hoxie and Neal Salisbury (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 17-20.

[17]Among recent studies of the academy in the nineteenth century are a collection of articles published as a Symposium in the *History of Education Quarterly.* Kim Tolley and Nancy Beadie, et al, "Reappraisals of the Academy Movement," *History of Education Quarterly* 41 (2001): 216-270. Other studies of female students in the nineteenth century include Lisa Natale Drakeman, "Seminary Sisters: Mount Holyoke's First Students, 1837-1849," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1988) and Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851-1909.* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

newspaper, so the research methodology varies somewhat from that used in this study.[18]

Scholarly interest in the academy has also overlapped with interest in women religious to produce the first book-length study in the academic press of a single female teaching order in America, the Sisters of St. Joseph. Americanists have trailed behind their medievalist colleagues in seeing the merit of studying women religious. In fact, this author's first interest in this topic grew out of previous work done under the guidance of Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, who shaped many of the ideas regarding the economic and social aspects of religious life. Fellow medievalist JoAnn McNamara's massive survey of the history of women religious, *Sisters in Arms,* helped bridge the gap for this writer between medieval times and the nineteenth century.[19]

Although subject to many different influences, the overall method of this study most closely resembles Jennifer Brown's approach in *Strangers in Blood.* Brown applies both anthropological and historical methods in her study of fur trade social patterns. Through an approach she terms as "macrobiographical," Brown uses biographical sources to trace the history of families through institutional changes in the fur trade, showing the evolution of fur-trade society and highlighting differences between social patterns of Hudson's Bay and North West Company families. Brown employs this approach to "organiz[e] historical materials that in their raw form are unwieldy and of uneven quality and helpfulness regarding specific individuals and

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[18]Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds.*

[19]Coburn and Smith; Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996).

Very fine work on women religious in America preceded *Spirited Lives*, but remains more obscure. In particular, Mary Ewens's *The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America*, remains the standard for scholarship on Catholic religious women of the nineteenth century. Like other works in this genre, it surveys religious women across American territories, rather than regionally.

details." The materials she uses range from personal and family papers to church records and wills. This study draws from similar primary sources and applies Brown's macrobiographical approach on a narrower scale.[20]

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur worked in Oregon for nine years before following gold-seekers south to California. It was a short but far from insignificant time. It is not, however, a history easy to recover. In the 150 years since their departure from Oregon, more information about the Sisters has been lost than rediscovered in archives here and abroad. What remains often lacks context or attribution. The records still extant from the SNDN years in Oregon are a few account books, letters, and journals. No chronicle or student roster exist.

Studies in this area are bolstered by a long tradition of historiography of the fur trade in this region, and an abundance of primary sources. Mention of women in both primary and secondary sources, however, is made rarely and usually in passing. Moreover, Elizabeth Vibert has shown quite elegantly how many of the primary sources from the fur trade must be read carefully with an eye for the male traders' cultural perspective, which, reflecting the thoughts and prejudices of the time, often gives a distorted view, especially of Indian life.[21]

Given the lack of comprehensive resources on which to base this study, such as the detailed chronicles of other female religious congregations, the author attempted a number of different approaches to find a sample for comparing the two schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon. The first effort to compile a

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[20]Brown, *Strangers,* xx.

[21]Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

comprehensive list of students followed a visit to the SNDN archive in Belmont, California. An examination of the three Oregon account books still in the Sisters' possession resulted in a list of students' names, but on closer examination, it became clear that the records were incomplete. Although the account books are dated 1844-1857, entries for years prior to 1848 are especially spotty. In fact, only fifteen names appear prior to September 1848, when the Oregon City school opened. Other sources inform us that enrollment exceeded fifteen the *first year* of the St. Paul school (1844), so it is clear that the records do not make a full accounting of enrollment. Later entries are problematic too, because two of the account books (*Pupils' Accounts* and *Boarders' Accounts*) carry over to the California years without clear demarcation in the records. To add further confusion, some of the Oregon students actually traveled with the nuns when they left Oregon in 1853, and continued their studies with them in California. In addition, since the account books record financial receipts, such as tuition and fees, they do not list the names of many of the girls for whom no payment was made, although they do indicate that the Sisters taught and boarded many orphans. The account books list who paid for special music classes, but enrollment dates are sometimes difficult to ascertain. Dates are, in fact, often missing or difficult to make out. Furthermore, the early Oregon economy operated on the barter system and payment was often made on a casual basis, especially at St. Paul. The nuns, who were themselves trying to build schools and eke out a subsistence living by farming, certainly did not have had the opportunity to record every sack of flour given to them in exchange for their educational services.[22]

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[22]An example of a chronicle of a female Catholic congregation is found in Sara J. McLellan, ed., "Chronicles of Sacred Heart Academy, Salem, 1863-1873," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 80 (1979): 341-64 and 81(1980): 75-95.

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *Oregon Accounts 1844-1849*, *Pupil's Accounts 1848-1856*, *Boarder's Accounts 1848-1857,* California Province Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,

Given these limitations, the data provided by the *1850 United States Federal Census of the Oregon Territory* provided the best means for comparison of the Oregon SNDN schools. Conducted house to house, the 1850 census lists students boarding at the St. Paul and Oregon City schools. This thesis employs this list of forty students, equally distributed between the two schools, as its sample. This snapshot approach provides a basis for explorations into a large body of literature on the fur trade and on the Catholic Church in the Oregon Country. Mining mountains of information contained in the *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest* and standard genealogical and historical sources, research bearing on the lives of forty students and their families charts ethnicity, marriage patterns and religious activities of the students, and uncovers patterns of social and religious affiliation. An analysis of the data reveals significant differences in the characteristics of fur-trade daughters between the two SNDN schools, to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the research conducted for this study followed these girls beyond their school years in an attempt to find lasting effects of their education and religious training, and to identify social patterns as markers for acculturation into mainstream white society and/or the perpetuation of fur-trade affiliations and perhaps, even, hints about the existence of a métis ethnic consciousness. A brief discussion of the four major areas of inquiry: ethnicity, class, religion, and gender, follows.[23]

Saratoga. (The SNDN California archive moved from Belmont to Saratoga in 2003.) *Oregon Accounts* includes a "Compte des Orphelines" ["Orphans' Accounts"] on page 53. McNamee, 153, 159-75. On the barter system, see Gibson, 140.

[23]U.S. Census Office, *Population Schedules, Oregon Territory* [1850], National Archives Microfilm Publications, microcopy M432, roll 742 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Record Service, [1980?]). ***U.S. Federal Census of 1850,*** "Oregon Territory." Transcribed by Elsie Y. Browning (n.d.).

Ethnicity

Fur trade peoples and Euro-American settlers, along with the already-present multiplicity of Native peoples, represent the great ethnic diversity of the Pacific Northwest in 1850. Of most interest here is the generation of offspring resulting from the mixing of fur-trade employees with Native women.

The fate of male and female fur-trade children could differ widely. Whether sons of officers or servants, male métis generally found themselves among the low to middling ranks of the fur trade. Daughters often fared better because they could improve their status through marriage. Neither, however, found easy acceptance among whites, because of their mixed racial heritage. In some areas, most notably Red River (present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada), they developed a distinct Métis culture and consciousness. Scholars are keen to determine if a métis consciousness developed outside of the Canadian Prairie, and whether métis elsewhere identified themselves as unique and demonstrated the characteristics of a distinct ethnic group. These questions have been much on the minds of Canadians, whose Constitution Act of 1982 extended aboriginal treaty rights to Métis. Establishing oneself as Métis in Canada could potentially bring tangible benefits.[24]

In Canada, Métis rights is a very contentious political issue. With roots in the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks and on to the 1885 Northwest Rebellion and the "martyrdom" of Louis Riel, the modern movement gained momentum in 1982 when the new Canadian Constitution granted certain rights to "Métis" as aboriginal for the

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[24]"The Canadian Constitution," *Canadian Sourcebook* (Don Mills, Ont.: Southam Information Products, 1997) 15-11 to 15-17.

first time, without clearly defining those rights or who could be considered Métis. The document opened the way for Métis to gain the same entitlements now granted to Indians and Inuit, but as a distinct people. Among Canadians, as well as ethnologists and historians, there is much disagreement about who is Métis.[25]

In contrast to Canada, in the United States, métis status has resulted in the loss of federal recognition or failure to establish tribal status - a delicate issue in places as close as the Nisqually basin in Washington State. In order to enroll in an Indian reservation, individuals had to quantify their Indian blood. Métis heritage could be costly, as compensation corresponded directly to the percentage of Indian blood. This helps to explain "[t]he seemingly invisible existence of the métis on the United States side of the border." Americans lack cultural or legal categories for peoples of mixed descent; western historians likewise tend to lump populations into neat ethnic categories that belie the messiness of cultural exchange. According to James Clifford, it is an "ongoing process, politically contested and historically unfinished." Western historians will have their hands full trying to document and analyze the mess, although New Western historian Richard White's example for Great Lakes Indians presents a useful model.[26]

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[25]A recent newspaper article serves as a reminder of the political tensions north of the border. Clifford Krauss, "Canada's Metis track hunting rights to nation's high court," *The Sunday Oregonian*, 6 April 2003, sec. A, p. 14. Several organizations and a plethora of internet websites owe their existence to the viability of this issue in Canada, for example: the Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association, Quebec Metis Nation, and the National Metis Council.

The Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 lists the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" as "Indian, Inuit, and Métis" and affirms "[t]he existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada." It does not elaborate on what those rights are, nor give any further guidance for interpreting or carrying out the intent of the Constitution. "Constitution Act, 1982" part II, sec. 35(1-2), in *Canadian Sourcebook,* 15-15.

A. Kienetz offers a cogent discussion of the evolution of Métis rights and "nationalism" in "Metis 'Nationalism' and the Concept of a Metis Land Base in Canada's Prairie Provinces," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* XV, 1-2 (1988): 11-18.

[26]Jackson, *Children*, 229-30; Brown, *History Teacher*, 19; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture,* qtd. in Vibert, 15; White, *The Middle Ground.*

The evidence clearly supports the existence of distinct ways of dress, foodstuffs, and other cultural markers developing among métis members of fur-trade society. Furthermore, métis throughout the former trading territories usually made their living trapping, hunting, and/or farming. Many also served as mediators between Indians and whites. But was that enough to make them a distinct ethnic group? Clearly, in Red River, where Métis boldly proclaimed themselves the New Nation, protected their unique folkways, and by-and-large married within their own ranks, a Métis ethnic identity emerged. The point is more difficult to argue for other regions. Harriet Gorham asserts that for the métis in the Western Great Lakes region (present-day Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario), no such shared ethnic identity existed. Certainly, within the fur trade itself, a separate métis identity was not cultivated, as métis children worked to fit into their fathers' culture. According to Sylvia Van Kirk, "The response of mixed-blood society to the growth of racial prejudice was an ever stronger emphasis on the total emulation of respectable Victorian [white] society."[27]

One of the goals of this study is to search for evidence of a distinct métis ethnic identity in the Pacific Northwest. No one has yet studied the full spectrum of métis in this region to determine if a métis ethnic consciousness lay dormant or unidentified. If

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The métis are notably absent from general works by "New Western" historians, for example, Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987.); and Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). White's omission of the métis of the far west is all the more astounding considering that he published his phenomenal study of cultural mixing among the Great Lakes Indians (*The Middle Ground*) in the same year as his aforementioned survey of the West. For a definition and discussion of the New Western History, see John R. Wunder, "What's Old about the New Western History," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 85 (April 1994): 50-8.

The record keeping with regard to ethnic origin has also been too tidy. U. S. Census data fail to reflect the true texture of the racial make-up of American society.

[27]On the existence of a distinct métis culture, see Peterson and Brown, 4-8; and Julia D. Harrison, *Metis: People Between Two Worlds* (The Glenbow-Alberta Institute and Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre), 1985. Harriet Gorham, "Families of Mixed Descent in the Western Great Lakes Region," in *Native Peoples,* 234.

the métis here did not, in fact, constitute an ethnic group, did they also embrace the ideals of Victorian society? To what extent did they assimilate into either Indian or white society? These questions informed the search for evidence regarding the fur-trade girls who were being primed for entry into white society by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a search which followed them as far as possible beyond the convent schools.

Harriet Gorham uses two measures to determine if the métis of the Western Great Lakes formed an ethnic group. First, she looks for "self-ascription and ascription by outsiders" that is, identification as métis by mixed-blood persons themselves and by others. As this is very difficult to determine given the paucity of first-hand accounts that deal directly with this issue, Gorham relies more heavily on the second measure, "mating and marriage patterns," following the reasoning promoted by some anthropologists that "endogamy is . . . an important feature of most ethnic groups." Following Gorham's practice, this study examines marriage patterns of the students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon for evidence of either ethnic group formation or assimilation. Since education is a tool of acculturation, in this case métis girls acculturated to white society, educated métis girls should be more attractive to the dominant white group. It follows that marriage outside of their so-called ethnic group is a strong indicator of the success of education as a tool of assimilation.[28]

[28]Gorham, 38-9, 49. On the notion of self-ascription and ascription by others as necessary for determining ethnicity, Gorham credits Fredrik Barth and Michael Hechter. Barth enjoys a wide following among historians of the métis.

Class

Class divisions solidified in the early nineteenth century. In England and likewise in America and English-ruled Canada, the chasm between masters and servants grew and was accompanied by shifting attitudes towards work "as the degradation associated with manual tasks increased." A redefinition and hardening of both gender and class divisions culminated in the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, the index year for my study, 1850, coincides with the point at which Historians Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall mark the English middle-class as fully stratified.[29]

Class divisions were equally strong within the British-run fur trade, and appear to have endured in this population beyond the end of the trade in the Pacific Northwest. For the most part, the métis girls enrolled in SNDN schools in Oregon were themselves segregated between the two schools according to the fur-trade rank of their fathers, mirroring the sharp division between officer and servant ranks within the fur trade. Irene Spry noted the same division based on class among French-Indian "métis" and English- or Scots-Indian "mixed-bloods" of Rupert's Land, including those who migrated to the Pacific Northwest. She found that their social standing in the fur trade, rather than ethnicity, determined their ultimate position in pioneer society. Further divisions among uneducated servant class men placed sedentary farmers above those who continued to hunt and to wander.[30]

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[29]Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* , Women in Culture and Society Series, ed. Catherine R. Stimpson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 22-4. Davidoff and Hall cite Mary Ryan's study of class in America, *Cradle of the Middle Class: the Family in Oneida County, New York 1790-1865* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981) as a model for their own work, likening the class system in Great Britain with that in America. Davidoff and Hall, 30.

[30]Although the officer class is commonly referred to as the upper class, a designation retained here, in the larger scope, it corresponds to the English middle class, while the servant class and English labouring or lower class are equivalents.

Local sources contain a wealth of information on the fathers of these girls. In addition to the standard sources for fur-trade history, both officers and servants figure prominently in histories of the Oregon Country because they were pioneers. Still, due to their greater social prominence both in the trade and after, the officer-class families are indeed easier to trace than the servant-class girls and even many of the overland immigrants.

A simple assessment of class, however, does not stand alone. Multiple strands must be brought together to give a more complete picture of this sample of fur-trade daughters in Oregon. In this matter, this study draws from Devon Mihesuah's study of the Cherokee Female Seminary which links ethnicity with class. The Cherokee Female Seminary was a Cherokee institution modeled after the popular white female school, Mt. Holyoke. Its curriculum epitomized Euro-American values and contained not one nugget of Cherokee culture. Like the Oregon schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, it was strictly a vehicle of acculturation into the white world. Mihesuah's ultimate aim is to discover whether Cherokee women educated at the Seminary adopted attitudes and lifestyles that were more "white" or "Indian." Mihesuah uses the terms employed by the Cherokee Dawes Roll (full-blood, half-blood, quarter-blood, etc.) to measure "physiology" (racial mixing), combined with a determination of the extent to which Cherokee women continued traditional Cherokee practices which he refers to as "cultural adherence" in order to draw conclusions about students' ethnicity.[31]

Irene M. Spry, "The Métis and Mixed-Bloods of Rupert's Land Before 1870," in Peterson and Brown, 108-12.

[31]The U.S. federal government applied the Dawes Act of 1887 in determining land allotment to Indians, granting larger amounts of land to those with more Indian blood. Mihesuah uses proportions down to 1/128, as listed on the Cheorkee Dawes Roll. Any amount of Cherokee blood qualified for membership in the Cherokee Nation. Mihesuah, 2, 107, 116.

As in the fur trade, intermarriage of Cherokees with whites resulted in a wide spectrum of racially mixed peoples. Instead of being lumped into a single middling category of "métis," mixed-blood Cherokees still claimed tribal membership, although they did not reap an equal share of tribal privileges. In fact, on the Oklahoma reservation, both economic and political privilege corresponded to a racial gradient, with traditionalist full-blood Cherokees holding both the most land and power. Whites, however, controlled socioeconomic success at the reservation's edges. According to Mihesuah, mixed-bloods gravitated towards white religion and education, often finding economic success in their fathers' (and less often mothers') white world. At the same time, they did not reject their ties to the reservation, but rather supported education for Cherokees to give the tribe a progressive edge, and in hopes that a more acculturated tribe would open the inner sanctum of Cherokee politics to a more diverse leadership. Not all traditionalists sent their children to reservation schools, but the Cherokee Constitution of 1827 betrays the extent to which white values had already infiltrated their thinking: "religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged in this Nation."[32]

In the final analysis, Mihesuah's study reveals a gradient of cultural adherence that corresponds to the racial gradient, with more traditional Indian practices maintained by women with more Indian blood, and those with less Indian blood able to assimilate into white society or float between both worlds. Mihesuah's findings with respect to cultural adherence hinge on the young women's choice of marriage partner, as few Seminary students followed an independent career track and most

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[32]Mihesuah 10, 17-18.

became housewives. Light-skinned and educated Cherokee women enjoyed considerable social mobility and power, usually marrying white or lighter-skinned Cherokee men of high social status, and finding acceptance in both the white and Cherokee worlds, even as far away as Europe. Seminary-educated darker-skinned Cherokee women found it difficult to enter into the white world their schooling prepared them for but found easy acceptance with both acculturated and traditional Cherokees. At the other end of the spectrum, women who were both dark-skinned and without formal education married dark-skinned Cherokee men and were kept out of the upper class of Cherokee society.[33]

With no parallel in the 1850 Oregon métis population to the precise racial gradient of the Dawes Roll, how do Mihesuah's findings apply here? After all, no legal distinctions hinged on the proportion of Indian blood within the Pacific Northwest at mid-century. In fact, with the long history of racial mixing in the fur trade, and the relatively late and imprecise usage of racially distinguishing descriptors within the trade, it can be difficult to determine an individual's racial makeup. The monikers "mixed-blood" or "*bois brulé,*" even "half-breed," did not correspond to any particular ethnic equation but rather alluded to *some* quantity of Indian blood. A few of those described as "French Canadian" may well have been métis, since the term *Canadien* was used loosely to describe those with some French Canadian blood who spoke French, especially servant-class men. But as revealed in Mihesuah's analysis, appearance (which varied even among siblings) along with education were critical factors in opening doors into the white world.

Underlying Mihesuah's explanation of cultural adherence among Cherokee women is the assumption that assimilation into white society was a goal shared by the

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[33]Mihesuah, 2-5, 21, 105 and 108.

majority of women educated at the Cherokee Female Seminary. Scholarly discussions of ethnic identity among the métis, however, revolve around a somewhat different concept: whether or not the métis formed a distinct ethnic group derived from but identified separately from their Indian and white roots. An application of this scholarship to the métis students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon will be pursued in Chapter 3.

Religion

Most western historians put a Protestant face on religion on the frontier, especially the Pacific Northwest, leaving the rich Catholic history of this region to be told mostly by Catholic religious for Catholic audiences. For its part, Catholic scholarship varies widely in its embrace of recent trends in historical writing, resulting in quality of output ranging from near-hagiography to cutting-edge scholarship. The work of scholars such as Joseph Mannard and Thomas Spalding shows great promise in American Catholic studies, as does an initial effort by church historians to take a regional look at Catholicism in the West in the Fall 1994 issue of the *U.S. Catholic Historian*, devoted to frontier Catholicism.[34]

Religion figures prominently in this study for a number of reasons. First of all, the female teachers recruited to instruct fur-trade daughters were Catholic nuns. Surely, women religious were the most active and successful educators in the western

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[34]For example, Mannard, "Protestant Mothers" and "Maternity . . . of the Spirit: Nuns and Domesticity in Antebellum America," in Nancy Cott, ed., *History of Women in the United States,* Vol. 13 (Munich: KG Saur, 1993), 74-93; Thomas W. Spalding, "Frontier Catholicism," *Catholic Historical Review* 77 (July 1991): 470-84; *U.S. Catholic Historian.* 12 (Fall 1994).

world at the time, including the predominantly Protestant United States. Their choice as educators of young women belies the importance placed on religious and moral values. Indeed, nineteenth-century women perpetuated religious ideals through their central role within the family, and they set the moral standard for the household. The men of the fur trade were quite explicit about the fact that they wanted their daughters to be instilled with strong religious and moral values so that they could lead respectable lives, pass Victorian values on to their children, and be an example of wholeness and faithfulness to their husbands. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have shown in their study of the English middle class that a respectable wife was a key ingredient to the economic success of a middle-class family, for a man's ranking in the business world depended on his respectability, judged not only by his own actions, but by the reputation of his wife and children. English middle-class people held a "preoccupation with the domestic as a necessary basis for a good Christian life." These were the ideals held by officers of the fur-trade, and were expected to be emulated by the servant class. Indeed, the fact that men of the servant class called for Catholic nuns to educate their daughters in the Willamette Valley underscores the pervasiveness of these ideals. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur fulfilled their wishes by teaching the skills necessary for women to uphold these middle-class ideals. Officers and servants alike who enrolled their daughters in the Oregon schools embraced the English middle-class notion that "their children's inheritance should be their education and religious principles."[35]

That is not to say that religion elevated a person's social standing. Religion, in fact, reinforced notions of class. In English society, and presumably in American, religious affiliation paralleled class divisions. For Protestants in the English towns

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[35]Mannard, "Protestant Mothers,": 18; Davidoff and Hall, 450 and 21.

studied by Davidoff and Hall, denominational choice generally mirrored rank within the middle class. Methodist, Baptist, and Independent Anglican churches were populated by the lower ranks and Quaker, Unitarian, Congregational and Anglican by the higher ranks. Roman Catholicism does not even enter into Davidoff and Hall's discussion, but in America, Catholicism was considered the religion of immigrants and the working poor, although later in the nineteenth century the ranks of middle-class Catholics in this country swelled.[36]

On the other hand, religion brought people together, and therefore is an important factor in studying group cohesion. Access to a parish church was one factor in determining location of settlement. Important relationships built in church gatherings and formalized in church rituals often had wider social and economic implications. For the French Canadians, family and religious ties were especially strong. However, the early Catholic clergy in the Pacific Northwest were not bent on creating ethnic enclaves, but hoped to attract Catholic immigrants of diverse backgrounds to their churches. Even though many of the early Catholic religious spoke French, priests and nuns adopted the English language in Catholic churches and schools as soon as American and Irish immigrants outnumbered French Canadians in Oregon.[37]

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[36]Davidoff and Hall, 24. The United States equivalent of Anglican is Episcopalian. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States sprang forth from the colonial Church of England, and is united with worldwide Anglican churches through its participation in the Anglican Communion.

Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present,* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1985), 156.

[37]Dolan, 153, 178, and 162. Ethnic enclaves within the Catholic church in the Pacific Northwest appeared later, especially German (ca. 1870s). This was true in other areas of the country. See Dolan, 162-5; Patricia Brandt and Lillian A. Pereyra, *Adapting in Eden: Oregon's Catholic Minority, 1838-1986* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2003), 29 and 33. English appears sparsely in the St. Paul Catholic Church Register beginning in 1854, but is already in use by some of the priests in Oregon City in 1846. Irish priests appeared in Oregon Catholic Churches in 1854, and some of the Jesuits came to Oregon from the United States, although they were of European birth. Catholic Church in Oregon Records, MSS 1580, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

Although the Catholic Church was a binding influence among the métis and had an especially strong following among fur traders and Indians in the Pacific Northwest, not all fur-trade families were Catholic. The French Canadians, who were largely restricted to the lower class of the fur trade, adhered strongly to the Roman faith, even in the isolation of the fur trade, but they were not always perfect practitioners of their faith. Scots tended towards Presbyterianism, and the English generally followed the precepts of the Anglican Church. Both of the latter groups held a certain disdain for the Catholic Church, which in some cases resulted in their refusal to send their daughters to the SNDN schools. John Work, Chief Trader at Fort Simpson, expressed his objections to Sir George Simpson in a letter written shortly after the Sisters' arrival:

> I understand Nuns from Belgium came . . . there [Fort Vancouver] last summer and that the do[ctor?] has been recommending them as tea[chers?] to some of the Gentlemen but not to me. I don't like Catholicism.[38]

Fur-trade families were not the only ones to send their daughters to SNDN schools in Oregon. American and Irish immigrants also enrolled in the Oregon City academy, and will be considered in this study as well, although the main focus is on fur-trade daughters.

According to historian Timothy L. Smith, religion supersedes language or nationality in determining the maintenance of an ethnic identity in America. Emigrants to the United States came out of "a long existing cultural diversity . . .

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[38]John Work, Letter to George Simpson, 8 October 1844, Hudson's Bay Company Archives Microfilm D.5/12 fo. 399. Transcribed by Anne Morton, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, to whom the author is indebted for this source. Fragments missing where page is torn. The "doctor," presumably, is John McLoughlin, Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, a Catholic and active promoter of education and the SNDN schools.

On the faithfulness of French Canadians, see Dolan, 178. Highland Scots were, however, often Catholic.

[and] regrouped on this side of the Atlantic into larger aggregations that both preserved and revised inherited patterns of language, religion, and regional culture." It follows that religion was a significant factor in the creation or absence of a métis ethnic identity. Religion, too, must have influenced settlement patterns of fur-trade offspring, and their integration into the dominant society. Certainly, in the mid-nineteenth century, religion and education went hand-in-hand in the work of civilizing and acculturating, allowing faithful educated métis an entry into mainstream white society. The scholarly literature, however, completely ignores religion as a factor in the métis's isolation from or integration into the dominant society, or its relationship to socioeconomic divisions within the fur trade itself. With this study, the author hopes to begin the discussion of the role of religion in configuring social and familial ties for métis in the Pacific Northwest.[39]

Gender

As discussed above, gender divisions in Euro-American society solidified by the mid-nineteenth century, with women firmly planted in the role of religious and moral standard-bearer for the family and middle-class women, at least, fairly restricted to the realm of the household. Women's educational opportunities for all classes expanded tremendously throughout the century as parents sought to prepare their daughters for their important, albeit restricted, role in society. Female Catholic congregations found themselves at the center of this educational mission, using their

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[39]Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83 (October 1978): 1158.

special status as unmarried women to venture to remote regions to spread the gospel of "True Womanhood." Catholic education in the nineteenth century, then, provides a rich context for exploring notions of gender.[40]

Gender differences had a tremendous impact on the lives of métis, and on their own ethnic identity. By-and-large, girls fared better socially in the white world, in part because the absence of white women in the fur-trading frontier made them desirable marriage partners for white men. Métis girls gained in social standing by "marrying up" to a white officer, but métis men had fewer opportunities for upward social mobility through marriage. Girls were also less likely to be sent away for education or vocational training, so they remained closer to their families. In the fur trade, and among French Canadians and Scots especially, relationships with family and community played a central role. In contrast to their fur-trade sisters, male métis experienced more discrimination, especially in the post-merger fur trade, and often found themselves at both a physical and emotional distance from their families. The resulting resentment of or displacement from the dominant culture may have made métis men more likely to identify themselves as "Métis." On the other hand, Jennifer Brown hypothesizes that women were central to the transmission of métis culture.[41]

This thesis clearly concentrates on fur-trade daughters, so the discussion of gender is admittedly one-sided. As far as is practical, the research followed the brothers of these young girls, but with so large a sample, any comparisons drawn from

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[40]The classic study of nineteenth-century ideals of womanhood is Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, 2 (1966): 151-74. A more recent exploration of the topic is found in Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States,* Yale Historical Publications Series (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1991.

[41]Jennifer Brown, "Diverging Identities: The Presbyterian Métis of St. Gabriel Street, Montreal," in *The New Peoples*, 203-4, and Jennifer S. H. Brown, "Woman as Centre and Symbol in the Emergence of Métis Communities," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3 (1983) 1: 39-46.

the limited data gathered is woefully superficial. This would be, however, a potentially fruitful area of study to anyone interested in taking on the arduous task of tracing both the male and female lineage of these large pioneer families.

The main contribution of this study is in its examination of "cultural contact and transformation" between women of diverse ethnicities, which historians Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz identify as "so important in understanding the development of . . . cultural arenas crucial to women's history concerns." As the field of women's studies matures, scholars are coming to grips with the fact that race and class color individual and group experience as much as gender does, and that all three must be taken into account. DuBois and Ruiz call for a multicultural approach sensitive to socioeconomic dynamics, since "The history of women cannot be studied without considering both race and class." Accordingly, in this present work, gender will not be considered as a separate category for discussion but will be incorporated throughout the text.[42]

In conclusion, the aim of this study is to explore the way in which class, ethnicity, religion, and gender worked together to determine the impact of cultural contact and change upon the students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon, especially fur-trade daughters. This sample of SNDN students drawn from the 1850 census provides an excellent model for exploring these issues. Differences between the two Catholic girls' schools and the students enrolled in them provide an unprecedented opportunity for comparing fur-trade daughters by social class, a discussion informed by the dynamics of racial mixing within fur-trade society.

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[42]Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History* (New York: Routledge, 1990), xii-xiii.

Moreover, the mingling of fur-trade students with new Irish and American immigrants in the Oregon City school reflects the larger cultural, social, and ethnic dynamics of the Oregon Country during a formative period in the region's history, and offers a test for the strength of both métis ethnic identity and acculturation to white ways among fur-trade daughters. Finally, this study examines the role of religion on the formation of these girls into women, and explores the relationship between religion, ethnicity, class, gender and culture. In exploring these issues, the author hopes to open a window into a dynamic and transformational process of social and cultural adaptation among a small but significant group of young women in pioneer Oregon.

CHAPTER 1

FUR-TRADE SOCIETY

Introduction

At the heart of this investigation of the education of fur-trade daughters in Oregon is fur-trade society, the forces that shaped it, and its eventual demise. The fur trade was a commercial monopoly of an imperial power operating in remote regions of North America, the most remote being the Pacific Northwest. For its very existence, the fur trade depended on a web of relations with local Indians, who became not only trading partners but, through traders' alliances with Indian women, also became an integral part of fur-trade society.

Fur-trade society is the distinct milieu created from the mixing of fur-trade men with Native women and the mingling of their diverse European and Indian cultures. Historian Richard White elucidates in his book, *The Middle Ground*, that fur-trade society arose out of a complex cultural mixing that resulted in negotiated and continually changing social and economic practices between Indian and non-Indian participants. Negotiations took place on every level, from the quotidian to formal diplomacy, as individuals and groups worked to establish and maintain a peaceful coexistence. White speaks of this whirlpool of negotiation and accommodation as "the middle ground . . . the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages," which was maintained only in the presence of a relative balance of power between the Native and Euro-American

realms. White continues, "It is the area between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat."[43]

Once Indian power eroded and Euro-Americans gained the upper hand, the middle ground collapsed, and Indians became marginalized as "the other." At that point, the dynamic of acculturation replaced accommodation, so that instead of a more-or-less balanced blending of cultures, the cultural traits of the more powerful group, the Euro-Americans, became dominant.[44]

Such was the case in the Pacific Northwest in 1850. After a relatively short period of about fifty years of accommodation and cultural mixing on the part of the fur trade and Native groups, forces acting on both entities led to the demise of both Native society and the fur trade, and consequently, the middle ground, fur-trade society. American settlement, and the imperialism ushered in with it, delivered the final blow to fur-trade society in the Oregon Country. Disease, war, and other factors already threatened the Native population, as economic, social, and political factors lessened the significance of the fur trade in this region. The California gold rush, although a temporary boon to the Hudson's Bay Company, caused further disruption of the social order by draining the region of many fur-trade men and their families.[45]

To understand this final phase of fur-trade society in Oregon, one must also understand the complex and long-standing relationship between settlement and the fur trade. Settlement came in a number of different forms, overlapping in a web of settlement, including native and non-native; missionary, American agrarian, and fur

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[43]White, *Middle Ground*, x and 53.

[44]White, *Middle Ground*, xv and 518.

[45]John Hussey, *The History of FortVancouver. and Its Physical Structure,* (Portland: Washington State Historical Society, 1957), 98.

trade, located near fur-trade posts and in other geographically important areas. Much of it was concentrated in the Willamette Valley where the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur built their schools.

Missionaries played a central role in motivating and facilitating settlement. Missionaries, such as the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, favored settlement in order to have a stationary constituency to proselytize. They also embraced agrarian settlement as an accepted sign of civilization conforming to Euro-American ideals. To support this goal, they built institutions, educated children, and even demonstrated by their own agrarian efforts the way to a settled, productive, and godly life. This was the work of acculturation. Within this framework of settlement, and religious and cultural formation, the métis students at Oregon SNDN schools learned to adapt to a new way of life that was not entirely unfamiliar, but that held little in common with the Native traditions of their maternal (and sometimes also paternal) heritage.

The evolution and demise of fur-trade society plays an integral part in the story of the young women who attended early Catholic schools in Oregon. Their births took place within a social framework of accommodation between their Native and Euro-American parents, but in a few short years, these same girls were encouraged to integrate into the newly dominant white American society, with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur serving as agents of acculturation. To understand the circumstances surrounding these daughters in 1850, it is important to trace fur-trade society to its roots, and to examine the forces giving shape to the new society of mid-century Oregon.

Fur trade, religion, and settlement

What in the first place had driven nations and corporations to exploit vast regions of unknown territory and hunt furbearing animals to the brink of extinction? No lesser force than European fashion. During the latter half of the sixteenth century, garments of fashionable French aristocrats at court incorporated fur trim, sparking moderate interest in a variety of North American furs. When milliners discovered that beaver hair could be turned into a fine felt perfectly suited for hat-making, the beaver hat became all the rage and the fur trade of enormous economic importance.[46]

From that point, European interest in North America was largely propelled by a desire to obtain furs both for European markets, and for trade to China for oriental goods for sale in Northern Europe and the colonies. The French and British pioneered the trade in Canada, while the Dutch and Pilgrims extended its reach into the continental United States. Spain and Russia pioneered trade on the Pacific coast. Much of the early seventeenth-century efforts to exploit this trade were accompanied by a search for a direct route to East Asia, the elusive northwest passage. This quest continued intermittently throughout the next two centuries, while the fur trade became a constant and significant economic factor in European involvement in North America.[47]

Global expansion of European commercial interests coincided with an equally fervent expansion of religious missionary zeal. North America offered not only economic opportunity in its vast unmined fur reserves, but also spiritual opportunity in

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[46]Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 3d ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1969), 26.

[47]McInnis, 100.

the unconverted souls of its Native peoples. For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to examine only the French and British trade and, to a limited extent, later American involvement.

The French trade came first. From the start of French commercial endeavors in the area now known as Canada, "There were two main interests in New France, conversion of the Indians and conversion of beaver into peltry." Both efforts, unwittingly or not, paved the way for settlement.[48]

In New France, the fur trade expanded its territory to avoid the threat of settlement. As fur was hunted out and settlement grew, the territory widened. This pattern repeated itself in every place the trade ventured. Initially, Indians brought furs to the St. Lawrence, but as the supply of fur-bearing animals was depleted in this area, the trade moved farther afield. This expansion created higher overhead costs for transportation and supplies, and increased time from trap to market. The need to reach more distant Indians for trade created a large cadre of *coureur du bois* (unlicensed trappers who sold their furs to fur trading merchants), and developed a complex network of social and trade relations with Native peoples. Such was Canadian enthusiasm for the trapping life that "Every young Canadian of spirit became an explorer or a coureur de bois, and the more adventurous of these traveling salesmen of the fur business had reached the Dakotas before Englishmen had attained the crest of the Appalachians."[49]

The first French investors bartered with their government for franchises to do business in New France, agreeing to a program of exploration, settlement, and

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[48]Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg, *A Concise History of the American Republic*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 31.

[49]Morison, et al., 43; Johansen, 63-4.

proselytizing Indians. Although coupled from the onset of France's seventeenth-century colonial experiments in New France, the relationship between religion and the fur trade grew strained over time, to the point that traders and missionaries viewed each other as threats to their success in the New World. While exploration fit into efforts to expand commercial territories, settlement and religious activity had the opposite effect. By 1620, it was clear to the newly incorporated Company of New France Composed of the Hundred Associates that large-scale settlement would reduce profits from importing European goods by producing cheaper commodities at the point of need. Furthermore, the presence of settlers would impinge on trade relations with the Indians and spoil trapping grounds. The fur trade depended above all on a very large open range for trapping and a good rapport with the resident Indians. These Indians produced the bulk of furs, which they gathered during hunts fit into their seasonal rounds, requiring unfettered access to hunting grounds. Settlement blocked access to hunting grounds or destroyed wood and wetland animal habitat, and disrupted other subsistence activities, putting Natives' self-sufficiency at risk. In effect, settlement interfered with the beaver and the Indian, two crucial components of the fur trade.[50]

While many fur-trade investors counted themselves among the religious faithful, they soon discovered that missionary efforts worked against their commercial interests precisely because the missionaries strove to create a stationary constituency. Jesuit and other Catholic missionaries complained of the difficulty in converting and serving the Indians because their nomadic way of life did not conform to the parish-based ministry of the church, and worked to move the Indians toward agricultural settlement. Compounding the clerics' grief, non-Native trappers adopted a similarly

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[50]McInnis, 26 and 34.

nomadic lifestyle, putting them beyond surveillance by the church. Not only did they violate strict sexual norms imposed by the church in their relationships with Native women, but they often offended their Native hosts as well. This drove the Jesuits to the conclusion that the Indians must be kept separate from the French settlers until they were converted; separate, too from the corrupting influence of the trappers. But without contact between trapper and Indian, and the mobility necessary to maximize hunting returns, the fur trade would not exist, and the economy of New France would be in shambles.[51]

While fur traders worked against settlement, the church worked toward it. The church was a formidable force in New France, as it was on the Continent, and it held more than a quarter of royal land grants in the colony. Fortunately for proponents of the fur trade, the independent, adventurous, and more profitable life of the *coureur du bois* held greater appeal to the robust young men of the colony than farming under the feudal seigniory system.[52]

In sum, there was a fundamental incompatibility between the fur trade and settlement, and by extension, religious missionary activity. At the same time, through its extensive exploration and establishment of commercial outposts, the fur trade opened North America to settlement. This irony eventually factored into the trade's demise.[53]

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[51]McInnis, 78, 82-3, 91. Brown, *Strangers,* 2-6. Jesuits are well known for their ability to immerse themselves in foreign cultures in order to more successfully work toward winning souls. Their ultimate goal, however, was not to adapt the Christian religion to the culture in question, but to bring about a cultural as well as religious conversion. Gibson, 97-98.

[52]McInnis, 76, 90.

[53]McInnis, 70-1 and 21-7

With the French trade in full swing, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) received its Royal Charter from the British government in 1670, and with it exclusive rights to the vast watershed of Hudson's Bay for the purpose of natural resource extraction and maritime exploration. Although initially based around the bay, the HBC expanded to keep up with its competition, establishing its first inland post, Cumberland House, in 1774.[54]

The HBC, controlled centrally by its shareholders in London and administered in the colony by a governor for each district, had a centralized physical and organizational structure in its chartered area. Based at large posts, the rather stationary traders relied on Indians to bring furs to them. The trading posts themselves were settlements, although ideally designed more as monasteries for commercial purposes, with fur-trade employees as celibate monks whose dealings with Native groups were limited to "business only."

Indian villages grew up around the posts (called the Home Guard or *Gardins*) as trade developed with Native groups. Native peoples near the forts became dependent on the Company for food as well as the European manufactured goods that had initially drawn them to the trade. According to Elizabeth Vibert, a number of factors were at play. Environmental fluctuations and overhunting reduced some of the food supply. On the other hand, some groups altered their seasonal rounds to suit the demands of the fur trade and thus relied more on supplies from the posts or easily obtainable seasonal foodstuffs. Other groups turned to the posts in time of need, further increasing demand. Furthermore, asserts Pacific Northwest historian Dorothy

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[54]McInnis, 206-8; Morison, et al, 110. The French preceded the HBC in trade by about 150 years.

The HBC charter, incidentally, also included a commitment to colonize. Gibson, 10.

Johansen, the Hudson's Bay Company credit system with its high-priced goods kept the Indians perpetually in debt.[55]

Following the British conquest of New France in 1763, other British (mostly Highland Scots) venturers followed the French model of small independent merchant-traders contracting with the *coureur du bois*. Most of the remaining French merchants could not keep up with the growing costs of trading over an ever-expanding territory, but the Scots and a few of the French prospered, eventually forming a coalition of their smaller concerns into a new enterprise, the North West Company (NWC) in 1783-1784. The coalition offered a way to share costs but still maintain the fluidity of a loosely-organized and independent trade network. The NWC used a system of small trading posts to facilitate trade with local Indians, and relied heavily on sustained and local contact between traders in the field and Indians who provided furs. Aggressive trapping forced continued territorial expansion, eventually necessitating the construction of posts in the interior and all the way to the Pacific Coast. Settlement also moved territory further West, but at the same time the need to preserve trapping lands and the recruitment of men in their prime who would otherwise be farming slowed settlement.[56]

Because of its lesser dependence on fixed trading posts and a large itinerant labor force of *coureur du bois,* the North West Company offered a formidable challenge to the Hudson's Bay Company. Clashes between the two companies resulted in the 1821 forced merger of the two competitors into an enlarged Hudson's Bay

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[55]Vibert, 187-96; Johansen, 125.

[56]McInnis, 88-90; Morison, et al, 63; Brown, *Strangers* , xi; Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia, revised ed.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 33-4. Reorganization in 1787 and then merger of the New North West Company (or XY Company) with the Northwest Company in 1804 further strengthened the Montreal-based venture. McInnis, 209; Johansen, 65. The NWC conducted the first land-based trade in the Pacific Northwest.

Company, bringing an end to the fierce rivalry. Since the employees of the NWC outnumbered the HBC by about five to one, it was a bit like David defeating Goliath. David's territory now included all of British North America except for settled eastern provinces; that is, from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean. Skillful management of the newly enlarged HBC strengthened the British trade in the face of growing competition from American interests.[57]

The fur-trade hierarchy

The fur trade was a business concern in a distant land, but its founders' commercial practices and social patterns carried over across the Atlantic. The major fur trade companies represent this well. The North West Company, based in Canada, retained a fluidity inherited from its foundation as a coalition of Scottish trading interests, and its trading partners in the field held a stake in the business. In organizational structure, it followed the French model, although the very tight bonds of kinship among Scots families, both in Canada and Scotland, heavily influenced personnel choices and business partners. Generally speaking, in the Montreal-based North West Company, Scottish merchants formed the managing commercial partnership, employing Scots and Englishmen from tenant-farming and trades families to be trained in the professional class (*bourgeois*), while French Canadian, métis, Iroquois, and Scots' islanders *voyageurs* provided mobility throughout the wilds of Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company, on the other hand, reflected the more rigid class

[57]Gordon B. Dodds, *The American Northwest: A History of Oregon and Washington* (Arlington Height, Illinois: Forum Press, 1986), 39; Gibson, 10-14; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 11-2. The two companies had a combined force of 1500 servants at the point of merger. Barman, 39-40.

distinctions of English society and exercised firm centralized control over its trading network. It was a highly structured corporation headquartered in far-away London. Hudson's Bay Company officers were recruited from English families, while the servants were Orkney and "Iroquois" (a term referring broadly to eastern natives). A physical separation at Company posts reinforced the class structure, with officers ("gentlemen") housed inside the stockade, and servants outside, in "Kanaka Village." Regardless of their very different corporate styles, the companies shared an essentially bipartite social structure and the influence of British social expectations.[58]

The greater fluidity of the NWC made it sometimes possible to move up in rank, but even in the HBC, some men rose from the lower ranks to positions of leadership when experienced men were in short supply. Historian Jennifer Brown, however, notes a hardening of social stratification following the 1821 merger, which resulted in new limitations placed on métis men, the mixed-blood sons of tradesmen and their Indian country wives. To compound the problem, in the early years of the newly consolidated HBC, Governor George Simpson urged district managers to limit their employee base, so new openings in high positions were few. Métis sons of fur-trade officers were increasingly frustrated by their lack of opportunity within the trade. Racial prejudice played an increasing role in employment decisions, and métis sons had less access to the more sophisticated education then required to secure a high-level

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[58]Vibert, 40 "Iroquois" was used broadly to refer to eastern natives, many of whom had some exposure to Catholicism. Many Iroquois found employment in the fur trade. Among those who worked in the Pacific Northwest, several retired at French Prairie. Mikell De Lores Wormell Warner and Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver, Volumes I and II, and Stellamaris Mission* (St. Paul, OR: French Prairie Press, 1972), A-39-40. Hussey, "The Women of Fort Vancouver," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 92 (Fall 1991): 278-9.

post in the trade. At the same time, the Company was able to draw from a greater supply of educated white men coming into the trade.[59]

As a result of new employment policies, the trade became more tightly stratified socially and more racially segregated. Racial theories of the day supported the notion that human races were innately different, creating levels of superiority. Whites were thought to be of superior intelligence and motivation in comparison to Indians; métis fell somewhere in between. These differences could not necessarily be overcome by education or other efforts of acculturation.[60]

The root of much of the racial prejudice within the fur trade was the Governor himself. George Simpson was notorious for his narrow prejudices, as betrayed in his character book, where he privately logged his impressions of HBC employees. Of Simon McGillivray, Jr., métis Chief Trader of Fort Nez Percés from 1831-2, Simpson wrote:

> Has a good deal of the Indian in disposition as well as in blood and appearance, and if promoted would be likely to ride on the top of his commission and assume more than it is either fit or proper he should have an opportunity of doing; in short I think he would make a bad use of the influence he would acquire by promotion, and be a very troublesome man.[61]

George Simpson was a formidable force in the fur trade, reigning as the sole governor of North American operations from 1839-60, reflecting both his competence as an administrator and respect engendered from London. Although always keen to

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[59]Brown, *Strangers*, 30. Theodore Stern, *Chiefs and Chief Traders: Indian Relations at Fort Nez Percés, 1818-1855*, vol. 1 (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1993), 83-6.

[60]Pollard, "The Making of the Métis," 377-90.

[61]Qtd. in Stern, vol. 1, 94. McGillivray was the son and namesake of a leading partner in the North West Company who was a chief negotiator for representing the NWC on the boundary question. Frederick Merk, *The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), 400.

put economic concerns first, Simpson was eager to fulfill the expectations of his rich and powerful superiors. The rigid class structure further reinforced prejudice, and cast employees into certain economic roles based on their race or ethnicity. Opportunity for education also varied according to one's class and/or race; the two were tightly intertwined.

Thomas McKay, stepson of Fort Vancouver's Chief Factor John McLoughlin, was bitterly disappointed to reach no higher than the position of clerk, due to George Simpson's opposition. Another Columbia District employee, Michel Laframboise, was also frustrated not to advance beyond post master and interpreter. Simpson is reported to have preferred loyal English and Scots or men with military service to métis, whom he mistrusted, for professional positions. The choice of Pierre Pambrun, Chief Trader at Fort Nez Percé, one of the few high-ranking French Canadian officers in the Company, is credited to his service in the War of 1812.[62]

Following the 1821 merger of the HBC and the NWC, the structure of the fur trade largely followed the HBC model: The upper rank or officer class consisted of trained professionals: chief factors, chief traders, clerks, doctors, and other professionals. Chief factors led entire districts, while chief traders supervised single posts or were on special assignment. Below them were clerks, literate and educated fellows who might advance to chief factor or chief trader. These were the administrators of the fur trade, and they considered themselves gentlemen. The lower rank, or servant class, consisted of post masters, craftsmen, canoemen, laborers, and trappers (*voyageurs* and *engagés*). The new intermediary category of post master provided employment for métis men but kept them out of the officer class. Some who

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[62]Hussey, *Champoeg*, 93 and 102; Jackson, *Children*, 67-82.

had previously served as clerks before the merger were demoted to this position after 1821.[63]

In general, the upper class was literate and the lower class was not. Remuneration differed sharply: chief factors and chief traders held shares in the company in addition to their salary according to their rank; servants were little more than contract workers who relied on the company for most of their material needs and had little to show after spending their meager earnings at the company store. Entry into the officer class depended heavily upon patronage, so family and friends were of the utmost importance. In the Pacific Northwest following the merger of 1821, most of the officers were Scots, while the more populous servant class was "cosmopolitan:" French Canadians and métis; Iroquois, Abenakis, and local Indians; Orkneymen and Hawaiians.[64]

Close ties developed within these two ranks, but not necessarily between them. Brown points out ethnic and social differences between the two groups:

> voyageurs had their own distinctive ethnic identity and social and cultural attributes - distinctive values, lifestyle, tastes, music, and so forth. But these men and the bourgeois and clerks whose persons, furs and trade goods they transported on the waterways of the Northwest showed little unity as a social group.[65]

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[63]Brown, *Strangers,* 206.

[64]Johansen, 65-6; Dodds, 41-2; Brown, *Strangers*, 44-50; Stern, vol. 1, 98.
The lot of servants was so bad and such was their indebtedness that Charles Wilkes, leader of the United States Exploring Expedition, described them as "a sort of vassal." Wilkes, *Narrative,* vol. 4, 330.

[65]Brown, *Strangers*, 47-8. The NWC used the French Canadian term *bourgeois* for its top rank, equivalent to chief factors and chief traders in the HBC.

Social customs further separated them. For example, Company rules mandated that the two classes dine separately. Housing was also segregated, with officers families' dwelling in the grandest homes safely tucked within the post walls, while servants crowded into cabins on the edge of the compound. With fur trade society so sharply divided, it is easy to understand the officers' frustration when they were unable to place their sons within the upper ranks. (Daughters, however, might fare better, because they had the potential of marrying above their station.)[66]

Despite social distinctions within the corporate structure and the differences between the major fur companies, taken as a whole, the fur trade in North America developed its own distinct social practices and norms. These were an amalgamation of English, French, Scottish, and various Indian practices, born in isolation from the so-called "civilized world," but catering to the economic and social needs of a shared endeavor. This mix of European and Indian evolved into a unique "fur trade society."

Jennifer Brown describes fur-trade society as incomplete in its social development, brokering between its two parent societies but never quite filling in the gaps caused by isolation from both. It was by its very nature an accidental society, arising out of a business venture and diplomatic negotiations. The business of melding together customs from many different Indian and non-Indian groups was tricky enough, but the trade was also susceptible to the whims of the market, the availability of natural resources, and cooperation with often unpredictable independent brokers (both *coureurs du bois* and Indians). Over and above factors directly effecting the trade, revolution and industrialization brought profound changes to European and American society, with new forms of government, a new standard of living, and a new social order. The change from a household-based and agrarian economy to a factory-

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[66]*Strangers*, 205; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 125; Vibert, 109-11.

based industrial economy caused stress and a number of social changes. Both the middle and wage-laboring classes swelled. A new market economy spawned competition, opening the possibility of upward mobility, but also the potential for bankruptcy.[67]

Concurrently, Euro-American and Native societies responded to pressures and strains brought on by Indian-white contact and competition with each other for trade goods and natural resources. Native Americans succumbed to disease and were increasingly marginalized by encroaching settlement and the policies adopted to support it. A cascade of social and cultural changes followed economic innovations and the introduction of European goods. These changes ranged from the increased status of women involved in a more profitable trade network to religious power boosted by the possession of certain coveted items obtained by trading with Europeans.[68]

These monumental changes challenged carefully brokered relationships and coincided with changes in the traders' social expectations. As Indian power eroded and Euro-American society took more interest in the moral behavoir of its members, tradesmen and their corporate sponsors took more interest in earning respectability in white society. This profoundly altered fur-trade society and brought the fur trade to a turning point in the Pacific Northwest by 1850.

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[67]Brown, *Strangers*, xvii-xviii; Davidoff and Hall, 18-28.

[68]Changes brought on by the introduction of European goods is a topic of much scholarly discussion. One of the best overall treatments is found in Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Disease such as smallpox, measles, and malaria decimated the Indian population of the Pacific Northwest. Boyd estimates a population decline of ninety percent for Lower Columbia Indians during a fifty-year period ending in 1855. Boyd, Robert T.,. "The Introduction of Infectious Diseases Among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, 1774-1874," (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1985), 520.

Women in fur-trade society

One remarkable fact about the fur trade is of greatest significance to this study: white women had virtually no part in fur-trade society, at least until 1830. Not only were white women absent, but they were strictly forbidden from Company posts. Although the early Hudson's Bay Company, at least, expected their men to live in monastic celibacy, in the isolation of the trading post men yearned for the comforts of home and found them in the company of Native women. The North West Company adopted more permissive policies following the French model and permitted its men, regardless of rank, to enjoy the companionship of Indian women. Over the years, many of these casual alliances evolved into committed and lasting relationships. These relationship became known as "country marriages"; in French, *mariage à la façon du pays.*[69]

A number of different official positions were taken on the issue of marriage between tradesmen and Native women. The French royal government wavered in its response to sexual relations between traders and Native women. It alternatively imported white women eligible for marriage or promoted the intermarriage of French and Indians, hoping to absorb the Native peoples into French society. Canadian historian Edgar McInnis brands the latter effort a failure, claiming that most Native women and their children eventually returned to live with their tribes and sustain their own culture. Even those who stayed with their white mates largely maintained Native ways, adapting them for the fur trade. Surely, white women were no match for their Native counterparts in serving the economic needs of the traders, nor were they likely willing to follow their spouses into the trading frontier. Bowing to pressure from the

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[69]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 28.

church, the French crown issued an edict in 1696 ordering *coureurs du bois* to marry, settle down and cease the business of trapping and trading in order to facilitate the work of Catholic missionaries. Fortunately for the continued success of the fur trade, Canadian authorities largely ignored this order.[70]

After a brief experiment allowing some officers' wives and families to join them at their posts, the British Hudson's Bay Company adopted a policy (around 1684) barring white women from the North American chartered lands, which it maintained until the 1830s. According to Jennifer Brown, the company expected both celibacy and chastity of its employees. This was, of course, neither practical nor widely practiced, and the Company, in time, took more realistic measures to deal with the situation. [71]

Lacking oversight by clergy or legal authorities, and exposed to cultures with different marriage and sexual practices, tradesmen sometimes diverged from the European norm in their relationships with Native women, by practicing polygamy or serial monogamy. Among the North Westers, many a voyageur took a new woman at each new station, either maintaining multiple relationships, or abandoning previous mates along the way. Some tribes, eager to solidify trade relations, compounded the problem by offering female slaves as prostitutes to lonely, lusty tradesmen. Even within the trade, some bourgeois sold their country wives to willing voyageurs seeking domestic partners, rather than moving them to their next assignment. By its reluctance to grant wives and families portage, the HBC unwittingly encouraged this practice.

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[70]McInnis, 82. Morison, et al., 43.

[71]A late seventeenth-century resolution of the HBC Council denied white women passage aboard ships bound to Hudson's Bay. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 173. Brown, *Strangers*, 10-13.

Women sometimes also made the choice to stay behind with their band, or refuse to travel from the familiar surroundings of the post. Nevertheless, as trade developed, relationships with Indian women regularized, and loyal, monogamous unions became the norm. In fact, by the early nineteenth century, both the NWC and HBC instituted policies encouraging marital fidelity and responsibility for families. For example, the 1824 HBC Council ordered that no employee take a wife without pledging to support her and any offspring from the union during and after his tenure in the trade.[72]

With clergy absent from trading posts until the 1820s or 1830s, these marriages were informal, largely following established Indian customs and trade practices. First, the tradesman asked for his future in-laws' consent, and then offered the appropriate bride price. Engagés in the NWC also required the permission of their *bourgeois*, a practice evidently carried into the post-merger HBC. These marriages were important to the Indians, and failure to follow customary procedures could have serious consequences. Ceremonies marking the alliance varied according to the customs of the tribe, but sometimes included pipe smoking, and perhaps a cleansing ritual for the bride. The new brides of officers adopted European dress, although somewhat modified to suit fur-trade life. It is not clear if wives of servants did so also, although forms of European dress were adopted eclectically by Indians. The appearance of a chief trader's wife on brigade to California betrays the hybrid mixture of clothing:

> Directly behind him rode his Indian wife gaily attired in the finest London broadcloth, with a wide-brimmed, feather-trimmed hat atop her wealth of long, shining black hair. The bells on her leather leggings made a musical note as her pony jogged lazily along. At her saddle bow, in a basket of native weave, hung her youngest offspring.[73]

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[72]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 27, 38, 47; Stern, vol. 1, 108.

[73]Alice Bay Maloney, ed., *Fur Brigade to the Bonaventura, John Work's California Expedition, 1832-1833* (San Francisco, 1945), iv, qtd. in Hussey, *Champoeg*, 36. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 36-7, 40, 47. *Strangers* 84-9, 108.

This hybrid dress marks the transitional nature of fur-trade society.

Reflecting their importance as an economic strategy, in the post-bound HBC, country marriages first took place between Indian women and officers, whose rank allowed certain personal privileges as well as greater advantages as allies in the eyes of the Indians. The custom spread as the fur trade became more entrenched. These early marriages met with stern disapproval from Company offices in London, where they were viewed as a financial burden for the corporation and a distraction for the officers. Regulations regarding employees' financial and moral obligations towards their wives and families demonstrate the Company's recognition that the problem would not go away.[74]

In the years leading up to the NWC-HBC merger, male-female partnerships became both more acceptable and more enduring. "By 1821," Jennifer Brown writes, "when the companies merged, practically all officers of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, and many lower-ranked employees as well, were allied with women born in the Indian country." Country marriages became so commonplace that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company gave up trying to suppress them by the early nineteenth century, and shifted their attention to a growing population of native-born offspring.[75]

Even after the coalition of 1821, when clergy were more available to perform the marriage rite, the practice of country marriage was so ingrained that many fur trade marriages were still informal. It is doubtful that these marriages would have stood up

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[74]Brown, *Strangers*, 61. On fur-trade regulations regarding employees' responsibilities towards their country families, see, for example, "Standing Rules and Regulations" in R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31,* Publications of the Champlain Society, Hudson's Bay Company Series, III (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1940), 224.

[75]Brown, *Strangers*, 109, 51, and 76.

in a European court. Indeed, many a traders' will was challenged by their British kin, especially Scots. Although country marriages were acceptable in most Canadian circles, they were not preferable. In Britain, the rights of a fur-trade widow and her children to support or inheritance could be contested. Such was the case of two Scottish North Westers in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Pacific Northwest, Samuel Black and Peter Skene Ogden. Black and Ogden, both Scots and former North Westers, followed the spirit of Scottish law when they argued that their country marriages should be considered legal, since the law required only the presence of witnesses, not clergy or a representative of the court, to render a marriage legal. Perhaps unaware of a growing intolerance for illegitimate children in British society, their failure to obtain a blessing or marriage contract left their estates vulnerable to legal challenge and their country families uncertain of their means of support. Samuel Black, Chief Factor at Kamloops until his death in 1841, drew his will before the birth of his last two children. His relatives in Scotland contested it, especially any award due to these unnamed children. At least part of the settlement was still pending in 1852. His friend, Peter Skene Ogden, retired from the trade after a distinguished career, buffered his family with a meticulously prepared will. Even so, his British family still called the document into question, under the precepts of English law whereby common-law spouse and children have no rights to inheritance.[76]

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[76]Brown, *Strangers,* 95, 98. Davidoff and Hall credit the increasing importance of marriage as central to the concept of family for the decline in legacies for illegitimate offspring, p. 321.

[Samuel Black], *A Journal of a Voyage from Rocky Mountain Portage in Peace River to the Sources of Finlays Branch and Northwest Ward in Summer 1824.,* ed. E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, vol. 18, *Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955), xcviii-c. Gloria G. Cline, *Peter Skene Ogden and the Hudson's Bay Company.* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 214-6; Archie Binns, *Peter Skene Ogden: Fur Trader* (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1967), 355-6.

Similarly, in general, both Protestant and Catholic clergy did not recognize country marriages as legitimate until solemnized, and viewed the offspring of these casual coalitions as lower-ranking socially, even those with an officer-father, because they were not born in the safe harbor of a Christian marriage. According to the *Manuel des Parents*, a guide issued by the Archdiocese of Quebec in 1851 and in the possession of Oregon missionary F. N. Blanchet, "Le mariage n'est valide que lorsqu'il est contracté selon les règles de l'Eglise." ["Marriage is valid only when contracted according to the rules of the Church."] Blanchet and his confrère Modeste Demers, however, eager to bring couples into holy union, showed considerable understanding of fur-trade society, and accepted country marriages as "natural marriages." They and other Catholic missionaries in the Pacific Northwest solemnized existing unions and did not condemn children to illegitimacy, unless the father could not be identified.[77]

Chief Factor John McLoughlin and his country wife of many years, Marguerite Wadin McKay, refused to be married by the Anglican Reverend Herbert Beaver, and failed to engage the services of any other Protestant clergy who passed their way. It was for the Rev. F. N. Blanchet alone to bless McLoughlin's beloved Marguerite as "his legitimate wife" in a solemnization ceremony. "Wishing to renew their consent of marriage in order to discharge the grave bonds on receiving the Sacrament of marriage" was enough to render their children "legitimate," including the deceased John Jr. Catholic priests, in the Pacific Northwest and at Red River, distinguished between the act of mutual consent and Sacrament but gave them both validity in the eyes of God, an act that gained them many adherents in fur-trade society. Their very

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[77]Brown, *Stangers,* 211-2. Al Mailloux, *Manuel des Parents Chrétiens, ou Devoirs des Pères et des Mères dans l'Education Religieuse de leurs Enfants* (Québec: Augustin Côté et Cie, 1851), 323. The copy examined is from the private collection of F. N. Blanchet, now at Mt. Angel Abbey Library, St. Benedict, OR. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 157.

acceptance of fur-trade marriages won them the respect of (and considerable influence over) tradesmen and their families.[78]

Added to the life of the post and brigade, the presence of women and children transformed the business into a distinct social realm. The trade itself depended upon negotiated alliances between traders and Native peoples. Country marriages played an important part in cementing trade relations, and were the key element in the aforementioned bartering between European and Native cultures that gave rise to fur trade society.

Women at and en route to fur trade posts played an important domestic role by creating the comforts of home and family, and providing loving companionship. Elizabeth Vibert also contends that the traders created a familiar and comforting environment for themselves and their families at the trade posts. George Simpson wrote of Spokane House as "a particular haven of civility, what with its ballroom, race course, garden, and liberal supplies of 'Eatables Drinkables and other *Domestic Comforts*.'"[79]

Although Indian women were a great comfort to the men of the fur trade, they had an important economic role as well. Their knowledge of the land and traditional skills bolstered the fur trade in ways white women could not. Indian women knew where to gather food and how to prepare and preserve it for a long journey or for a long winter at the fort. They trapped small animals, prepare pelts, and fish. In fact, the Nez Percés Indians, who dwelled in the eastern Snake River Country, considered

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[78]*Catholic Church Records,* Vancouver, vol. 2, p. 6, M-3.

[79]Quoted in Vibert, p. 87. Emphasis in original. Simpson, ever aware of economic considerations, did not generally approve of excess at the forts, however complementary he appears here. Gibson, 16.

beaver-hunting a task fit only for women and slaves; men did not bother with so small an animal. Peter Skene Ogden wrote in his journal during one of the Snake Country brigades, "it is a pleasure to observe the Ladys of the Camp vieing with each other who will produce . . . the cleanest and best dress'd Beaver." Native wives made moccasins, snowshoes, and clothing adaptable to the trail and cold winters, and navigated the back country in canoes they helped build. Many were multilingual, serving as language instructors, interpreters, guides, and sometimes peacemakers. Ogden's daughter Sarah recalled the protection her mother Julia provided for her father:

> . . . she was thought of a great deal with her people and had great influence among them as she was rela[ted] to all the great Chiefs of that country both on her father and mother side and thus made it safe for my father to travel among enemys as her people was a protection to him, even with the Crow nation as her father was half Crow.[80]

Even in their own tribes, many were traders, especially on the Columbia. The economic value of an Indian woman's labor was a powerful motive for tradesmen to seek a country wife. Moreover, marriage also provided an entry point for Native women into a potentially lucrative business and for some, at least, offered certain comforts otherwise unavailable to them. Women at Fort Vancouver were given store credit for agricultural and domestic work; credit they exchanged for European goods at the Company store.[81]

Most of the literature on women in the fur trade portrays the country wife as helpmate, but fails to account for the fact that Native women's involvement in trade

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[80]Stern, vol. 1, 113. Cayuse men, on the other hand, were among the few males in the region who would trap beaver. Theodore Stern, *Chiefs and Change in the Oregon Country*, Vol. 2 (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1996), xiii-xiv. Letter of Sarah McKinley to Eva Emery Dye, 20 March 1892, Eva Emery Dye Papers, MSS 1089, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. Brown, *Strangers* 64-5, 81-2; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 52-73.

[81]White, *Middle Ground*, 65 and 74. Hussey, "Women of Fort Vancouver," 286-8.

predated the arrival of the Europeans. In some groups, notably Northwest Coast Indians, women's participation in the fur trade extended a traditional pattern of economically important trade between women. Native women gained important skills through bartering with other tribes in a wide-ranging network. Their advanced negotiating skills made them natural trading partners for the Europeans, whether representing their own tribes or in alliance with the fur traders themselves. The taking of an Indian wife, therefore, not facilitated business ties through kinship relationships with high-ranking tribal members, but gained the woman's own skill and established trading network. This could also be used to the wife's benefit by raising her own status among her Native peers, as David Peterson del-Mar has shown for Chinookan Celiast Smith.[82]

Indian women eagerly adopted European tools that lightened their domestic tasks. They did their own cultural bartering, borrowing bits and pieces from each culture. Sylvia Van Kirk illustrates how they became "women in between," gaining power from their ability to negotiate between the two cultures. But as Native women moved into the fur trade world, they moved away from their own tribal roots, yet never moved completely into European society. They were thus also caught in the middle, a position that made them quite vulnerable. They gained comforts and leisure, as well as some independence, autonomy, and freedom from cultural limitations. On the other hand, they encountered condemnation of some of their cultural practices, and the absence of like-minded companions to help them through the tough times. Without

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[82]Lorraine Littlefield, "Women Traders in the Maritime Fur Trade," in *Native Peoples*, 173-85. David Peterson - del Mar, "Intermarriage and Agency: A Chinookan Case Study," *Ethnohistory* 42 (1995): 1-30.

the protection of their family of origin, Van Kirk believes that they were more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.[83]

When officers retired, they sometimes left their Native wives behind, either out of fear that their wives would not fit into European or Canadian society, or in order to marry a white woman to boost their social stature. Indian women, however, often found it difficult to return to their tribes because they were far removed physically and often also culturally. Conscientious tradesmen arranged for their fur trade wives and families to be cared for at the post, either by directing funds for their support, or by arranging for a suitable mate. (The latter was called "turning off.") Some men abandoned their wives and even their children, leaving them dependent on the goodwill of others. Fortunately, most men did whatever they could to avoid separation from their spouses.[84]

Fur-trade families

At first, children born from both casual alliances and country marriages usually returned to their mother's tribe rather than settling into post life, but this pattern changed over time. As affections grew and country marriages became a regular part of fur-trade life, families stayed together at the post. When traders relocated, some took their wives and families with them. As tradesmen became more directly responsible for their children's lives, they had to prepare their offspring for life in a world quite different from their mothers.' Although children living at the post needed to retain

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[83]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 6-8, 75-94. Littlefield, 173-85.

[84]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 50-1; Brown, *Strangers, 109.*

some of their mothers' Native skills to remain useful to the fur trade, they also needed a European-style education. In the nineteenth century, a formal education became increasingly important for male children to qualify for a respectable position in the trade, and for female children to find a respectable mate and run a household according to Euro-American middle-class standards. It was even more essential for those children, both male and female, who left the trade to join an increasingly literate British or Canadian society. To use Richard White's terminology, the middle ground was giving way to Euro-American influence; accommodation gave way to acculturation.

Officer fathers, concerned about the behavior and lifestyle of their children, were especially eager for them to learn the ways of European civilization and more cautious about their daughters' exposure to "uncivilized" Indian ways. Beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century, fathers took an active role in securing their children's future. Fathers groomed and promoted their daughters as good marriage partners, perfectly suited as a trader's wife: skilled with their hands, literate, and morally upright. Most remained close to home, although a few parents undertook the risk of sending their daughters away for schooling. As a result, in the fur trade as in English society, women maintained close ties to their families, and daughters often developed close relationships with their fathers.[85]

When feasible, officers sent their sons away to Canada or Europe for schooling and apprenticeships, just as English families sought training for their sons in other towns in England when necessary. The difference in the fur trade, of course, was in the physical distance placed between boys and their kin, which was often compounded by an emotional distance. Moreover, as discussed above, métis sons often found it

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[85]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 97-9; Davidoff and Hall, 333 and 346.

difficult to secure a suitable post within the fur trade, with relatively few entering into the officer class. Andrew Pambrun, William McBean and James D. Sinclair numbered among the exceptions, all gaining the top position at Fort Nez Percés, which was by then a dangerous post in foreign territory. In his memoir, *Sixty Years on the Frontier of the Pacific Northwest*, Andrew Dominique Pambrun boasts of the success of a few métis sons who secured good positions outside of the trade, including Alex. Ibister and J. Lumsden, both college professors, and Canadian Premier John Norquay, but he has harsh words for those families who did not adequately provide for their métis children's needs.[86]

As children became more a part of their father's world, they began to identify themselves separately from their mothers. In a sense, they became less "Indian." Subsequent generations looked more and more white, and were better able to integrate into white society, as long as the conditions were favorable. Some even went so far as to suppress their Indian identity, especially when trying to integrate into white society. Métis children were in a sense even more "in between" than their mothers, and subject to changing attitudes about racial mixing. These attitudes were codified in Oregon state law in 1866, when the legislature banned marriage between whites and Indians or half-Indians.[87]

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[86]McBean, Pambrun, and Sinclair's terms as post masters at Fort Nez Percés spanned the years 1846-55. They were the last three men in charge at this post. Anthropologist Theodore Stern speculates that this position became available to métis because it did not appeal to more desirable (white) candidates. On the other hand, it is possible that during these years of Indian-white conflict, Governor George Simpson was well advised to place a métis in this position, since métis were often skilled mediators. Stern, vol. 1, 86-8. Andrew Dominique Pambrun, *Sixty Years on the Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1978), 61-2. John Norquay served as Premier of Manitoba from 1878-89. National Archives of Canada Website, (http://collections.ic.gc.ca/portraits/docs/gov/ec012882.htm, 20 February 2004), s.v. "The Honourable Joshn Norquay, Premier of Manitoba, August, 1881."

[87]Brown, *Strangers*, 63-73; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 101-2; Peterson del Mar, 15.
A similar phenomenon took place in England, where daughters of the same generation were more sophisticated than their mothers, due to changes in English society. Davidoff and Hall, 338.

As the population of métis daughters grew, they became eligible and even preferred marriage partners within the fur trade, even to incoming white officers. This was due to a number of factors. Firmly established alliances with Indian groups eliminated the need to cement the trade relationship through marriage. Traders' daughters performed the same economic functions as their mothers, in fact, the trader sometimes got a skilled Native mother-in-law in the bargain. Métis women offered linguistic skills bridging at least two cultures. Furthermore, fur-trade daughters secured kinship ties within the trade, especially those with well-positioned fathers who promoted the interests of their new sons-in-law. By the early 1800s, fur-trade society had produced so many marriageable métis daughters that the North West Company forbid alliances with Native women but encouraged marriage with fur-trade daughters whose support was becoming an economic burden on the company's thinly-stretched resources. At the same time, officers exercised considerable pressure on the trading companies to provide for their families' present and future needs by providing such things as education.[88]

As it became commonplace within the fur trade to marry métis daughters, the act of marriage itself changed. Initially, casual and unofficial alliances sufficed, and since the HBC neither recognized nor approved of these unions, it had no mechanism in place to legitimize them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the desire to conform to British social mores increased, which by this time had evolved to bring marriage to the central place in the family. Marriage became a necessary societal seal of approval of a couple's relationship, even in the fur trade. Accordingly, when clergy were not present at a fur trade post, the highest-ranking Company official available

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[88]Brown, *Strangers,* 73-4, 96-7; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 95, 109-11.

was sought to sanction new unions. This followed the British legal definition of marriage as a civil contract. An 1836 British law authorized Justices of the Peace to perform marriage ceremonies. Many HBC chief factors also held this title. They used an approved secular contract form, usually with some economic as well as legal protections written in. A celebratory drink and dancing into the night often followed. As unions regularized, the incidence of serial monogamy and polygamy also declined. Country marriages became monogamous unions for life.[89]

Many couples later solemnized their vows in the eyes of God when missionaries came to their settlements. Most tradesmen had access to clergy by the 1830s, even in the far west. Some, like Columbia Department Chief Traders Peter Skene Ogden and Samuel Black, mentioned earlier, apparently took no interest in this option. Others waited for the right clergy. After repeated insults to his country-born wife by the Reverend and Mrs. Herbert Beaver, Fort Vancouver Chief Factor John McLoughlin refused to allow the Anglican priest to bless his marriage, although the Reverend Beaver did perform a double marriage ceremony of his daughter Eloisa and William Glenn Rae and Chief Trader James Douglas and his country wife Amelia. The Doctor chose instead to legalize his long marriage to Marguerite Wadin McKay in a secular ceremony conducted by Douglas, and a later solemnization by the Catholic missionary, Father F. N. Blanchet, when he also made firm his allegiance to the Catholic faith of his parents.[90]

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[89]Davidoff and Hall, 322-5; Brown, *Strangers*, 77-78, 142; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 114-9.

[90]*Strangers*, 137-8, 142; Dorothy Nafus Morrison, *Outpost: John McLoughlin and the Far Northwest.* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1999), 7 and 258; *Catholic Church Records,* Vancouver, vol. 2, p. 6, Profession of Faith and M3 (19 November 1842).

McLoughlin's parents adhered to the Catholic faith, while his maternal grandfather, the most powerful member of McLoughlin's extended family, was staunchly Scots Presbyterian. Grandfather Fraser sent McLoughlin's sister Marie Louise to be educated by the Ursuline nuns, and much to his

As stated above, when métis daughters grew up, they became eligible and desirable marriage partners, even preferred to Indian women. In fact, the loss of status of Indian women due to racial prejudice helped motivate fathers to acculturate their fur-trade daughters. Officers lamented the fact that their sons could not find jobs in the upper ranks of the trade, but at least their daughters were able to marry well, and sometimes even above their station. According to Davidoff and Hall, "Marriage became both symbol and institution of women's containment." This proved to be especially important in the fur trade, because an Indian woman was generally perceived not only as savage but promiscuous; a proper church wedding would reform her.[91]

Since alliances between Native women and fur-trade men had initially been restricted to the officer class in the HBC, the first eligible mixed-blood women were officers' daughters. Their fathers matched them to incoming junior officers whenever possible, although they were just as likely to settle for an acceptable match with a servant or officer's métis son. Rather the opposite occurred in the NWC, where French Canadian engagés fathered the majority of métis girls. Many found partners in the bourgeois class, who preferred them to Indian women. Most of the métis women of English-Indian descent, then, came from the upper class of the HBC, while in the NWC they were predominantly French-Indian and of the servant class. Métis

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chagrin, she joined the order, becoming Sister St. Henry and eventually Mother Superior of the Ursuline convent in Quebec. Morrison, 7-13.

Contrary to the opinion of early twentieth-century historian T. C. Elliot, McLoughlin's wife, Marguerite Wadin McKay McLoughlin, the daughter of a Swiss Protestant fur-trade officer and former wife of Protestant Alexander McKay, also converted to Catholicism. In fact, her baptism predated John McLoughlin's profession of faith. T. C. Elliot, "Marguerite Wadin McKay McLoughlin," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 36 (1935): 342-7; *Catholic Church Register,* St. Paul, vol. 1, p. 34, B-69 (11 September 1841).

[91]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 159-60, 171; Davidoff and Hall, 451.

daughters were able to breach class lines, resulting in significant racial diversity in the succeeding generations of both classes, especially after the two companies merged. By 1850, this correlation between ethnicity and class had diminished.[92]

The real threat to the popularity of métis brides came with the entry of white women into fur-trade settlements. As in other colonial settings, the presence of white women ignited prejudice and marginalized mixed-blood and Native women. In the fur trade, this occurred around 1830 when a handful of ambitious officers sought white wives in Britain and returned with them to Canada. This proved an impractical move, as most of these white women were ill-equipped to cope with the special demands of fur trade life, and in the 1840s and 1850s native-born wives again found favor. Even George Simpson, one of the first to bring a white wife to Red River, had to admit that they were out of place:

> European ladies can seldom accommodate themselves to the want of society in Hudson's Bay and affect a supercilious air of superiority over the native wives and daughters of gentlemen in the country.[93]

Mrs. Simpson was chief among those who refused the company of métis and Native women, with her husband's support. The extreme snobbery of the white women was short-lived, and by 1840 the taboo against white women fraternizing with the native-born had disappeared at Red River.[94]

By the time the white wife craze had passed, native-born women had themselves undergone a transformation through education and religious instruction.

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[92]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 108-9.

[93]Quoted in Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 216.

[94]Brown, *Strangers*, xv, 132. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 182-216.
Racism was also a threat to native-born women's virtue. New men entering the trade from Britain viewed country marriages as illegitimate, and took advantage of native women, bespoiling their reputations. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 146

Métis daughters were now even further removed than their mothers from their Native roots due to "civilizing" influences. Jennifer Brown notes a change in fur-trade society that marks a decline in the cultural negotiation of the middle ground:

> Genetically, culturally, and in their social affiliations, they exhibited far fewer Indian traits. And accordingly, fur trade social and domestic life was for some years before the end of Hudson's Bay Company control over the Northwest losing the distinctiveness that had for many years set it apart from European society or what the traders commonly described as the "Civilized world."[95]

The Northwest referred to above, however, was the established fur-trade region now called the Old Northwest, spanning the Upper Midwest and Central Canada, not the Pacific Northwest, which was then still a frontier. Marriage trends in the Oregon Country were out of step with other fur-trade regions because new trade alliances had to be formed, and few métis daughters were available to marry. Eligible white women did not come to the Pacific Northwest until the 1840s and 1850s, when the trade was coming to an end. Some men, such as John McLoughlin, did bring métis or Native wives with them from the east, while many others made alliances with Native women in the Pacific Northwest. This juxtaposition of old and new practices underscores the transitional nature of fur-trade society in the Pacific Northwest. The timeframe for mixing (i.e., the creation of the middle ground) was condensed in comparision with other fur-trade regions, and was ended preciptiously by American occupation.

This mixing of peoples caused conflict when white settlers came to Oregon. Fur traders and their families found themselves victims of harsh criticism. For example, the Anglican priest Herbert Beaver so offended Dr. John McLoughlin by his remarks about the doctor's métis wife, Marguerite, that McLoughlin caned him. This

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[95]Brown, *Strangers*, xvi.

is the most famous example, but many other men endured remarks about their "squaw wives." Life for the Native and métis women themselves must have been difficult.[96]

Although country marriages were commonplace by the time the fur trade had spread to the Pacific coast, the newly-expanded Hudson's Bay Company still considered fur-trade families a burden. George Simpson, writing in 1825 of the Columbia District, complains:

> Almost every man in the District has a Family, which is productive of serious injury and inconvenience on account of the great consumption of Provisions; . . . We must really put a stop to the practise of Gentlemen bringing their Women & Children from the East to the West side of the Mountain, it is attended with much expense and inconvenience on the Voyage, business itself must give way to domestick considerations, the Gentlemen become drones and are not disponsible in short the evil is more serious than I am well able to describe.[97]

The HBC Council passed a resolution in 1825, forbidding officers from bringing their families across the Rocky Mountains to the two westernmost districts. Some managed to keep their families together despite the restriction, while others chose local country wives. A later resolution recognizes the persistence of fur-trade families, but insists that families are the employees' responsibility, and that all officers and servants with country families "make such provision for their future maintenance, more particularly for that of the children as circumstances may reasonably warrant and the means of the individual permit" and thereafter forbids the taking of a country wife "without binding himself down to such reasonable provision and maintenance for her and children in the event of issue . . . not only during his residence in the Country, but after his departure therefrom."[98]

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[96]Morrison, 258-9.

[97]Frederick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal 1824-25* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 131.

[98]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 130. Resolution 24, 1831, in Fleming, *Minutes of Council,* 224.

Families were clearly an economic burden to the fur trade. They were not as mobile as single individuals, and required a greater social structure for their support, including schools and churches for the proper upbringing of children. Fur-trade officers did their best to provide schooling and religious instruction for their own children, and recruited teachers for more formal instruction whenever possible. Extensive informal training, provided by Indian and métis women, continued to equip women for trade-specific tasks. For a time, minimal formal European-style training offered at posts produced a class of people fit for the fur trade, either as male workers or as female helpmates. The education of fur-trade children, especially daughters, will be covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

Fur-trade retirees in the Willamette Valley

Not only were fur-trade families a burden when the male head-of-household was actively employed in the trade, but finding a suitable location for retirement presented a problem. "Retirement" in this case meant a shift in occupation, rather than a cessation of work. Many fur-trade retirees who had fulfilled their contracts still had many productive years left and young children to support. Where could tradesmen settle that their Indian wives and mixed-blood children would find acceptance and employment? The posts simply could not support a growing population, and retirement among the Indians appealed to few, especially among the officer class. The Company did not, moreover, encourage retirement near its posts, and routinely offered a one-way ticket out. Many tradesmen retired alongside fur-trade compatriots in

Eastern Canada, but for those who had no ties there, it was a lonely life. It was much more difficult to return to Britain, because of both the physical and cultural distance.[99]

Over the years, NWC bourgeois with métis wives showed a preference to settlements in Eastern Canada, while enclaves of HBC retirees in Ontario made the transition less difficult for the upper class. NWC engagés were more likely to settle with Native families *in situ* in fur trade country, becoming guides, hunters, or suppliers. "Sometimes several freemen settled in the same vicinity and formed a small community." These were often along a river, in places such as Red River and Chicago. In the Pacific Northwest, retired freemen found similar circumstances at French Prairie, with its rich riverine soil and easy access to the Willamette River for portage. They were aware, furthermore, that their Indian wives would not be acceptable in "civilized" Canada or Great Britain. The Governor and Committee did not approve of these settlements, for they feared that they would encourage others to settle, leading to large-scale farming, which would interfere with hunting and trapping. Geographer James R. Gibson suggests that at the root of this fear was not so much the ruining of game habitat by agricultural improvements, but the potential threat to the HBC's monopoly on commerce in the area.[100]

Hudson's Bay Company employees were not the first Euro-Americans to establish a presence in the Pacific Northwest, and many settlers at French Prairie had come to the area with other trading concerns. American maritime trade preceded land-

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[99]Brown, *Strangers*, 67. Bagley counts twenty-eight fur-trade forts in 1838, which generated a sizable population of retirees. Clarence Booth Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon,* vol. 2 (Seattle: Lowman and Hanford, 1932), 35.

[100]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 138; Brown, *Strangers*, 86; Gibson, 130, 144, and 193-4. The Company's policy of "trapping out" to reduce competion was the real threat to wildlife. Jennifer Ott, "'Ruining' the Rivers in the Snake Country: The Hudson's Bay Company's Fur Desert Policy." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 104 (Summer 2003): 166-95.

based British and Canadian operations in the Oregon Country, beginning when Captain Robert Gray sailed his ship the *Columbia* into the mouth of the Columbia River in May 1792. The Americans saw the market in sea otter pelts in the Orient as an entrée into the international economy. By the time of Lewis and Clark's overland expedition to the Pacific (1804-6), a dozen or more traders had visited the coast.[101]

A number of land-based American fur trading endeavors in northwest Oregon ended in failure. The first, albeit swiftly aborted, attempt was made by Captain Nathan Winship in 1810, who tried to establish a trading post forty miles inland along the Columbia River. John Jacob Astor founded a post of his Pacific Fur Company at Astoria in 1811, only to sell out to the North West Company in 1813 after a hostile takeover related to the War of 1812. The NWC had already expanded to the Pacific coast in 1807. The 1821 merger of the North West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company made the newly enlarged company the predominant British concern in the region. From then on, the Hudson's Bay Company ruled the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest, with Fort Vancouver as the local command center. From the 1820s until the last Rocky Mountain rendezvous of 1840, however, the Company received stiff competition from brigades of American trappers coming overland from the east, competing not only for furs but also for able-bodied trappers.[102]

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[101]Johansen, 48-59; Morison, et al., 233.

[102]Hussey, *Champoeg*, 27. Astor employed several French Canadian trappers. McInnis, 209, 212. The Astorian venture is thoroughly described in James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

In addition to renaming Fort Astoria after King George, the North West Company established the following posts: "Fort Okanogan, Spokane House, Kamloops, Kootenay House, Fort Alexander, and Fort Nez Percés (Walla Walla)." Johansen, 107. Johansen 61-2 and 136-9; Dodds 39-41.

The biggest years for mountain men to retire were1840 and1850, with a decline in the intervening years. Hafen, LeRoyR., ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West,* vol. 10 (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1972), 12.

Some of the Astorians left behind when John Jacob Astor sold out to the North West Company decided to settle in Oregon and work as free agents, or freemen (*lachés*). A number of these mostly French Canadian men were the first Euro-Americans to settle along the riverbank of the Willamette near French Prairie, while others chose to settle on the Tualatin Plains, at Scappoose, or on Sauvie Island. The Hudson's Bay Company forbid settlement in its chartered lands, but John McLoughlin allowed the men and their families to take up farmsteads. Indeed, some had certainly already done so. McLoughlin was resigned to the fact that there was little he could do to prevent settlement because many were American citizens and beyond his legal jurisdiction. He also had in mind the Company's obligation to supply agricultural products to Russian Alaska, and so was eager to see farms developed in the valley. Valley farms produced a surplus of wheat, which the HBC sold to the Russians. Many supplemented their income by hunting and trapping, or even raising horses. As long as fur-trade retirees were contained in a few small settlements, the trade benefitted from their agricultural production, but realized no threat to their commercial monopoly.[103]

John McLoughlin realized the potential hardship for retired tradesmen and their families back in Canada, and made accommodations where he could, but also demanded that retirees live up to his standards. Etienne Lucier, a former Astorian who settled on the Pudding River along with Joseph Gervais and their Indian wives, fit McLoughlin's criteria for a desirable settler. He agreed to Lucier's settlement "as I knew he was a good, honest man, and none but such need apply, and as if he went to Canada and unfortunately died before his children could provide for themselves they would become objects of pity and a burthen to others." In order to escape a fine for

[103]Hussey, *Champoeg*, 45; Jackson, *Children*, 89; Gibson, 5. The Columbia Department also exported wool to England.

allowing servants to settle, McLoughlin knew he "must keep him and all the Hudson Bay Company servants whom [he] allowed to settle, on the Hudson Bay Company's books as servants . . . but they would work for themselves, and no service would be exacted from them."[104]

Lucier and his friend Gervais did not disappoint McLoughlin. In fact, Oregon's first school was taught by Solomon Smith at the home of Joseph Gervais. The two French Canadians were also among those who petitioned for Catholic priests to come to the Willamette Valley. Among the first HBC retirees in the Valley, Pierre Belleque (also spelled Bélèque, Bellique, or Billeque) was also a family man, active in civic and religious affairs. His daughters Esthère and Sophia attended Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur schools.[105]

For the few servants who desired to settle with the relatives of their Indian wives, McLoughlin held firm that they should, for the sake of their children, do their best to blend in with the whites. He makes his case for assimilation and presents the Willamette Valley settlement as an acceptable alternative:

> . . . as their children would be brought up with the sympathies and feelings of Indians, and as the half-breeds are in general leaders among Indians, and they would be a thorn in the side of the whites, I insisted they should go to the Willamette, where their children could be brought up as whites and Christians, and brought to cultivate the ground and imbued with the feelings and

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[104][John McLoughlin], "Copy of a Document Found among the Private Papers of the Late Dr. John McLoughlin," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (1880): 48-9. Hussey, *Champoeg,* 33 and 53.

Other sources say Lucier had settled near the Willamette River as early as 1812. See, for example, Hussey, *Champoeg*, 33.

[105]Hussey, *Champoeg,* 62 and 67; Ruby Lacy, *1850 Oregon Territory Census,* transcribed (Ashland, OR: By the author, 1984), 58 and 185-6; Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *Oregon Accounts.*

> sympathies of whites, and where they and their mothers would serve as hostages for the good behavior of their relatives in the interior.[106]

McLoughlin's words must have carried some weight, as relatively few métis settled among the Indians. In fact, as U.S. explorer Charles Wilkes observed, Company officers held an economic and moral power over Company servants that extended into retirement, as long as the Company held a monopoly on goods in the region. This authority, Wilkes asserts, had positive consequences:

> In this way . . . order and decorum are preserved, together with steady habits, for few can in any way long withstand this silent influence. The consequence is, that few communities are to be found more well-behaved and orderly than that which is formed in the persons who have retired from the Company's service. That this power, exercised by the officers of the Company, is much complained of, I am aware, but I am satisfied that as far as the morals of settlers and servants are concerned, it is used for good purposes.[107]

"An asylum for retired servants"

The Red River colony, at the site of present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, offered a model for post-fur-trade retirement, one certainly known among the fur-trade employees in the Pacific Northwest. Between 1811 and 1817, Lord Selkirk attempted to settle poor Scottish Highlanders on land purchased from the HBC at Red River (Assiniboia), but the violent resistance of the NWC and even some factions of the HBC itself ended his scheme. The NWC objected to the settlement because it used the area as a hunting ground to secure buffalo meat used to make pemmican, a staple food

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[106][McLoughlin], "Copy," 49. It is ironic that Lucier had expressed skepticism at the Willamette's potential for civilization since the area had no Catholic priests, p. 48.

[107]Wilkes, *Narrative*, vol. 4, 330.

of the trade. The HBC, however, encouraged this settlement to continue in order to supply provisions more economically to the interior fur trade and fulfill its obligation to colonize. Added benefits included agricultural improvements to the land and "civilization of the Indians."[108]

The Hudson's Bay Company subsequently assumed responsibility for the settlement and set up a retirement colony there for the fur trade, with most of the trappings of civilization. Lord Selkirk had invited Roman Catholic missionaries, who arrived in 1818 to establish schools and churches for the French-Canadians and métis. In 1820, the HBC brought in the Reverend John West, sponsored by the Church Missionary Society (Church of England), to minister to the families of English officers. Around that time, métis hunters began to settle at Red River to farm, greatly increasing the agricultural returns and realizing the Company's goal of self-sufficiency. At Red River, the Hudson's Bay Company became a colonial agent, inviting missionaries to aid in establishing a permanent settlement. The Committee in London and Governor George Simpson predicted its importance to the trade and its employees:

> . . . the Colony will be of no small importance in furnishing provisions for the Fur Trade and will serve as an asylum for retired servants of the company who must otherwise be maintained at heavy expense at the different inland posts.[109]

Fur-trade society had taken a step in a different direction as colonial agent, a move that was to be repeated on a lesser scale in the Pacific Northwest.

George Simpson was keen to exploit the agricultural potential of the Pacific Northwest region as early as 1822, as a means to expand the trade and make it more self-sufficient. In fact, central operations moved from Astoria to Fort Vancouver

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[108]Governor Joseph Berens quoted in Gibson, 10. Gibson, 10-11; Mackie, 230-22.

[109]Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire,* 250. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 145.

because "it was a place where we could cultivate the soil and raise our own provisions." Impressive farms supported tradesmen at Forts Vancouver, Langley, and Colvile, with Fort Vancouver producing sufficient agricultural goods to support its employees by 1828. Fishing, sawmilling, and other industries were added at Fort Vancouver. Fort Nez Percés and Thompson's River (Kamloops) specialized in horse breeding.[110]

International politics motivated the Company to take these agricultural initiatives seriously, but the main impetus was economics. In order to renew its License of Exclusive Trade, due to expire in 1842, the HBC moved to expand settlement, promising to bring British citizens to the region. This would bolster the British claim to the area jointly occupied with the United States since 1818. The international boundary between the United States and Canada was extended westward from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains in an 1818 convention between the United States and Great Britain, but left the Pacific Northwest to be shared for ten years. This arrangement was extended in 1827, and finally resolved in 1846 with the Treaty of Washington. The United States was moving aggressively towards claiming most, if not all, of the contested territory, and had sent exploratory missions. The 1841 United States Exploring Expedition, led by Charles Wilkes, signaled the seriousness of the United States with respect to its claim on the Oregon Country. In his *Report on the Territory of Oregon*, Wilkes called for military occupation of the region. Tensions were high, prompting John McLoughlin to request British naval protection for Fort Vancouver in 1843. By 1845, war between the United States and Great Britain

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[110][McLoughlin], "Copy," 46; Gibson 35, 41 and 52.

seemed a real possibility, although ultimately the intense U.S. passion for the territory was matched by British apathy.[111]

To the HBC, the need to fulfill a contract with Russian America for wheat and the desire to diversify trade were even more powerful motives than regional politics. In this interest, the HBC launched a new concern, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC), to produce a surplus of goods for foreign markets. Organized in 1838, the PSAC was to be based at Nisqually, at the southern end of Puget Sound in present-day Washington State. To support its efforts to encourage participation in the PSAC and the movement of fur-trade settlers north, the Company finally allowed passage to and even supported the first Catholic priests François Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers, who came overland from Red River in response to petitions by French Canadian settlers in the Willamette Valley. In order to gain passage, these priests agreed to try to convince the Willamette Valley settlers to move north and thus boost Britain's claim to the territory north of the Columbia, for by that point, the British had little hope of retaining a foothold to the south. Having failed to move their constituent, the Company then cut off most of the funding for the missionaries.[112]

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[111]Jackson, *Children,* 89-91; Gibson, 4; Charles Wilkes, "Report on the Territory of Oregon," Oregon Historical Quarterly 12 (1911): 296; Barman, 47-8.

The contract with the Russian American Company for the supply of agricultural goods to Russian settlements in Alaska was signed in 1839. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver*, 78.

[112]Jackson, *Children*, 66 and 92; Gibson, 9 and 90; Joseph Gervais, et. al, *Letters,* MSS 83, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

The PSAC was organized as a separate company to avoid violating the HBC charter granting only fur-trading rights. Shareholders, however, were HBC officers. Barman, 42.

George Simpson had initially been reluctant to sponsor missionaries because he feared they would try to make the Indians sedentary, thus disrupting hunting, and because he suspected they would frown on fur-trade activities such as the taking of country wives. The missionaries' potential utility in promoting the HBC's agricultural projects, however, convinced him to grant permission for their passage. Stern, vol. 2, 42.

With the failure to move retired trappers from the Willamette Valley to the less fertile Nisqually plains, and the added pressure of another larger American Methodist party soon to arrive, George Simpson turned to Red River for the labor needed to run the PSAC. Initially, he envisioned the colony for English settlers, but ultimately deemed Red River métis more suitable because they had endured rugged conditions and dealt successfully with the Indians. The 1841 migration from Red River included twenty-two mixed-blood families - 121 immigrants, including 77 children, far fewer than Simpson had hoped for. Two-thirds, mostly English half-breeds, landed at Nisqually, and the remaining seven predominantly French-Canadian métis families headed for Cowlitz Farm, near the Catholic mission, between Nisqually and Fort Vancouver. Simpson believed the English more suitable for farming; the Canadians, who "having devoted more of their time and attention to the chase than to agricultural pursuits" would fare better raising livestock. This division between the English and French-Canadian mixed bloods parallels Andrew Pambrun's description of Red River:

> The settlement was . . . in two distinct parts, the lower, that is from Fort Gary to the lake, being settled by Scotch and English, their descendants and civilized Indians, while the upper, from first named place, to the United States' line, by French Canadians and their descendents. The disparity between the two sections was so great, there was but little intercourse, the one was Protestant, Episcopal and Presbyterian, the other was Catholic; the one had numerous schools, the other had none, but had more Priests and Nuns, than they could well support. The first were agriculturalists and raised most if not all of the surplus products of the farm, and they were in comfortable circumstances and even opulent in contrast. The second depending on the buffalo hunt and the improvidence inherent to such a life, and the exody of said animals from their usual haunts caused more or less suffering among them.[113]

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[113]Pambrun, 45.

George Simpson, quoted in Jackson, *Children*, 118; 92-95 and 117-18; Gibson, 116. According to Jackson, the women were all "daughters of daughters of the country," (p. 201).

Only one French speaker, Toussaint Joyelle, with his wife and four small children, went to Nisqually. Finding little of what was promised them, many of the new transplants moved south of the Columbia after only a short time. Within a couple of years, most of the English mixed-bloods settled on the Tualatin Plains, just south of the Columbia River near the Willamette. Ultimately, the Company had little control over where its employees settled. With no ties to local Native peoples and no reason to remain loyal to the HBC, these families sought better land to farm than that offered to them by the Company.[114]

By and large, Company men with families in the Pacific Northwest sought asylum on land of their own choosing, retiring in numerous communities in the region. Many moved north when the HBC transferred its headquarters to Vancouver Island in 1845. Many more settled in the Willamette Valley, sharing John McLoughlin's assessment that "it is deserving of all the praises Bestowed on it as it is the finest country I have seen and certainly a far finer country than Red River for Indian traders to retire to." By 1844, St. Paul emerged as the Catholic religious center of the entire region, where only a decade before only eight families had settled. The year 1846, when an international boundary between the US and Great Britain was fixed at the forty-ninth parallel, found more than 700 at Fort Vancouver, 1000 retired servants at Champoeg (of 2110 people listed in the 1845 census), and 500 at Oregon City, mostly retired from the HBC. Oregon City, founded by John McLoughlin, was the home to many of the officer class, the first important urban area and the territorial capitol. Although increasingly less significant, later enclaves of French Canadian settlers

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[114]More individuals traveled overland from Red River in the following years, and another large party came in 1854, although there were no French Canadian immigrants among them. A few English colonists did go to Nisqually later, but most did not stay long. Jackson, *Children,* 126-7, 148, and 210; Gibson, 115.

formed near former posts and the sites of Catholic missions, such as Frenchtown, near Walla Walla (after the 1847-48 Cayuse War, though disrupted by the 1855 Yakima War) and in Montana.[115]

"A new order of things"

By the fall of 1844, when the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur began their Oregon experiment, 2500 immigrants had traveled overland to Oregon, most headed for the Willamette Valley. The first overland caravan carried American settlers to the Willamette Valley in 1840. According to a contemporary account in a St. Louis, Missouri newspaper, "The rapidity with which change now came to the West was illustrated only nine years later, when startled Indians began to speak of emigrating eastward, unable to believe that many whites remained east of the Missouri River." Immigration peaked at 10,000 in 1852. In total, historian John Unruh estimates that 53,062 American and European immigrants crossed the Great Plains to settle in Oregon in the years 1840-1860. The fur trade coexisted with a few small agricultural settlements, but it could not withstand thousands of American and European immigrants. Americans in particular responded to the pressure to move westward embodied in the political doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which Frederick Merk calls "perhaps the most important" reform movement of the early nineteenth century.[116]

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[115]John McLoughlin, qtd. in Gibson, 130. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 143; Barman, 43; Hussey, *Fort Vancouver*, 87-9; Jackson, *Children*, 148; Johansen, 135, 178, and 212.

[116]Letter appearing in the St. Louis *Daily Missouri Republican* 15 June 1850, quoted in Unruh, 119. Morison, et al., 233; Johansen, 141-9; Unruh, 118-20. Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 53, qtd. in Robert J. Loewenberg, *Equality on the Oregon Frontier: Jason Lee and the Methodist Mission, 1834-43* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 53.

An equally devastating change came at the same time that American settlement pushed the fur trade northward. The beaver hat declined in popularity as the gentlemen's silk hat came into vogue. This change in fashion saved beavers from extinction but the trade in peltry was doomed. Compared with today's flash-in-the-pan fashions, the beaver hat enjoyed an unbelievably long life. But the time had come for the fur trade to shift its economic strategy quickly or perish. Between changing fashions, a decimated Indian population, and settlement in trapping areas, fur traders saw their profits plummet. Forced settlement of the Indians would have further threatened the trade, if it had not already foundered by the time of the Indian treaties of the 1850s. By the time of the last Rocky Mountain rendezvous in 1840, several American mountain men had already given up the trade and settled in the Willamette Valley. More were to join them soon, with several establishing homes at French Prairie or on the Tualatin Plains.[117]

By 1843, the HBC had already begun preparations to transfer its headquarters to Vancouver Island, taking into account the site's easier access by sea and its northern location, which was closer to the more profitable trapping areas of New Caledonia (British Columbia) and well within the territory the Company expected would fall under British control. There the Company diversified, producing agricultural products, timber and fish. The supply of beaver south of the Columbia by that time was very low due to the HBC policy (1823-1841) of overtrapping in this region to discourage American competition.[118]

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[117]Johansen, 147-8.

[118]George Simpson had contemplated the move to Vancouver Island at least a decade in advance. The trade in beaver declined, but rich stocks of marten in New Caledonia supplied new markets. Barman, 43; Vibert, 47-8; Gibson, 15, 133, 200 and 202.

On overtrapping, see Ott, 166-95.

Fur traders played a key role in facilitating settlement of the West. Even the HBC itself aided American occupation of the Pacific Northwest. Although the Company had tried to discourage American efforts in the region by aggressive trapping south of the Columbia, through their trapping and trading efforts they also gained geographic knowledge, demonstrated the potential of agricultural settlement, built peaceful relationships with the Natives, promoted Christianity, and established key posts and trade routes, making it easier for incoming Americans. In short, they had shown the promise and provided the infrastructure for settlement. Their reward? Following the resolution of the boundary dispute between the United States and Britain ending joint occupation of the Pacific Northwest, the British lost political jurisdiction and thus the practical means to maintain a foothold in the Oregon Country south of the forty-ninth parallel. Writing in about 1836, Chief Factor James Douglas of Fort Vancouver saw a dark future for the fur trade:

> The interests of the Colony, and Fur Trade will never harmonize, the former can flourish, only, through the protection of equal laws, the influence of free trade, the accession of respectable inhabitants; in short by establishing a new order of things, while the fur Trade, must suffer by each innovation.[119]

Still, the extent of territory Britain ceded to the United States came as a shock to Company men in the region. Americans had not settled extensively north of the Columbia River, but the American government held out for a claim that extended north into Puget Sound rather than settle for the Columbia, with its treacherous bar, as its only West Coast harbor. Furthermore, although the Treaty of Washington settled the boundary question, sustained the Company's right to continue business in the region, guaranteed navigational rights on the Columbia River, and allowed British citizens to hold land until it could be sold at a fair price, strong feelings against the

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[119]Quoted in Hussey, *Champoeg,* 44; Johansen, 135; Dodds, 47.

HBC amongst the Americans and a blatant disregard for Company land rights made it difficult to continue operations in American territory.[120]

Their chief competitors in the region, American trappers, guided settlers over the long road to Oregon. In addition to those carried westward by the maritime and British fur trade, small parties of American trappers had spilled over the Rockies immediately following the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Mountain men were ideally suited to escort caravans of covered wagons, as they did as early as 1830. "Every river, valley, mountain, and waterhole of the Far West was known to the trappers before 1830, and without their guidance transcontinental emigration would have been impossible."[121]

Chief Factor John McLoughlin himself played a critical role in the settlement of the Oregon Country through his generous assistance to immigrants, including the early missionaries. McLoughlin served as ambassador to all newcomers, both out of good will and to benefit Company business. Although McLoughlin was reluctant to help the settlers at first, by the early 1830s he accepted the inevitability of settlement and encouraged those he viewed as potential allies of the HBC. His work and that of his Columbia District employees received high praise from Charles Wilkes for their assistance:

> Wherever the operations of the Company extend, they have opened the way to future emigration, provided the means necessary for the success of emigrants, and rendered its peaceful occupation an easy and cheap task.[122]

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[120]Gibson, 203-4; Barman, 49. The boundary question is thoroughly treated in Merk, *The Oregon Question.*

[121]Some of these worked for John Jacob Astor's more successful venture, the American Fur Company. Johansen, 81 and 106. The War of 1812 suspended the American fur trade for about a dozen years. Morison, et al., 231.

[122]Wilkes, *Narrative*, vol. 4, 333; Hussey, *Champoeg*, 94-5.

John McLoughlin states plainly his reward for his involvement in the peaceful settlement of Oregon: regard by Britain as a traitor, and as a great impediment by "American demagogues." His own

Ushering in the great wave of immigration to the Oregon Country were missionaries, first Protestant and, following soon after, Catholics. Once again, the relationship between religion, settlement, and the fur trade is crucial. Like the Jesuits in New France, Protestant missionaries were the first boosters of settlement in the Oregon Country. Through the maritime American fur trade with Hawaii, the Reverend Hiram Bingham, a Congregational missionary stationed in the islands, came to know of and believe in the agricultural potential of the region. Following his lead and sharing his religious fervor, Hall J. Kelley published tracts to promote immigration, inspiring Nathaniel J. Wyeth to lead expeditions to the Willamette Valley in 1832 and 1834 to gain his own foothold in the fur business. Although his efforts ultimately failed, he built or inspired the establishment of important posts along the overland route. A few of the party remained behind and were the first American homesteaders in the valley. Accompanying Wyeth on his second journey were Methodist missionaries Jason and Daniel Lee. The Methodist mission, established in 1834, supplied an economic alternative to the HBC (the first real threat to the Company's monopoly), and stimulated the tiny Oregon economy. Although the Methodists were not so successful at spreading the gospel to the Indians, they were keen to start farms, businesses, schools, and a government, and to promote the future prosperity of Oregon. Catholic missionaries followed in 1838, who were, conversely, more successful at winning souls than at agriculture.[123]

The most famous Protestant missionary in the region, Dr. Marcus Whitman, stated most precisely the link between religious work and settlement: "I have no doubt

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disputed land claim took years to settle, and resulted in significant losses for the Doctor. [McLoughlin], "Copy," 54-5.

[123]Johansen, 179, 151.

our greatest work is to aid the white settlement of this country and help to found its religious institutions." By the time he wrote these words in 1844, Whitman had largely discounted the future of the Indians he had come to convert. Other Protestants shared his sentiments.[124]

In 1842, Oregon fever spread to the Midwest, and trapper-guides found a lucrative business in jumping-off points such as St. Louis and Joseph, Missouri. The intensity of that fever and the resulting influx of American immigrants led Horace Lyman to insist upon the inevitability of American domination:

> . . . it became apparent that the Willamette Valley was already, or soon would be, preponderatingly American. Whatever expectation had been entertained that on the banks of the Willamette would grow up another Red River settlement, consisting chiefly of old servants of the British Fur Company and a mixed population of half-natives, with French blood and language predominaing [sic], and mingled with the Indian jargon forming the medium of thought and speech, was rapidly passing away. This was to be chiefly a white population, with white women as well as men; English in speech, and American in education and aspirations.[125]

Elizabeth Vibert concludes her study of fur trader narratives in 1846, the date of the boundary settlement and of the arrival of a critical mass of settlers in the Oregon Country. The missionaries were, by then, well established. This time, she asserts, "represents an important transition in the history of the Native-white encounter . . . " Crucial events followed which further shaped the lives of the fur-trade peoples and their new neighbors in Oregon. The Whitman massacre in 1847 and efforts to confine Indians on reservation lands resulted in the Indian Wars of the 1850s. The 1849 California gold rush emptied Oregon of able-bodied men for a time, but eventually brought new prosperity and sparked new entrepreneurial activity. Communities took

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[124]Marcus Whitman, letter of 16 May 1844, qtd. in Stern, vol. 2, 90.

[125]Horace S. Lyman, *History of Oregon*, vol. 3 (New York: North Pacific Publishing Company, 1903), 251.

shape, built foundational institutions, and grew into prosperous towns. A provisional government gave way to U. S. territorial government, with statehood granted in 1859. Fur-trade peoples born in a remote politically contested area, populated mostly by their mothers' tribes, became citizens of the thirty-third state of the Union and were among the few remaining to have been brought up by Native mothers.[126]

The fur-trade daughters of 1850 that are the object of this study were caught up in the transition from a British extractive economy where Indians were courted and accommodated as partners to an American agricultural settlement, where the few remaining Indians were considered an impediment, removed from their ancestral lands, and forced to assimilate. Many of their fathers sought to prepare their girls for entry into white society through a European-style education, in the hopes that they would learn the skills necessary to attract a respectable mate, run a respectable household, and lead an upright life, serving as an example for their families and communities. For many of these Oregon fur-trade daughters, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur provided this training, this acculturation. Not only that, but the Oregon City academy provided an early entry into a new, more diverse society, where métis girls mingled with Irish and American immigrants. The education they received is the topic of the next chapter.

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[126]Vibert, 46.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATING FOR TRUE WOMANHOOD

Introduction

Education was key to advancement within the nineteenth-century post-merger fur trade and went a long way towards sustaining the separation of ranks. Membership in the officer rank required literacy and a facility with numbers. Men without sufficient academic training could only hope for lower-class jobs requiring hard physical labor in mostly rugged outdoor conditions. The gap between upper and lower classes in the fur trade was measured not only monetarily but also in terms of physical comfort.

An education sufficient to handle the business side of the trade in the Hudson's Bay Company could only be obtained in the urban centers of Lower Canada or in Europe. Prior to the nineteenth century, much of the knowledge required for work in the fur trade was acquired within the trade itself, assuming a certain degree of literacy for men of the officer class. But as the trade advanced and as new, more educated men from Europe and Canada entered into service, competition for the more lucrative positions increased while the number of positions decreased due to post-merger consolidation.

Despite the Company's encouragement, officers could only afford to send a few of their children away for instruction and apprenticeships, and the education of fur-trade sons took precedence over daughters. Pacific Northwest historian Dorothy Johansen notes: "The gentlemen of the officer class were required to have something more than trading skill and lore of forests and plains. Lack of education was a

handicap; its possession was almost a guarantee of advancement." For girls, however, John McLoughlin expressed the sentiments of many officers when he wrote of his daughter Eliza, "My object is not to give her a splendid Education but a good one --- at least a good Education for a Girl." Sons and daughters of servants, whose parents were mostly illiterate and far less able to pay for schooling, had few opportunities for a similar education.[127]

A formal education prepared fur-trade offspring to make their way in an increasingly literate, diversified workforce. The Industrial Revolution increased communication and contact with British and Canadian society, closing the gap between the "frontier" and the "civilized world." At the same time, negotiation between cultures gave way to the marginalization of Native peoples and the devaluation of their culture as uncivilized, despite the known experiences of métis and Native women. The resulting more "civilized" fur trade eventually replaced social practices unique to the trade with those more acceptable to white society. Along with acculturation came the desire for the material comforts of white society, and new standards for respectability. Organized religion played a central role in educating and molding upright Victorian citizens, and despite past difficulties with Christian missionaries, the fur trade found renewed religious zeal. Missionaries provided much of the schooling at posts and in fur trade settlements in the nineteenth century, often at

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[127]As early as 1824, the HBC Northern Council advised "That all those desirous of withdrawing their children from the country, be allowed every facility and encouragement for that purpose." It is unclear, however, to what extent the Company aided their employees to do so, especially in the remote Columbia Department. Regulation 119, July 1824, in Fleming, *Minutes of Council,* 95.

On the lives of fur-trade children sent away for education, see Jennifer Brown, "Ultimate Respectability: Fur-trade Children in the 'Civilized World'" *The Beaver* 308 (3): 4-10 and 308 (4): 48-55.

Letter of John McLoughlin to Simon Fraser, 15 March 1825, quoted in Burt Brown Barker, *The McLoughlin Empire and Its Rulers: Doctor John McLoughlin, Dr. David McLoughlin, Marie Louise (Sister St. Henry)* Northwest Historical Series, 5 (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1959), 176.

Johansen, 130.

the invitation of tradesmen or Company directors. Spiritual training went hand-in-hand with reading, writing, and arithmetic. Such was the case with the schools established by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon.[128]

Education and religious instruction made métis daughters more like their white counterparts socially, and thus more attractive as wives in a changing social climate, where the Euro-American woman came to be preferred for the social advantages marriage to a "cultured lady" would bring. But although education gave daughters of officers and even some servants' daughters the possibility of a "good marriage," their economic and social role would be much different than their mothers.' Young ladies were expected to learn English or French, and to remove themselves from the so-called corrupting influence of Native women, who were considered immoral and unchaste. In the ideal, Victorian ladies had a more ornamental than economic function, and women's education supported this function by emphasizing subjects that embellished their femininity rather than allow them to contribute to the family economy. This reworking of the Euro-American feminine ideal removed women from the center of economic activity and thus from power. Both Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk lament the loss of independence and increased vulnerability of métis daughters who moved toward this new ideal. Native women fared even worse, for they failed to meet the new Victorian standard of womanhood because of their color and lack of "refinement," and were often relegated to the status of outsider and outcast. If they were lucky, they would be welcomed into their daughter's household, where their fur-trade skills were still useful and they could enjoy a more comfortable life.[129]

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[128]Brown, *Strangers,* 147-8; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 147.

[129]Brown, *Strangers,* 78, 150-2; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 102-7.

Pushed by economic and political concerns, fur-trade society in the nineteenth century drifted towards European society and away from Indian ways. Just as the appearance of women and children gave rise to a distinct fur-trade society, so now the concern for uplifting women and children to fit European expectations shifted the design of fur-trade society again. The underlying irony does not escape Sylvia Van Kirk:

> What is particularly striking about fur-trade life was the extent to which a concern for women and family influenced the development of social custom in a world where both initially were supposed to have been absent.[130]

Fully embracing European standards, nineteenth-century fur-trade fathers and missionaries agreed to a program of "rapid acculturation" of fur-trade offspring, with education and religion as the centerpiece.[131]

Educating fur-trade children

Since adequate schooling was not available close to home, sons of fur-trade officers traveled great distances to receive the necessary education to follow in their fathers' footsteps or to seek a suitable position outside the trade, usually leaving home around the age of twelve. Girls, however, were much less likely to be sent away to Canada or Britain for schooling because they could not be offered the necessary protection for the journey or for an extended stay in a distant land. The Company advised the few young ladies who did venture away to seek a more formal education

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[130]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 122.

[131]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 152.

not to return to fur-trade country, for acculturation to white society rendered them unfit for fur-trade society. For example, when John McLoughlin and his family went west to the Columbia, his ten-year-old daughter Eliza (Marie Elisabeth) was already at school in the Ursuline convent in Quebec, under the watchful eye of her aunt Marie Louise (Sister St. Henry). Eliza and her brother John, at school in Terrebonne, stayed in the east as the rest of their family departed. John eventually made his way west to work in the trade, but Eliza remained in Canada, marrying British army officer William Randolph Eppes in 1833. Unlike Eliza McLoughlin, however, most girls received their education at home.[132]

As early as 1806, the HBC encouraged that schooling at posts, meant to be practical in nature, be offered to both boys and girls. Education was not limited to officer-class offspring: in 1808 the Company directed that all children of servants, aged five to twelve (or until completion of the course of study; for boys, until employed) be schooled. The HBC license of 1821 extended the field of instruction by prescribing the moral and religious instruction of Indians.[133]
Company regulations passed in 1823 also required that every man, woman and child residing at a post (including Indians) attend weekly religious services, Catholic or Protestant, to be conducted by a high-ranking officer, as a means of acculturation and moral instruction. Fathers were to attend to their children's religious and moral instruction, and to provide some basic training in literacy. In 1826, the Northern Council augmented the bare-bones instruction previously prescribed with "such other

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[132]Pollard, "The Making of the Métis," 287-90. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties,* 96, 99. Sister St. Henry was John McLoughlin's sister, and later became Abbess of the Quebec convent. Morrison, 121-2, 221-2, 278.

[133]Brown, *Strangers,* 165-8; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 103-6. Education at posts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is covered in Jennifer S. Brown, "'A Colony of Very Useful Hands,'" *The Beaver* 307(4): 39-45.

elementary instruction as his situation and means permit," thus increasing a father's family educational obligations. Furthermore, this instruction, and in fact all conversation between the male head-of-household and his children and their mother was to be "in the vernacular dialect (whether English or French) of the Father," in the interest of preparing a foundation for more formal instruction.[134]

Through its emphasis on religion, a European-style education, and the acquisition of a European language, the Northern Council of the HBC clearly communicated its expectation that fur-trade sons and daughters be set on a course leading to assimilation into their fathers' culture. The Council marked the distinction between fur-trade families and white British families by its admonishment that "decency cleanliness and moral propriety will be promoted" -- implying that fur-trade families were indecent, unclean, and immoral. Furthermore, by calling for the "civilization" of "the families attached to the different establishments and the Indians," the Council placed fur-trade families in the same camp as their Indian progenitors. There was no more room for negotiation; no more middle ground.

HBC officers at Red River hoped to have their daughters educated as ladies. According to Sylvia Van Kirk, "Giving their daughters a refined English education, they hoped, would be sufficient to overcome the taint of their mixed blood." In 1832, an Anglican missionary couple, David and Mary Jones, founded the Red River Academy. At the behest of George Simpson and HBC officers, the young ladies were chaperoned to keep them at a distance from Native women. At the academy, they received instruction in music and the ornamental arts as well as the usual academic

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[134]Resolutions 153 and 157, July 1823, p. 60; Resolution 129, July 1824, p. 96; and Resolution 145, June 1826, p. 174; all in Fleming, *Minutes of Council.*

subjects. From 1844 onward, respectable Catholic daughters received their education at the convent school established by a large congregation of Grey Nuns.[135]

Fur-trade education in the Oregon Country

The Company placed the overall responsibility for enacting its educational initiatives on the shoulders of lead officers. This was a charge John McLoughlin, a regular attendee of the Northern Council, took very seriously. As head of the Columbia Department and Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver, McLoughlin conducted religious services and saw to the education of all children at his post, regardless of class. He began like most officers in a small way, providing what education he could for his own children, but when the opportunity arose, he hired an instructor, John Ball, to provide an elementary education for a handful of officers' sons. Obviously pleased with Ball's teaching, McLoughlin soon extended his teaching duties to include other male children at the fort. Others followed in Ball's footsteps, keeping the school in continuous operation in one form or another until the late 1840s. For at least some of the time during the years 1835-40, the fort school was open to children of both sexes, with some officers' daughters in attendance. For the most part, however, officers' daughters received their lessons at home, with occasional private tutoring from visiting female missionaries. [136]

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[135]Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 147-8, 236. Sister Marie Bonin, "The Grey Nuns and Red River Settlement." *Manitoba History* 11 (1986): 12-14.

[136]Although lead officers had previously been responsible for the implementation of "Regulations connected with Civilization and Moral and Religious Improvement," the Council of 1825 specified for the first time that these duties extended to "companys Servants, Families and Indians attached to their respective Districts and Posts." Resolution 144, July 1825, in Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, 134-5.

Other Oregon Country officers also showed religious and educational leadership. Historian Charles Carey theorizes that Pierre Pambrun, Chief Trader at Fort Nez Percés, taught the Flathead Indians about Christianity - the same tribe that sent delegates to St. Louis in 1833 in search of "Blackrobes" (Catholic priests). Pambrun also made copies of the Catholic ladder, an evangelistic tool devised by F. N. Blanchet, for local chiefs, for whom he also provided religious instruction. Although a devout Catholic, Pambrun hired Protestant missionary Narcissa Whitman to teach his family, even sending some of his daughters to Waiilaptu (the nearby Whitman mission) to continue their studies. Still, Pambrun adhered strongly to the Catholic faith, and despite his and his wife's friendship with the Whitmans, some tension arose between them when Marcus Whitman attempted to convert the Catholic trapper Charles Compo to Protestantism.[137]

It was some time between the adoption of resolutions favoring education and religious formation in the 1820s and the arrival of Fort Vancouver's first HBC-commissioned Anglican chaplain, Rev. Herbert Beaver, in 1836. The Rev. and Mrs. Beaver's arrival signaled increasing concern among British citizens with the moral propriety of the empire's representatives and the reform of Indians. With its own

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Ball taught at Fort Vancouver during the winters of 1832 and 1833. Pollard, "The Making of the Métis," 285-6, 297-9; Hussey, *Fort Vancouver*, 213-4.

David Lavendar reports that in 1839, teacher John Fisher Robinson was caught taking advantage of the daughter of Chief Trader John Work. This incident initiated segregation of the sexes in Ft. Vancouver schools. David Lavendar, *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site*, Handbook 113, The National Park Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1981), 103.

[137]Carey, Charles Henry, *A General History of Oregon Prior to 1861,* vol 1, (Portland, 1935). More recent scholars attribute the religious instruction of the Flatheads to Old Ignace and other Iroquois fur hunters who arrived on the West Coast around 1811 and intermarried with the Indians. The Nez Percés Indians apparently joined the deputation to St. Louis, which took place in 1831. Even so, Pambrun played an active role in spreading Christianity of the Indians. [Tully and Schoenberg], 3. Jacqueline Peterson and Laura Peters, *Sacred Encounters: Father De Smet and the Indians of the Rocky Mountain West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 22. Margaret Whitehead, "Chrisitanity, A Matter of Choice: The Historic Role of Indian Catechists in Oregon Territory and British Columbia," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 72 (3): 100. Stern, vol. 2, 51-2. Pambrun, 146-7.

license to conduct business in the Pacific Northwest up for renewal in 1841, and the interest in imperialism and monopolies waning in Britain, the Hudson's Bay Company bowed to pressure to bring religious personnel to this remote region in order to win popular political support.[138]

The gesture was not, however, appreciated in the Columbia Department. Beaver so annoyed McLoughlin with his educational philosophies and racial insults against fort residents that his tenure as teacher lasted only two days. Although education was normally the chaplain's duty, Chief Factor McLoughlin, who had Catholic leanings, disliked the idea of the Reverend Beaver spreading his very Protestant Church of England ideas among the children. Not to mention the fact that Beaver blatantly challenged McLoughlin's authority in educational and religious matters. Beaver held steadfastly to his rights as an Anglican minister; the Chief Factor to his responsibility for both moral and religious instruction. Historian Stephen Woolworth paints a vivid picture of their conflict, and although the drama may not have run so high at other trade posts, one can well imagine a certain tension between chief officer and clergy, each feeling the weight of his charge. Ultimately, McLoughlin prevailed, with the Beavers returning to England in 1838.[139]

Religious diversity was a fact of life in the fur trade, and one which John McLoughlin respected. He showed great tolerance to clergy of all stripes, the Rev. Beaver excepted. The French Canadians were predominantly Catholic, of course, but many of the Scots had Calvinist leanings, so finding clergy suitable to the whole was

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[138]Johansen, 160; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 131; Loewenberg, 15-33.

[139]Stephen Woolworth, "'The School is Under My Direction': The Politics of Education at Fort Vancouver, 1836-1838," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 104 (Summer 2003): 228-51.

no mean trick. When Methodist missionary Jason Lee first preached at Ft. Vancouver, the congregation included:

> English, French, Scottish, Scotch-Irish, American, Indian, Hawaiian, Indian half-breed, and three Japanese survivors of an unintentional trans-Pacific voyage, whose wrecked junk had been found on the coast in 1833.[140]

Religious tolerance, however, was not a hallmark of the mid-nineteenth century. Conflicts between the missionaries themselves, especially Catholics and Protestants, were common, especially when the population they felt called to serve (Native peoples) was losing souls faster than they could convert them.

Despite the best efforts of fur-trade officers and the earliest missionaries, advanced education was not available in the Columbia Department until the mid-1840s, and several officers sent their sons to Red River and Eastern Canada for schooling. The Red River colony offered a promising experiment in acculturation, alas, with disappointing results. As mentioned above, the HBC developed the colony as a place for retirees, providing schools and missions for the proper instruction of children and a place for families to live with more of the comforts of civilization than offered by the posts, yet without the strain of full reentry into white society.[141]

Unfortunately, the colony did not muster the personnel to offer an entirely satisfactory education, especially for young men. Moreover, even when the quality of instruction offered at the Red River Academy (established 1833) had advanced enough to qualify métis sons as clerks (1840s), they more often secured lower class positions, if any. The lack of jobs in the trade, combined with insufficient educational offerings at Red River, prompted many tradesmen to send their children to Canada or Britain,

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[140]Johansen, 161.

[141]Thomas F. Brendin, "The Red River Academy," *The Beaver* (Winter 1974): 10-7.

even though it meant greater expense and reliance on relatives and acquaintances to see to the well-being of their children. Education abroad placed them not only in a more competitive position for a fur-trade career, but it also opened up employment possibilities in the outside world.[142]

The Columbia Department established its first academy relatively late, with its directors, the Covingtons, arriving in 1846 to lead instruction in the newly-constructed school buildings at Fort Vancouver. The boundary settlement, which gave control of the fort to the U.S. Army, soon forced them to relocate a short distance to the north. A similar school opened at Fort Victoria in 1847. These new schools provided local options for fur-trade daughters and sons to receive a more advanced education than formerly available, but it is not clear how many of the 200 or so children living at Fort Vancouver at that time they served. In addition to post schools, Willamette Valley settlements offered other options, primary among them the schools run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.[143]

Educational beginnings in the Willamette Valley

Answering the call of French Canadian settlers in the Willamette Valley, two experienced Canadian Catholic missionaries, Fathers François Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers, traveled overland from Montreal to the Oregon Country and founded missions at Willamette (St. Paul), Cowlitz, and Nisqually, serving both Indians and French Canadians. The priests' mission included "the establishing of order between

[142]Brown, *Strangers*, 177-8, 208-9; Brown, "Ultimate Respectability," 4.

[143]Hussey, "Women of Fort Vancouver," 278, 289-90.

the men and women, the imparting of religious instruction, the baptizing of the children, the blessing of the marriages, and the inspiring of all with the love of the Christian virtues."[144]

Almost as soon as the priests arrived, plans were afoot to establish schools at French Prairie. The Jesuit Father Pierre Jean De Smet came to the Willamette Valley in 1842, where the Catholic mission established a boys' school, St. Joseph's College, at St. Paul. De Smet, a Belgian, originally came West from St. Louis in 1839 to minister to the Flathead Indians in present-day Northern Idaho and Northeastern Washington. In 1844, De Smet returned to Oregon from Europe with reinforcements, including the first six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur for the Oregon mission.[145]

Traditionally, the residents of New France turned exclusively to the church for formal schooling, which was offered primarily in urban settings. The tradition of parochial education remained strong among French and Catholics in Canada during British occupation. As a result, "Catholicism was deeply rooted as an integral part of the life of the individual." It was only natural for French Canadians in the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest to turn to the Catholic church to establish educational institutions in their settlements.[146]

Before the priests' arrival, tradesmen in French Prairie gathered their children at the home of retired trapper, Joseph Gervais, where Solomon Smith conducted the first school in the Willamette Valley in 1834. According to missionary-explorer Samuel Parker, writing in 1835, settlements at Champoeg were clustered around the

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[144]Bagley, vol. 2, 37.

[145]St. Joseph College opened with thirty boarders, all sons of Valley settlers save one son of an Indian chief. [Tully and Schoenberg], 10.

[146]McInnis, 80-81.

McKay and Gervais homesteads, and each had a common school with American male Protestant teachers. Others also hired private tutors or formed small schools in their homes.[147]

At the same time, some French Prairie settlers attended Methodist services and sent children to the Methodist mission school. Jason Lee, leader of the Methodist party, held out great hope for the métis children of the Willamette Valley, whom he called, "the future hope of the country, they *will*, they *must* have the influence, unless a colony be introduced from the civilized world." Unfortunately, the Methodist school folded in 1844, ending any serious outreach to Indians and the métis in the Valley. The Methodists had already abandoned their Champoeg mission in 1841.[148]

By that time the French Canadians had already changed camps. According to Clarence Bagley, they were such loyal Catholics that "not less than twelve families separated from the Methodists" after hearing of a Catholic priest in Oregon for the first time. Several couples who received blessings by a Protestant minister for their country marriages repeated the ceremony with a Catholic priest when one was finally available. The Catholics had no trouble recruiting students for their new schools, even with the Methodists still in operation.[149]

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[147]Hussey, *Champoeg*, 67, 76-81. Before moving into the Valley, Smith taught briefly at Fort Vancouver.

[148]Jason Lee envisioned that the métis would civilize and Christianize the Indians. Letter of Jason Lee to corresponding secretary, Mission House, 8 October 1835, *Christian Advocate and Journal*, 1 July 1836, p. 182, qtd. in Loewenberg, 123. Loewenberg, 64-6, 200.

The Methodists maintained a school at Chemeketa (Salem), the Oregon Institute (precursor to Willamette University), founded in 1844 to serve the children of white settlers. Loewenberg, 76.

[149]Bagley, vol. 2, 44.

Wanted: white female teachers

In the nineteenth century, women held the responsibility for the moral instruction of their children, not only for the family's well-being but for the good of society. In the fur trade, however, Native-born mothers were not considered sufficiently acculturated to fulfill this duty.[150]

With the goal to acculturate fur-trade children to white society, and the dismissal of fur-trade mothers from the primary responsibility for their instruction, the burden of placing children in schools fell to their fathers. This, in effect, created patrifocality within fur-trade society, with "fathers involved . . . in considerable social, economic, and emotional commitments toward the proper upbringing, education, and placement of offspring." The effectiveness of fathers in educating and placing their children determined their ability to integrate into white society, or to be sufficiently acculturated to reach the upper ranks of the fur trade. In short, it determined the future status of both their sons and daughters.[151]

Lacking appropriate female models for their daughters, fur-trade men sought white female teachers. In 1807, the officers of York Factory outlined their goals and objectives for finding suitable teachers for their fur-trade daughters. They sought women who would bring the best of English society, introduce "cleanliness and domestic Economy" to the post, and remove all traces of Native culture from their children. Native women, on the other hand, brought the polluting influences of "Indian Language and with it, its native superstition." The ultimate goal was to put a

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[150]Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 14.

[151]Brown, *Strangers*, 218-9. A grandfather or other male guardian sometimes took on these responsibilities in the absence of a father.

physical and social distance between métis daughters and Indian women, in order to "not only estrange the Children from their Indian Acquaintance but present other advantages friendly to the progress of Education, Morality, and Good order." White female teachers became rare but important additions to fur-trade life, and were meant not merely to supplement a girl's home training, but to supersede it.[152]

Retention of women schoolteachers, however, proved to be a serious problem. Single female teachers often left teaching to marry. Clergy wives, another popular choice, often had their own family obligations or were not ideally suited to teaching. Moreover, only Protestant women married to missionaries were allowed to teach Indians. The safest and most stable choice for educating fur-trade girls were nuns.[153]

Catholic "True Women"

Barbara Welter introduced the term "true womanhood" in her seminal 1966 essay, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," in reference to the prevailing Euro-American notion that women needed to be isolated and protected from the public and manly world of production by remaining within the domestic sphere. Historian Lori Ginsberg highlights the moral and religious component of women's containment:

> To many nineteenth-century observers, women's presumably sheltered environment sustained their truer morality. And as long as a woman did not leave her sphere, God had ordained that she be protected by some degree of inherent goodness, a 'moral organ' in her very being.[154]

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[152]Hudson's Bay Company Archives, *London correspondence inward from posts*, A.11/118, f.3, quoted in Brown, *Strangers*, 165-6.

[153]Coburn and Smith, 115.

[154]Welter, 151-74. Ginsberg, 11.

The doctrine of true womanhood assumed woman's subordination to man as part of the natural order. DuBois and Ruiz, however, point out that the social and moral authority attached to true womanhood belonged to nineteenth-century middle-class women but not to many of their working-class counterparts, who either labored as domestic servants to free up middle-class women to do this noble work or were themselves the objects of middle-class charity and reform.[155]

Ironically, the women's education movement brought many women, including Catholic nuns, out of the private sphere and into the public arena in order to prepare young women for their important private role. New demands for a more skilled and educated workforce combined with high expectations for the development of moral character to shape education in the nineteenth century, first in Europe and then the United States and Canada. At the same time, the Catholic population in the United States expanded with increased European immigration.[156]

Women, Catholic and Protestant, orchestrated their movement between the public and private spheres carefully, in order to preserve all appearances of propriety. The works they performed in the public sphere largely reinforced the ideal of true womanhood, and their rhetoric insisted that benevolent work performed outside of the home was a natural extension of their womanly duties. Thus, when Catharine Beecher wrote of women's activism, she placed it in the domestic sphere and enrobed it with feminine virtues:

> Woman is to win every thing by peace and love; by making herself so much respected, esteemed and loved, that to yield to her opinions and to gratify her wishes, will be the free-will offering of the heart. But this is to be all

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[155]DuBois and Ruiz, xiii.

[156]Coburn and Smith, 40.

> accomplished in the domestic and social circle. . . . A woman may seek the aid of co-operation and combination among her own sex, to assist her in her appropriate offices of piety, charity, maternal and domestic duty . . . [157]

Other political causes and social needs compelled more women to venture out further from the hearth and into the world as increasing urbanization, industrialization, and political upheaval created a large class of working poor men, women, and families needing charitable services. Middle-class American Protestant women strove to provide for these needs through the formation of schools, benevolent societies, and other charitable institutions. Catholic nuns had been serving these needs in Europe for centuries. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Catholic sisterhoods formally expanded their ministry from the service of prayer to community service, drawing them beyond the cloister. Their attempts to offer service outside the convent walls began in the middle ages, but met stern opposition by male ecclesiastical authorities who tightened regulations regarding the mobility of women religious. Radical changes in society accompanying the industrial revolution and political revolutions forced a loosening of the cloister in order to allow nuns to fill great needs, but not without much resistance on the part of bishops and even some female religious orders. Gradually, teaching orders appeared, and in the nineteenth century, female religious not only established schools for girls, but also hospitals, orphanages, and asylums, creating significant and enduring institutions that formed the backbone of a major social services network in much of Europe and North America.[158]

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[157]Catharine Beecher, *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism with reference to the Duty of American Females* (Philadelphia: Henry Perkins, 1837), 99-103, qtd. in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century,* vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 311-2. Beecher took an especially conservative stand on women's political activism, but her depiction of the boundaries of women's sphere typifies contemporary attitudes towards women.

[158]See JoAnn McNamara, *Sisters in Arms* for an excellent overview of the history of female religious in the Catholic Church.

As religious women moved out of the cloister and into public service, they took pains to continue to serve nineteenth-century ideals of womanhood. Along with Catholic women religious' newly defined vocations as teacher and nurse came the new titles of "Sister," demarking their ungraded status, and "Mother," a non-aristocratic label reflecting the values placed on mothers not only as child bearers, but also as moral standard-bearers. Nuns ventured away from their hometowns and native lands to perform missionary work, and developed new categories for their work of service mirroring, even preceding, the professionalism that developed among secular women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Furthermore, the loosening of the cloister brought them from a very special, tightly confined private sphere into the public sphere, just as (or perhaps just before) their Protestant sisters took their moral agendas from the home to the meeting-house. At the same time, both Protestants and Catholics continued throughout the century to uphold ideals of domesticity, never forgetting the sanctity of the household. "As they freed themselves from a badly defined limbo between clergy and laity, women religious moved into the very center of religious public life."[159]

Even within Catholicism, however, the relationship of women religious to the feminine realm of domesticity was ambiguous. Nuns assumed some roles of authority unavailable to other women, such as hospital or educational administrator, but the goal of their efforts was essentially conservative. They served as spiritual *mothers* and groomed other women and children to perform domestic duties. Furthermore, most women religious were still confined to the special separate sphere of the cloister, and

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In addition to running two schools, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon cared for orphans and contemplated establishing a hospital in Oregon City. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 230.

[159]McNamara, 602.

took mandatory vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These vows clashed with Protestant middle-class ideals of womanhood and at the same time made it difficult for religious women to perform the work they found increasingly necessary. Chastity was incompatible with a "womanhood" synonymous with motherhood and marriage. The vow of poverty posed enormous economic challenges for women religious occupied with charity work and in the missions field, and even threatened the survival of many female religious orders. While nuns chose an alternative lifestyle, their role was not so different from that of married women, as it was carefully circumscribed by male (and female) authorities to whom they had vowed obedience.[160]

Despite these restrictions, Catholic religious women developed strategies to circumnavigate the barriers presented by their vows. Their chastity could be viewed as a sign of respectability, especially when bolstered by the use of titles such as "mother" and "sister." In an advertisement for the Oregon City SNDN convent school, potential students were instructed to address their letters of application to the "Lady Superior." Indeed, nuns were model ladies, and enterprising as well, developing economic strategies that allowed them to carry out the work they felt called to do. At St. Paul, for example, the Sisters involved students in the production of butter and other goods for sale to support their charitable enterprises, and farmed the land near their school to provide food for both of their Oregon schools.[161]

In many ways, Catholic sisters were uniquely suited to their social mission. They made a lifelong commitment to their work and found support in continuing education offered by their congregations. Their vows placed them at the same level as

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[160]Mannard, "Maternity" provides a lively discussion of the relationship between nuns and domesticity.

[161]*Oregon Statesman,* 16 September 1851, p. 3 c.2. The same advertisement appeared in the *Oregon Spectator,* 14 October 1851, p. 3 c. 3. *Notice,* 166.

those they served: impoverished and obedient. Nuns worked for very low wages, acted respectfully towards their employers, and performed their own domestic work as well. Their chastity inferred sanctity and respect, kept them safe from men and even allowed access to places other women could not go. They worked in highly structured intergenerational communities that carried with them a very long history of monastic religious devotion. Finally, both the sisters themselves and those they served reflected the great ethnic diversity of a new wave of immigration to America. In all their actions, they had to consider the needs of the community and those they served over their own needs.[162]

Like secular Protestant American women who worked to resolve the contradictions inherent in performing public works from the private sphere, Catholic women religious had to negotiate between their vows and an increasingly public and autonomous role. Even so, they did not question prevalent middle-class ideals of true womanhood, nor did they question the centrality of the family. On the contrary, nuns worked diligently to uphold those ideals, especially in their schools. Religious affiliation imparted the respectability of tradition even as nuns ventured into new professions not yet open to other women. For example, Catholic women religious founded and operated hospitals long before Clara Barton made nursing an acceptable profession for other women, and provided their own labor from chief administrators and planners to domestic servants. Moreover, as symbols of tradition and stability, the presence of a female religious congregation was often a comfort even for middle-class American Protestants who anxiously witnessed the transformation of their towns into dirty and impersonal industrial cities.[163]

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[162]Coburn and Smith, 7-10, 80-3, and 115.

[163]McNamara, 612.

Building schools for young women

In the first half of the nineteenth century, America put down the roots of its school system, and these were primarily religious. Although in the minority, Catholics took the lead in women's education, providing the most numerous, consistent and comprehensive schools, far outlasting the mostly small and short-lived Protestant schools. So meager was the Protestant effort even at mid-century that Catharine Beecher urged Protestant clergy to support the "establishment of permanent institutions, which should embrace all the good features of the motherhouses established by the Catholics." Moreover, in many parts of the country, Protestants made up the bulk of tuition-paying students in Catholic schools, as immigrant Catholics remained in the lower class, their children attending free parish and convent schools, if any. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur attracted many Protestants to their new school in Cincinnati, Ohio. Full payment of fees made it possible for religious women to carry out other duties, including educating the poor and caring for the sick.[164]

Historian Barbara Misner states, "There were very few schools or academies for young women any place in the United States in 1790." Catholic girls' schools in America grew from three in 1809 to 201 in 1860, with sixty-eight percent west of the Appalachian mountains. If Catholic schools greatly outnumbered Protestant, these figures clearly illustrate the limited educational opportunities for girls at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moreover, few of the ninety-one Catholic schools for young

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[164]Catharine Beecher, *An Address to Protestant Clergy of the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846), 31, qtd. in Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 18.

Misner, 177-8, 189; Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 140-4; Coburn and Smith, 147; Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *The American Foundations of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur* (Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1928), 28.

women in America in 1850 were in the West. In the vast Oregon Country, the two small schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur stood alone.[165]

The popularity and predominance of Catholic schools sparked a panic among Protestant leaders beginning in the 1830s and continuing up to the Civil War. Prominent female educators such as Catharine Beecher, Sarah Hale, and Mary Lyon doggedly promoted the establishment of female schools staffed by Protestant female teachers, especially in the West, where they hoped to preempt Catholic missions. Scores of young women stepped up to ready themselves for service as frontier schoolmarms. Protestant academies and normal schools cropped up near Catholic convent schools. Feeding on strong anti-Catholic nativism that arose with mounting immigration from the 1820s onward, proponents of Protestantism urged parents to remove their daughters from Catholic schools or the nation would fall to popery. Nativism had many causes, including the granting of civil rights to Catholics in England and the United States, and it coincided with Protestant revivalism that swept through America like wildfire. Its rhetoric drew a clear link between religion, politics and geography. The Rev. Lyman Beecher writes, "Can Jesuits and nuns . . . be safely trusted to form the mind and opinions of the young hopes of this great nation? Is it not treason to commit the formation of republican children to such influence?" adding that "the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West."[166]

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[165]Misner, 179. In 1830 there were only 20 Catholic girls' schools, 47 in 1840, and 91 in 1850. Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 4, 7. Mary Ewens notes thirty-nine new convents from 1829-1859, with eleven home-grown American orders, and twenty-eight European. Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 86.

[166]Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 3-7;14-16. Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 145.
Rev. Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West,* 1835, quoted in Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 5-6. Lyman Beecher refers here to the frontier midwest as the West, but the thought and effort carried westward with the large number of midwesterners who traveled overland to Oregon.

Although Catholic women religious promoted and themselves modeled "true womanhood," many Protestants saw the convent as a symbol of Popish depravity and viewed the presence of Catholic missions in the West as a dangerous threat to the establishment of Protestant American culture on the frontier. As stated above, because of their celibacy and removal from family life, women religious were often viewed as a challenge to Protestant notions of womanhood because they neither married nor bore children, and lived outside of the protection of the home. Anti-Catholicism found strong and even violent expression in American political and social life from the 1830s to the 1850s, subsiding somewhat after the Civil War and surfacing again in the 1920s, with the issue of parochial schooling fueling extremist activities in Oregon. Much of the violent activity targeted female Catholic congregations, causing physical harm to women religious and their property, and causing tremendous anxiety within American Catholic sisterhoods.[167]

One of the strongest expressions of anti-Catholicism in print in the nineteenth century appeared in popular literature. Perhaps the most notorious work, a slanderous and scandalous novel by a woman posing as a former nun, was Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal* (1836). This bestseller found its way to the Willamette Valley by the early 1840s, supposedly distributed by Protestant missionaries. Novels and other anti-Catholic propaganda aroused the suspicions of reform-minded Protestants in the East, and nuns experienced the flip-side of reform as convents were "inspected" for disreputable activities and nuns "rescued" from their convent-prisons.[168]

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[167]Anti-Catholicism targeted at female religious congregations in America is discussed in broad terms in Mannard, "Maternity," 74-93; and in McNamara, 600-30.

[168]Clark, "The Bigot Disclosed," 112. Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). McNamara, 569, 589.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Whitman murders localized and focused anti-Catholic feelings on Catholic missionary activity amongst Native peoples. Protestant fanatic J. S. Griffin added fuel to the fire by providing numerous "accounts" of the incident in *The Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist,* which reached a wide audience. The list of subscribers in 1848 reads like a Who's Who of pioneer Oregon, including principal supporters of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur as well as high-ranking Hudson's Bay Company officers. Significantly, no French-Canadian names appear, nor any Catholic clergy. This anti-Catholicism also found expression in jealousy over the choice riverside land claims of the first French-Canadian settlers. In this instance, the conflict over land created by white settlement was amplified by religious difference.[169]

On a human level, the harsh confrontation between Protestants and Catholics sometimes melted away. In the accounts of early Catholic convents in America, women religious note the Protestants' initial hostility subsiding once they became acquainted with the sisters and their dedication to a common mission, the education of young women. For example, the Sisters of the Holy Names, who served an overwhelmingly Protestant constituency in Salem, Oregon beginning in 1863, cite the favorable comments of local newspaperman J. W. P. Huntingdon in their Chronicles. Huntingdon recognizes the congregation's unqualified success in light of great challenges presented by anti-Catholicism:

> The school of the "Sisters" is a great success. It has wrought out its own high status in spite of prejudice and opposition, and it now stands as the first female Academy in the State, not because of its sectarianism, not because of its

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[169]*Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist.* Subscribers are listed in Dobbs, 209-13. Jackson, *Children*, 221, 225. Vibert, 281.

> location, not because of any outside influence, but simply because people are aware that their school is the very best female Academy in the State.[170]

Face-to-face contact of parents and sister-teachers and the positive experiences of their young Protestant students certainly went a long way toward conteracting nativism. In fact, Mary Ewens speculates that "it might well be shown that sisters' efforts were far more effective than those of bishops or priests in the Church's attempts to [preserve and foster] its faith among millions of immigrant members and establishing her credibility in an alien and often hostile society." Moreover, although Catholic women religious started their schools with a small workforce (six in the case of Oregon's Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur) they usually outnumbered available male Catholic religious and certainly Protestant teaching staff, and made impressive progress in building educational and charitable institutions. Still, at mid-century in the Oregon Country, the general consensus did not weigh in the Catholics' favor, and kept enrollment disappointingly low in the first Catholic schools.[171]

Despite their fragility, these parochial institutions represent the best that Oregon had to offer its children at the time. Public education, a Protestant-driven movement, reached Oregon in the late 1850s and spread slowly. Early schools were private and predominantly religious. A fragile economy and shifting settlement patterns rendered their very existence tenuous; most were small and short-lived operations.[172]

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[170]Huntingdon wrote his comments in the *Oregon Daily Unionist* following the 2 July 1868 closing ceremonies. (Date of publication not provided.) McLellan, 364. At the end of the first year in operation, the Sacred Heart Academy served 132 pupils, only two of them Catholic. McLellan, 351.

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[171]Ewens, "The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism," in Ruether, 101-2. The first Cincinnatti SNDN school had 125 students after only one year in operation. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *American Foundations*, 31.

[172]Charles Henry Carey provides a thorough summary of the history of education in Oregon in *A General History of Oregon Prior to 1861,* vol. 2, 698-721.

Students' attendance followed the course of seasonal and economic cycles. Since the domestic economy in this period depended in part on children's labor, work interrupted childrens' schooling, whether for a period of weeks or days, or even for hours within the school day. When children labored on the school grounds, their duties were both instructional and profitable, teaching important skills while producing goods. For example, at Fort Vancouver, work in the fields and gardens was considered a part of the children's schooling, and, in fact, helped pay for it. Even convent schools benefited from the products of their students' labor, with some of the products made for sale, and others used by the students and Sisters themselves. The Oregon Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur certainly followed this model, perhaps especially at the St. Paul school.[173]

What schools offered in terms of curriculum varied with and because of their pupils' attendance, since they often had to make up for deficiencies in their students' academic preparation and those caused by temporary absences. Clifford Constance notes the discrepancy between the name of the school and the academic level of its students in his exhaustive inventory of Oregon schools. Initially, schools were not divided into different grade levels. Even when a school bore a label identifying it as a secondary school or even a college it did not guarantee that the content of instruction reached the high standards now associated with those categories. Frontier schools had to meet the needs of their communities and their students. Thus was the state of schools in Oregon throughout the nineteenth century. Successful teaching in

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[173]Wilkes, *Narrative,* vol. 4, 332. Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 135. The Sisters of the Holy Names encountered a similar problem when they opened the Sacred Heart Academy in Salem, Oregon. They note "the inconstancy of the people of Oregon. Here pupils come for a few terms, and this is the duration of their school life." McLellan, 349.

unpredictable frontier conditions required flexibility, ingenuity, and a great deal of luck.[174]

Answering the call: Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

A French-speaking order centered in Belgium, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur established foundations in Flanders and Cincinnati, Ohio, before the first six nuns set sail for the Pacific Northwest. The next two decades garnered new congregations in several United States cities, in England, and in Guatemala. With a primary mission to provide a free education to the poor, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur gave a feminine religious presence to the colonial enterprise embraced by their mother country and its European neighbors.[175]

Wherever they landed on the globe, Catholic women religious (like their Protestant counterparts) strove to educate women in order to prepare them for the duties of motherhood, including the management of the household, moral formation of

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[174]Clifford L. Constance, *Chronology of Oregon Schools 1834-1958*, University of Oregon Monographs, Studies in Education No. 2, Nov. 1960 (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1960), v.

[175]Julie Billiart originally founded the order in Amiens in 1804, and it quickly expanded to include six congregations in France, all dissolved due to political difficulties with the Bishop of Amiens. The Namur foundation, established in 1807, became the order's new headquarters. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *American Foundations*, x and Louis Jadin, "Les Soeurs de Notre-Dame et les Soeurs de Sainte-Marie de Namur aux U.S.A., au Guatemala et en Angleterre sous Leopold Ier." Bulletin des Séances de l'Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre Mer 11, 3 (1965): 662.

On the growth of the SNDN worldwide, see Jadin, 662-70 and Sister Mary Fidelis, *As Gold in the Furnace: The Life of Blessed Julie Billiart* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), 203-9.

The SNDN Constitution states the order's main goal: "La fin de cette association est de travailler principalement à l'instruction gratuite des enfants pauvres." ["The goal of this association is to work primarily towards the free instruction of poor children."] *Regles et Constitutions des Soeurs de Notre-Dame, approuvés par Monseigneur Pisani de la Gaude en 1818 avec modifications faites par Monseigneur Dehesselle en 1836 à la demande de la révérende Mère St Joseph,* typescript, Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, California Province, Saratoga, CA., 1. The SNDN constitution received papal approval in 1844.

their children, and whatever other utilitarian or ornamental arts deemed appropriate for their station. Writing in 1851, Edward Mansfield justifies an education for women: ". . . women are the mothers of mankind. As such they are the *first teachers* . . ." Contemporary attitudes discouraged coeducation and the education of women by men, so female teachers were in high demand once the education of girls became a priority. For women religious, "the growing awareness of the importance of education for girls" yielded "the key that finally opened school doors to the female congregations."[176]

The Constitution of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur clarifies this role:

> Les membres de cette association sont principalement destinés à préparer les enfants à la confirmation, ainsi qu'à la première communion, et à les former aux bonnes moeurs, aux vertue chrétiennes et aux devoirs de leur état.
>
> [The members of this association are principally meant to prepare children for confirmation, as well as first communion, and to develop good morals, Christian virtues, and duties according to their station.][177]

Julie Billiart, co-foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, exhorted her congregations to "spare neither time nor labour in preparing to be teachers."[178]

Julie Billiart made the mission plain: "To form by education, Christian mothers, Christian families, and to save countless souls." Although the foundation recruited members from its schools, their foundress admonished them, "You must not want to make nuns of all your pupils, but good Catholics, women who will be useful members of society" and to "Train up valiant women who find their strength in a solid and practical faith." The importance of educating future mothers remained central to

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[176]Edward D. Mansfield, *American Education Its Principles and Elements* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1851), 301-3, qtd. in Misner, 187. Coburn and Smith, 30.

[177]*Regles*, 1.

[178]Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, "Sisters of Notre Dame Throughout the World, 1751-1951," p. 27, Pamphlet Collection, Mt. Angel Abbey Library, St. Benedict, OR.

the order's mission a century later, when the California sisters proclaimed themselves proudest of alumnae who made up "the host of Christian mothers whose modest homes ring with the laughter of happy children . . . . "[179]

In terms of the content or format of education among Protestants and Catholics, little differed save details of religious training offered to their students. Both followed educational trends and tried to meet parents' expectations while keeping to their own ideals. As European thought highly influenced American education, the tools women religious brought with them from Europe generally sufficed for their teaching jobs in America, although American parents had some different expectations than their European counterparts and demanded a slightly different curriculum for their daughters.

Fortunately for the sister-teachers, modifications made to their Constitution in 1838 by Monseigneur Dehesselle foresaw the need to adapt to differing expectations. He created more flexibility in the curriculum and removed a prohibition on teaching music, dance, and fine arts. Dehesselle admonished the sisters not to be too rigid, to vary instruction to fit the time and place: "Tout Institut livré à l'instruction de la jeuness qui veut atteindre son but, doit bien s'accommoder aux goûts et au besoin des temps" ["Every Institute engaged in the instruction of youth that wishes to attain its goal must accommodate the tastes and needs of the time."] acknowledging that "ce goût n'existant peut-être pas également partout." ["Current tastes may not be identical in every locale."] Local tastes and the desires of the students and parents must be considered, but nevertheless care must be taken not to allow the wishes of their constituency to override the overall educational plan of the congregation: "Les Soeurs se garderont bien de conseiller ces leçons aux enfants ou aux parents." ["Sisters would

[179]"Sisters of Notre Dame Throughout the World," 20, 27-8.

do well to advise children or their parents of their teachings."] Julie Billiart herself had refused to provide special lessons for some students, firmly adhering to the order's instructional goals to train virtuous, competent, and hard-working mothers:

> Madame, *our* end is to train good Catholic women, who know how to manage a household and bring up their family, women who understand business, who can read, write and keep accounts, who speak like educated people and are not ashamed to work. Especially, especially, Madame, do we train girls to be virtuous. [180]

When Namur Sisters set out to America to teach young women in its cities and its remote frontier, the advice of their superiors followed them. In letters to the Sisters in Cincinnati, whose mission predated the Oregon foundation by only four years, the Belgian Mother Superior made it clear that she wished her envoys in North America to continue to follow the practices of the Belgian congregations in teaching, dress, and household management. She writes:

> I hope that you are very careful, my dear sisters, to introduce in your classes our method of teaching. . . . Can you procure stuff for habits, like or very nearly like ours? I would not like anything to be changed in our costumes; and while I am on this chapter, tell me how you manage the household? Does order and cleanliness reign there? Is your manner of living like ours? We are children of the same mother, try to do, as we, in community.[181]

The flexibility inherent in the order's rule and pressure from the Superior to conform to adopted standards combined by the great distance from the motherhouse caused some conflict within the Ohio and Oregon foundations as the Sisters struggled with new and difficult circumstances. Important decisions requiring quick action often

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[180]Nicolas Dehesselle served as Bishop of Namur from 1836 to 1865. Jadin, 663. *Regles*, 13, 20-20.' Julie Billiart qtd. in Sister Anne Consuela, "Blessed Julie's Philosophy of Education at High School Level Today," Paper presented to the NDEA (Scottish Branch) Conference, Dowanhill, 5 February 1966, 1. (Sister Anne Consuela's translation.)

[181]Letter of Sister [Mother Superior] Ignatius, Namur, to Cincinatti congregation, 1 March 1841, "Letters Bearing upon the Foundation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in America," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* [RACHS] 11 (1900) 331-2. The letters are published in English.

could not wait for months for an answer from halfway around the globe. Moreover, freedom from local diocesan control eliminated the interference of the local bishop and his agents. This was the case for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and an increasing number of female religious orders in the nineteenth century, who benefitted from the wise direction of spiritual advisors who helped draft their constitutions and guide them through the process of papal approval.[182]

A series of small independent decisions sometimes resulted in major changes, such as those leading up to the Oregon congregation's move to California. Sister Mary Catherine accompanied Sister Loyola, Superior for the Oregon mission, on their first visit to San Jose, their future home. During their visit, Jesuit Father Nobili persuaded Sister Loyola to commit to a California establishment without the consent of either the SNDN Superior General or his own Superior. This caused a great deal of concern to Sister Mary Catherine, who "felt somewhat annoyed to find arrangements made for a foundation. I felt a dread of abandoning our dear children in Oregon, whose fathers and mothers had already cast them away."[183]

While in Oregon, the Sisters exhibited remarkable flexibility in adapting to rugged situations. Nevertheless, they brought their traditions with them, including "the weekly awarding of points, oral examinations at the end of each session, and the solemn distribution of prizes at the end of the year . . . taken over from the French system." The first closing exercises found the pupils at Ste. Marie du Willamette in traditional European white uniforms, "so that the Sisters 'were transported to the

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[182]McNamara, 606.

[183]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes on the Oregon Mission*, English translation, typescript, California Province Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Saratoga, 33-4.

boarding school in Belgium.'" They were later chided by their Belgian Mother Superior, who reminded them that Oregon was not Belgium.[184]

Certainly, the Sisters brought their Belgian ways to the frontier, but they also adapted local customs when convenient to their cause. Thus, they prepared students to receive gracefully the customary Canadian Paternal Blessing at New Year's, much to the delight of their fur-trade fathers.[185]

Whenever possible, Catholics established single-sex schools, with nuns teaching girls almost exclusively. Female religious played such a prominent role in establishing Catholic schools that Catharine Beecher could remark at mid-century, "Nine-tenths of their schools are for females . . . " By 1900, the Catholic Church maintained 765 single-sex academies in the United States, but only 102 for boys. Moreover, in the nineteenth century, neither Protestants nor Catholics thought it appropriate for women to teach boys. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur strictly prohibited nuns against teaching boys older than fourth grade, a rule relaxed only in 1922. The SNDN Oregon schools served girls exclusively.[186]

Catholic schools usually also divided along the lines of social rank, following the French custom. Indeed, the SNDN Constitution called for students to be instructed "aux devoirs de leur état" ["in duties according to their station"], and immediately upon their arrival the Cincinnati SNDN formed two institutions: "a school for pay-scholars, a school for poor children." What was unusual about the Sisters of Notre

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[184]Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 98-99. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 168.

[185]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 162. The French Canadian practice of the New Year's blessing was encouraged by the Church in Quebec, as stated in Mailloux, *Manuel des Parents,* 326.

[186]Catherine Beecher, AWEA, *Second Annual Report* (1854), p. 20, qtd. in Mannard, "Protestant Mothers," 18. Misner, 199-200. Ewens, "Leadership of Nuns," 101.
European custom dictated that nuns care for male orphans only to age five. Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 125-6.

Dame de Namur is that they were not *themselves* divided by class; they were, from their inception, an ungraded order, one of the first. Other religious orders struggled to adapt rigid class structures to fit a society that blurred class lines. Mary Ewens writes, "Americans found this lack of equality shocking, and European sisters were highly suspicious of American democracy." As a result, many American foundations followed the SNDN's classless model when organizing their own congregations (but not their schools). At home in America, European-based sisterhoods found a need to alter their social structure to serve an American public, but many encountered resistance from their European motherhouses. Some groups broke away from their European foundations, forming new American congregations, again on the classless model of the SNDN.[187]

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur differed from other female Catholic religious orders of the day not only in their lack of class distinction within their congregation, but also in their relative freedom from the rigors of the daily office of the church and the cloister. All three characteristics mark a departure from the traditional structure of women's religious orders and reflect changes taking place within the church and society in the nineteenth century. These changes reflected larger political and economic changes taking place in Europe and the United States. Political changes ushered in by the French Revolution had serious consequences for the church in France and Belgium. Catholicism lost its pre-eminence as the religion of kings and the proponents of revolution launched a campaign against religious institutions, seizing church property and dismantling monasteries and convents. A religious vocation became a hazard and many religious, both male and female, fled to England

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[187]Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 65. *Regles*, 1. "Letters," RACHS 11, 326. Ewens, "Leadership of Nuns," 103.

and the United States. Others, like Father Jean Pierre DeSmet, found refuge in missionary work. With Europe a nexus of political upheaval throughout the century, the safety of the religious community continued to be at risk. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur arose out of this turmoil and stand as an example of the transformative power of widesweeping social, economic, and political change on established institutions.[188]

Removal of at least some of the constraints of class, cloister, and the rigid schedule of praying the daily office that hampered the works of many religious congregations gave the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur greater flexibility to do works of service. Absence of cloister did not, however, grant women religious complete freedom of movement. The SNDN constitution included strict instructions governing communication and mobility to guard against any impressions of impropriety:

> Sans être cloîtrés, les Soeurs ne doivent pas sortir sans nécessité, et ne le peuvent faire sans la permission de la Supérieure; et les Supérieures elles-mêmes ne le doivent faire sans de justes raisions.
>
> [Without being cloistered, the Sisters must not go out unnecessarily, and cannot do so without the Superior's permission; and the Superior may not do so herself without justification.][189]

For many female religious congregations, the disappearance of the cloister was a great loss, and they opened schools and other money-making operations out of economic need. It took money to be cloistered: a convent needed land enough to

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[188]Quinlan, 19. That the order was ungraded, that is, not divided by class, reflects social change in the late eighteenth-century, especially in France, where the supremacy of the upper class came into question. Gradually, other female religious orders adopted this new, more egalitarian structure. Interestingly, McNamara informs us that many class-stratified convents began adding a "'middle class' of teaching nuns" around this time. Even though this class-based ordering of convents slowly diminished in practice, it was not officially abolished by the Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65. McNamara, 581.

[189]Coburn and Smith, 85. *Regles*, 2.

house the nuns and to accommodate their daily activities, and it required servants to do chores that required leaving the confines of the convent. The class-based division of cloistered convents had an economic basis: upper-class contemplatives provided a source of income with their dowries, while lower-class women labored as servants. Some uncloistered orders, like the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in both Cincinnati and Oregon, received support from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and other benefactors, but it was never enough. Religious women had to rely on their own ingenuity to support themselves, or at least to supplement the small income they received for serving middle-class needs. Either way, the work they engaged in differed drastically from that of their foresisters, and fundamentally altered convent life. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur reflected these changes in the rules governing their foundation, and in the works of service that they performed.[190]

The Sisters nevertheless kept the ritual of the church at the heart of their day. "We only six in number, had to observe all the ceremonies of the Divine Office as in Namur. We sang the office of the Blessed Virgin, Vespers and Benediction every day and Feast Day, frequently making the Holy Hour on the eve of the First Friday from eleven o'clock until midnight."[191]

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[190]The Cincinatti congregation was founded in 1840. Fr. De Smet had initially encountered nuns of this order in Cincinatti, prior to meeting Blanchet. Quinlan, 37. McNamara, 576-7.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur took a simple vow of poverty, which allowed communal ownership of property, which they used to their advantage in Oregon. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 265-6.

[191]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 19.

Two schools in Oregon

When Julie Billiart founded the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1804, she established the Institute of Notre Dame, with its mission "the spiritual care of poor children, the Christian education of girls of all classes, and the training of religious teachers." The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon carried on this tradition, founding two schools in the Willamette Valley. The first school, founded at St. Paul, served the French-Canadian and Indian populations. The French "Ste. Marie du Willamette" (also known in English as St. Mary's Convent School) changed to "St. Paul's Mission Female Seminary" when the Sisters filed for incorporation with the Oregon Territorial Government in 1851. The second school, at Oregon City, however, received a thoroughly secular sounding new name, "Young Ladies' Academy of Oregon City." Judging from available details about the curricula and economic basis of the students of the two Oregon schools, they appear to have followed the two-tier system in place in Cincinnati and probably also in effect in European SNDN schools.[192]

However different, the Oregon SNDN schools coexisted to form an economic system in which one contributed to the success of the other: these two endeavors were interdependent. In theory, the surplus tuition of the Oregon City school would support the education of lower-class students at both St. Paul and Oregon City, and also provide for the care of orphans. In reality, products of the Willamette farm and school, such as butter and knitted goods, as well as cattle and grain, netted a profit used to support the orphans and the academy in Oregon City, as incoming tuition failed to

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[192]Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, (www.snd1.org, 28 April 1997), s.v. "St. Julie Billiart: Short Biography." McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 235. Oregon Territorial and Provisional Government Papers, Oregon State Archives Microfilm, documents 4160 and 4165.

meet expenses. The farm at Willamette also furnished provisions for the Oregon City school, where the nuns had nothing more than a garden for raising fruit and vegetables.[193]

One cannot credit the Oregon Sisters for inventing the economic model whereby tuition-based academies funded elementary schools and orphanages, although necessity forced a greater economic role for agriculture than seen elsewhere. Scholarship on religious women and education in the nineteenth century informs us that most female religious orders, both in Europe and the United States, quickly established academies to supplement income from other sources, and to support their true mission to educate the poor. The Bishop of Cincinnati understood this, and was reportedly impressed that "while the Sisters of Notre Dame provide for the better classes by means of academies and boarding-schools, their special aim has always been to devote themselves to the education of the masses."[194]

In the United States, the care of orphans and instruction of the poor and minorities was often left to Catholic nuns. For example, the Ursulines in New Orleans taught black girls in the early nineteenth century. Among the students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon were an unknown number of orphans, referred to many times in their correspondence. Sister Laurence took charge of those at St. Paul, and informs Mother Constantine of their duties:

> . . . elles sont la plue grande partie du temps occupées aux ouvrages de la maison; elles aident à la cuisine à tour de semaine et tous les 15 jours elles lavent leur linge. Je prends soin de leur petit trousseau. Celles qui sont les plus fortunées ont deux ou trois chemise, deux robes, etc. Ma Soeur Supérior me donnera aussin [sic] un moment pour leur faire le catéchisme. Elles ont

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[193]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 166, 169, 202.

[194]Misner, 193. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, *American Foundations*, 25.

toutes de la bonne volonté. Depuis deux jours nous sommes occupées à rentrer de l'avoine, du houblon et des grains de toutes espèces.

[. . . most of the time they are busy with housework; they help in the kitchen all week and every fifteen days they do their laundry. I take care of their little trousseau. The most fortunate among them have two or three blouses, two dresses, etc. My Sister Superior also gives me a moment to teach the catechism. They are all good willed. For two days we have been busy harvesting oats, hops, and all kinds of grains.][195]

Certainly, the Sisters in Oregon were prepared for some of the inconveniences of frontier life, and discovered many previously unknown talents. They had the foresight to bring with them Sister Norbertine, who proved to be an excellent farmer. Furthermore, the SNDN Constitution expressed a common missionary zeal and a desire to reach spiritual frontiers: "leur [les membres] désir . . . [est] de consacrer leurs soins aux pauvres des lieux les plus abandonnés." ["their wish . . . [is] to dedicate their attention to the poor in the most isolated locations."] That the Mother Superior could gather a group of willing missionaries for a post halfway around the world in short order is further testimony to their desire to travel far and wide. Sister Mary Catherine speaks to the romance of the mission field:

At the age of fifteen . . . I devoured, so to speak, the lives of the Saints, especially Martyrs and Missionaries. I became so fixed with zeal that I regretted not being a man to go and evangelize the Indians, in my enthusiasm, I would stand on a chair in my room and explain the Catechism as I imagined I would to the Indians were I a man.[196]

The romance of the mission field aside, one may draw many comparisons between the life of a nun with that of a housewife, wherever she wandered. As women of the church, nuns performed its domestic chores, including constructing and

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[195]Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 42-3. Letter from Sister Laurence, Wallamette, to Mère Constantine, 29 August 1847, French typescript, California Province Archives of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Saratoga.

[196]*Regles*, 1. Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 5.

laundering sacred and secular garments. Upon their arrival in Oregon, the Sisters immediately noticed the deplorable state of the priest and altar boys' liturgical vestments, and Sister Mary Albine set to work right away to make a new cassock for the Vicar-General. Apparently foreseeing the need, she had brought a pattern with her from Belgium.[197]

St. Paul

Although not centrally located with respect to other early Catholic missions in the Oregon Country, St. Paul was the first administrative and educational center, serving as headquarters for Oblates, Jesuits, and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur beginning in 1844. The St. Paul mission consisted of the Oblate and Jesuit residences, St. Joseph College, the Sisters' convent, a church, a farmhouse, and several outbuildings. With the Sisters' arrival, twenty-six Catholic missionaries inhabited the vast Oregon Country: sixteen Jesuits, four Canadian Oblate priests, and six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, among a field of 200,000 Indians, 1500 "Canadians," a growing number of Americans (already 10,000 by then), and a dwindling number of British subjects (300-400). F. N. Blanchet laid out an ambitious master plan for the joint mission: "C'est ici que nous allons nous fortifier, que seront nos écoles, le couvent, le collège et le séminaire: c'est d'ici que partiront les missionaires pour aller évangéliser." ["It is here that we will fortify ourselves, where our schools, convent,

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[197]The Sisters' published letters mention several times that they did laundry for the school, the church, and the clergy. *Notice,* 120, 124, 127, and 142. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 142-3.

college and seminary will go: from here the missionaries will go out to evangelize."][198]

The St. Paul Mission was situated in French Prairie. Surrounded by early French Canadian settlements, it was a logical place for the Sisters to establish their first school. Perhaps to the disappointment of the nuns, St. Paul never developed into an important urban center, and was soon superseded by Oregon City. Accordingly, the Sisters maintained Ste. Marie du Willamette as an elementary school with an emphasis on practical skills, and built their academy at Oregon City. Regardless of the settlement's future, at that time the St. Paul SNDN school made a significant contribution to education in the area: six out of the nine teachers in Marion County were Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.[199]

Ste. Marie de Willamette served the "Native" children and the mostly Indian or mixed-blood wives of the French-Canadian settlers, who were former servants of fur-trading companies. The students themselves were illiterate, unconverted, and lacking in basic Euro-American domestic skills. The nuns provided basic religious and literacy instruction and domestic training. All classes were conducted in French, which was considered the native language for this population. Historian Margaret Thompson informs us that the order's constitution demanded that the Sisters speak the language of their residence. This was apparently uncommon among female religious

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[198]Maps A and B, Gonzaga Archives Microfilm Collection, Rocky Mountain Mission, vol. 1, section V.

"Canadians" refers to French Canadians. Not all were British subjects, as a number came west with American fur trading companies. Bagley, vol. 2, 55. The number of Jesuits doubled the same year that the Sisters arrived.

Letter from F.N. Blanchet, St. Paul du Willamette, to Bishop Signay, 3 November 1844, p. 2, F. N. Blanchet Papers, MSS 322, English typescript, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

[199]U. S. Census Office, Seventh Census, 1850, *Statistics of Territories,* vol. 1, p. 1001.

congregations and contributed to the international success of the order. The ability and willingness of Catholic religious and clergy to speak the language of their immigrant parishioners was a major influence on the development of the Catholic church in America.[200]

French was the language of many fur-trade fathers, but not necessarily of their offspring. Many of the métis students may, in fact, have been brought up using their mothers' native language and Chinook jargon, with little exposure to French. This created a gap between the Sisters and their students, and presumably between the métis community at French Prairie and the incoming English-speaking populace. Even at the point of the Sisters' departure from St. Paul in 1852, Sister Mary Catherine later recalled difficulty in understanding some of the students:

> We closed our boarding school at Willamette, but we had to keep the orphans of those poor Canadians who had died in California. Their half savage mothers filled us with compassion. One by one they left their farms to join their tribe. It was truly sad to see the poor abandoned children. Reduced as we had been by the fire [at the St. Paul school] we found it very painful to be burdened with fifteen or sixteen children whom we could understand with only the greatest difficulty.[201]

Moreover, the importance of Chinook jargon is underscored by the Sisters' efforts to learn it on their voyage to North America and by its use in worship, even by SNDN students, as attested by Mary Wagner Applin, who stated that hymns were sung in all three languages. The students at St. Paul were, however, expected to learn French. "By degrees they were forbidden to speak Chinouk. They could read French

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[200]Margaret Susan Thompson, "Sisterhood and Power: Class, Culture, and Ethnicity in the American Convent," *Colby Library Quarterly* 25 (1989): 149-75 [unpaginated reprint from SisterSite Website, www.geocities.com/Wellesley, 28 April 1997]. Dolan, 162.

[201]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, unpaginated section.

and study the catechism so that they learned how to correct their perverse inclinations."[202]

All foreign Sisters faced the struggle to master English, for their native language, however useful for the immigrant groups they came to serve, carried them only so far. In order to generate income through academies they had to master English. Most antebellum convent schools taught French as a subject, and it was even included in the limited curriculum of the School for Colored Girls in Baltimore. When the Sisters of Notre Dame Namur opened their school in Oregon City, instruction was offered in English. From the start, English was also taught at St. Paul.[203]

Although the Sisters instructed girls and women ranging in age from sixteen to sixty, they most desired to teach the younger women and girls, so that they could, in turn, teach their mothers.

> . . . [the] pupils [are] "hardly civilized" but have a good heart, are not at all malicious; their faults could be attributed to the weakness of their primary education because their mothers, being savages, are unable to correct them . . . [and fathers are too busy farming] Have great hopes of seeing changes in the pupils . . .

The Sisters instructed older women in the catechism, and taught Sunday school to those children not attending school during the week.[204]

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[202]Fred Lockley, interview with Mrs. George Applin [nee Marie Wagner], "Observations and Impressions of the Journal Man," *Oregon Journal* 5 May 1922, *Oregon Journal* Files, Oregon Historical Society, Portland. Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 20.

[203]Misner, 272-6. *Notice*, 54.

[204]*Notice,* 122 & passim. The goal of daughters teaching mothers was also held by Protestant women engaged in the instruction and acculturation of immigrants, as described in Gwendolyn Mink's *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State. 1917-1942,* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995). On cathecism and Sunday school, see McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 145-6, 149-50.

The family of Phil Thompson, a Rocky Mountain man and most likely a Protestant, provides a model for the trickle-down effect of the education of métis daughters:

> After trapping many years in the Rocky Mountains and marrying a native woman of the Snake Indians, he saw his oldest daughter beginning to grow up to womanhood, and concluded that he must follow the missionaries who had come into the Willamette Valley that the girl might be educated. He talked the matter over with his Indian wife, who perceived the advantage of the child becoming a white woman; but could not bring herself to leave her country. She bade him and the girl a sad farewell, and Thompson set out, and after one day's journey made camp. In the morning the mother appeared to say good-bye again. Another day's march was made; but once more, as morning came, the Snake Indian mother was there to say good-bye. Thus continuing several days she finally gave up her tribe to follow her child; and in the Willamette Valley became known as one of the most careful of housewives. She tried to learn the white women's ways, and visited her white neighbors, noticing all the home arrangements and ways of cooking, washing, and keeping house, and introduced these at home, to please her husband, and that her children might grow up like white people.[205]

The Sisters' school opened September 12, 1844, just days after the nuns arrived at St. Paul. They had only crude accommodations to offer, but nonetheless received nineteen students on the first day. Eight days later they counted thirty boarders, but could only accommodate twelve (including three orphans), plus an unknown number of day students. At the time, the region still operated on a commodity rather than a cash-based economy, with farm products and fur used as currency to purchase goods from the HBC. Accordingly, the Sisters required the following provisions for tuition:

> Per trimester: One hundred pounds of flour, twenty five pounds of bacon or thirty six of beef, four pounds of lard, one sack of potatoes, three gallons of peas, three dozen eggs, one gallon of salt, four pounds of candles, one pound of tea and four pounds of rice.[206]

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[205]Lyman, *History of Oregon*, vol. 3, 266-7.

[206]*Notice*, 122, 125, 133. On the commodity-based economy, see Gibson, 43.

With the high price of provisions at Fort Vancouver, it is no wonder that the nuns did not receive tuition paid in full.

The nuns were set on course to clean up the religious lives of the area's inhabitants just as they instilled notions of good hygiene in their pupils. The priests eagerly welcomed the Sisters as partners in missionary work, for they, too, saw the utility of perpetuating religious values in the family through women. Education, furthermore, would not only help to solve the problem of an endemic immorality in frontier culture, but it would also contribute to the economic well-being of the community. According to Fr. Bolduc, one of the priests at the St. Paul mission,

> All the Canadians are married to native women of different tribes, who have no proper knowledge of how to keep a household in order. . . . Only farmers married to skillful Canadian wives could make a fortune here. Their example would be of great usefulness for the country, which, without that, will long remain stationary.[207]

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, then, were to make proper "Canadian wives" out of these Native women.

Even more importantly, the Indian and perhaps even some of the métis mothers of the Sisters' students were ignorant of Western religion. Writing almost 100 years later, historian Clarence Bagley speaks to the Victorian values of the 1840s, seeing the dangers of ignorant mothers and wives: "The native women whom they had taken as wives were pagans, or if they had become Christians were not sufficiently instructed in the principles of religion, and the children were being raised in ignorance." The priests and sisters came to provide the French Canadians with "the means of practicing their own religion" and to counteract the "hostile [Protestant] teachers . . . among them"

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[207]The French-Canadian population of the Willamette settlement at the time was estimated at 600 individuals, including women and children. Carl Landerholm, trans., *Notices and Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission to the Pacific Northwest.* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1956), 207. Fr. Bolduc's journal is quoted in Landerholm, 145-6.

who had "invaded the homes of the Canadians with the sole object of making them followers of their creed." The Sisters came equipped with the necessary materials needed to teach their students European manners and religion, including a piano, and a tabernacle given to them in Peru.[208]

Few firsthand accounts exist of the SNDN Oregon schools from the perspective of their students. Fred Lockley, the "Journal Man" who for years chronicled the people and stories of Oregon's past for the *Oregon Journal,* provides a rare glimpse into the SNDN school at St. Paul in an interview with Mrs. George Applin (nee Marie Wagner). The Sisters taught them more than academic subjects and useful household skills, she told Lockley:

> . . . taught us spelling, arithmetic, reading and grammar and later writing. . . . Our teachers taught us to make aprons, to knit stockings, to patch, to spin and to weave. We took turns helping Sister Norbertine with the cooking. Much of the time I used to learn to sing in Latin, French and [Chinook] jargon. I learned all of the hymns, hundreds of them, by heart.[209]

Marie added further insight into the life of a métis child of the frontier:

> . . . They taught us to play. We did not know we should laugh when we played. Always before we had played with bits of colored flint or sticks, but they taught us to run around and drop the handkerchief and many new and strange games.[210]

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[208]Bagley, vol. 2, 36. *Notice,* 95; Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon City Register 1842-1890, Salem Register 1862-1885, Jacksonville Register 1861-1885* (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1984), frontispiece.

[209]Fred Lockley, "In Earlier Days," *Oregon Journal* 19 September 1914, *Oregon Journal* Files ("Aplin - "), Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. According to Marie Wagner Aplin's account published the following day, 20 September 1914, she attended the school in St. Paul for five years, returning home when she was fourteen.

Oregon Accounts records tuition and choir payment for M. Wagner from 1846 to June 1850. Her sisters Rose, Lizette, and Marguerite also attended school at St. Paul. *Oregon Accounts,* 66-7. Lizette Wagner is listed at the St. Paul school in the 1850 Census.

[210]Fred Lockley, "In Earlier Days," *Oregon Journal* September 19, 1914. Oregon Journal Files ("Aplin - "), Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

The priest-advisor to the Sisters in Oregon exhorted them to expand their curriculum to include domestic and agricultural skills so that their students could, in turn, teach their mothers. This was new territory, as Sister Mary Dominica McNamee explains, "So by way of home economics classes the girls were rotated through household and barnyard charges, which in many cases the Sisters were only then learning themselves." Perhaps they also received encouragement from John McLoughlin, who had written to fellow HBC officer Edward Ermatinger in 1836, "let those who wish to do good to Indians - teach them to get their food in a different way than at present - in short teach them Agriculture While they are instructing them in Religion . . . " In this arena, the Sisters' relative immobility gave them an advantage over the priests, for their sedentary lifestyle allowed them to farm, while many of the priests often traveled to reach their constituency and so could not manage to raise crops or tend livestock. In addition, having a half-dozen Sisters allowed for a greater workforce and a greater division of labor than the more widely dispersed priests could afford. According to James Gibson, farming was an economic necessity for all missionaries in this region during the fur-trade era, due to the high cost of purchasing goods from the HBC and the additional cost of freight to transport them to the point of need.[211]

Not only did they need to teach these skills, however, they needed to put them into practice to gain self-sufficiency. Domestic skills conformed to local need. When faced with the exorbitant cost of woolen yarn and fabric, the Sisters taught their students to spin, weave, and knit, clothing themselves and producing material for the market. The Belgian Mother Superior, Mère Constantine, prepared the second band

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[211]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 163. John McLoughlin, qtd. in Gibson, 180. On farming and missionary work, see Gibson, 159, 163-9.

of Sisters who arrived in Oregon in 1847 by insuring that some of them acquired new skills for the new world: Sister Aldegonde, weaving, and Sister Laurence, shoemaking. She sent along two looms and tools and materials for shoemaking. The Sisters apparently did not appreciate the Indian and métis women's almost legendary skill at making moccasins, the standard footwear for the fur trade, and set about with zeal outfitting their students with European-style shoes. Their métis students likely came to them sporting an interesting combination of clothing styles, since contemporary depictions of métis men and women feature both European and Indian clothing worn together, with Indian-style footwear and accessories. American explorer Charles Wilkes describes the garb of métis women observed 1841:

> The ladies of the country are dressed after our own bygone fashions, with the exception of leggins, made of red and blue cloth, richly ornamented. Their feet, which are small and pretty, are covered with worked moccasins.[212]

As mentioned earlier, instruction at Ste Marie de Willamette was in French, the native tongue of the sisters and of many of the fur-trade fathers. But Father Demers soon urged them to improve their English to prepare for the incoming tide of settlers. In a letter to Mère Constantine, he remarked that English-speaking settlers already expressed interest in the school. The second group of Sisters studied English at the motherhouse and on their voyage, and brought with them textbooks and catechisms in their new language.[213]

The Sisters provided most of the labor to maintain and finish building the school, and to establish and run the farm where they raised foodstuffs for their own use and for sale. Instruction surely gave way at times to labor, as was commonly the case

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[212]Wilkes, *Narrative*, vol. 4, 370. John Hussey adds: "For most women the moccasin took the place of both shoes and stockings, but gentlemen's wives preferred European-style footwear." Hussey, "Women of Fort Vancouver," 288. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 173-5, 180, and 191.

[213]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 173, 177, and 185. Bagley, vol. 2, 111.

in schools in this period. Sister Mary Catherine's memoirs describe the care necessary for a special crop, chicory, which was grown to replace the supply of coffee lost in a fire. "Chicory is difficult to grow, and so, she and her pupils spent hours pulling up weeds. . . . This chicory cost us many a sacrifice, particularly Sister Mary Cornelia who felt that her pupils stood more in need of schooling than weeding." The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, perhaps sometimes inadvertently, taught their students desirable Euro-American practices and ideals about agrarian settlement by taking up the plow themselves. They set a very vivid example of an orderly life, tied to the earth in a very different way than any of the local Indian groups perceived their relationship to nature.[214]

Life was not easy at Ste. Marie du Willamette, but the Sisters plotted and then carried out plans for an academy in Oregon City. Other events interfered that brought the St. Paul school into decline. Sister Mary Catherine recalls: "Towards the end [of 1849] . . . the discovery in California reached the ears of the poor Canadians. They imagined that in a short time they would pick up a fortune. They left their daughters with us making fine promises. So we were left with our poor family without any assistance in any way. All had left with the 'gold fever.'" Jesuit Father M. Accolti expresses the excitement generated by the discovery of gold in California, even among clergy:

> Or or or c'est le mot du jour. Allez ou vous voulez on ne parle que d'or. Les vieux et les jeune, les femmes et les enfans, les séculiers et les ecclesiastique, tous n'ont sur les levres que le mot *or*.

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[214]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 22.

> [Gold gold gold is the word of the day. Go wherever you wish, people talk of nothing but gold. Old and young, women and children, secular and ecclesiastic, all have only the word *gold* on their lips.][215]

A brigade heading south to join the gold rush departed from French Prairie, with Fr. Delorme in tow. An epidemic of yellow fever claimed forty members of that party, including twenty heads of families. Archbishop Blanchet subsequently closed the boys' school, St. Joseph College. McNamee asserts that following that tragedy, "Sainte Marie de Willamette might be classed a home for orphans, children whose fathers died on the mining expedition and whose mothers returned to their native villages when they found themselves without support."[216]

An 1850 typhoid epidemic infected all but one student at Ste. Marie du Willamette. At that time "only one pupil had a home." The Sisters used the nearby abandoned St. Joseph's College as a hospital. Eleven students died. Two years later, in the spring of 1852, the Sisters moved the remaining students to Oregon City and closed their St. Paul mission school.[217]

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[215]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 23.
Letter from M. Accolti, Ft. Vancouver, to Fr. General, 15 March 1849, Item 17, p. 1, Rome Jesuit General's Rocky Mountain Mission Correspondence Collection, vol. 1, sec. V, no. 20, Rocky Mountain Mission, 1844-1851, General's Archives, Rome, microfilm, roll 4, Gonzaga University Microfilm Collection, Spokane, WA. Accolti, who not long after this founded the Santa Clara (California) Mission, apparently shared the gold seekers' enthusiasm.

[216]Bagley, vol. 1, 144. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude,* 202.

[217]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 229 and 254.

Oregon City

After the arrival of a reinforcement of seven additional nuns from Belgium in 1847, the Sisters added a more "proper" school in Oregon City, similar to the convent schools in Belgium that the nuns themselves had attended. Sister Mary Dominica McNamee makes clear the contrast between the two Oregon schools: "This would not be another Sainte Marie de Willamette, where Mère Constantine's warning to keep it a simple school for primitive people would certainly apply. Things would shape up to importance in Oregon City, and Mère Constantine would come to realize the fact." Perhaps the Mother Superior already realized this, since the new Belgian envoys had set to work immediately upon their selection to ready themselves for the new enterprise by learning English and other skills. Once landed in Oregon, the enlarged corps of nuns divided themselves between the St. Paul mission and the new enterprise in Oregon City according to their talents, with the best and brightest going to the new academy.[218]

In 1846, Oregon City founder and former Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, John McLoughlin, gave the Sisters an entire city block of his land claim in Oregon City. He later reminded them of the claim by bringing a delegation of important Oregon City residents to St. Paul, who urged the Sisters to build a school in their city. McLoughlin's charity was not reserved for Catholics. Ada Losh Rose later reported that "More than 300 lots were donated [by McLoughlin]. Those who numbered among his beneficiaries were the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic and Congregational churches. Eight lots were given for a Catholic school. The Oregon City high school now stands on the ground donated by him for a protestant seminary."

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[218]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 199.

Oregon City quickly earned its name, the first real urban center in the Pacific Northwest. (By 1850, however, Portland eclipsed its brief ascendancy, which lasted only about seven years.)[219]

Even as John McLoughlin distributed lots in Oregon City, Catholics in St. Paul built their new church with the confidence that it would become the cathedral. When F. N. Blanchet returned from Europe in 1847 as archbishop, however, the Oregon City Catholic Church became his cathedral although his throne still resided at St. Paul, which remained for a time the center of his activity. The change of focus from the missionary activity based in St. Paul to urban Catholicism centered in Oregon City was incomplete, but certain.[220]

Significantly, in Oregon City, the Sisters chose a site four blocks away from the Catholic church, even though Archbishop Blanchet had hoped they would be situated adjacent to the church, in order to be readily available to provide music for religious services (and presumably perform other duties on demand). Although they built an impressive structure for their school, fire at St. Paul brought disappointment as it destroyed treasured items that the second wave of nuns had recently brought from Belgium for the Oregon City school.[221]

Despite the setback, the Young Ladies Boarding School and Day School in Oregon City opened its doors in September 1848, with Sister Ignace de Loyola as the Superior. Sister Mary Aloysia's new piano was removed from storage at Fort Vancouver, placed in their temporary lodgings at the Bishop's "palace," and moved

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[219]*Gresham Outlook,* 18 October 1935, in "Biography - McLoughlin, John," Vertical File Collection, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. Hussey, *Ft. Vancouver*, 82.

[220]Brandt and Pereya, 17-8.

[221]Mc Namee, 196. The Sisters did sing Vespers Sunday afternoons in the church. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 224.

into their new building in June 1849. Sister Loyale took care to furnish the academy with the finest items available: prie-dieus and an organ for the chapel, paneling for some of the rooms, good carpets and decent beds. They dined on real china and pewter, and the students gained another piano, a harp, and smaller instruments.[222]

After a slow start, the school attracted students from the upper class of the fur trade, including two granddaughters of Dr. John McLoughlin, and respectable families settling in the Willamette Valley. According to Sister Marie Catherine, "The Sisters established in Oregon City not withstanding the little knowledge of English, succeeded very well with the Americans and soon they had thirty or forty boarders besides their day scholars who were the children of the principal families of the place." News of gold in California reached Oregon just as workers put the finishing touches on the building, but for the moment, the gold rush meant a boom in students whose fathers left them in the care of the nuns as they headed south. The second year, thirty-six students enrolled, plus some Indian girls who were to receive domestic training. McNamee generously estimates the highest enrollment to be eighty or ninety, including boarders and day students, at all levels from infant to secondary. Like the other SNDN school at St. Paul, the six Oregon City SNDN faculty constituted seventy-five percent of the teaching force in Clackamas County.[223]

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[222]Bagley, vol 1: 143-44. In 1851, enrollment dropped to 12 boarders, with no new students. McNamee suggests that only a handful paid full tuition. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 200, 208, and 251-2.

[223]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, unpaginated. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 200, 210. It is hard to see how she arrives at so high a number from the paltry records remaining.

The 1850 federal census lists Oregon City's population as 697. Even at the height of the gold rush, men outnumbered women by a wide margin, 426 to 271. The census also records eight teachers for Clackamas County. U.S. Census of 1850, *Statistics of Territories*, 995 and 1001.

General academic subjects in female secondary schools of the day included arithmetic and higher mathematics, writing and grammar, elements of history, "Geography, with the use of Maps and Globes." Religion and reading ranked highest in the nineteenth-century curriculum, followed by handwork. Barbara Misner informs us: "Certainly French was important to those who sought to take their place in society in the major cities along the eastern seaboard, but it is also clear that various types of fancy needlework, painting and music were important elements." It is clear from Msg. Dehesselle's remarks in the Constitution of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur mentioned above that tastes in Europe and America in this regard resembled one another closely. Hands busy with needlework and music replaced idle hands ready for mischief. For upperclass women, these skills demonstrated their femininity; for others, they provided employable skills to create marketable items. The prominent place of Marguerite Wadin McLoughlin's elaborate oriental sewing cabinet in the parlor of McLoughlin House in Oregon City is a striking symbol of the importance of handiwork as an emblem of civilization and femininity.[224]

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur offered instruction in English at Oregon City, with a curriculum that included writing (penmanship?), drawing, and needlework, samples of which were to be displayed at an exhibition for parents and the community at the end of the year. The nuns provided a refined education for ladies, using standard texts such as *The Central School Reader: Being a Collection of Essays and Extracts from approved Writers*, compiled by the Female Association for the Improvement of Juvenile Books.[225]

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[224]Misner, 181, 272-6; Coburn and Smith, 31.

[225]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 213. "Young Ladies Boarding School and Day School," *Oregon Statesman*, 16 September 1851, p. 3 c.2
Presumably due to the fire at St. Paul, "weaving never came to the academy." McNamee, Willamette Interlude , 212.

American parents demanded more musical training for their girls than the Europeans. In fact, in America, "the greatest source of income often was private lessons in music and art." Indeed, tuition for music lessons appear as line items in the SNDN account books. The harp and guitar appear to be popular choices. These were among the items liquidated at the closure of the Oregon City school, as was a piano. The Sisters also offered supplemental lessons in drawing and painting.[226]

Students at the Young Ladies School came from Catholic and, to a much lesser extent, Protestant families. In carefully chosen language, the Sisters advertised their school in the local press, nearly masking its religious affiliation. One is alerted to the fact that it is "conducted by the Sisters of Notre Dame" by the smaller print under the heading, but the description contains no references to religion. The advertisement describes a proper ladies school, run by "a society of ladies", and emphasizes moral rather than religious formation:

> the heart must be formed as well as the mind, and adorned with all those qualities which beautify the manners and render virtue attractive and amiable. the moral advancement of the pupils shall be the object of the most assiduous care.

In addition, the Sisters took pride in the beautiful grounds (landscaped by Sister Norbertine), and assured parents that they would care for their daughters' health. Tuition was to be paid in cash, in advance, with full-time boarding fees listed as "Board and tuition, per session, $175,00" and day classes ranging from $4.50 to $9.50, per quarter, in three categories: "Infant class," "Elementary school," and "more advanced." The form of tuition, now cash instead of agricultural goods as formerly required at the St. Paul school, reflects a change from a commodity to cash-based

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[226]Ewens, *Role of the Nun*, 100, 134. See, for example, *Pupils' Accounts*. "The Sisters of Notre Dame," *Oregon Statesman*, 12 March 1853, p. 3 c. 1. "Young Ladies Boarding and Day School," *OregonSpectator,* 14 October 1851, p. 3 c. 3.

economy coinciding with the disruption of the HBC monopoly by an American manufacturing and commerce. This major economic change coincided with the opening of the Oregon City SNDN school. The elevated tone of the school's advertisement also indicates that the Sisters were reaching out to a more literate, cultured (or aspiring to be cultured) clientele, again reflecting new economic and social circumstances. Appearing just a week before the start of the school year, it seems likely that the advertisement was intended to generate respect for the nuns' endeavor in the wider community as much as to recruit new students.[227]

Au revoir, Oregon

Unfortunately, the Sisters' efforts in Oregon were short-lived. The gold rush lured tuition-paying fathers away to California, and the Jesuits with them. Following the Jesuits' withdrawal from the Willamette mission in 1849, which resulted in the closure of both St. Joseph's school and the mission house of St. Francis Xavier at the St. Paul site, the Sisters closed Ste. Marie de Willamette in 1852 and moved the remaining boarders and orphans to Oregon City. The Young Ladies' Academy closed in 1853, and the Sisters subsequently left Oregon to consolidate their efforts at a new school founded near the Jesuits in San Jose, California. The Catholic Church in Oregon "languished," burdened with a "huge debt" and a diminishing labor force.[228]

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[227]"Young Ladies Boarding and Day School," *Oregon Statesman.* 16 September 1851, p. 3 c. 2. On the change to a cash economy, see Gibson, 140.

[228]Wilfred P. Schoenberg, *A Pictorial History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest* (Portland, OR: Knights of Columbus, 1996), xvii.

In 1851, enrollment at the Young Ladies' Academy had dropped to 12 boarders, with no new students. McNamee suggests that only a handful paid full tuition. Worse still, in 1852, "Nine of the twelve academy boarders were withdrawing, either of necessity or because the school had become predominantly native." Remaining were the two Cavanaugh sisters, Blanchet's wards, one new student, and one or two others. Again, McNamee speculates: ". . . from the day the orphans arrived the academy was doomed, regardless of the fortunes of Oregon City. The presence of so many "savages" would of itself have emptied the boarding school; the Raes [John McLoughlin's granddaughters], for instance, had become "externes" after the arrival of the orphans." Sister Mary Catherine blames the failure of the school on the parents' spendthrift ways in the wake of the gold rush.[229]

> At first everything in Oregon City seemed to prosper. The Americans placed their daughters with our sisters and on their return settled their accounts very satisfactorily. But as their hands were frequently in their bags of gold they soon were as poor as formerly. Their daughters were taken from the boarding school which reduced it to nothing.[230]

As they prepared to leave Oregon, the Sisters had to find homes for the orphans and "service in good families for their older girls." They took a few of the girls with them, as the account books record entries for passage to San Jose for a handful of students.[231]

The Sisters' tenure in Oregon coincided with three pivotal events in Pacific Northwest history. In 1846, the Oregon Country became exclusively American territory, fixing the boundary between British and American holdings in the Northwest

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[229]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 251-2, 256 and 259.

[230]Sister M. Catherine, *Notes*, English typescript, 23-4.

[231]McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 261. Among those traveling to Califormia are Victoire Masta, and Rosalie and Aribanche Plouff, listed in *Oregon Accounts*, 62 and 65.

at the forty-ninth parallel. Subsequently, American settlers poured overland to settle the fertile Willamette Valley. A massacre at Waiilaptu (Walla Walla) ended the lives of American Board missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman in November 1847, fueling not only the Indian Wars but also anti-Catholic sentiment among the new Protestant American settlers. Finally, the California gold rush of 1849 drew parishioners to the southern gold fields, leaving farms empty in the Willamette Valley, and wiping out the economic base of the Willamette missions. The Catholic missions barely survived and were revived later by Blanchet, but the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur permanently abandoned their missions, first St. Paul in 1852, then Oregon City in 1853. They were not the first missionaries to abandon the Willamette Valley; the Methodists had disbanded after ten years, in 1844, just prior to the arrival of the Namur sisters.

The preceding paragraph follows the standard argument for the collapse of the Willamette Valley Catholic missions. They are significant events, and help to place this discussion in the larger context of the history of the Pacific Northwest. They do not, however, fully explain the nuns' departure. Internal church politics were partly to blame. The Sisters had historically close ties to the Jesuits, dating back to their foundation as a religious order. Relations between members of the male clergy, the Jesuits and the Oblates (in particular F.N. Blanchet), were often strained, and the Sisters no doubt shared in the Jesuits' complaints about the Archbishop. The Donation Land Act of 1850 threw Oregon City into turmoil, with the churches' benefactor, John McLoughlin, losing control of a great deal of property. The Sisters worried about losing their land, a concern even more understandable in light of the considerable losses many churches and religious congregations had experienced in post-revolutionary France. Lastly, the lure of gold in California may have been as attractive

to the nuns as it was to the French-Canadian community, promising an easier and more familiar lifestyle than that found in Oregon.[232]

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon followed the ambitions of their local leader, Sister Loyola. She expressed disappointment in the Oregon mission, especially with the knowledge that her fellow Sisters in Cincinnati enjoyed immediate and rather remarkable success in their enterprise.[233]

The Jesuits abandoned their Willamette Valley mission to establish a college in San Jose, California, later to become Santa Clara College. The Sisters followed them eagerly, no doubt enticed by the Jesuits' offer of mutual assistance, and despite attempts by their male and female superiors to dissuade them. They founded their new academy near the Jesuit college, and in fifteen years the Sisters chartered the College at Belmont, now Notre Dame de Namur University.[234]

Conclusion

The role of missionary-educators suited the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur perfectly. They were true Catholic women able to adapt to harsh conditions and carry on with their mission. As agents of acculturation, they spread the gospel of true

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[232]Julie Billiart founded the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at the urging of Jesuit Father Joseph Varin, who was seeking a religious congregation to educate the children left in his care. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, (New York: Robert Appleton, 1911) s.v. "Institute of Notre-Dame de Namur," by A Sister of Notre Dame, transcribed by Joseph E. O'Connor [unpaginated reprint from New Advent Website, www.newadvent.org/cathen/11128b.htm, 3 March 2004].

Letter of Sister Loyola, Oregon City, to General Joseph Lane, 18 October 1851, Joseph Lane Papers, MSS 1146, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

[233]"Letters," RACHS 11: 328, 335.

[234]"Sisters of Notre Dame Throughout the World," 18.

womanhood to Indian, métis, and Euro-American girls in frontier Oregon, shored up by their faith and supported by the age-old institution of the Catholic Church. The unique conditions of their foundation, both classless and relatively autonomous, gave them the flexibility and freedom to operate at a great distance from their motherhouse. It also allowed them the liberty to abandon their mission, much to Oregon's loss.

Recognizing the different social roles their students would fulfill as adult women, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur established schools to fit the needs of their students "according to their station." At the same time, they built an economically sustainable organization which fell victim to the unique circumstances of time and place. The following chapter examines the demographics of the Oregon SNDN students, not only in order to gauge the success of the Oregon mission, but also to bring to life a significant number of young women "lost" to history, and to uncover the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of the very diverse population of the Oregon Territory in its infancy, especially the métis.

CHAPTER 3

PIONEER DAUGHTERS IN OREGON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, 1850

Introduction

Two questions have guided this project from its very inception: what, if anything, divided the students between the two Oregon SNDN schools, and what impact did Catholic schooling have on these girls' lives? The overwhelming presence of daughters of fur-trade employees in the two schools combined with an impressive body of literature on women in the fur trade directed the focus of this study to fur-trade daughters. The presence of incoming overland emigrant daughters, both Irish and Anglo-American, at the Oregon City school complicates and enriches the discussion, and generates more questions. As Oregon became increasingly white and Euro-American, did Catholic schooling prepare métis girls to integrate into the new order? Did fur-trade daughters continue to be identified as métis, and did their ethnic identity affect their social standing? Finally, did their Catholic education guarantee a continued affiliation with the Catholic Church? These questions, pondered throughout primary and secondary source research and analysis, have led to four main areas of inquiry: ethnicity, class, religion, and gender, as discussed briefly in the introduction to this thesis. Ethnicity, class, and religion will first be considered separately, with the connections between these elements examined later in the chapter. Gender has been and will continue to be considered throughout the text.

The preceding chapters have laid the groundwork for this analysis by discussing the changes taking place in Oregon in the years leading up to 1850, when the region underwent the transformation from a Native-dominated landscape with a

small Euro-American commercial presence under disputed political jurisdiction to a predominantly white territory of the United States. Chapter one set the context for understanding the unique nature of fur-trade society, and the ways in which it adapted to political, economic, and social change. Chapter two discussed the importance and evolution of the education of women in the nineteenth century, both within and outside the fur trade, and the role of Catholic women religious educators. The present chapter draws this broader discussion to the level of a small group of young (métis) women in Oregon Catholic schools to explore the lasting effects of their social and cultural formation.

Pioneer daughters

The sample chosen for this study is derived from the *1850 United States Federal Census of the Oregon Territory*, which lists a total of forty students residing at the two Oregon SNDN schools in 1850. As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, the list of students extracted from the early account books of the SNDN Oregon mission yielded insufficient information for a broader comparison of the two Oregon schools based on the Sisters' archival record. By providing a sample of an average of twenty students at each school taken at a single point in time, the census data sets up a convenient comparison of the St. Paul and Oregon City schools at the height of the Sisters' educational operation. The following investigation of the ethnic lineage, socioeconomic class, religious affiliation, and marital history of these pioneer daughters profiles these young women using standard genealogical and biographical sources, following Jennifer Brown's macrobiographical approach.

Research focused on tracing the girls' ethnic roots, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and choice of marital partner. Family lineage, derived from numerous genealogical sources, often revealed mixed ethnic roots. Socioecomomic status here is roughly determined according to the occupation and social status of prominent males (i.e. father - in some cases grandfather - and spouse). Church and civic records were mined for the religious affiliation of parents, girls, and their spouses. Finally, church and civic records also provided information regarding marriage.

Before proceeding with this analysis, it is useful to discuss the nature of the census data. Conducted house-by-house, the 1850 census provides a listing of girls residing at each of the Oregon SNDN schools during the 1850-1851 academic year. Because the census counted individuals at their place of residence, it does not yield information about day students living at home or boarding elsewhere, and so does not provide a comprehensive listing of enrollees. It does, however, list students regardless of their ability to pay tuition and fees. In fact, the 1850 census adds six students to the roster who do not appear in the Sisters' accounts. Some or all of these girls were orphans; they may all have been charity cases and therefore not recorded in the Sisters' financial registers. Considering the state of the schools' archival records, this random snapshot taken by the U.S. Census offers the clearest picture of the SNDN schools possible from this distant point in time. It also helps to clarify information provided in the SNDN account books, which will also be used whenever appropriate.[235]

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[235]U.S. Census Office, *Population Schedules [1850],* Clackamas County [Oregon City], household 324 and Marion County [St. Paul], household 454. The census-taker visited Oregon City 18 October 1850 and St. Paul 3 February 1851.

Students identified only by the 1850 Census include Catherine, Cécile, and Marianne Laurant, and Genievre Joseph at St. Paul; Renee Bracoigne and Louisa Martineau at Oregon City. Louisa Martineau was an orphan, the parentage of Genievre Joseph and Renee Bracoigne is uncertain, and the Laurant sisters lost both of their parents by 1861, possibly earlier.

Jennifer Brown's macrobiographical approach allowed the wide-ranging search of primary sources necessary to extract sufficient information from a record usually silent on young women. The girls' affiliation with both the fur trade and the Catholic Church, whose records have been well preserved and thoroughly documented, proved to be fortuitous. Many of their fathers, participants in the fur trade, early settlement and institution-building, the California gold rush, and Indian wars, figure prominently in the historic record. (Tables C & D list fathers' fur-trade affiliation.) Mothers proved more difficult to trace, although the Catholic Church records reveal the identity of most of them, if sometimes inconsistently. Somewhat surprisingly, accounts of the Euro-American overland emigrants were more elusive.

Ethnicity

In an effort to discover what factors sorted the SNDN students into the two schools, and to afford a discussion of ethnicity in the Oregon Country at mid-century, a thorough search of genealogical sources uncovered the ethnic lineage of girls in the census sample. A discussion of the results, by school, follows.[236]

As French Canadians predominated in settlements in the St. Paul area, it comes as no surprise that all of the girls listed in the 1850 census at Ste. Marie du Willamette have French surnames. Most had French-Canadian fathers; two fathers were

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[236]See bibliography for genealogical sources, which are too extensive to list separately. They include church records, census data, traders' accounts, fur-trade records, land records, newspapers, vital statistics, early histories, diaries and letters.

"Iroquois" with French names. (See Table A.) All of the fathers of St. Paul students also appear to have had some affiliation with the fur trade.[237]

Most of the girls' mothers, on the other hand, descended from Indians of the following Pacific Northwest tribes: Cayuse, Chehalis, Chinook, Colville, Kamloops, Nez Percés, Stikin, and Tumwater. Eleven mothers were full-blood Indians from the Oregon Country. Among the five métis mothers, one Iroquois-Indian, one Hawaiian-Indian, and two of the three French Canadian-Indian mothers were born of country marriages between Indian women from the Pacific Northwest and Iroquois, Hawaiian, or French Canadian men. Only Emilie Fenlay Bercier Plamondon, a métis of French Canadian and Cree heritage, came from outside the Northwest. In sum, the average student boarding at St. Paul in 1850 was métis of French Canadian and local Indian heritage with some connection to the fur trade.[238]

Preliminary research on the list of students derived from the Sisters' *Oregon Accounts,* the apparent record of Ste. Marie du Willamette, corroborates the evidence from the 1850 census. Most if not all of the students recorded in this ledger were

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[237]Table A lists the identities and ethnic origins of the parents of the St. Paul students listed in the 1850 census. The parentage of two of the nineteen girls, Melecie Albot and Genievre Joseph, could not be traced.

In this context, Iroquois is used as a generic term for eastern Indians employed by the fur trade. They were skilled boatmen who, through a long affiliation with the fur trade, gained French names and proficiency in the French language.

[238]The two girls enrolled at St. Paul that are not characterized are Melecie Albot and Genievre Joseph. Albaugh, pronounced the same as Albot, appears later in the area, but the name or any variations of it in does not appear in contemporary records searched, including those of the HBC Archives. Joseph could be either an Indian or fur trade name. Osborne-Ryan's *Cumulative Baptism Index to the Catholic Church Records* lists 11 individuals-all Native American - with the last name of Joseph. Unfortunately none are named Genievre. On the other hand, the employee registers of the Hudson's Bay Company for 1821-1822 lists J. B. L. Joseph among other employees in this region. Sharon Osborn-Ryan, *Cumulative Baptism Index to the Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest* (Oregon Heritage Press, 1999), 173. "Duplicate Register of Persons Employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in North America from 1st June 1821 to 1st June 1822," Hudson's Bay Company Miscellaneous Collection, MSS 1502, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland, unpaginated.

métis girls with ties to the fur trade. (Table E lists students appearing in *Oregon Accounts*.) Further investigation is needed to confirm the parentage of students not appearing in the census, but the results so far are intriguing.[239]

The picture is more complicated for students of the Oregon City Young Ladies' Academy, as summarized in Table B. Fur-trade daughters represent only half of the students in the 1850 census listing. Of the eight (out of nine) whose lineage could be traced, all were métis. All but two of their mothers were also métis; the other two were probably local Indian women. Only two of their fathers, however, were French Canadian. Another was of Scottish and French Canadian heritage, while three others (including the father of Margret and Maria Louisa Rae), were Scottish. One father, Pierre Martineau, was métis.[240]

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[239]*Oregon Accounts* recorded student accounts along with a variety of other transactions conducted by the Sisters. This makes the task of compiling a list of students a challenging one. This study uses only the names of students for whom school-related expenses are clearly indicated in the ledgers. This may omit some students. For example, the name "L. Martinon" appears on page 15 with no notes regarding enrollment. This very well could be Louisa Martineau, an Oregon City student, who perhaps began her education at St. Paul along with Angelique Black and Elizabeth McLean. Both Black and McLean attended Ste. Marie du Willamette before the Young Ladies' Academy opened.

Some duplication of names occurs in the list, especially where first names are abbreviated. For example, A. Plamodon is almost certainly Angelique Plamondon. This further underscores that the account books are not a good source for estimating the number of students enrolled in SNDN Oregon schools.

[240]The record is silent on the parentage of Renee Bracoigne, although a J. B. Brauconier (Brasconnier) was listed as an HBC employee in the 1820s, and again in 1840-1841 and 1850. "Duplicate Register," unpaginated; Hudson's Bay Company Archives Microfilm B.239/g/80 and B.239/g/90. Another possible parent, Louise Braconier, appears in the St. Paul parish register as early as 1842, and was married to Joseph Klyne, an 1841 Red River immigrant. It is not clear if Louise came with the Red River party or was already living in the area. Harriet Duncan Munnick and Mikell Delores Warner, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: St. Paul, Oregon 1839-1898, Volumes I, II and III* (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1979), vol. 1, p. 53, B-26. A third possibility comes from George Simpson's *Narrative of a Journey Around the World* and is mentioned in an article appearing in the *Oregon Journal:* a Cree guide, Bras Croche, apparently also in the Red River party. David W. Hazen, "This Day in Oregon History," *Oregon Journal*, 4 October 1916, in Scrapbook 76, p. 71, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. The author has yet to find connection between J. B. Brauconier and Louise Braconier, and no other mention of Bras Croche. Consultation with the Hudson's Bay Company Archives yielded no further information. Personal communication with Anne Morton, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 28 July 2003.

The remaining ten students were most likely Anglo-American or Irish-American emigrants with no fur-trade affiliation. Here the record is less specific. At least five came from Irish Catholic families, a group of growing importance in the American Catholic Church. Among them, the Cosgroves and Burns actively supported the Sisters' endeavors, and over the years sent at least eight girls to study with them, even in California. Some of the other girls may also have been born into Irish families or were stepdaughters of Irish men, including Jane Cockerell, Frances Lee, and Charlotte Seymour. The remaining Anglo-American girls, Susan Frances Powell and Mary Willson, both hailed from single-parent families, each with four or five children.[241]

Little is known about the origin of Angelique Cameron, wife of Chief Trader Samuel Black, although she was most certainly Indian or métis. Black's daughter Angelique was born during her father's tenure at Kamloops, and his Scottish family contested her and her mother's rights to inheritance.

Elizabeth McLean's mother probably was "a woman of the country," since Elizabeth was born during her father's tenure in British Columbia. McLean was a clerk at Stuart Lake. Thomas E. Jessett, "Origin of the Term 'Black Robe,'" *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 69 (1968): 53. McNamee cannot be correct in calling Elizabeth McLean "American," since she was born in British Columbia, and first appears in the Sisters' records in 1846, placing her among the other French speakers at St. Paul. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 200; 1850 Census, Marion County, household 454;*Oregon Accounts*, 64.

Munnick asserts that Pierre Martineau may have been native but probably was métis, "usually working out of Fort Walla Walla." *Catholic Church Records,* Vancouver, A-51.

[241]Anna and Mary Cosgrove are recorded in the 1850 Census as students at the Oregon City school. Their sisters Castine, Elizabeth, May, and Suzanne appear with them in the first pages of both the *Pupils' Accounts* (pp. 1-3) and *Boarders' Accounts* (pp. 1-4). Hugh Burns' granddaughter, Virginia Burns, attended the Oregon City school, and later, while residing in San Francisco, Mr. Burns sent a niece to the Sisters' new school in San Jose. Letter to E. E. Dye from Edward H. Cahalin, 28 February 1910, Eva Emery Dye Papers, MSS 1089, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. McNamee also claims that Burns sent his wards, the Costellos, to the SNDN Academy, but they do not appear in the Sisters' accounts. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 252-3.

Jane Cockerell's father, Kilborn Coquerel (also Cockrale or Kockreil) died either on the way west or shortly after the family's arrival in 1847. Her mother was recorded as the wife of William Ryan at the baptism of their first child, Suzanne, 4 February 1849. *Catholic Church Records*, Vancouver, vol. 1, p. 102, B-3. Her parents may or may not have been Irish, but her stepfather certainly was.

Frances Lee's father, Washington Lee, could very well have been Irish, although he came to Oregon from Virginia. The maiden name and ethnicity of her mother is unknown.

Charlotte Seymour appears to have been born Charlotte Newton, and may have lost her father on the overland voyage to Oregon. John Newton died along the Umpqua, according to a letter written by Jasper S. Burns to Eva Emery Dye, 8 July 1904, Eva Emery Dye Papers, MSS 1089, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. Perhaps the wealthy Irish Portland entrepreneur Harris

It appears that none of the non-fur-trade Anglo-American or Irish students attended Ste. Marie du Willamette during its nearly eight academic years in operation. This points to a possible segregation of students based on ethnicity or some other factor, and is underscored by the fact that Irish girls from the area near St. Paul attended the more distant Oregon City school, even those too young for academy classes or even elementary school. Although McNamee asserts that two Cosgrove girls transferred from St. Paul to Oregon City, the evidence presented in the Sisters' financial ledgers does not support her claim. Only Angelique Black and Elizabeth McLean, both fur-trade daughters who transferred to Oregon City from St. Paul in 1849, appear in all three SNDN pupil account books, indicating attendance at both schools.[242]

Seymour was her stepfather, which would explain her "spendthrift" ways. "Harris Seymour," Pioneer Index, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland; McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 212.

Almedia Powell's death in 1848 is reported in the Pioneer Index, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. Baptism and burial of William Powell (age incorrect), in Harriet Duncan Munnick and Adrian R. Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Missions of St. Ann and St. Rose of the Cayouse 1847-1888, Walla Walla and Frenchtown 1859-1872, and Frenchtown, 1872-1888* (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1989), Walla Walla, vol. 1, p. 1, B-12, S-4. The 1850 census places the family in Clackamas County, household 202.

Mary Wilson's father was William Logsdon, who died in 1837, close to the time of her birth. Her mother subsequently married General A. Wilson and came west in 1845. Gen. Wilson died in California in 1849, leaving his wife Sarah with five children. Sarah Wilson married her third husband, Thomas Stoddard, in 1851, and died in 1852. Genealogical Forum, *Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims,* vol. 2, p. 76, No. 3994 (Stoddard); U.S. Census *[1850]*, Clackamas County, household 215.

[242]The SNDN archives listing does not explicitly state that *Oregon Accounts* was the record for the St. Paul school, but comparison with other SNDN ledgers, census data and other primary sources supports this assumption. Furthermore, the SNDN archives attribute the *Pupils' Accounts* and *Borders' Accounts* to Oregon City, San Jose and Marysville [California]. Another account book, *Willamette House Accounts, 1844-1851,* recorded the Sisters' own expenses.

Hugh Cosgrove, a local merchant and farmer supposedly attracted to the St. Paul area because it had a Catholic church and school, fathered six SNDN students, all students at Oregon City. *Boarders' Accounts* (pp. 1-4) and *Pupil Accounts* (pp. 1-3). McNamee claims that two of Hugh Cosgrove's daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, along with HBC ward Mary Cod, started at St. Paul and transferred to Oregon City in September 1848, when the school opened, although the Cosgrove girls and Mary Cod do not appear in *Oregon Accounts*. McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 200. The earliest Cosgrove entry, for Elizabeth and Mary, is in the *Boarders' Accounts,* dated October 1848. Cosgrove himself was away for almost two years mining in California. H. S. Lyman, "Reminiscences of Hugh Cosgrove," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 1(1900): 268-9.

The fact that métis girls attended the Young Ladies' Academy and even transferred there from St. Paul, however, precludes segregation of students between the two schools based on ethnicity alone. One family even sent a métis daughter to each of the two schools at the same time. Age appears to have been a significant factor in placing students, and certainly explains Angelique Black's transfer, since she was fifteen at the time, and perhaps the twelve-year-old Elizabeth McLean's. The Young Ladies' Academy functioned as both elementary and secondary school, with students ranging from two to eighteen; no girls over the age of thirteen appear in our sample at Ste. Marie du Willamette. Age, too, accounts for Sophia Belleque, eighteen, residing at Oregon City while her ten-year-old sister Esthère stayed at St. Paul, as well as the presence of Louisa Martineau at Oregon City, even though her guardian lived in St. Louis. Age did not, however, compel the guardian of the young Cavanaughs nor the Cosgroves to enroll their girls, aged six to sixteen, in the more distant Oregon City academy . (See Table H.)[243]

The orphan Cavenaugh girls, ages 2 and 6, from St. Louis parish, boarded at Oregon City. Here they were near their brother and under the watchful eye of their protector, Archbishop Blanchet, but were also a burden to the Sisters whose attention was focused on the education of the older girls. Payment for the Cavenaugh girls' tuition and Mary's fees is credited to F. N. Blanchet. *Boarders' Accounts,* 43; *Pupil Accounts*, 51. Ellen, aged two, died shortly after the census taker's visit. *Catholic Church Records,* Oregon City, p. 12, S-3. Their brother, Jaramiah Cavenaugh, age 4, appears in the 1850 Census at the residence of "F N Blanchette" in household 270, Clackamas County.

Records for both Angelique Black and Elizabeth McLean date back to 1846, prior to the establishment of the Oregon City school. Both also appear at the Oregon City school in the 1850 census. McLean apparently transferred to Oregon City in January 1849, Black in August. *Oregon Accounts*, 74 and 64; *Boarders' Accounts*, 6, 14; *Pupils' Accounts*, 7-8, 13-14.

[243]The 1850 census lists Esthère Belleque at Ste. Marie du Willamette and her sister Sophia at the Young Ladies' Academy. Unfortunately, Sophia Belleque does not appear in the SNDN account books, and her educational background is unknown. She may have enrolled at Oregon City simply on the basis of her age (the oldest student at 18 in 1850), an ability to speak English, or because of advanced academic status.

Castine Cosgrove was age six and Suzanne age seven in February 1849, when they initially enrolled at the Young Ladies' Academy. *Boarders' Accounts*, 3.

Most of the St. Paul students lived relatively close to the more remote St. Paul mission, although at least two did not. (See Table H.) Less than half of the Oregon City students, however, were local, with others coming from throughout the Oregon Country. Language clearly differentiated the two populations, with the area around St. Paul a Francophone enclave in a region fast becoming dominated by English speakers. Moreover, while many of the fur-trade students were probably multilingual, speaking Chinook jargon, any one of a number of Native languages, and perhaps French Canadian patois, most probably did not easily converse in the continental French of their Belgian teachers. This not only created communication difficulties for the Sisters, but reflected very pronounced cultural difference between the métis students at St. Paul and the incoming Euro-American immigrant population. On the other hand, students at Oregon City must have been either native English speakers or proficient enough in English to receive academy-level instruction. With métis students found at both SNDN schools, what accounts for the difference in linguistic ability of fur-trade daughters at St. Paul versus Oregon City?

A closer look at the ethnic makeup of métis students is revealing: the St. Paul students were closer to their Native roots than those at Oregon City, presumably resulting in a number of cultural and physical differences among them, linguistic included. Of the nineteen métis at St. Paul characterized for ethnicity, four had three-quarters Indian blood or greater; twelve were half-bloods; the remaining three were quarter-bloods. (See Table A.) Among the eight fur-trade daughters at Oregon City whose ethnic heritage could be traced, only three were half-bloods, three were quarter-blood or less, and two were eighth-blood. (See Table B.) The average St. Paul métis girl, then, was half-blood Indian or more, while the average Oregon City fur-trade daughter was quarter-blood or less. Again, St. Paul mothers were predominantly full-blood Indians; those of Oregon City students were themselves métis, some even third-

generation métis. In fact, métis girls at Oregon City were an average of one generation further removed from the point of intermarriage between their white and Indian ancestors than their peers at St. Paul. The difference of a single generation could have resulted in significant differences in appearance, language, dress, and other cultural markers that may have resulted in more ready acceptance of the less "Indian" girls by white pioneers. While there is no absolute division of students between the two schools based on ethnicity, there is a racial gradient weighted on either end, with the more "Indian" students at St. Paul and the more "white" students at Oregon City. Perhaps not insignificantly, the quarter-blood Belleque sisters, split between the two schools, fell near the midpoint of this gradient.

Class

An exploration of ethnicity has revealed an ethnic gradient rather than a brown-and-white division between fur-trade students at the two Oregon SNDN schools. What other factors determined which students attended which school? The example of the two half-blood girls who transferred to Oregon City from St. Paul, Angelique Black and Elizabeth McLean, sheds light on this dilemma. Both were daughters of fur-trade officers, while all of the remaining St. Paul students had fathers of the servant class. (See Table D.) As discussed in Chapter 1, class division between officer and servant in the fur trade created a nearly impenetrable gap. In fact, class loyalty was such that other officers saw to it that Angelique Black, an orphan whose officer-father's will was contested by relatives in Scotland, received the best possible education. Davidoff and Hall likewise show firmly solidified class divisions in

England by the mid-nineteenth century. Could class have divided SNDN students in Oregon?[244]

Not all métis girls at Oregon City, however, came from the officer class. The two exceptions, Louisa Martineau and Sophia Belleque, daughters of servant-class men, add a bit of texture to the discussion. The orphan Louisa Martineau had connections to the Pambrun family, her father having served Chief Trader Pierre Pambrun at Fort Nez Percés, following him in death by one year. Moreover, Ada Pambrun and Louisa Martineau's mothers were Humphervilles, both probably tracing their lineage back to the Englishman Thomas Humpherville. A family connection to the Pambruns may have been enough to place Louisa at Oregon City even though her guardian, Pierre Wakan Humpherville and stepfather, George Montour, both lived near St. Paul. Age may also have been a factor, since at fourteen, she was older than any St. Paul student listed in the 1850 census. Louisa Martineau's absence from the Sisters' accounts implies that she may have been a recipient of charity.[245]

Also curiously absent from the Sisters' financial ledgers is Sophia Belleque, the eldest daughter of Pierre Belleque. Her sister Esthère attended Ste. Marie du Willamette, with tuition payment recorded in *Oregon Accounts*. At age eighteen, Sophia was the oldest student listed in the 1850 census. She may have either received her education as a favor to the widow Belleque, or served in another capacity at the school, perhaps as an assistant or domestic helper. On the other hand, Sophia's and even Louisa's presence at Oregon City could have been a sign of changing economic

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[244]Notes in *Boarders' Accounts* (p. 14) and *Pupils' Accounts* (pp. 13-4) indicate that Angelique Black's tuition payments were made by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, including John McLoughlin, and also "Lane" (Territorial Governor Joseph Lane?).
Davidoff and Hall, 22-4.

[245]*Catholic Church Records*, St. Paul, A-44 and A-69.

dynamics in the post-fur-trade period, and also representative of the kind of encouragement offered by the Catholic religious establishment to its constituency.[246]

While the fur trade held an economic monopoly in Oregon, of course, socioeconomic status fell cleanly into upper and lower classes corresponding to officer and servant ranks. Officers' salaries and profit-sharing far outweighed the meager income of servants and set them economically far above the laboring class. Euro-American settlement, however, may have somewhat narrowed the gap between officer and servant, with some servants profiting from new economic opportunities, and some officers suffering losses in an economically and politically risky climate. Officers, with their superior education and capital available for investment, were generally well-poised to meet the challenges of a new post-fur-trade economy. Some, like John McLoughlin, suffered considerable economic losses at the hands of unscrupulous Americans, which would have devastated an officer of lesser circumstances. Some servants, on the other hand, fared well by taking advantage of opportunities to acquire land and cultivate it or sell it at a profit, or successfully engage in extractive enterprises, such as mining. Certainly many benefited from disruption of the HBC monopoly which for the first time allowed them the opportunity to purchase goods from other vendors.[247]

Among these former servants, Sophia's father Pierre Belleque stands out as a prime example of one owing his success to new-found opportunities. Belleque came

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[246]According to the *1850 Federal Census,* Sophia Belleque attended the Young Ladies' Academy at Oregon City and Esthère Ste Marie du Willamette. Sophia does not appear in the Sisters' accounts; Esthère is recorded in *Oregon Accounts* (p. 15) for 1850-1851.

More advanced pupils in Catholic schools sometimes served as teaching assistants. Misner, 195.

[247]Dorothy Morrison chronicles John McLoughlin's legal struggles with American settlers in *Outpost*, 387-96.

to the Pacific Northwest as an employee of the North West Company in 1818, working first in New Caledonia (British Columbia), and later for the Hudson's Bay Company. In the early 1830s, he retired to French Prairie, eventually taking up residence in the relatively elegant former chief trader's house at Willamette Fur Post, two miles west of Champoeg, where he farmed and raised hogs on 50 acres of land. Helen E. Austin describes the Belleque home as compared to the typical early homesteader's dwelling:

> . . . built in the French style, having lapped siding; and dressed lumber was used for finishing. The house had been lined with flowered glazed chintz . . . An outstanding feature was the glass in French-style windows, while the usual log cabins with parchment windows and rough lumber comprised the homes of his neighbors.

Pierre Belleque not only lived in style, but gained the respect of fellow settlers, gaining appointment as one of Oregon's first constables. Monsieur Belleque's socioeconomic status had advanced considerably from his fur-trade position of middleman. Perhaps this elevated status paved the way for Sophia's admission to the Young Ladies' Academy, or made her an acceptable member of that community, where white or upper-class métis students predominated. Ultimately, however, Belleque's fate was much the same as other Oregon men. Although successful in the California gold fields, he lost his life and gold on the return voyage.[248]

It is, of course, ironic that class played a prominent role in placing students in SNDN schools, since the religious order itself consciously worked against class

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[248]Helen E. Austin, "Belleque House" *Oregon Historic Landmarks: Willamette Valley*, (Portland, OR: Oregon Society of DAR, 1963), 14-5, in Doris Huffman Papers, MSS 1864, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland; Hussey, *Champoeg*, 62; Harriet D. Munnick, "The Transition Decades on French Prairie, 1830-1850," *Marion County History* 4 (June 1958): 36; Helen E. Austin, "Our Unmarked Fur Posts . . . , " *Marion County History* 2 (1956): 24-5; J. B. G. Thomas and Charles Hibbs, *Report of Investigations and Excavations at Kanaka Village, Vancouver Barracks, Washington, 1980/1981*, vol. 2 (Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Transportation, 1984), 800; *Catholic Church Records*, Vancouver, A-6.

Harvey McKay claims that Pierre Belleque was "well educated," which could have been a considerable factor in gaining prominence among French Canadian settlers. Harvey J. McKay, *St. Paul Oregon: 1830-1890* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1980), 95.

distinctions among its own members. It appears, however, that their commitment to a classless congregation did not carry over to the organization of their schools. Moreover, although the Sisters came to Oregon on a mission to serve orphans and Native peoples, that mission conflicted with the expectations of tuition-paying parents who were vital to the success of their institutions. The Sisters themselves may not have actively encouraged this class-based segregation, but officer-fathers had a firm idea of what was "proper" for their female dependents' upbringing, and it did not include mingling with "Native" or low ranking/dark-skinned servant-class girls. Moreover, the ranks enjoyed some physical distance, with servant-class families settling near St. Paul, and officers in Oregon City. As in other female Catholic religious communities, the end result was a system of economically interdependent but class-segregated schools.

The Sisters may even have overestimated the goodwill of their supporters in the fur trade, and did not perhaps perceive the depth of fur-trade class divisions. For example, even though McLoughlin himself had once pooled all male students together at Ft. Vancouver, his granddaughters, the Rae girls, were not allowed to play with dark-skinned girls. When economic conditions necessitated the closure of Ste. Marie du Willamette and the Sisters brought its students to the academy, parents withdrew their children.[249]

The Irish did not, however, suffer the same discrimination at the hands of upper-class fur tradesmen, although Davidoff and Hall inform us: "The moral order"

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[249]Pollard, "The Making of the Métis," 285-9; McLoughlin's daughters were not allowed to play with other children at Fort Vancouver unless they had "at least one fully-white parent." Alberta Brooks Fogdall, *Royal Family of the Columbia: Dr. John McLoughlin and His Family,* 2nd ed. (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1982), 192.

According to McNamee, the majority of boarders withdrew in June 1852, "either of necessity or because the school had become predominately native." McNamee, *Willamette Interlude*, 256. This statement draws some support from the SNDN ledgers.

imposed by the English middle class "had lasting effects . . . in definitions of who was properly part of the English nation. The 'teeming poor', the Irish, the gypsies, the unclean, all were consigned to the category of 'other'." Within the United States, however, Catholic Church historian Jay Dolan distinguishes between lower-class Irish and the few upwardly mobile Irish who gained a foothold by acquiring wealth through business and land holdings in developing areas such as San Francisco. The Irish in this sample appear to be of the entrepreneurial class, and clearly understood the value of an academy education for their daughters.[250]

So far, this discussion has focused on the socioeconomic class of fathers, but what of the mothers? While it would be fascinating to examine class or its equivalent on the maternal side of country marriages in depth, a study of this kind faces a number of obstacles, including sparse documentation and the very different social structure(s) of Native groups, different from each other as well as from Euro-Americans. Alas, this is an aspect of fur-trade society not often discussed, but at least it is possible here to speculate on the possible importance of the status of Native brides, and to look more directly at the status of métis fur-trade mothers.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, standard sources credit fur-trade officers as the first to establish formal links to Indian tribes in HBC trading regions, often marrying chiefs' daughters in order to cement trade relations. But this pattern was not strictly replicated in the Pacific Northwest, even though it was a fur-trade frontier. It appears that in this region, both officers and servants readily entered into country marriages with Indian women. Perhaps this is because few métis women of marriageable age were available, and alliances with native women were already so much a part of the fur

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[250]Davidoff and Hall, 450. Dolan, 128-44.

trade. Also, the North West Company and former NWC trappers entered the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest first. Moreover, servant-class men were as likely as officers to marry high-ranking Indian women. For example, at least two of the daughters of Chinook Chief Concomely formed partnerships with officers, while three of Clatsop Chief Coboway's daughters allied with servant-class men. It is significant that Coboway's sons-in-law were the first three men authorized by John McLoughlin to settle in the Willamette Valley. Certainly, their country marriages gave them some socioeconomic advantage. A high-ranking spouse was a boon even to a man of the servant class, if it enabled him to establish a good relationship with a tribe that he could use to his own or the Company's advantage. Certainly, Simon Plamondon, who opened up the Cowlitz River area to travel and settlement, gained some protection and influence through his marriage to Veronica, the daughter of Cowlitz Chief Seehaneewah. The stategically important marriage of Nancy McBean's maternal grandfather Jean-Baptiste Boucher dit Waccan, a NWC interpreter and engagé, to the daughter of a Carrier chief was the first successful fur-trade alliance with the Carriers. Waccan gained enough esteem for his daughter Jeanne Boucher to marry an officer, William McBean.[251]

Even when the bride was métis, the socioeconomic status of the woman's family must have been of some importance, especially in an industry such as the fur trade where family ties factored into employment decisions and provided any number of protections and opportunities. Perhaps it is significant that the three métis girls

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[251] Officers marrying Concomely's daughters included Duncan McDougall, Alexander McKenzie, Archibald Mc Donald, and Tom McKay. Fogdall, 193; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 30. Van Kirk reports that the NWC appreciated the importance of servants' alliances with Native women. Coboway's daughters married Louis Labonte, Joseph Gervais, and an unnamed American mountain man. McKay, *St. Paul*, 4, 149-50. Veronica was Simon Plamondon's first wife, ca. 1821-1827. "Genealogy-Plamondon Family," Vertical File Collection, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland; Harriet D. Munnick, "Simon Plamondon," in Hafen, vol. 9, 320-6.

whose mothers were born into upper-class fur-trade families (Ada Pambrun, and Margret Glen and Maria Louisa Rae) are the same three who appear in *The Portland Blue Book*, a mark of high social standing. Their fathers' high social rank in the fur trade still carried weight fifty years later. In a 1903 biographical sketch of John McCraken, the author notes with distinction McCraken's wife, Ada Pambrun, "whose father was an officer of the Hudson Bay Co."[252]

Religion

As mentioned previously, female Catholic religious found it necessary to recruit significant numbers of tuition-paying Protestants to their academies to support the educational mission to their Catholic constituency. This was no less true in the Pacific Northwest. Students at the Oregon SNDN schools, however, were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. (See Table I.) In fact, all of the students in the 1850 census sample for St. Paul came from Catholic families. This is not surprising for a mission school which expects to use the profits from an academy for its financial support. Unfortunately, the Oregon City academy attracted few Protestants and even fewer who could be considered well-off, no matter how secular the Sisters tried to

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[252] "Hon. John McCraken," *Portrait and Biographical Record of Portland and Vicinity, Oregon* (Chicago: Chapman, 1903), 189. The John McCrakens (Ada Pambrun), Theodore Wygants (Margret Glen Rae), and Joseph Myricks (Maria Louisa Rae) all appeared in the *Portland Blue Book.* The 1890 Blue Book also notes that the McCrakens belonged to the Assembly Club, a prestigious social club, while the 1894 edition lists John McCraken as a member of the Commercial Club. *The Portland Blue Book and Pacific Coast Elite Directory, being the Fashionable, Private Address Directory and Ladies' Visiting and Shopping Guide - Containing the Names, Addresses, Reception Days of the Society People of Portland, East Portland, Albany, Albina, Salem, Etc., Season 1890-91* (San Francisco: Bancroft, 1890), 13, 15, 21, and 25. *The Portland Blue Book for 1894: A Residence Address, Visiting, Club, Theatre and Shopping Guide* (Portland, OR: Portland Publishing Co., 1894), 17, 90, and 106-7.

Tables C and D list parents' fur-trade rank.

make their school appear. The Sisters certainly delighted in the conversion of their Protestant students who abjured their parents' faith in favor of Catholicism, but were distressed by the fact that few of the predominantly Protestant immigrants chose a Catholic education for their daughters.[253]

As it was, the Sisters recruited students for the Young Ladies' Academy from a very small pool of Catholic fur-trade officers' families with few Protestant officers enrolling their daughters. To add to their woes, many fur-trade servants left their farms for the California gold fields in 1849 and many did not return, adding at least fifteen orphans to the St. Marie du Willamette roster.[254]

Two prominent Columbia Department officers were, however, faithful Catholics, and their influence helped shape the religious landscape of the region. Pierre Pambrun, Chief Trader of Fort Nez Percés and one of the few French officers in the Hudson's Bay Company, instructed Indian chiefs to conduct Sunday prayer services for their communities and otherwise encouraged and defended the practice of his faith at every turn. Chief Factor John McLoughlin officially embraced his paternal Catholic faith later in life and generously supported the efforts of the Catholic Church and even Protestant missionaries, providing land in Oregon City for churches and schools and assistance to emigrants of all faiths, as previously noted. Above all, he urged his employees and their families to live a respectable and godly life, and supported

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[253]For the purposes of this study, religious affiliation is determined by church membership, baptism, confirmation or profession of faith, marriage, and/or burial as recorded in church and civil records and other sources.

Conversions are recorded for students whose single parent remarried to a Catholic spouse. These include Jane Cockerell and Charlotte Seymour. *Catholic Church Records,* Vancouver, vol. 2, p. 106, B-22; Oregon City, vol. 1, p. 14, B-16.

[254]The objections of John Work to Catholic schooling are mentioned in the thesis introduction. Angelique Black's Presbyterian father had no say in her enrollment in SNDN schools, since he had passed away in 1841. [Black], *Journal of a Voyage*, xciii. On gold-fever orphans, see Sister M. Catherine, *Notes,* English typescript, unpaginated.

education both at Fort Vancouver and at the Catholic mission schools in the Willamette Valley, sending two granddaughters to study at the Young Ladies' Academy, one of whom followed the Sisters to California.[255]

In a move sure to find favor with John McLoughlin, servant-class Catholics expressed their fervent devotion to the faith by repeatedly petitioning for clergy to come to the Pacific Northwest.

> We have musch of Neede of some assistance from you for we have allmost Every Religion but oure own Wich you know Revernd sir with oute youre Assistance wen we are surounded by every one it will be very hard for us to bring oure familyes up to oure owne Relgeon Wen theire is so maney others around them We are bringing oure familyes up as well As we posible Can But not so well as We would wish[256]

The servants faithfully prepared for the priests' arrival; in the interim they received instruction from the bishop as to how they should bring up their children. Already, in their desire to "bring oure familyes up to oure owne Relgeon," they

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[255]In 1841, Marcus Whitman noted that Pierre Pambrun and John McLoughlin were the only Catholic officers that he dealt with in the Columbia Department. Letter from Marcus Whitman to David Greene, 13 July 1841, quoted in Stern, vol. 2, 359. William McBean (father of SNDN student Nancy McBean), another Catholic officer well known to Whitman, arrived on the scene later. John McLean's religious affiliation is unknown. Daughters of two Protestant officers, Samuel Black and Peter Skene Ogden, also attended SNDN schools, although Black's death preceded his daughter Angelique's enrollment. References to Henrietta Ogden in *Boarders' Accounts* (p. 9) and U. Ogden in *Pupils' Accounts* (p. 19) most likely refer to Ogden's daughter Euretta (1836-61), the youngest daughter of Peter Skene Ogden. She was enrolled in and boarding at the Oregon City academy from June 1849-September 1850, withdrawing shortly before the census-taker's visit.

Pierre Pambrun's religious activities are noted in Stern and in his son Andrew Dominique Pambrun's memoir. Stern, vol. 2, 24; Pambrun, 34-5.

On John McLoughlin's religious heritage, see Morrison, 5-7. Margret Glen Rae continued her education at the SNDN school in San José until the year of her grandfather's death, 1857, according to an interview with Mrs. M. L. Myrick (Maria Louisa Rae) conducted by Fred Lockley and published in the *Oregon Journal*, 20 September 1929. "Genealogy - McLoughlin (John) Family," Vertical File Collection, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

[256]Gervais, et al, "Letter from Servants Willammeth Settlers to the Bishop [Provencher] of Juliopolis (Red River), 8 March 1837 (photostat copy and typescript).

Prior to the settlers' petitions, John McLoughlin had written to Father Thomas Maguire, chaplain at the Ursuline Convent in Quebec, proposing a Catholic mission on the Columbia. Brandt and Pereya, 2.

expressed the importance of a Catholic education for their children. Perhaps the community in Oregon knew of Bishop Provencher's efforts to recruit religious women to educate the métis at Red River. Several signers of these petitions later enrolled their daughters in SNDN schools.[257]

As noted above, once the priests arrived, apart from attending church and enrolling their children in Catholic schools, the early Catholic residents of the Oregon Country made a public sign of their devotion by having their country marriages sanctified by Catholic priests and, when possible, their wives and children baptised. Many parents of future SNDN students fulfilled this sacramental obligation at the first opportunity, filling the earliest church registers with many such occasions.[258]

Although the French Canadians diligently followed through on formal religious obligations, Jesuit priest M. Accolti expresses the negative sentiments of many Catholic clergy towards them: "Ceux-ci sont trop grossiers et insolents, pour mériter un poste dans la société. Ils sont capable d'envie, mais pas d'émulation." ["These folks are too coarse and insolent to merit a position in society. They are capable of envy but not of emulation."][259]

Given this outpouring of devotion and dedication by their parents to the teachings (or at least the institution) of the church, did fur-trade daughters educated in SNDN schools remain faithful? Did they marry and remain in the Catholic Church?

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[257]Bonin, 12. Provencher first sought religious educators for the Red River settlement in 1819, and in 1844 seventeen Grey Nuns arrived by canoe.

[258]The *Catholic Church Records*, Vancouver, vol. 1, records the earliest Catholic missionary activity in the region, noting sacraments performed as early as 1838.

[259]Letter of M. Accolti, St. Francis Xavier, Oregon, to Van deVelde, 29 April 1848, Rome Jesuit General's Rocky Mountain Mission Correspondence Collection, vol. 1, sec. V, no. 20, Rocky Mountain Mission, 1844-1851, General's Archives, Rome, microfilm, roll 4, Gonzaga University Microfilm Collection, Spokane, WA, Item 13, p. 3.

The answer to these questions is a qualified "yes," with details presented below and data summarized in Tables J and K.

Marriage and ethnicity, religion, and class

Marriage is used in this study as a measure not only of religious devotion, but also of ethnic cohesion, following the work of fur-trade social historian Harriet Gorham and immigration historian Timothy L. Smith. Gorham measures the preservation of métis ethnic identity directly through an examination of marriage patterns. Smith does not look at marriage directly, but his theory that religion strengthens or modifies ethnic identity ties in well here. Of course, marriage also factored into a couple's social status in nineteenth-century Euro-American society.[260]

Religious affiliation was, in fact, strongly tied to both class and ethnicity in the nineteenth century. As discussed earlier, Davidoff and Hall show a direct relationship between Protestant denominational choice and social rank within the English middle class. In the fur trade, religious affiliation generally corresponded to ethnicity and class. French-Canadian, Iroquois, and Highlander Scots tended to be Catholic and lower-class, while Anglican Brits and Presbyterian Scots dominated the officer class. On the whole, Catholicism ranked low on the religious spectrum in England, and is but one element of English disdain for the Irish. Similarly, in America, Catholics (mostly new non-Anglo European immigrants) were less well-off than their Protestant neighbors.[261]

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[260]Gorham, 37-55; Smith 1155-85.

[261]Davidoff and Hall, 24. Dolan, 156.

Not only does denominational choice reflect social organization, but Timothy L. Smith's studies of religion and ethnicity reveal a direct relationship between the faith community and ethnic identity. In fact, Smith identifies religion as a stronger factor than language or nationality in maintaining an ethnic identity in America. Of interest to this study is the fact that diverse peoples gathered together according to their chosen religious practices, mixing in such a way that "both preserved and revised inherited patterns of language, religion, and regional culture." Certainly, social, economic, and even political bonds form within communities, and are strengthened through social and spiritual ties in a common place of worship. On the other hand, lack of access to religious services can threaten the fiber of a community, as the French Canadians in the Willamette Valley recognized when petitioning for priests: "it will be very hard for us to bring oure familyes up to oure owne Religeon Wen theire is so maney others around them." A common religious preference among people living in close proximity, then, is an important factor in evaluating the maintenance or transformation of ethnic identity.[262]

Social historians of the fur trade in general agree that both the existence and form of a distinct métis ethnic identity varies regionally. Its existence in the Pacific Northwest has not been thoroughly studied. To determine its presence, Harriet Gorham informs us, one must look at two factors: ascription by self and by others, and marriage within the group (endogamy).[263]

Ascription is a direct revelation of identity but can be difficult if not impossible to document for the fur-trade period. While few direct personal accounts address the issue of ascription by self or others, the absence of an official identifying record is

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[262]Smith, 1158. Gervais, et al., Letter of 8 March 1837.

[263]Gorham, 38.

telling. When asked by American census-takers, métis in the Pacific Northwest exercised considerable freedom in naming their own ethnicity. For example, none of the parents of SNDN students nor any of their children were noted as other than white in the 1850 census. On the other hand, the only racial identifiers used in that census year were white, black, and mulatto.

Measuring endogamy, another decisive characteristic of ethnic cohesion, is more direct. According to Gorham's model, ethnic identity drives individuals to chose marital partners from within their ethnic group. Exogamy, on the other hand, is indicative of the absence of a strong ethnic identity. For the métis, of course, endogamy is marriage to another métis. Exogamy, however, includes marriage to either an Indian or white partner. Potential white marriage partners for SNDN Oregon students were most likely newly arriving employees of the fur trade or incoming overland emigrants, mostly American or Irish. An examination of the marriage patterns of the students sampled based on religion, ethnicity, and class follows.

Based upon the data gathered and presented in Tables J and K, servant-class daughters were most likely to maintain their religious ties to the Catholic Church, regardless of which SNDN school they attended. These young women married in the church and raised their children (even illegitimate offspring) in the faith. Most chose French Canadian or métis husbands and settled in rural communities and small towns with a high concentration of other former fur-trade families and in close proximity to a Catholic mission or church. The majority of these women came from French Prairie, and were daughters or neighbors of the men who had petitioned the Bishop of Red River. (Angelique Plamondon's father, who was neither a Willamette Valley settler

nor a signer of the petition, helped found the mission at Cowlitz.) As has already been stated, French Canadian communities in general maintained close ties to the church.[264]

Although all of these marriages were religiously endogamous, they were ethnically exogamous from the standpoint of métis ethnicity, with only a handful of students marrying other métis. From the standpoint of their French Canadian heritage, however, most marriages were endogamous. Servant-class métis students overwhelmingly chose partners of the same ethnic heritage as the predominant male population of their fathers' generation, rather than marrying men who were their racial equivalents. For a time, at least, the "French Canadian" community of the history books remained more French Canadian than métis.

Daughters of the officer class, however, were more likely to choose a mate of another faith, with those achieving the highest social status most likely to stray into Protestant denominations. (See Table K.) Of special interest here are the two granddaughters of John McLoughlin, Margret and Maria Louisa Rae, and Pierre Pambrun's daughter Ada. They were, with their husbands, prominent members of Unitarian and Episcopal churches in Portland, denominations corresponding to an English upper-middle-class affiliation described in Davidoff and Hall. These same women appear in the Portland Blue Book, as noted above. Perhaps it is of no coincidence that these métis daughters of fur-trade officers were the farthest removed from their Indian heritage, and most likely able to "pass" for white.[265]

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[264]The *Catholic Church Records* record baptisms of two potentially illegitimate children born to Catherine Brisebois: Catherine Emma in 1868 (father Onesime Lessage) and Mary Angel in 1872 (no father given). *Catholic Church Records*, Walla Walla, vol. 2, p. 2, B-6. Likewise, two illegitimate children of Josephte Lavigeuer received the sacrament of baptism at St. Paul, Frances Rosa in 1875 and Mary Patricia Malvina Lavigneuer in 1877. *Catholic Church Records*, St. Paul, vol. 3, p. 84, B-13; p. 105, B-7.

Dolan, 178.

[265] One source places Ada Pambrun in the Congregational Church, although her husband, John McCraken, was a vestryman at Trinity Episcopal Church. "McCracken, Mrs. Ada Pambrun (Beard),"

Officer-class daughters exhibited exogamy in their marriage choices in not only religious terms, but in ethnic terms as well. Most chose mates who were not métis, and half chose men who were ethnically different than their own fathers. All choices, however, allowed them to maintain a consistent social standing. The Rae girls, along with Ada Pambrun and her sister Harriet, and possibly Elizabeth McLean, chose white Protestant spouses. Angélique Black was the only one among them who married a métis man, Alexander Pambrun, the quarter- or eighth-blood brother of Ada Pambrun, who was an educated officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. She was of Scottish-Indian heritage, he of French Candian-Cree. Interestingly, like many of the métis daughters educated at St. Paul, the only daughter of a métis fur-trade officer, Nancy McBean, chose a French Canadian mate and remained firmly Catholic. In all cases, marriage choices among officer-class fur-trade daughters educated at the Young Ladies' Academy conform with Mihesuah's findings for educated Cherokee women, that they chose "whiter" mates of equal or higher social standing. They do not, however, support the notion of a métis ethnic identity as presented by Gorham. Nor do they show strong common religious ties with other métis that foster ethnic cohesion as described by Smith.[266]

Pioneer Index, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. John McCraken's obituary, however, firmly establishes his membership at Trinity Episcopal, where fellow vestrymen served as pallbearers at his memorial service. "Colonel M'Cracken, 'Forty-Niner,' Dies," 16 February 1915, "Biography - McCracken, John" Vertical File Collection, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

[266]Harriet Pambrun does not show up in the 1850 census sample, but she was also an Oregon City SNDN student. In fact, Harriet not only continued her studies with the Sisters in San Jose, but she was also organist at St. John's Church in Oregon City upon her return. She did, however, marry an American farmer of English and French Ancestry in a Protestant ceremomy. *Boarders' Accounts*, 10; *Catholic Church Records*, Oregon City, n.p. (illustration); *Daily Oregonian*, 19 October 1871, p. 2 c 3.

Preliminary research indicates that Elizabeth McLean married James O. Taylor in the Unitarian Church in Portland in 1872. *Marriage Records of Multnomah County, Oregon 1855-1873,* abstracted by Harriette Word Park and indexed by Violet D. Gregg, vol. 1 (Portland, OR: Genealogical Forum of Portland, Oregon, 1977), 90.

As revealed in Mihesuah's analysis, appearance along with education were critical factors in opening doors into the white world. When applying Mihesuah's findings to the métis students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon, one expects students at St. Paul to be culturally more conservative and isolated (i.e.: more Indian or "métis") and the lighter-skinned students at Oregon City to be more welcome in white society and to achieve higher socioeconomic status. While evidence is not available to support or contradict the former, the social prominence of the "least Indian" métis women in the sample lends credence to the latter.

It is important to emphasize here that few SNDN students, from either St. Paul or Oregon City, married métis men. Perhaps the old Indian myth was true, the one related to Marie Wagner Aplin by her mother:

> It makes me laugh to think of the things my mother told me when I was little. . . . She told me when her people first saw white men they thought they were half animals because they had fur on their faces. They had never seen people with beards. The squaws would tell their little ones to be good or the strange new animals would get them.[267]

Overall, exogamy in this cohort shows the same limitations found by Gorham for the Great Lakes region: white women did not marry métis men, and métis women did not marry Indian men. The difference with the results of this study and Gorham's findings

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Although married by a Protestant minister, Angélique and Alexander Pambrun sought Catholic baptisms for their children. No records have been located, however, demonstrating Angélique's conversion to Catholicism. The marriage record of Mary Angelique Black and Alexander Pambrun appears in Daughters of the American Revolution, Oregon, Tualatin Chapter, *Early Marriage Records: Clackamas County, Wasco County, Oregon.* (Oswego, OR, 1960), 28. The Pambrun children's baptisms are registered in *Catholic Church Records*, Vancouver, vol. 2, p. 131, B-18 (James Pambrun); p. 151, B-no number (Emily Harriett Pombrun).

[267]Marie Wagner was sent to Ste. Marie du Willamette by her "foster father," Archbishop F. N. Blanchet. Fred Lockley, "In Earlier Days," *Oregon Journal,* 17 September 1914; "In Earlier Days," *Oregon Journal,* 20 September 1914; and "Observations and Impressions of the Journal Man," 5 May 1922; in "Aplin - ,"*Oregon Journal* Files, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland. In all, three or four Wagner girls attended the school. *Oregon Accounts*, 66-7. Lizette (Elizabeth) is the only one in the 1850 census sample.

is that, with few exceptions, these métis women did not marry métis men. In a way, the Indian myth came true: the white men did get the métis girls.[268]

Similar to students at the Cherokee Female Seminary, métis students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon generally chose spouses who were more "white" than themselves. Moreover, as the years passed the ethnic diversity of formerly French Canadian settlements increased, as Harriet Munnick astutely observes:

> In its early years of settlement French Prairie was truly French. Names like Despard, Aubichon, Chalifoux and Turcott filled the records. By 1850 a wave of Irish names had infiltrated the lists with Whelen, McManus, Mooney and Kennedy, along with a good admixture of plain American names like Smith, Jones and Morrison. A decade later Continental Europe was contributing Faisler, Van Wassenhoven and Tyborski, Wocjic, Roeser and Zielinski. Even some of the lingering French has lost their [sic] Gallic flavor as LeBlanc became White, Boisvert became Greenwood, and Goulet a simple Gooley. Does the old Grosjean bear a haunting sound of Groshong? - in this I may be mistaken. But this much is certain, that by the close of the [nineteenth] century French Prairie had become internationalized.[269]

Many French-Canadian men sold their land to incoming settlers as they liquidated their assets to equip themselves for the California gold fields. The Catholic Church records note the change in the ethnic pool of settlers in French Canadian settlements with a linguistic change from French to English, and with an increase of non-French surnames recorded. F. N. Blanchet recognized the need for English-speaking priests and sought three young Irish graduates of the Irish Seminary in Rome in 1846, remarking that "Cet envoi serait important pour les americains." ["This delegation

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[268]Gorham, 48.

[269]Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: St. Louis Register 1845-1890, Brooks Register 1893-1909* (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1982), A-8.

would be important for the Americans."] As early as 1854, Irish priests appear at both St. Paul and St. James (Vancouver).[270]

As found in Gorham's study, class overcame ethnicity:

> Among the mixed-bloods of the Great Lakes, inter-ethnic contact, especially in the form of community-approved male-female relationships, appears to have been the expression or the result of economic concerns. This suggests that class, although not overtly recognized as such, may have been a more significant factor motivating apparently common behaviour than was a sense of shared ethnic background.[271]

Métis daughters of fur-trade men in the Pacific Northwest made matches that made social and economic sense. They did not appear to be concerned with maintaining a strong ethnic identity tied to their fur-trade past, if they ever conceived of themselves as anything other than Indian or white. In a climate hostile to Indians and prejudicial against dark-skinned people, it made most sense to identify oneself as white.

Certainly, the evidence does not support a strong métis ethnic identity in this group, even among St. Paul students. Some retained the knowledge and practices of certain Native or métis folkways, but these were not displayed to an extent that constitutes a separate and distinct culture. Their upbringing and formation in the Catholic Church worked against métis culture by teaching them Euro-American ways and by creating a context for cultural mixing.

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[270]*Catholic Church Records,* Vancouver; *Catholic Church Records,* St. Paul; Letter from F. N. Blanchet to Abbé Auger, 18 March 1846, p. 1, Blanchet Papers.

[271]Gorham, 48.

An end to the middle ground

The transformation that was begun in the fur trade neared its completion. While their mothers had lived in the middle ground, these fur-trade daughters moved on to a new reality, one dominated by white Euro-Americans who had had no part in fur-trade society. American Board missionary Narcissa Whitman taught Kitty Pambrun (mother of students Ada and Harriet Pambrun) many new skills, including English, but when Mrs. Pambrun needed to help support her family following the death of her husband, she used traditional skills well-known to women in the fur trade. Maria Louisa Rae Myrick recalled: "Mrs. Pambrun was very skillful in making buckskin robes trimmed with porcupine quills." She was, indeed, still fully a part of fur-trade society. It is hard to imagine, however, her daughters making similar garments.[272]

Still, there remained a sense, perhaps strong for some and certainly lasting, of having been a part of the middle ground. In Fred Lockley's series of interviews with Marie Wagner Aplin, Mrs. Aplin wistfully recalls "all the old people I used to know as a girl" - the fur-trade men of the Willamette Valley. She informs us in some detail of Father F. N. Blanchet, who "adopted" her at age eight, who "started [her] in a new and strange life." She fondly remembers many of the songs learned in French, Latin, and Chinook Jargon, representing her richly textured past.[273]

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[272]Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Converting the West: A Biography of Narcissa Whitman.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 101; *Catholic Church Records*, Vancouver, A-37; Interview with Mrs. M. L. Myrick by Fred Lockley, 20 September 1929, cited earlier.

[273]Interviews with Marie Aplin by Fred Lockley appeared in the *Oregon Journal* on 16, 17, 19 and 20 September 1914, and 5 May 1922. "Aplin ---," *Oregon Journal* Files, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

For her part, Maria Louisa Rae Myrick, favorite granddaughter of John McLoughlin, preserved the memory of the middle ground in her role as one of the founders of the Oregon Historical Society, and donor of many precious artifacts of the time that recall not only the memory of her esteemed grandfather, but of her métis grandmother as well. At the same time, as already noted, she achieved high marks for respectability in a very conservative white American city. The efforts of her grandfather and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur succeeded in making her and her sister very much a part of the mainstream of white society.

On a sadder note, some former SNDN students did not gain the skills needed to prosper in the new order. Angelique Plamondon, student at St. Paul from at least 1849, could neither read nor write when she applied for her deceased husband's Indian War pension in 1902. She married a common laborer, Simon Gill, who died after twelve years of marriage, leaving their five children for her to raise alone. When the chance arose to receive compensation for her husband's Indian War service, Angelique had to rely on the assistance of others to prepare her application. An error in the recording of her marriage date and a lack of documentation due to a series of natural disasters resulted in an unsympathetic denial of benefits. Nearly blind and having lost all of her belongings in a house fire, she lived out her days among other métis whose families were also anchored in history to the middle ground.[274]

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[274]*Oregon Accounts*, 54 and 60; "Angallic Gill," Indian War Pension Papers, MSS 364-1, no. 416, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland.

Conclusion

Devon Mihesuah found the Cherokee Female Seminary an "effective agent of acculturation." From the evidence presented in this study, it appears that the Oregon schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur also found success in fulfilling their mission to turn fur-trade daughters into proper Euro-American women.[275]

If, as Jennifer Brown proposes in her essay "Woman as Centre and Symbol in the Emergence of Métis Communities," métis life was indeed matriorganized, with practical skills and knowledge of folkways handed down from mother to daughter, an interruption of the passing of traditional practices would have significantly disrupted efforts to perpetuate the culture. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur worked to do just that - by teaching European methods of shoemaking, ornamental needlework, clothing construction, agriculture, and food preparation, replacing skills the students would have learned from their mothers with those that conformed to new standards. This was the work of acculturation to white (wo)man's ways.[276]

Those who passed a significant amount of time in the Sisters' care and who also fell under the influence of other acculturating forces succeeded in making this transition. Others, such as Angelique Plamondon, found life more difficult when there was no more room for a middle ground.

On the other hand, disease and negative attitudes towards mixed-blood children both worked to keep métis out of Indian tribes. For example, Chinooks considered individuals without flattened heads to be marked as slaves. Since fur-trade fathers abhorred head flattening, Chinook mothers who gave up the practice had to

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[275]Mihesuah, 111.

[276]Brown, "Woman as Centre," 39.

make the choice between abandoning their tribes or their round-headed children. For his part, John McLoughlin strongly urged servants who wanted to live in their wives' Native communities not to, ostensibly in the interest of security:

> Others [Canadians] wanted to go and live with the relatives of their wives, but as their children would be brought up with the sympathies and feelings of Indians as the half-breeds are in general leaders among Indians, and they would be a thorn in the side of the whites, I insisted they should go to the Willamette, where their children could be brought up as whites and Christians, and brought to cultivate the ground and imbued with the feelings and sympathies of whites, and where they and their mothers would serve as hostages for the good behavior of their relatives in the interior.[277]

Indeed, many forces appear to have driven the acculturation of métis girls into white society, including at least one of their classmates' mothers. This example from Hugh Cosgrove's reminiscences nicely contrasts the stylishness of a respectable white family with the unusual and quaint attire of the St. Paul congregation. Compelled by this first encounter, Mrs. Cosgrove sets to work to alter the fashion standard, and teaches other women to adopt her style:

> His [Hugh Cosgrove's] family were comfortably established, but met rather a severe shock as they went to [church] meeting for the first time. With feminine interest and delight his wife and daughters brought out their best dresses and bonnets, as they would at Chicago or Joliet. Mr. Cosgrove himself selected his best suit for the occasion - he had three with him, a blue, and a gray frock, and a swallowtail coat. The swallowtail and a rather high silk hat, and the other accompaniments of full dress, was the suit that he chose. At the meeting, however, where the appearance of the strangers caused minute observation, the men all sitting on one side and the women on the other, there were no bonnets, - the women wore only a red handkerchief tied over the head; and the latest style bonnets from the east created not only admiration, but much suppressed - though not very well suppressed - merriment in the congregation.
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> On returning home Mrs. Cosgrove was very much dispirited, and exclaimed, "To think that I have brought my family here to raise them in such a place as this!" However, taking up the difficulty in a truly womanly way, she

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[277]Hussey, "Women of Fort Vancouver," 288. [McLoughlin], "Copy," 49. Pollard, "The Making of the Métis," 7-9.

> soon had the women of the neighborhood making sun-bonnets, and then instructed them how to weave wheat straw and make chip hats; and in course of time they even put on bonnets. Not so, however, with Mr. Cosgrove's swallowtail coat and silk hat. These were such a mark for ridicule that he never tried them again, at least in that circle; but found his blue frock good enough. Indeed, even to this day, swell dress is much despised among Oregon men.[278]

Acculturating the women of French Prairie appears, at least in this instance, to have been easier than the men, who remained enrobed in their casual backs-woods dress.

It remains to be seen if the students' brothers found adaptation to the new social order more difficult than their sisters, or if the benefit of an education made a significant difference for both men and women. Were many métis unsettled "marginal peoples" as John C. Jackson pessimistically implies?

> In many ways the collective experience of the Northwest Métis paralleled that of other marginal peoples. They stood between opposing cultures, interpreting and mediating, but never completely at home in either faction. Too long on the cutting edge, they purposefully grew dull in retirement and, like Ulysses' boatmen, were satisfied to rest from wandering and rust in disuse."[279]

Surely male and female experienced the sting of racism and anti-Catholicism, and not everyone found easy acceptance in the white world. Probably most if not all of the fur-trade daughters in this study dealt with some unpleasantness due to their mixed ethnic background.

Just as the building up of fur-trade society was a consensual process carried out during the long history of the fur trade, so too was its gradual decline and its participants' incorporation into either white or Indian society. Acculturation is not inherently evil, nor is it a complete and sudden transformation. It does not, however,

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[278] Lyman, "Reminiscences of Hugh Cosgrove," 267-8.

[279] Jackson, *Children* , 276.

prevent someone from successfully bridging two worlds, as many métis were noted for doing.

Like the progressive light-skinned graduates of Cherokee Female Seminary, some métis students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Oregon found themselves comfortable in both the métis and white worlds, even though they were "not bicultural" but rather "fully integrated into white society." As their fathers and certainly many of their mothers knew, education gave them the key to open doors which would otherwise have been closed to them. It didn't mean that other doors were closed forever. Jennifer Brown notes: "Socially and culturally, [*métissage*] has had a complex history over many generations - one that continues into the present, as people of this dual descent decide which of their many ancestral roots they wish to tap in defining a contemporary identity."[280]

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[280]Mihesuah, 107. Brown, "Woman as Centre," 40.

CONCLUSION

Through the use of primary documents of the fur trade, Catholic missions, and the early settlement in Oregon, this thesis reconstructs an aspect of Oregon's past while reconstituting a portion of the lives of young fur-trade daughters and the Catholic nuns who sailed halfway around the world to guide them into Euro-American society. This study contradicts the assumption that the history of fur-trade daughters, especially those of the servant class, is lost "because they left no written records." Rather, it follows the lead of Clara Sue Kidwell, who advises historians and anthropologists to examine the cultural context of women's actions and their influence on others around them.[281]

This story takes place at a pivotal time in Oregon's history, a time of cultural contact and transformation, when the relatively peaceful coexistence of Indians and a small group of Euro-American *commerçants* gave way to an entirely new order. In the formative years of these young métis women, American settlement transformed the physical, political, and socioeconomic landscape. Farmers and surveyors placed a grid of private ownership over land formerly occupied by and shared among Native peoples, a pattern heretofore altered only by the comparatively small imprint of the fur trade. New political institutions on the American model shifted power away from both the Indians and the British-licensed Hudson's Bay Company. An expanding cash-based economy offering a growing number of goods and services replaced not only a barter system that dated back centuries, but also a relatively short-lived monopoly on the market for European goods controlled by the HBC. A new social order

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[281] Jackson, *Children*, 212. Kidwell, 98.

accompanied these changes, with new social institutions forming to meet the demands of a new society. Among the fastest growing of those institutions were schools.

Not only in Oregon, but also in Canada, the United States, and Europe, the nineteenth century witnessed an explosion in the educational offerings to young people, especially young women. While increasing industrialization created new job opportunities for men requiring formal education and apprenticeships to develop advanced skills, women's education addressed new expectations for women within the home which distanced them from industrial work.

These same expectations reached the remote regions of North America served by the fur trade, which was, after all, a "factory" system. In order to succeed either within the trade or in the outside world, fur-trade sons had to leave their families to seek education in settled areas. Even so, few found satisfactory employment within the trade, and even officers' sons often found themselves relegated to the lower class. Their fathers' dissatisfaction found expression in efforts to enhance educational opportunities in fur-trade posts and settlements.

Not many fur-trade daughters traveled far from home for their education, and their prospects for social advancement came through marriage. In the absence of competition from white women, métis women were desirable marriage partners within the fur trade, and even a number of servants' daughters were able to find mates in the officer class. Education, however, greatly enhanced their chances for a good marriage.

For these social and economic reasons, fur-trade fathers sought a Euro-American style education for their children. That the desire to educate fur-trade children extended into the servant class is a testament to the strong influence of men of the officer class over fur-trade servants. Furthermore, the great distances which separated the Columbia Department from more established fur-trade settlements and the European and Canadian cities providing more advanced educational opportunities

made it even more important to find local ways to prepare fur-trade children for their adult lives. Incoming educators, especially Catholic missionaries, found firm support within both ranks of the fur trade.

Early education in Oregon took the form of home-based schools taught by itinerant teachers who often moved quickly on to new commitments, with larger and more stable schools formed by Christian missionaries, as well as somewhat limited schooling offered at Fort Vancouver. The public school movement, a predominantly Protestant initiative, did not reach Oregon until the late 1850s. As in many parts of North America the most significant players in women's education, for much of the century, were Catholic nuns.

Catholic sisterhoods advanced a program of scholarship and training imbued with current notions of woman's proper place in society. Teachings about Catholic womanhood mirrored those of nineteenth-century Protestants, who promoted the doctrine of "true womanhood," which gave women considerable moral authority within their families as long as they remained within the domestic sphere. Catholic sisters' celibate and communal lifestyle, however, also put them at odds with Protestant reformers who viewed marriage as the only arena for demonstrating true womanhood. American distaste for Catholicism, combined with prejudice against the ethnic minorities and immigrants whom Catholic women religious served, gave rise to derogatory rhetoric and even violent action against nuns. Nevertheless, their significant contribution to education in America was widely recognized.

Although "true womanhood" was held as the ideal, women's education followed a two-tier system, reflecting socioeconomic realities which created a divide between the middle and laboring classes. Only middle or upper-class women could aspire to true womanhood, and to do so required the service of women of the laboring class. Someone, after all, still had to perform the more menial household tasks, such

as preparing food, cleaning, and tending the fires that warmed and fed the household. Moreover, laboring-class women produced many of the products needed for everyday life either in their homes or in factories, and provided a significant portion of labor in farming and family businesses. The Oregon schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur mirrored these socioeconomic divisions as well as perhaps more subtle cultural divisions between French and English speakers.

The overall purpose of the education of fur-trade daughters was not simply to pass on accepted notions of womanhood, but to transform these girls into something their mothers were not: white women. It is in the cultural contact between the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and their Indian and métis constituency that the real story takes place, and the complexity of the larger reality is revealed. Concurrent with changes to the land, economy, and politics of the Oregon Country came wide-sweeping social changes that had a direct and significant impact on the daughters of fur traders. The story here is different from many other American stories of assimilation, since these girls were themselves the products of an intermediate society that bridged Indian and white worlds. In the words of Richard White, they were born into "the middle ground," that world of cultural mediation between Indians and Euro-American fur traders. Yet, by the time of the Belgian nuns' arrival on the soil of the Willamette River Valley, the middle ground was already giving way to a starker reality for its Native peoples. As resident Indians died off from disease and lost their land to white settlers, these young métis girls found themselves pushed into white society. Their fathers (and perhaps their mothers), who enrolled them in the Sisters' schools, understood the necessity of acculturation, for the alternate route - incorporation into Indian life - was paved with tears and thorns. For some years, the officers and directors of the fur trade had already been promoting a European-style education for fur-trade offspring, with major fur-trade posts offering some formal education. In a

way, these educational initiatives signaled the beginning of the end of the middle ground. Euro-American settlement, however, brought a greater urgency to the task of acculturation, and along with it, Christian missionaries who played a very large role in education.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur recognized social differences among their students, and tailored their education accordingly. Regardless of their social class, however, students learned European skills that would replace the traditional Native American and fur-trade skills passed down by their mothers. Students at St. Paul experienced farming first-hand, and produced an array of goods for sale to meet the expenses of convent schooling, while they prepared for a similar lifestyle as farmers' wives and domestic laborers. Oregon City students by-and-large concentrated their efforts on academic subjects supplemented by instruction in skills that would make them good middle-class wives, such as music and ornamental handiwork. All girls, of course, studied and practiced the Catholic faith, but only to the extent that it enhanced their ability to serve in their capacity as wives and mothers.

Among the students in the sample extracted from the *1850 Federal Census,* most of the girls from Ste. Marie du Willamette married men at or slightly above their fathers' social standing but of their fathers' ethnicity, French Canadian. These couples maintained close ties to the Catholic church in their predominantly rural French Canadian communities. Oregon City métis girls, however, married men of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and were as likely to break away from the Catholic Church as to stay within it. The most affluent among them, however, joined socially respectable urban Protestant churches. Overall, the Catholic Church continued to serve the needs of most of the fur-trade daughters in this sample, with the exception of those with the greatest social standing. (This phenomenon begs further exploration in a larger sample.) On the whole, the Sisters' program of acculturation succeeded and the

religious ties established in part by their agency not only maintained French Canadian community ties for a time, but also facilitated the assimilation of French Canadians and other Catholic ethnic groups, such as the Irish, into the mainstream.

On the whole, these young women lived up to the socioeconomic expectations of their fathers and teachers, and assimilated into the dominant culture. Moreover, none of the métis students at either school married Indian men, and surprisingly few married métis men. In short, their marriages were exogamous, with most of these young métis women marrying white men. Consequently, the majority of marriages resulted in a significant dilution of Indian blood in the next generation, and did nothing to advance the prospects of a métis ethnic identity.

Fur-trade social historians and the citizens of Canada recognize the historic presence of an important remnant of the middle ground, the Métis, many of whom still reside in Canada. Whether Métis culture has survived outside of a limited region of Canada (primarily Red River) is a topic of great interest to fur-trade historians and Canadians in general, an interest in no small part due to the Canadian constitutional reforms of 1982 which gave Métis new political rights. The evidence presented here does not support the existence of a strong métis identity in the Pacific Northwest, but perhaps the place to look is in the French Canadian communities and Indian reservations where many métis settled rather than in the schools of Catholic nuns bent on erasing métis culture. Most likely, only a small percentage of métis girls received a Catholic education or any formal education at all. Could they have been more likely to identify themselves as Métis? A comprehensive study of métis life in this region remains to be written. This, and any future study of métis in the former HBC Columbia Department, should be taken into consideration by serious students of fur-trade social history who are interested in understanding the full impact of the fur trade in North America.

To students of Pacific Northwest history, this study brings attention to the work of a relatively unknown group of women, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and the even more obscure daughters of fur traders who formed the bedrock of settlement in the Oregon Country. It examines important elements of the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of a politically contested region to an American-controlled and dominated Oregon Territory, drawing attention to the role of institutions in shaping society. On a smaller scale, it also brings to life two early and important schools for girls that have not received adequate attention in the historical record. Moreover, although this thesis examines a particular time and place, it should be of broader interest in a number of fields of historical scholarship and in a wider venue than the Pacific Northwest, and not only to fur-trade historians, whose potential interest has already been alluded to.

In the field of educational history, this work fits into several areas of study: religious, women's, and cross-cultural education. Perhaps most significantly, by virtue of its focus on the students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, it joins only a handful of studies of students - the objects of education - standing out from the very large number of studies of educational institutions, leadership, and theory. In this case, the choice of schooling as a topic of study was fortuitous, for it provided an unprecedented model for comparing fur-trade women across socioeconomic classes and afforded a discussion of race and religion within the fur trade.

This thesis also contributes to knowledge in the area of religious history, both in examining the proponents and practitioners of the Catholic faith, and in exploring the role of religion in the dynamics of a culture undergoing significant change. Influenced by the work of Timothy Smith on religion and the formation of ethnic identity in America, religion enters into the discussion of métis ethnic identity for the first time. Moreover, the central importance of women as promulgators of religious

faith and culture brings important questions to bear on the effect of religion on social organization.[282]

In the area of gender studies, this thesis meets the mandate for women's history put forth by DuBois and Ruiz in *Unequal Sisters* which calls for "an analysis that takes class into account . . . as an intertwined component of both race and gender." The mixture of Belgian nuns, a multiplicity of Native Americans, and a great pool of Euro-Americans, both fur traders and incoming settlers, provides rich ground for a multidimensional and multicultural analysis. Class fits neatly into the discussion due to the divisions inherent both in the fur trade and in Catholic women's education. The further addition of religion, an element often left out of the equation - especially in the history of the American West - adds an extra and important dimension.[283]

This study draws from disparate sources, and goes a long way towards piecing together a picture of the lives of the young female students of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur given little direct documentation. Not only does it face the difficulty of reconstructing a history of (part-)Native American women from a written record that relies upon Euro-American witnesses, but it also faces a challenge common to all of women's history: the invisibility of women who are recognized only as wife or daughter, and whose own significance goes unrecognized. Moreover, the ravages of time and war have taken their toll on this history, with valuable material lost in the Belgian SNDN archive during World War II, and crucial records of the Oregon mission fading nearly to the point of illegibility. If not for the *Catholic Church*

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[282]Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America."

[283]DuBois and Ruiz, xiii.

Records and the diligent work of religious archivists, much of this history would be unrecoverable.[284]

The author does not assume that the work of reconstructing these stories is complete, but hopes that this study will encourage others to join in the task of reexamining this ethnically diverse and understudied population with renewed vision. In particular, a more detailed analysis of fur-trade families, including mothers and sons, would enhance and possibly alter some of the hypotheses proposed in this thesis. For example, a comparison of fur-trade sons with their sisters would test the proposition that male métis had less upward social mobility than their female siblings, and that they may have been more likely to identify themselves as métis. On the other hand, a focused examination of the mothers of métis women, if possible, could reveal an important relationship between the social structure of specific Indian tribes and métis ethnic identity or, conversely, with a propensity for assimilation into white or Indian society.

Small samples of statistics tabulating abstract concepts such as ethnicity and religious affiliation, as presented here, relate only some of the rich texture of the past. No matter how well supplemented by other material, this handful of information cannot be extrapolated to estimate the sum total of experience for métis women, but much fertile ground for historical exploration remains. Undoubtedly, new perspectives will come to bear and fresh approaches will reveal more of the story.

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[284]Rayna Green outlines the pitfalls of extracting Native American women's stories from Euro-American accounts in her article "The Pocahontas Perplex," an opinion seconded by Elizabeth Vibert's *Traders' Tales*. Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History, eds. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki Ruiz* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 15-21.

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APPENDIX

KEY TO ETHNICITY TERMS USED IN TABLES

Ethnicity (Abbrev.)	Definition
Métis	mixed AmerIndian/White
French Canadian (FrCan)	of French descent originating from Canada
Iroquois	Eastern AmerIndian
Iroquois Métis	mixed AmerIndian/Iroquois
Hawaiian Métis	mixed AmerIndian/Hawaiian
Irish	of Irish descent
Scottish	of Scottish descent
AngloAmerican (AngloAmer)	American of English descent
English	of English descent (not originating from America)

TABLE A: Parentage and Ethnic Lineage of Students Enrolled at Ste. Marie du Willamette, St. Paul, 1850

STUDENT	**Ethnicity**	**FATHER**	**Ethnicity**	**MOTHER**	**Ethnicity**
Melécie ALBOT	?	?	?	?	?
Esthère BELLEQUE	Métis (1/4-blood)	Pierre BELLEQUE	French Canadian	Genevieve ST. MARTIN	Métis (Chinook)
Catherine BRISEBOIS	Métis (1/2-blood)	Olivier BRISEBOIS	French Canadian	Catherine CAYUSE	(Cayuse)
Margarite GAGNON	Métis (1/4-blood)	Luc GAGNON	French Canadian	Julie GREGOIRE	Métis (Kamloops)
Genievre JOSEPH	?	*?(JBL JOSEPH?)*	*French Canadian?*	?	?
Marianne LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+	Joseph LAURENT	Iroquois	Therese TCHINOUK	(Chinook)
Catherine LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+	Joseph LAURENT	Iroquois	Therese TCHINOUK	(Chinook)
Cecile LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+	Joseph LAURENT	Iroquois	Therese TCHINOUK	(Chinook)
Josephte LAVIGEUER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Hyacinthe LAVIGEUER	French Canadian	Marguerite COLVILLE	(Colville)
Marie Adeline LIARD	Métis (1/2-blood)	Francois Xavier LIARD	French Canadian	Marie Anne NEZ PERCE	(Nez Percés)
Marguerite LIARD	Métis (1/2-blood)	Francois Xavier LIARD	French Canadian	Marie Anne NEZ PERCE	(Nez Percés)
Monique MALOIN	Métis (1/2-blood)	Fabien MALOIN	French Canadian	Louise Michel ATENESSE	Iroquois Métis
Victoire MASTA	Métis (1/2-blood)	Antoine MASTA	French Canadian	Sophie TCHINOUK	(Chinook)
Catherine MONIQUE	Métis (3/4-blood+)	Louis Oskanah MONIQUE	Iroquois	Charlotte CHINOOK	(Chinook)
Luce PERAULT	Métis (1/2-blood)	Jean Baptiste PERRAULT	French Canadian	Angele CHEHALIS	(Chehalis)
Angelique PLAMONDON	Métis (1/4-blood)	Simon PLAMONDON	French Canadian	Emilie Finlay BERNIER	Métis (Cree)
Rosalie PLOUFF	Métis (1/2-blood)	Joseph PLOUFF	French Canadian	Therese MAKAINE	Hawaiian Métis (Chehalis)
Angèle POIRIER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Basile POIRIER	French Canadian	Louise DEMOUTTASSE	(Chinook)
Marie PRESSE	Métis (1/2-blood)	Francois PRESSE	French Canadian	"a Stiken woman"	(Stiken)
Helène ST. ANDRE	Métis (1/2-blood)	Pierre ST. ANDRE	French Canadian	Marie MATHLOMAT	(Tumwater)
Lizette WAGNER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Pierre WAGNER	German/Fr Can	Marie Stens STOMIS	(Chinook)

TABLE B: Parentage and Ethnic Lineage of Students Enrolled at the Young Ladies'Academy, Oregon City, 1850

STUDENT	**Ethnicity**	**FATHER**	**Ethnicity**	**MOTHER**	**Ethnicity**
Sophia BELLEQUE	Métis (1/4-blood)	Pierre BELEQUE	French Canadian	Genevieve ST. MARTIN	Métis (Chinook)
Angelique BLACK	Métis (1/2 blood)	Samuel BLACK	Scottish	Angelique CAMERON	*(Kamloops?)*
Renee BRACOIGNE	*FrCan or Métis?*	*(J B BRAUCONIER?)*	*French Canadian*	*(Louise BRACONIER?)*	*French Canadian?*
Virginia BURNS	Irish	Daniel James BURNS	Irish	Mary O'BRIAN	Irish
Ellen CAVENAUGH	Irish	Peter CAVENAUGH	Irish	Helene CAVENAUGH	*Irish?*
Mary CAVENAUGH	Irish	Peter CAVENAUGH	Irish	Helene CAVENAUGH	*Irish?*
Jane COCKERELL	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	Kilborn COCKRALE	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	Suzanne Harless Cockrale RYAN	*Irish or AngloAmer?*
Anna COSGROVE	Irish	Hugh COSGROVE	Irish	Mary ROSSITER	Irish
Mary COSGROVE	Irish	Hugh COSGROVE	Irish	Mary ROSSITER	Irish
Arna Frances LEE	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	Washington LEE	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	Amanda LEE	*Irish or AngloAmer?*
Nancy McBEAN	Métis (1/4-blood)	William McBEAN	Scottish/FrCan	Jane BOUCHER	Métis (Cree/?)
Elizabeth McLEAN	Métis (1/2-blood)	John McLEAN	Scottish	"a woman of the country"	local Indian
Louisa MARTINEAU	Métis (1/2-blood)	Pierre MARTINEAU	Métis	Louise HUMPHERVILLE	Métis (E. Canada)
Ada PAMBRUN	Métis (1/8-1/4 blood)	Pierre C. PAMBRUN	French Canadian	Catherine HUMPHERVILLE	Métis (Cree)
Susan Frances POWELL	AngloAmerican	David POWELL	AngloAmerican	Almedia POWELL	AngloAmerican
Margret RAE	Métis (1/8-blood)	William Glen RAE	Scottish	Maria Eloisa MC LOUGHLIN	Métis (Chippewa)
Maria Louisa RAE	Métis (1/8-blood)	William Glen RAE	Scottish	Maria Eloisa MC LOUGHLIN	Métis (Chippewa)
Charlotte Ann (NEWTON) SEYMOUR	*AngloAmerican?*	*John NEWTON?*	*AngloAmerican?*	Johannah NEWTON *(SEYMOUR?)*	*AngloAmerican?*
Mary Elizabeth (LOGSDON) WILLSON	AngloAmerican	William LOGSDON	AngloAmerican	Sarah Logsdon WILSON	AngloAmerican

TABLE C: Parents' Fur-trade Affiliation, St. Paul Students

STUDENT	FATHER	FATHER'S FUR TRADE RANK	MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S FUR TRADE RANK
Melecie ALBOT	?	?	?
Esthere BELLEQUE	Pierre BELLEQUE	SERVANT (middleman)	SERVANT
Catherine BRISEBOIS	Olivier BRISEBOIS	*SERVANT? (Canadian)*	-------
Margarite GAGNON	Luc GAGNON	*SERVANT? (Canadian)*	SERVANT
Genievre JOSEPH	? *(J B L JOSEPH?)*	*(SERVANT)*	?
Marianne LAURENT	Joseph LAURENT	SERVANT (voyageur)	-------
Catherine LAURENT	Joseph LAURENT	SERVANT (voyageur)	-------
Cecile LAURENT	Joseph LAURENT	SERVANT (voyageur)	-------
Josephte LAVIGEUER	Hyacinthe LAVIGEUER	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Marie Adeline LIARD	Francois Xavier LIARD	SERVANT (engagé)	-------
Marguerite LIARD	Francois Xavier LIARD	SERVANT (engagé)	-------
Monique MALOIN	Fabien MALOIN	SERVANT (engagé)	SERVANT
Victoire MASTA	Antoine MASTA	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Catherine MONIQUE	Louis Oskanah MONIQUE	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Luce PERAULT	Jean Baptiste PERRAULT	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Angelique PLAMONDON	Simon PLAMONDON	SERVANT (middleman)	SERVANT
Rosalie PLOUFF	Joseph PLOUFF	SERVANT (blacksmith)	SERVANT
Angele POIRIER	Basile POIRIER	SERVANT (cook)	-------
Marie PRESSE	Francois PRESSE	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Helene ST. ANDRE	Pierre ST. ANDRE	SERVANT (middleman)	-------
Lizette WAGNER	Pierre WAGNER	SERVANT (middleman)	-------

TABLE D: Parents' Fur-trade Affiliation, Oregon City Students

STUDENT	FATHER	FATHER'S FUR-TRADE RANK	MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S FUR-TRADE RANK
Sophia BELLEQUE	Pierre BELLEQUE	SERVANT (middleman)	SERVANT
Angelique BLACK	Samuel BLACK	OFFICER (chief factor)	-------
Renee BRACOIGNE	? *(J B BRAUCONIER)*	*(SERVANT)*	?
Virginia BURNS	Daniel James BURNS	none	-------
Ellen CAVENAUGH	Peter CAVENAUGH	none	-------
Mary CAVENAUGH	Peter CAVENAUGH	none	-------
Jane COCKERELL	Kilborn COCKRALE	none	-------
Anna COSGROVE	Hugh COSGROVE	none	-------
Mary COSGROVE	Hugh COSGROVE	none	-------
Arna Frances LEE	Washington LEE	none	-------
Nancy McBEAN	William McBEAN	OFFICER (chief trader)	SERVANT
Elizabeth McLEAN	John McLEAN	OFFICER (clerk)	-------
Louisa MARTINEAU	Pierre MARTINEAU	SERVANT (engagé)	SERVANT
Ada PAMBRUN	Pierre PAMBRUN	OFFICER (chief trader)	OFFICER
Susan Frances POWELL	David POWELL	none	-------
Margret RAE	William Glen RAE	OFFICER (chief factor)	OFFICER
Maria Louisa RAE	William Glen RAE	OFFICER (chief factor)	OFFICER
Charlotte Ann (NEWTON) SEYMOUR	*John NEWTON?*	*none*	-------
Mary Elizabeth (LOGSDON) WILLSON	William LOGSDON	none	-------

TABLE E: Students listed in SNDN *Oregon Accounts, 1844-1849*

Melisie Alboth
Marie Bazon
Esther Bellèque
A. Black
C. Brisebois
Zoé Chamberland
Marie Chamberland
A. Depauss (Depot)
Eleánore Fenlar (Finlay)
Rosette Fenlar
Rose Foicier (Forcier)
T. Forest
M. Gagnon
U. Gagnon
F. Gervais
H. Gervais
M. Guilleau (Guilbeau)
J. Lavigueur
Josette Lavigueur
Adeline Liard
M. Liard
C. McCarty
E. McClean (McLean)
Cat. McPhail
Marie McPhail
Monique Malois (Maloin)
Eloise F. Malois
Victoire Masta
C. Monique
L. Ouvre
T. Ouvre
Luce Perault
E. Pichet (Pichette)
A. Plamodon (Plamondon)
Angelique Plamodon
G. Plamodon
Aribanche Plouf (Plouff)
Rosalie Plouf
A. Porier (Poirier)
Emilie Quesnel (Quinsal)
Hélène St André
M. Todd
H. Wagner
Lisette Wagner
M. Wagner
Marguerite Wagner

Note: Students appearing in the 1850 census at the St. Paul school are shown in bold; those residing at the Oregon City school in 1850 are shown in italicized bold.

TABLE F: Students listed in SNDN *Boarders' Accounts, 1848-1857*

Angelique Black
Jane Brown
Maryann Buekloo
Emma Burton
Mary Cavenaugh
Ellen Cavenaugh
Eveline Chapman
Jane Cockrell
Mary Cod
Ab Coffin
L. Coffin
Mary Connor
Anne Cosgrove
Castine Cosgrove
Elizabeth Cosgrove
Mary Cosgrove
Suzanne Cosgrove
Suzanne Cotton
Honora Fitzgerald
Mary Fitzgerald
Isabella Gilliham
Armetta Hunsaker
Josephine Hunsaker
Marian Hunsaker
Ellen Hunt
Christine Klingler
Mathilde Klingler
Marie Anne Larisson
Francis Lee
Eliza Jane Mabee
Nancy McBean
Mary McIntosh
Isabell McKey (McKay)
Mary McKey
Elizabeth McLean
Jan McMahan
Elisabeth Moore
Isabella Morgen
Julie Morgen
Henrietta Ogden
Ida Pombrun (Ada Pambrun)
Hariette Pombrun
Francis Pauwell (Powell)
Charlotte Prive
Marthe Prive
Margret Rae
Louisa Rae
Charlotte Ann Seymour
Mary Spence
Elisabeth Stevens
Ellen Stevens
Mary Wilson
E. Wilkoomb (Whitcomb)
O. Wilkoomb

Note: Names appearing in italicized bold appear as residents at Oregon City school in 1850 census.

TABLE G: Students listed in SNDN *Pupil Accounts, 1848-1856*

Angelique Black
C. Blood
Jane Brown
Virginia Burns
Emma Burton Tam Hill
Mary Cavenaugh
Eveline Chapman
Grace Cibbats (Gibbars)
Jane Cockrell
Mary Cod
Lusine Coffin
Mary Connor
Anne Cosgrove
May Cosgrove
Mary Cosgrove
Suzanne Cotton
Miss Cusiels
Lizzie Flynn
Martha Gage (& another?)
Isabella Gilliham
Holland
A Hunsker (Hunsaker)
G Hunsker
M Hunsker
Ellen Hunt
Christine Klinger
Lacelles (Sacelles?)
Marianne Larisson
M. Lawson
Francis Lee
Misses Lyons
Nancy McBean
McElleer
Mary McIntosh
Isabelle McKey (McKay)
Mary McKey
Elizabeth McLean
Jane McMahan
Isabelle Morgen
Julie Morgen
M. J. Murray
A. Oberbeids
U. Ogden
Miss Clara (Painter?)
Marguerite Painter
P. Patterson
Miss. M. Philips
Mary Ponnt (Jonnt?)
Frances Pauwell (Powell)
Miss Powell
Margret Rae
Louisa Rae
C. Reyes
Miss Robinson
Charlotte Seymour
Meag? Stevens
S. Williams
Mary Wilson

Note: Names appearing in italicized bold appear as residents at the Oregon City school in the 1850 census.

TABLE H: Age and Family Domicile

STUDENT - St. Paul	Age	Family domicile	STUDENT- Oregon City	Age	Family Domicile
Melécie ALBOT	10	?	Sophia BELLEQUE	18	St. Paul
Esthère BELLEQUE	10	St. Paul	Angelique BLACK	16	Kamloops (*orphan*)
Catherine BRISEBOIS	3	Marion County	Renee BRACOIGNE	15	?
Margarite GAGNON	13	St. Louis	Virginia BURNS	10	Oregon City
Genievre JOSEPH	9	?	Ellen CAVENAUGH	2	St. Louis (*orphan*)
Marianne LAURENT	9	French Prairie (*orphan?*)	Mary CAVENAUGH	6	St. Louis (*orphan*)
Catherine LAURENT	8	French Prairie (*orphan?*)	Jane COCKERELL	9	Clark County
Cecile LAURENT	6	French Prairie (*orphan?*)	Anna COSGROVE	16	St. Paul
Josephte LAVIGEUER	10	St. Paul (*orphan*)	Mary COSGROVE	16	St. Paul
Marie Adeline LIARD	7	St. Paul (*orphan*)	Arna Frances LEE	8	Clatsop County
Marguerite LIARD	5	St. Paul (*orphan*)	Nancy McBEAN	11	Ft. Nez Percés
Monique MALOIN	7	Brooks	Elizabeth McLEAN	13	Clatsop
Victoire MASTA	7 or 9	French Prairie	Louisa MARTINEAU	14	St. Louis (*orphan*)
Catherine MONIQUE	12	French Prarie (*orphan?*)	Ada PAMBRUN	15	Oregon City
Luce PERAULT	6	French Prairie	Susan Frances POWELL	9	Clackamas County
Angelique PLAMONDON	11	Cowlitz	Margret RAE	9	Oregon City
Rosalie PLOUFF	12	St. Louis	Maria Louisa RAE	8	Oregon City
Angèle POIRIER	10	*probably French Prairie*	Charlotte Ann SEYMOUR	14	*Portland?*
Marie PRESSE	9	*French Prairie?* (*orphan?*)	Mary Elizabeth WILLSON	12	Clackamas County
Helène ST. ANDRE	9	Chinookville, WA			
Lizette WAGNER	10	Champoeg			

TABLE I: Religious Affiliation of St. Paul and Oregon City Students

STUDENT - St. Paul	Parents	Student as adult	STUDENT- Oregon City	Parents	Student as adult
Melécie ALBOT	?	?	Sophia BELLEQUE	Catholic	Catholic
Esthère BELEQUE	Catholic	Catholic	**Angelique BLACK**	Presbyterian	Protestant
Catherine BRISEBOIS	Catholic	Catholic	Renee BRACOIGNE	*Catholic?*	?
Margarite GAGNON	Catholic	Catholic	Virginia BURNS	Catholic	Catholic
Genievre JOSEPH	?	?	Ellen CAVENAUGH	Catholic	*deceased*
Marianne LAURENT	Catholic	Catholic	Mary CAVENAUGH	Catholic	Catholic
Catherine LAURENT	Catholic	*deceased*	Jane COCKERELL	Protestant	*Catholic?* (baptised 1849)
Cecile LAURENT	Catholic	*deceased*	Anna COSGROVE	Catholic	Catholic
Josephte LAVIGEUER	Catholic	Catholic	Mary COSGROVE	Catholic	Catholic
Marie Adeline LIARD	Catholic	?	Arna Frances LEE	Catholic	?
Marguerite LIARD	Catholic	Catholic	**Nancy McBEAN**	Catholic	Catholic
Monique MALOIN	Catholic	?	**Elizabeth McLEAN**	?	*Unitarian*?
Victoire MASTA	Catholic	?	Louisa MARTINEAU	Catholic	Catholic
Catherine MONIQUE	Catholic	*deceased*	**Ada PAMBRUN**	Catholic	Episcopal
Luce PERAULT	Catholic	Catholic	Susan Frances POWELL	Protestant	(civil marriage)
Angelique PLAMONDON	Catholic	Catholic	**Margret RAE**	Catholic	Unitarian
Rosalie PLOUFF	Catholic	Catholic	**Maria Louisa RAE**	Catholic	Episcopal
Angèle POIRIER	Catholic	Catholic	Charlotte Ann (NEWTON) SEYMOUR	Protestant	*Catholic?* (baptised 1851)
Marie PRESSE	Catholic	?	Mary Elizabeth (LOGSDON) WILLSON	*Protestant?*	Protestant (*Christian?*)
Helène ST. ANDRE	Catholic	Catholic			
Lizette WAGNER	Catholic	Catholic			

Note: Fur-trade officers' daughters in **BOLD**

TABLE J: Spouses of St. Paul Students

STUDENT	Ethnicity	SPOUSE	Ethnicity	Joint Domicile
Melécie ALBOT	???	?		
Esthère BELEQUE	Métis (1/4-blood)	Joseph HEBERT Moise TESSIER	French Canadian French Canadian	Walla Walla Walla Walla
Catherine BRISEBOIS	Métis (1/2-blood)	Katona MONRONA Onesime LESSAGE	?? *French Canadian?*	Wasco County
Margarite GAGNON	Métis (1/4-blood)	Antoine MORAY	French Canadian	Frenchtown
Genievre JOSEPH	???	?		
Marianne LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+)	Olivier BLANCHET	French Canadian	St. Paul or Oregon City
Catherine LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+)	*deceased*	-----	-----
Cecile LAURENT	Métis (3/4-blood+)	*deceased*	-----	-----
Josephte LAVIGEUER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Louis BERNIER Cyrille RICHTER Andrew NORTHERN William MOORE	French Canadian French Canadian	St. Paul St. Paul Montesano, WA
Marie Adeline LIARD	Métis (1/2-blood)	?		
Marguerite LIARD	Métis (1/2-blood)	*unmarried?*		St. Paul
Monique MALOIN	Métis (1/2-blood)	?		
Victoire MASTA	Métis (1/2-blood)	? *(transferred to California)*		
Catherine MONIQUE	Métis (3/4-blood+)	*deceased*	-----	-----
Luce PERAULT	Métis (1/2-blood)	John GOULE (GOULET)	French Canadian	St. Paul
Angelique PLAMONDON	Métis (1/4-blood)	Simon GILL	French Canadian	Tenino, WA
Rosalie PLOUFF	Métis (1/2-blood)	P. O. RILEY John Desportes McKAY Xavier PELLAND	Irish or AnglAm Métis French Canadian	Marion County Roseburg Douglas County
Angèle POIRIER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Charles DEROCHE	FrCan or Métis	Ft. Vancouver
Marie PRESSE	Métis (1/2-blood)	?		
Helène ST. ANDRE	Métis (1/2-blood)	Alexander DAVIES	Scottish	Vancouver
Lizette WAGNER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Elie PELLAND	French Canadian	St. Paul

TABLE K: Spouses of Oregon City Students

STUDENT	Ethnicity	SPOUSE	Ethnicity	Joint Domicile
Sophia BELLEQUE	Métis (1/4-blood)	Narcisse CORNOYER	Métis (1/4-blood)	Athena, OR
Angelique BLACK	Métis (1/2 blood)	Alexander PAMBRUN	Métis (1/8-1/4 blood)	Ft. Vancouver
Renee BRACOIGNE	*FrCan or Métis?*	?		
Virginia BURNS	Irish	Jeremiah COLLINS	AngloAmerican	*Portland?*
Ellen CAVENAUGH	Irish	*deceased*	------	------
Mary CAVENAUGH	Irish	James COSGROVE	Irish	Champoeg
Jane COCKERELL	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	?		
Anna COSGROVE	Irish	Freeman ELDRIDGE	AngloAmerican	St. Louis/Gervais
Mary COSGROVE	Irish	James COSTELLO Jerome JACKSON	Irish AngloAmerican	Champoeg St. Louis
Arna Frances LEE	*Irish or AngloAmer?*	?		
Nancy McBEAN	Métis (1/4-blood)	Theodore MESPLIE	French/FrCanadian	The Dalles
Elizabeth McLEAN	Métis (1/2-blood)	? *(James O. TAYLOR?)*	*AngloAmerican?*	*Portland?*
Louisa MARTINEAU	Métis (1/2-blood+)	Joseph LUCIER	Métis (1/2-blood)	Woodburn
Ada PAMBRUN	Métis (1/8-1/4 blood)	Edward H. BEARD John McCRAKEN	AngloAmerican Scots-English	Oregon City Portland
Susan Frances POWELL	AngloAmerican	John HUBBARD	*AngloAmer or Irish?*	(California, 1903)
Margret RAE	Métis (1/8-blood)	Theodore WYGANT	AngloAmerican	Portland
Maria Louisa RAE	Métis (1/8-blood)	Joseph MYRICK	English	Portland
Charlotte Ann (NEWTON) SEYMOUR	*AngloAmerican?*	?		
Mary Elizabeth (LOGSDON) WILLSON	AngloAmerican	William Levi FARRELL	Irish	Clackamas County