

**ANNIE HOLLIS (1871-1941):
SASKATCHEWAN ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL**

A Thesis Submitted to the
College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Continuing Education
in the Department of Educational Foundations
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

By
Catherine Joy Holtslander
Spring 1998

Copyright Catherine Joy Holtslander, 1998. All rights reserved

Permission to Use

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of the University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my thesis work, or in her absence by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of material in this thesis in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of Educational Foundations,
College of Education,
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK.

Abstract

This thesis is a biographical study of Annie Hollis, 1871-1941. The purposes of the study were to piece together the available resources in order to bring Annie Hollis's contributions to Saskatchewan out of obscurity, to examine her as a someone who resisted prevailing patriarchal prescriptions for women's lives, and to understand her as an educator who worked as an organic intellectual in the Saskatchewan farm movement. The study is based upon methods and theories of feminist biography and upon Antonio Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual. The significance of the study for adult education is in its assertion of the importance of the role of organic intellectuals in social movement adult education as well as in the relevance of past struggles of women and co-operative socialists to the issues adult educators face today.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a major undertaking, and something I could not have done without the people who have helped me in many ways. I would like to thank Georgina Taylor who first told me about Annie Hollis; my committee members Dianne Hallman, Michael Collins, and Brett Fairbairn who provided intellectual support and challenges; Maria Wilkins who shared her knowledge of Shaunavon's history and introduced me to people who had known Annie Hollis; the staff of the Saskatchewan Archives in Saskatoon and of the Grand Coteau Centre in Shaunavon for their assistance in finding archival material; the Messer Fund for Research in Canadian History which provided funding support for my archival research; my friends and fellow graduate students for their moral support and encouragement; and my parents, Jim and Pat Holtslander who instilled in me, through the example of their own lives, many of the values and convictions of the Saskatchewan co-operative tradition. Thank you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	v
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE LIFE STORY OF ANNIE HOLLIS.....	17
3. ANNIE HOLLIS'S POLITICAL BELIEFS AND VALUES.....	51
Introduction	51
Primitive Methodist Heritage	54
Owenite Heritage	60
The Suffrage Movement	66
The Saskatchewan Scene	69
The Metaphor of the Oak: Slow Growth versus Violent Revolution	71
Annie Hollis – Not a Feminist?	74
A Counter-hegemonic Identity of Women	80
The Dialectic of Feudalism versus Modernity in Co-operation	83
Conclusion	86
4. ANNIE HOLLIS'S WORK AS AN ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL	88
Introduction	88
Education	89
Creating Pedagogical Spaces for Women in the Farm Movement	99
Women as Political and Economic Producers	108
Creating a Consciousness of Leadership Among Women	116
Conclusion	119
5. IMPLICATIONS OF ANNIE HOLLIS'S WORK FOR ADULT EDUCATORS	121
SOURCES CONSULTED	127
Primary Sources	127
Secondary Sources	129

ACRONYMS

CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
FU of C	Farmers' Union of Canada
SCEC	Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company
SFPA	Saskatchewan Farmers' Political Association
SGGA	Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association
UFC	United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, Limited (resulted from amalgamation of SGGA and FU of C in 1926)
WSGGA	Women's Section, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (sometimes also referred to as WSSGGA or WGG)
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In this thesis I will tell a story of Annie Hollis's life as a political activist and adult educator. Once described as "the quiet Englishwoman in whom a logical mind was joined with a disarming humor and a militant zeal for improving the lot of humanity,"¹ she is one of the now almost completely forgotten women who were prominent in the farm movement of western Canada in the 1920s and 1930s.

Studying the life story of one person has opened up a whole world to me. Discovering Annie Hollis and attempting to learn about her in political, philosophical, historical and geographical contexts has brought me to a far richer understanding of my own times, the political economy of Western Canada and capitalism in general, and the practice of emancipatory and feminist adult education.

Annie Lavina Hollis (nee Snaith) was born in North Shields, Northumberland in 1871, a region of widespread political activism in the nineteenth century. She did not marry as a young woman, but took up a successful career as a teacher. By the time she was thirty-seven she was the assistant headmistress of a residential girls' school near Portsmouth. In her mid-thirties she became involved in the women's suffrage movement. This political experience was influential in her later activism in the farm movement on the Prairies.

In 1914 she emigrated to Saskatchewan and took up her teaching career again, this time in one-room prairie school houses. In 1916, at the age of forty-five, she married George Hollis, a farmer fifteen years her junior. Annie Hollis was elected to her first office in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (SGGA) in 1917. The next thirteen years of her life were largely devoted to activism within this organization and the

¹ "Annie L. Hollis," The Western Producer, 27 July 1941, 6.

United Farmers of Canada (UFC), its successor. Consistent with her previous experience as a teacher and as a suffragist, her commitments were to advancing the position of rural women and to building up an intellectual base among farm people in general in order to ensure social change was based upon a solid democratic foundation.

Annie Hollis's activism shifted into electoral politics in 1929 as one of the founders of a new party, the Saskatchewan Farmers Political Association (SFPA). After 1932 the SFPA ceased to exist as it merged into the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Annie Hollis was an active member of her local CCF organization in subsequent elections.

Annie Hollis worked closely with Violet McNaughton, who had been the only woman on the SGGA Board of Directors in the early years of the organization, and was women's editor of The Western Producer during the 1920s. Hollis wrote a column for the Women's Section of the SGGA and was a frequent contributor to the debates that took place in the "Open Forum" pages of the paper. During the Depression of the 1930s her journalism was economically as well as politically important to her. She earned much-needed money writing a bi-weekly column in the Saskatchewan Farmer from 1932 until her sudden death in 1941.

After a well attended funeral, obituaries, and tributes in the local dailies and the farm papers, Annie Hollis's life as a public figure was largely forgotten. Very little has been published about her contributions to Saskatchewan's political history.² No schools,

² Annie Hollis is briefly mentioned in the following: Leo David Courville, "The Saskatchewan Progressives" (Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1971); George Hoffman, "The Saskatchewan Farmer-Labor Party, 1932-1934: How Radical was it at its Origin?," Saskatchewan History 28, (1975): 52-64; Maria Wilkins, "A Tribute to Annie Hollis," The Shaunavon Standard, 6 April 1977; Georgina Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later? The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and Their Participation in the Homemakers Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967," chap. in Women: Isolation and Bonding – The Ecology of Gender, ed. Kathleen Storrie (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 79-100; Georgina Taylor, "'A Splendid Field Before Us': Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909 to 1926," Proceedings of Canadian Historical Association Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1991; Cheryle Jahn, "Class, Gender and Agrarian Socialism: The United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, 1926-1931," Prairie Forum: The Journal of the Canadian Plains Research Center, (Fall 1994): 189-206; Christa Scowby, "'I Am A Worker, Not A Drone': Farm Women, Reproductive Work and the *Western Producer*, 1930-1939," Saskatchewan History,

parks, or public buildings have been named after her, to my knowledge – though these honours have certainly been given to less prominent male figures. This thesis will be a small attempt to redress this obscurity and connect her life with the ongoing life of the province and the practice of adult education within social movements.

I understand that what exists at present is embedded in the outcomes of past political struggles. Likewise, the ways in which present-day contradictions are identified and contested create a spectrum of political possibilities for the future.³ The subtle and complex influences that bear upon our lives all have their intertwining histories. Investigation of one thread, the life and work of Annie Hollis, has brought me to greater respect for both the activism of individuals and the forms of social organization that provide the conditions in which individuals move. I see large-scale social patterns alongside unique personalities. The interplay of emerging economic organizations, cultural institutions, and the conditions of everyday life provide a ground for individuals' thoughts and actions. Individuals in turn affect the whole social tapestry in particular ways. The boundary between the individual and the world in which she exists is permeable.

Yet an individual *is* a centre point: biography is a form of grounded research. In biographical research it is possible to explore relationships among social forces that have acted upon one person. The biographical form provides the discipline of concentrating on specific circumstances which converge in the narrative of an actual person's experience. In this case, the biography of Annie Hollis provides a framework for the years from 1871 to 1941 in which to examine the particular events, issues, ideas, people and organizations that affected her life, as well as her responses, and the effects of her actions. Biographical study provides boundaries, as well as richness and depth, as the biographer strives to integrate divergent and unexpected aspects of the subject's life into the coherence of a narrative.

(1996): 3- 15.

³ Cornel West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 10.

Until recent decades biography has mostly been concerned with male subjects, the exceptions being "woman worthies," who were seen as singular for their adoption of a public life.⁴ The relative absence of women in biography reflects the grand narrative of Western history: the male hero has adventures, triumphs, and leaves a legacy.⁵ The female of this mythology serves, or is the object of male protection and/or desire.⁶ Thus, the lives of women have generally been ignored, erased or purged from the canon of Western history.⁷ Women as social, political and economic agents in the world at large are nearly invisible in the canon. In the traditional Western schema, woman as agent is a mutation, a monster that exemplifies how *not* to be female.⁸

Aileen Moffatt, in her overview of the historiography of Saskatchewan women's history, identifies three main strands: an early compensatory and contributory history where "great women" were uncritically written into existing interpretations; a later focus on women as a group, emphasizing separate spheres or women's culture; and most recently an approach which highlights the diversity of women.⁹ Feminist biography, unlike celebratory "stage one" strand of women's history, allows for an examination of individual women, their unique contributions to Saskatchewan's history, along with an

⁴ Aileen Moffatt, "Great Women, Separate Spheres, and Diversity: Comments on Saskatchewan Women's Historiography" "Other" Voices: Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women ed. David DeBrou and Aileen Moffatt, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 10-26.

⁵ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History in History" New Left Review 133 (May- June 1982), 14.

⁶ Susan A. Lichtman, Life Stages of Woman's Heroic Journey (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 31.

⁷ Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 195; Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness from the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 220.

⁸ Richard J. Evans, The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920 (London: Croom Helm, 1977), preface (no page number).

⁹ Aileen Moffatt, "Great Women," 10-26.

analysis of how gender was a significant factor in their lives as historical figures, as well as in their relative obscurity in the historical record. Moffatt does not mention feminist biography as an area in which little work has been done so far, however she does make it clear that there remains much to be studied, and that interdisciplinary approaches are very promising.

Feminist biographies of women serve a number of purposes. They recover the lost and suppressed legacies of women, offer alternative story lines which subvert prevalent cultural prescriptions for women to live passive lives, and document the complexity of women's involvement in public issues.¹⁰ These biographies of women may also challenge the simplistic representations of feminists and feminism commonly found in the mass media.

Feminist biography as a genre is based on the assumption that power and responsibility belong to the subject, author, and reader.¹¹ Feminism interrogates the myth of objectivity which has been so much a part of Western scientific and quasi-scientific research and epistemology.¹² Feminism recognizes that the researcher and the researched are in a reciprocal relationship. In feminist biography the narrative is not only about the subject's life, but also implies and shapes the author's life as well.¹³ The "facts" of a person's life are organized by the author in such a way that they reflect both persons' lives. The researcher is not simply a chronicler, but a choice-maker and a world-shaper.¹⁴ She takes on the responsibility of representing her subject within a relationship of power.

¹⁰ Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 31.

¹¹ Diane Wood Middlebrook, "Postmodernism and the Biographer," chap. in Revealing Lives, ed. Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 165.

¹² Maureen Quilligan, "Rewriting History: The Difference of Feminist Biography," Yale Review 77 (March 1988): 268; Dale Spender, "Learning to Create Our Own Knowledge", Convergence, 13 (1980): 17.

¹³ Dee Garrison, "Two Roads Taken: Writing the Biography of Mary Heaton Vorse," in The Challenge of Feminist Biography ed. Sara Alpern and others, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 1992), 68.

¹⁴ Middlebrook, "Postmodernism," 159.

Rather than refusing or denying power, the author must acknowledge it and use it with respect for the biographical subject and her reading audience.¹⁵ Both parties demand fair treatment and clear meaningful communication. This is a responsibility I am aware of as I write this thesis.

Many biographers of women speak of the intimacy that develops between themselves and their biographical subject.¹⁶ This has certainly been true for me as well. The sense of recognition, friendship and kinship I felt towards Annie Hollis at times was uncanny. For example, in the darkness of the small room in the Provincial Archives where I read microfilm of her 1930s columns in the Saskatchewan Farmer I felt a flash of recognition at the feelings Annie Hollis expressed on the coming of spring signalled by enough frost melting off her window that she could see outside again. I had a very similar experience when I lived in a trailer while teaching Adult Basic Education in Northern Saskatchewan.¹⁷

I also felt a strong sense of symmetry during my interview with Mr. Art Force, now in his eighties. We drove to the former Hollis farm along the same road on which he had ridden his horse to and from school alongside his grade one teacher, Mrs. Hollis, driving her horse and buggy. I looked out over the same rolling, open hills and pine-fringed coulees that she found so beautiful in the springtime, and so forlorn and heart-breaking in the years of drought.

Back in the archives in Saskatoon, I turned the pages of Hollis's letters to Violet McNaughton, the pages of the minutes of SGGA and UFC meetings she attended, and I

¹⁵ Prell, Riv-Ellen, "The Double Frame of Life History in the Work of Barbara Myerhoff," in Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory of Personal Narratives, ed. The Personal Narratives Group, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 264.

¹⁶ Garrison, "Two Roads Taken," 68.

¹⁷ "How gorgeous to be able to see out of the window once more, without climbing on a chair to look out of a peep-hole which Jack Frost has kindly left us!

"After several weeks of frosted panes it feels like being let out of prison; even though nothing much is visible but snowdrifts. The caragana hedge is nearly buried. Among the trees are to be seen clusters of Hungarian partridges; crowds of snow birds seeking food and hiding behind clumps of weeds...."

A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 March 1937, 6.

read the microfilm copies of the newspapers she wrote for in the 1920s and 1930s. Her life has come into mine bit by bit. I often felt like a detective piecing together the clues. Annie Hollis led me, with the incompleteness of the records she left behind, to ask questions, delve into the spaces and gaps, to construct the figure from the ground.

As I wrote her story, Annie Hollis was also affecting the story of my life. My own ideas, values and beliefs now seem less idiosyncratic. I became more integrated as a whole person and as part of a larger context, as I came to recognize the historical and cultural conditions which have shaped my life as a political woman in Saskatchewan. It became clear to me that from childhood I learned the values and beliefs indigenous to the Saskatchewan co-operative movement without having learned its history.

This story has also been created in the context of my political commitment as a feminist and a socialist. As a feminist I believe it is important to bring the stories of women into mainstream history so they can be accessible to the present generation. As women we have been robbed of our own history and thus each generation in its ignorance is vulnerable to the prescriptions of male domination for female lives.¹⁸ Without knowledge of the ways women worked, struggled, campaigned, and fought for recognition, rights, and participation in public life, our vision of possibilities is restricted.¹⁹ Without our history we are isolated in time and weakened in our struggle for liberation. Annie Hollis is one woman who resisted the life story that patriarchal convention wrote for her generation. Recognizing her achievements and making her life known again is, for me, an act of solidarity with her generation and with the women of this generation: "If we do not know our own history, we are doomed to live it as though it were our private fate."²⁰

I have been able to construct a fairly detailed chronology of Annie Hollis's life using archival sources which include letters Annie Hollis wrote to Violet McNaughton; to Sophia Dixon, director and Woman President of the UFC in the 1930s; and to George Edwards, former SGGA president and UFC director; columns, articles, and letters to the

¹⁸ Heilbrun, Writing A Woman's Life, 43.

¹⁹ Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History," 29.

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, quoted in Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, 71.

editor Hollis wrote for The Western Producer and The Saskatchewan Farmer; minutes from SGGA, Amalgamation Committee, and UFC meetings and conventions; pamphlets, yearbooks, and other documents published by the SGGA, WSGGA, FU of C, UFC, and SFPA; reports in other newspapers about these organizations; local school board files and Department of Education records. This narrative is found in Chapter Two.

Following the life story, Chapter Three elaborates the political values and beliefs Annie Hollis expressed through her public and private writings and her involvement in the farm movement organizations. In this chapter I examine connections between her thought and her experience, her understanding of gender and class positions, and her regional origins. I also provide a brief historical overview of the major currents I have identified as informing her political beliefs and values.

Annie Hollis was a Primitive Methodist. The religion was friendly to political ideas of self-government and economic co-operation. It also supported the leadership of women more than did most other denominations of the time. Primitive Methodism's boundaries with secular politics were rather permeable. Several prominent leaders, and many obscure ones, in early and mid-nineteenth century working-class politics were also Primitive Methodists.²¹

Annie Hollis's political beliefs and values concerning co-operation and education were based in the traditions of Owenite socialism. She rejected revolutionary Marxist socialism as inherently unstable, and preferred to build socialism slowly through well-founded organization built upon a firm base of knowledge among the farm women and men.²²

I have been able to find very little detail on Annie Hollis's participation in the suffrage movement in England. However, she referred to it in later letters, drawing lessons for the farm movement from the experiences of the suffragists. Her strong focus on women's political participation in the farm movement resonates with the determination expressed by women who were her contemporaries in the suffrage movement in England.

²¹ Julia Stewart Werner, The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

²² Harold Silver, The Concept of Popular Education (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965).

In spite of her commitment to women's suffrage, Annie Hollis did not identify herself as a feminist. Her rejection of a feminist identity is also explored in Chapter Three.

Annie Hollis believed in progress, justice, and reason – core values of modernity. She attempted to claim modernity for the co-operative movement by showing atavistic tendencies towards feudal economic relations in capitalism as it was developing on the prairies.

Her beliefs and values were the foundation of her organic intellectual work. Co-operative ideology and a strong commitment to broad-based grassroots democracy led her to find ways to expand the intellectual base and leadership capabilities within the farm movement, particularly among farm women. In her 1928 Presidential Address she said:

In such a [co-operative] social state, dictatorship of any kind would be intolerable; the state must be composed of citizens, men and women, capable of self-government. Self-government means intelligence, self-control and capacity for co-operation.²³

Chapter Four examines Annie Hollis's work as an organic intellectual. The concept of the organic intellectual was developed by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), the Italian theorist and former leader of the Communist Party of Italy (1924-1926). The organic intellectual concept, which will be explained in more detail below, provides a way of thinking about the agency of intellectual production within a movement as a socially embedded and politically conscious historical force for change.

I find this concept particularly useful for critical, or emancipatory, adult education because it avoids simplistic ideas about class, democracy and the creation of insurgent knowledge, while still being hopeful. The concept of the organic intellectual indicates that individuals as adult educators, with commitment and political astuteness, can make real and lasting contributions towards the creation of a more just society. Annie Hollis's educational and organizational work within the co-operative movement is an example of

²³ A. L. Hollis, "Address delivered by Mrs. A. L. Hollis, of Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, the President of the Women's Section UFC," Report of Proceedings of United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section Limited, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Feb 12 to March 2, 1928, 21.

organic intellectualism among farm women, whom she described as a “class within a class.”

As a member of the farm movement and its sub-group, the organized farm women, Hollis worked to advance a critique of capitalist ideas and practices. As an elected official she worked to organize and defend spaces where women could create their own political knowledge through praxis, and she urged farm people to take control of the educational institutions training the younger generation.

Biographical research is helpful in learning about the agency of organic intellectuals. Studying the life of one specific person is a way to make sense of otherwise abstract political beliefs and values in action.²⁴ Biography can make clear that the organic intellectual is in a dialectic relationship with the world – not isolated from the world as a traditional “ivory tower” academic,²⁵ nor a passive victim of circumstances, nor an automaton mechanically responding to the imperatives of a social structure beyond human control.²⁶

Gramsci defined the organic intellectual in contrast to what he called the “traditional intellectual.” The traditional intellectual strives to be politically detached, in search of the objective “truth” alone, with no political purpose or affiliation. Gramsci asserted that this kind of detachment is a fiction, and that the traditional intellectual instead offered tacit support to the dominant group. For an example, see Jeffery Taylor’s description of the process of creating a traditional intellectual elite in the agricultural colleges of Manitoba, where “expertise meant being scientifically trained in a specialty and conducting work in a neutral and apolitical environment” and which consequently favoured the emergence of corporate capitalism in Western Canada.²⁷

²⁴ Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, "Feminist Biography," Atlantis Vol. 10 no. 2, (Spring 1985), 4.

²⁵ Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 418.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 337.

²⁷ Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925 (Regina, Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994), 20 and 86-89.

Traditional intellectuals enhance the power of the ruling class by equating the dominant group's perspective with objective truth and legitimate knowledge. In contrast, the organic intellectual's "truth" is openly and actively connected to a social group. This could be the dominant or an oppressed – or to use Gramsci's word, "subaltern" – class or group. The political aspect of the organic intellectual's work is conscious and deliberate. The organic intellectual organizes knowledge in a way which either openly supports or opposes the direction desired by the ruling class.

"Hegemony" is a key concept in Gramsci's theory which is essential for understanding the role of organic intellectuals. The term hegemony had an antecedent in the Russian labour movement. *Gegemoniya* meant that the proletariat needed to create a political will and a revolutionary awareness that went beyond its narrow corporate interests.²⁸ Gramsci went further, and defined hegemony as a complex interaction of historical forces (including culture, religion, language, and education systems) which constitute an instrument of rule expressed through civil society.

In the quotation below, Gramsci first defines "hegemony," and second, the juridical power of the state. The latter capability only needs to be used when hegemony fails to limit challenges to the ruling class' control, though even in "normal times" the threat of direct domination by force upholds the civil power of hegemony.

1. The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of this position and function in the world of production.

2. The apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed.²⁹

Marx's recognition of the importance of economic relationships in the development of social and cultural forms, including political ideas, was simplified and

²⁸ Richard Bellamy, Introduction in Pre-Prison Writings, Antonio Gramsci, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xxvii.

²⁹ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 12.

reinterpreted by popularizers of his work, also known as "vulgar Marxists" into a mechanistic set of assertions: The economic base of production was the material foundation of the political ideas which governed a society, and since the ruling class had control over the means of economic production, it also controlled cultural production, resulting in the general acceptance of ideas advantageous to the ruling elite.

Working-class people were flooded with ideas contrary to their own interests. When they accepted these ideas they were said to be suffering from "false consciousness," leading them to participate in their own oppression. This line of thinking led to a paradox: Consciousness could only be altered by changing the economic base of a society, but since people suffered from false consciousness they were unable to bring about a change in the economic system.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony took Marx's idea in the opposite direction from that taken by vulgar Marxism. Instead of simplifying the relationship between class and cultural production, Gramsci posited the working class' ability to actively encounter and challenge inevitable flaws in ruling-class ideology, and thus provided a way out of the theoretical impasse. According to Gramsci's analysis, the dominant class' exercise of hegemony in civil society usually manages to contain political conflict within bounds which prevent it from affecting the relations of domination in any serious way. However, the hegemony of the ruling class also contains contradictions. Critical interpretation of these contradictions by the organic intellectuals of subaltern groups allows for the possibility of revolution.

Organic intellectuals (from here on I will only be concerned with organic intellectuals of the subaltern groups, recognizing that organic intellectuals of the ruling class exist and work to maintain and strengthen its power³⁰) create spaces where hegemonic ideas are exposed as socially constructed, interested, and oppressive. Alternative, or "counter-hegemonic," ideology can therefore begin to emerge. Organic intellectuals begin to see that how things are is not how they must always be: that the

³⁰ One example of organic intellectuals of the ruling class in Canada would be the Fraser Institute, described as a "right-wing think tank". See Jason Foster, "Business Bias in the Media: It All Depends on Your Point of View," *Briarpatch* Vol. 26 no. 5 (June 1997), 5.

present situation is not merely "normal and natural," but is the product of history and the social relations that have come to exist through the interplay of powerful groups. Organic intellectuals are instrumental in purposefully creating knowledge based upon their experience of the contradictions as individuals and by organizing pedagogical spaces where the creation of knowledge is organized in new, counter-hegemonic ways.

The work of organic intellectuals occurs within the social groups to which they belong.³¹ It is a reciprocal process, as learning occurs through action and experience, and action is based upon the changing knowledge base; additionally, changed people change the groups to which they belong, which in turn results in changed experience of the individuals. In other words, the knowledge of organic intellectuals is produced through praxis. "Experience" means being in intimate daily contact with the contradictions and challenges resulting from resisting the conditions of oppression. This experience is something to be valued as a source by organic intellectuals, not escaped from in order to be free to pursue pure knowledge (as is the ideal for traditional intellectuals). Therefore, the new knowledge is not static, but emergent, as organic intellectuals respond to the exposure of new contradictions in the flux of political life. The organic intellectuals seek to understand the world as it changes through the historical processes of which they are themselves a part. Gramsci wrote:

The active politician is a creator, an initiator; but he [sic] neither creates from nothing nor does he move in the turbid void of his own desires and dreams. He bases himself on effective reality, but what is this effective reality? Is it something static and immobile, or is it not rather a relation of forces in continuous motion and shift of equilibrium?³²

Gramsci saw the conditions of everyday life as pedagogical: the factory, the trenches, the school rooms, and the church pews were all locations where certain forms of knowledge and social organization were perpetuated. Thus he emphasized the importance of creating new ways of organizing everyday life, including the structures of material production, the family, and religion. In differently organized spaces, different kinds of knowledge would be able to emerge.

³¹ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 15.

³² *ibid.*, 172.

An example of a new pedagogical space was the Factory Council, a form Gramsci helped organize in Turin in the 1920s. The Council was epistemologically, as well as politically, significant for the development of a socialist revolution since it was a place where people who had been trained only to take orders from others were creating their own non-hierarchical, self-governing democratic organization. In contrast, Gramsci saw the other main working-class organization, the Trade Union, as merely an extension of the capitalist system since the Union organized workers according to the tools they used, not according to their relationships with other workers.³³ While Trade Unions could organize strikes and resist intimidation from factory owners, the Councils were taking on creative organizational leadership roles involving all the workers at a factory.

In September 1920 workers organized in Factory Councils occupied factories in Turin and carried on production for several days until the Italian government brought in the army to retrieve control for the owners. Through the factory occupations, workers proved that they had the ability to organize themselves for industrial production:

The 'implementing' classes, the 'instrumental' classes have become the 'managerial' classes: they have become their own bosses and found their representatives within their own ranks – men who can be invested with the power of government, men who can take on all the tasks involved in turning an elemental and mechanical aggregation into an organic whole, a living creature.³⁴

The organic intellectuals, then, not only create counter-hegemonic knowledge, they also challenge the relations of power. In Gramsci's life it was the industrial workers in the factories of Turin; in Annie Hollis's life, the farm people, and particularly the women of the farm movement, who challenged hegemonic power relationships by organizing their own counter-hegemonic political spaces.

In brief, the organic intellectual is a person who creates and organizes knowledge in the interests of his or her own social group. Organic intellectuals challenge the hegemonic ideology of the ruling class by exposing contradictions experienced in the interaction of their own knowledge and experience, or praxis, as members of a subaltern

³³ Antonio Gramsci, Pre-Prison Writings ed. Richard Bellamy, trans. Virginia Cox, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 118.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 198.

social group. The organic intellectual is also involved in creating new pedagogical spaces which are controlled by members of the subaltern group, where the alternative or counter-hegemonic world view can be both practised and developed through praxis.

The organic intellectual thus contests hegemonic knowledge, creating in a context of risk within the flux of changing social forces, and is responsive to power relationships that emerge in the course of action.³⁵ The organic intellectual's knowledge is open to revision as her or his relationships change with the social movement and the epistemological spaces opened up by its successes.³⁶ She or he must also work within the restrictions of a hostile intellectual environment in times where the movement falters, or is pushed back in its struggle.³⁷

When studying social movements, broad generalization can result in the existence of organic intellectuals and the complexity of their work being over-simplified, even overlooked and taken for granted. The political action resulting from organic intellectuals' organizational and educative efforts can be glibly dismissed as the "spontaneity" of the masses responding to economic conditions or other factors.³⁸ However, looking at one organic intellectual in biography provides an opportunity to examine the agency of the intellectual in creating a counter-hegemonic knowledge base and alternative organizational structures which are instrumental in effecting changes and resisting setbacks. The story of Annie Hollis, one organic intellectual, draws a specific path within the broad sweep of the co-operative farm movement of Saskatchewan. I find this encouraging in the 1990s where nihilism, cynicism, and consumerist passivity are encouraged by the hegemonic ideology of corporate capitalism.³⁹

The term "class" is used in three ways in this thesis depending upon context, and to avoid confusion should be explained. In his Prison Notebooks, Gramsci often used the

³⁵ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 172.

³⁶ ibid., 437.

³⁷ ibid., 365.

³⁸ ibid., 233.

³⁹ Cornel West, Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism (Vol II) (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993), 52.

term “subaltern social group” to indicate the working-class proletariat in relation to the ruling class capitalist elite in the industrial North of Italy. In discussing the late Victorian/early Edwardian context of Annie Hollis’s youth, class is used to distinguish between the landed aristocracy (the upper class), owners of factories and other forms of capital (the middle class) and those who sold their labour for wages (the working class). In Annie Hollis’s own terminology, she identifies farmers and women as a class, and a “class within a class”, respectively, as people who shared a common relationship of exploitation by more powerful economic groups, particularly the railway companies, banks, financial institutions and large grain companies; and additionally for women, patriarchal laws, traditions and customs, and the disrespectful behavior and attitudes of many individual men. She tended to use the term “class” to create a political identity, rather than simply to describe an economic or social category.

The final chapter of the thesis connects this biography of Annie Hollis with possibilities for present-day adult education practice through organic intellectualism. I locate her work within the field of adult education and suggest the significance of her story for the 1990s. My hope is that her story will resonate with the challenges being faced in the lives of today's adult educators. I hope the reader will also find encouragement, insight and inspiration so that Annie Hollis's life will continue to influence people's lives and social movements.

CHAPTER TWO

The Life Story of Annie Hollis

Annie Lavina Snaith was born in the small English coastal town of North Shields, Northumberland, January 22, 1871. She was the middle child in a family of three boys and four girls. Both parents were from Cumberland county near the border with Scotland. Their father, the Reverend John Snaith, was an itinerant preacher in the Primitive Methodist church. The nature of his work meant the family moved frequently, and many of their postings were in small towns and villages in Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, and the Furness district of Lancashire.¹

Mrs. Ann Snaith was a lively storyteller who passed along the store of regional folk songs and tales she had learned as a child: "How we enjoyed singing round the piano; carols, old songs, hymns, etc. were all in the program ... I still remember my mother singing 'The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies Oh' and 'Johnnie Cope', also reciting bits from the old folk drama of St. George and the Dragon."² Annie also got to hear the stories of old people from the towns and villages her family lived in. One old woman from a small village remembered the Chartist and Radical movements. She told Annie of how she had been instructed as a child to hide "if the Radicals came."³

The Snaith children were encouraged to be creative and imaginative. They enjoyed music and outdoor adventures: "[R]eading aloud and singing together were among our family pleasures."⁴ She later recalled picnics "up the burn" at Haltwistle,

¹ "Woman President" The Western Producer, 28 April 1927, 3.

² A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ..." The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Dec. 1936, 8.

³ A. L. Hollis, "Group Representation," The Western Producer, 18 Sept. 1924, 11.

⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ..." The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Dec. 1936, 8.

gathering violets, wood anemones and wild hyacinths.⁵ Annie particularly liked it when they lived near the sea. Their father told stories of when, as a young itinerant minister, he held services at Holy Island off the Northumberland coast near North Shields. This was the site of a thousand-year-old ritual where pilgrims worshipped at the ruins of the priory of Lindisfarne, an early Christian outpost in Britain.⁶

Around 1885 the Snaiths were living in a tiny village just eight miles from the Scottish border. Annie and her siblings went across to Getholm where they visited the gypsies who lived above the village. "On leaving, we all shook hands with the king [of the gypsies]. Afterwards I was often teased at the great honor paid to me. My farewell greeting from him was a request – 'Will ye not stay wi' me?'"⁷

Learning, reading, and discussing the political issues of the day were important activities during Annie's childhood. Even so, their father did not allow the children to stay up late at night to do their homework. He felt their health was more valuable than what they might learn from overly long hours of study.⁸

The family's frequent moves probably strengthened the emotional bonds between the siblings, particularly the three sisters Sem (nicknamed for her initials S. M.), Annie, and Margaret, who eventually emigrated together with their parents. The seven siblings provided a set of constant relationships in one another's lives when they moved from town to town, making and leaving other friendships during their childhood and youth.

It seems that John Snaith's income was stable enough to support the family in a modest lower middle class economic standard. Their social standing might have been more ambiguous. Without long standing roots in any of the communities they lived in, the kind of stability produced by interwoven extended family relationships could not be part of their everyday lives. Belonging to one of the Dissenting sects, rather than to the Church of England, would have left them open to religious discrimination. Likewise, much of their status in the community would have been based upon the Rev. Snaith's

⁵ *ibid.*, 15 June 1934, 8.

⁶ *ibid.*, 15 July 1937, 6.

⁷ *ibid.*, 1 Nov. 1940, 6.

⁸ *ibid.*, 1 Mar. 1941, 6.

position as a clergyman.

By 1870 the Primitive Methodists were less notorious than they had been a generation earlier, yet were still strongly associated with the working class, Chartism, and the emerging Trade Union movement.⁹ The intersection of a relatively stable income from a non-manual type of work with a political and historical connection to the poor via Primitive Methodism and the working class meant Annie Snaith would have grown up on the fringes of the lower middle class and the upper working class.

By the time Annie Snaith was twenty years old, teacher training was becoming available for young women. In 1891 Annie began a two-year course at Darlington Training College which prepared her for teaching at the elementary school level. She obtained her "Teacher's Parchment" on Jan. 1, 1893.¹⁰ She then taught in Hartlepool for three years while she continued to study part time at Armstrong College.

Annie Snaith's early career coincided with the feminization and early professionalization of teaching in England.¹¹ More women were becoming qualified to teach as the Elementary Education Act of 1870 made primary education available to the poor. By 1880 primary education became compulsory and so the demand for teachers increased dramatically.¹² Typical classrooms, often dingy, cold, and ill-lit, held over one hundred students under the supervision of one teacher. The over-crowding combined with the system of grants based upon examination scores encouraged methods of harsh discipline and rote memorization to ensure the continued solvency of the schools and the security of teachers' jobs.¹³

⁹ Robert Wearmouth, "Loyal and Liberal Methodists" in Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England, ed. Gerald Wayne Olsen, (Landham Md.: University Press of America, 1990), 115-134.

¹⁰ Saskatchewan, Department of Education Records, "Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928."

¹¹ Asher Tropp, The School Teachers (London: William Heineman Ltd., 1957), 116-118.

¹² Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), 112.

¹³ Simon, Education and the Labour Movement, 115.

Nottingham was a lively centre for working-class education initiatives in the 1890s. Annie Snaith took a position with the People's College Board school. The People's College Board had been established in 1846 at the tail end of the Chartist movement.¹⁴ It was organized on self-governing principles to provide evening classes for working-class adults, and later, a day school for their children. Annie Snaith taught there for one year before moving on to teach at Higher Grade and Higher Elementary schools in Nottingham for the next ten years. The Higher Grade and Higher Elementary schools had lower fees than middle-class schools. They were better equipped than other working-class elementary schools, and provided a broader curriculum for all students, and a more academic curriculum for girls,¹⁵ allowing workers' children access to advanced education.¹⁶

In 1897, at the age of twenty-six, Annie Snaith became qualified to teach at the high school level. To teach at this level was rare for women. At that time teaching was still largely equated with the "natural" maternal abilities of women towards young children. In addition, the teacher training system made it difficult for women to become qualified to teach advanced courses. Women teachers were concentrated in low-wage, low-status primary education.¹⁷

Annie Snaith's subject specialty was French. In the summer of 1906 she studied French language and literature in Lisieux, Normandy, then taught English to French girls at the College de Jeunes Filles in Morlaix the following year.¹⁸ While in France, as she later wrote, she was able to explore the countryside and get to know some of the people in the district:

¹⁴ John William Adamson, English Education 1789-1902 (Cambridge University Press, 1964), 164.

¹⁵ Jane McDermid, "Women and Education", in Women's History: Britain 1850-1945, ed. Jane Purvis, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 119.

¹⁶ Tropp, The School Teachers, 192.

¹⁷ ibid., 171.

¹⁸ Annie Snaith, Nottingham to A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, Regina, 4 Oct. 1913. Saskatchewan, Department of Education, "Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928."

... passing some jolly days with [a local family] at a little fishing village, Primel, on the rocky coast, a few miles from Morlais [sic]... I welcomed a sail in a fishing boat with the boys and a Breton fisherman. The small natural harbor was protected on the east by a steep rocky hill. Immediately on leaving the protection of this shelter, one had the feeling of being on the great ocean ...¹⁹

On her return to England she took a position at the St. Bernard's Residential School for Girls in Portsmouth. By April of that year she had become assistant headmistress of the school.²⁰

A strong contingent of the suffragist movement had been organized in Portsmouth by 1909, which Annie Snaith soon joined.²¹ She was a member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and took part in meetings and demonstrations, including the large Coronation Week procession of 1911 that drew over ten thousand women to march in London.²²

... I marched with the Portsmouth contingent of suffragettes from the Embankment to the Albert Hall for the great meeting. We passed through excited and enthusiastic crowds from all parts of the world ...²³

There is no evidence that she took part in the suffragist window smashing or letter box firing campaigns. She did attend Liberal Party political meetings from which she was thrown out along with all the other women who had not been sponsored by a Liberal Party member in good standing.²⁴ She faced police constables and guards who were protecting politicians from the suffragettes. The extent of her militancy may have been

¹⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 July 1940, 8.

²⁰ Annie Snaith, Nottingham to A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, Regina, 22 June 1913. Saskatchewan, Department of Education, "Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928."

²¹ Sarah Peacock, Votes for Women: The Women's Fight in Portsmouth, (City of Portsmouth: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1983).

²² Andrew Rosen, Rise up Women! The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914 (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 137.

²³ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Feb. 1936, 8.

²⁴ "Woman President", The Western Producer, 1927.

checked by a desire to continue teaching at the girls' school. Even so, her involvement may have cost her her job. It seems out of character for Annie Snaith, after seventeen successful years of teaching, to have chosen to leave her position as an assistant headmistress before securing another job.

In 1911 she left Portsmouth to move back to Nottingham. She lived there with her parents, took on students as a private tutor, helped her father with his manuscript on the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, and began studying for her Lady Literate of Arts degree (LLA) from St. Andrews University.

The LLA was one of the first university distance education programs. It was developed specifically for women who wished to gain a higher education equivalent to a Masters Degree. At the time it was very difficult or impossible for most women to enter the regular residential university courses.²⁵ Most universities restricted female enrollment, and prevented women from attaining academic standing through examinations. In addition there were cultural and economic barriers that prevented women from leaving their homes for residential study.²⁶ In two years of home study Annie Snaith prepared for, and wrote, examinations in English, French, Education, Logic and Metaphysics, and Physiology. She attained Honours standing in the first three.²⁷

Frustrated with limited opportunities for her in England, in early 1913 she began applying for a position as a teacher in Saskatchewan. Her brother had emigrated a few years earlier and had established a homestead at Brock, Saskatchewan. In her letter of application to the Minister of Education, Annie Snaith expressed her belief that Saskatchewan would provide "more scope and hope of advancement to a woman of my age, of good all-round abilities, and above all I shall not be hampered as here by the fact

²⁵ Rosalind K. Marshall, Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980 (Chicago: Academy Chicago Ltd., 1983), 261.

²⁶ McDermid, "Women and Education," 111.

²⁷ Norman H. Reid, Keeper of Manuscripts and Muniments, University of St. Andrews Library, Fife, Scotland, to Cathy Holtslander, 1 Feb. 1996.

that I am not a member of the Established Church."²⁸ With a war brewing in Europe, the struggle for women's suffrage in England meeting intransigent opposition, and her own prospects for employment at home dim, the promise of moving to Saskatchewan must have seemed like a great opportunity for a new beginning.

Annie, her parents, and sisters Sem and Margaret, left England at the beginning of 1914, arriving in the Shaunavon district in southwestern Saskatchewan in March to take up farming. Annie began teaching at nearby Anglo School. Sadly, their mother died barely a year later. She was the first person to be buried in the Shaunavon cemetery. In 1921, Annie's sister, Elizabeth Kirkpatrick arrived in Saskatchewan with her husband when he was accepted to study at the Methodist seminary. Their oldest and youngest brothers stayed in England.

Shaunavon had become an important town in the region. The main Canadian Pacific Railway line went through the town. It was a major stopping point for trains as there was an abundant underground aquifer which provided a reliable and cheap source of water for the steam locomotives. The landscape around Shaunavon is dominated by the sky. Wide expanses of arid, rolling hills are occasionally interrupted by steep, pine-fringed coulees cut by small run-off streams and spring-fed creeks.

Most of the settlers in the region were of English, Scottish or Scandinavian origin. There was a variety of languages and accents for the listener to hear on the streets of Shaunavon. Many of the immigrants had come with dreams of creating a better society in the New World. Many had been socialists, communists or trade unionists in England, Scotland, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.²⁹ It was a huge change – geographically, culturally and socially – from life in England.

At the age of forty-five, two years after arriving in Canada, Annie Snaith married George Hollis and moved to his farm six miles southeast of Shaunavon. They were

²⁸ Annie Snaith, Nottingham to A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, Regina, 22 June 1913. Saskatchewan, Department of Education, "Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928."

²⁹ S. M. Lipsett, Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 43.

married on March 3, 1916. The minister caused some apprehension when he was rather late in arriving at the Hollis farm. He had assumed the ceremony was going to be held at the school house where Methodist services were held every second Sunday.

Relieved at the arrival of the minister, the guests assembled to take part in the wedding. It was then discovered that George had not realized he needed to buy a license for the marriage to be legally recognized. The ceremony was held, but the guests had to leave before dark. Annie was presented with the dilemma of whether to stay with her not quite lawfully wedded husband or to go back to town and stay with her sister until the documents were in order. She took the prudent course and returned to her new home the next day with papers duly signed.³⁰ Nevertheless, Annie and George lived happily together for over twenty-five years.³¹

Annie Hollis continued to teach after she married. She was at Anglo School for four years altogether, at Marcliffe School for 1919, then moved to Numola School, also known as "the Finn School," for the next six years.³² She drove a horse and buggy the four and a half miles to Numola, often accompanied by one of her young students, Art Force, on his horse.³³

Annie enjoyed teaching, particularly the challenge of teaching the Finnish students who started school with barely a word of English.³⁴ The annual Christmas concert, complete with carols sung by the children in a combination of their teacher's British accent and their own Scandinavian accents, was a community highlight.³⁵

³⁰ Author's interview with Mr. Art Force, Shaunavon, 3 Sept. 1994. and letter from Mrs. Mabel Force, (no date, likely 1975) to Maria Wilkins, Shaunavon. Maria Wilkins Private Papers.

³¹ George Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Violet McNaughton, 12 July, 1942. McNaughton Papers, "Personal Correspondence, Hollis 1938-1942."

³² "Record of Teaching," Saskatchewan, Department of Education, Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928.

³³ Art Force, Shaunavon, interview with author, 3 Sept. 1994.

³⁴ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 4 Jan. 1921, McNaughton Papers, Women's Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

³⁵ Art Force, Shaunavon, interview with author, 3 Sept. 1994.

School inspectors' reports indicate that Annie Hollis was a creative and energetic teacher. Music and Nature studies, as well as students' excellent progress in reading and spelling, were noted. However, one inspector suggested that Annie Hollis's manner had "a little too much of the 'cock-sureness' that comes from long experience and 'English' training."³⁶

Annie Hollis's career as a farm movement organizer began in 1917 when she attended the annual Convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers in Moose Jaw.³⁷ She was elected District #15 Director of the SGGA Women's Section. Her task was to organize new locals in the area surrounding Shaunavon. When she took the position there was only one women's local in the District. After one year she reported "mostly endeavor and little result" with only one new Women's Section having been formed near the town of Kincaid.³⁸

The following year she continued as District Director, with somewhat more success. It was not until 1919 that she really came into her own as an active political figure in the Women's Section. A letter she wrote in July 1919, after a meeting which was disappointing from the women's point of view, indicates a turning point. "... one does not always like to appear as if pushing one's self to the front. Yet I suppose I ought not to look on it as a personal question and I know we women must fight our own battles." She decided to sacrifice her own social acceptability for the sake of improving the economic and political condition of rural women: "Henceforth however I intend to put personal feeling in the background and just remember that we women must make ourselves felt and never mind being mis-judged."³⁹

She continued to serve as the District Director as well as an active member of the Shaunavon local. She made lifelong friends with neighbours and fellow SGGA women

³⁶ "Inspectors reports," Saskatchewan, Department of Education, Department of Education Records, Files of former teachers, 1926-1928.

³⁷ "Woman President", The Western Producer, 1927.

³⁸ Women's Section, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, "Report from District 15" Yearbook 1918.

³⁹ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 24 July, 1919. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers' Association, 1912-1926.

and men, including Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Force, Mr. and Mrs. Meek, and others.

The Shaunavon lodge of the WSGGA innovated with large and small women's meetings starting in 1920. Men and women met together in Shaunavon every three months. But since travel was often difficult, smaller branches of the Women's Section were also organized, each with its own set of officers, which met monthly in rural homes.⁴⁰ This format suited farm women's daily lives and thus allowed women a better opportunity to participate in the organization.

Annie Hollis travelled the district speaking in various towns, villages, and at little schoolhouse outposts in the country in order to organize new locals and Women's Section lodges of the SGGA.⁴¹ It was interesting and purposeful work for her. It gave her a chance to meet new people and was a break from the isolation and monotony that farm women typically felt alone on the farms:⁴²

At Easter time I had quite an outing; the folks at Stone, about 25 miles N.W. of Shaunavon, sent a car for me on Thursday afternoon before Good Friday. The roads were rather awful and we had some adventures but I arrived after 2 in the morning; found a lot of people dancing, but they wanted an address, so I spoke and 31 women joined – they were making a special 'drive' for members.

Next day I was taken on to Garden Head – the weather was stormy at night but 5 or 6 women joined and they are forming a section as soon as the roads are in condition for getting about. I got home again on Saturday afternoon after a drive of about 32 miles in a buggy! (with an enormously fat man!)⁴³

By 1922 she moved into more responsibility when she was elected Director at

⁴⁰ "A Wonderful Year in North End Branch Shaunavon WGG," The Progressive, 10 Jan. 1923, 6.

⁴¹ "GGA Meetings in the Shaunavon District" Shaunavon Standard, 9 Dec. 1920, 1.

⁴² Georgina M. Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later? The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and Their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967," in Women: Isolation and Bonding – The Ecology of Gender ed. Kathleen Storrie (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 79-100.

⁴³ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 12 April 1921. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers' Association.

Large and member of the six-woman executive of the Board of Directors of the WSGGA. She attended quarterly executive board meetings in Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw. It was a difficult year for Annie Hollis. Her work was interrupted by serious illness. In June 1922 she offered her resignation from the Executive, but the women did not accept it and instead asked her to remain "in an advisory capacity" until the end of the year.⁴⁴

She had breast cancer on her left side and underwent a radical mastectomy in Saskatoon in March. She stayed in hospital for five weeks, then moved to her sister Margaret's home in Shaunavon until she was strong enough to return home.⁴⁵ Her left arm was always weak as a result of the surgery, but fortunately she had no recurrence of cancer.⁴⁶ Her doctor suggested it would be better for her to go back teaching than to attempt to do a lot of house work. She hired one of their neighbour's daughters, Emily Meek, a school girl, to help with house work and to drive her horse and buggy to and from school.⁴⁷

The year 1922 brought political difficulties too. The SGGA had become embroiled in conflict over the relationship between the organization and provincial electoral politics for over a year. A situation of interlocking directorates and political entanglement had developed since the establishment of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company in 1911. The provincial government at that time had promoted the formation of the company as a more palatable alternative to a proposal for government ownership of the elevator system which was being promoted by E. A. Partridge and his allies.

At the 1911 SGGA convention farmers had approved the more conservative proposal. According to historian Robert Irwin, this choice was likely a case of farmers choosing the "bird in the hand" since they knew legislation was being prepared for the

⁴⁴ Minutes of Executive Meeting, 13 June 1922, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Women's Section Minutes 1919-1925, 133.

⁴⁵ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 5 April 1922. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers' Association, 1912-1926.

⁴⁶ Author's interview with Mrs. Kay Lidfors, Shaunavon, 28 Aug. 1995.

⁴⁷ Maria Wilkins, "A Tribute to Annie Hollis," Shaunavon Standard, 6 April 1977.

establishment of a the new co-operative, rather than the "two in the bush" which the more radical, government ownership option appeared to be.

The legislation that established the SCEC put the SGGA executive in place as the company's provisional board of directors. J. A. Maharg was the president. Other leaders included C. A. Dunning who later became the Liberal premier of the province, J. B. Musselman, the General Secretary of the SGGA, A.G. Hawkes and George Langley. These men saw co-operatives as a tool to reform the grain trade, not as a means to bring about a transformed social system based upon co-operative principles.⁴⁸

By 1922 J.A. Maharg had been president of both the SGGA and the SCEC for over ten years, had served as a federal Liberal MP for four years, then had been appointed provincial Minister of Agriculture in 1921 by provincial Liberal Premier Martin. He resigned from the cabinet position at the end of 1921 in order to lead "independent" farmer MLAs in the legislature as the official Opposition to the Liberal government under Martin's successor, Hon. C. A. Dunning. Many of these independent MLAs were formerly connected to the federal Progressive Party, a party that was not organized at the provincial level.

There was evidence that Maharg had been setting up the SGGA Central Board organization as a party machine for this group of MLAs.⁴⁹ Annie Hollis completely rejected this style of politics. She disparagingly referred to it as "a game of ins and outs."⁵⁰ Rather than developing a broadly based grassroots democracy as she believed they should, in her opinion the SGGA leadership was using the farmers' organization to support their own political ambitions.

At the same time, some of the SGGA women were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the attitudes of certain prominent male leaders. SGGA Central Secretary, J. B. Musselman, was particularly known for categorizing women as incapable and

⁴⁸ Robert Irwin, "'The Better Sense of the Farm Population': The Partridge Plan and Grain Marketing in Saskatchewan" Prairie Forum: The Journal of the Canadian Plains Research Center Vol. 18 no 1 (Spring 1993), 33-54.

⁴⁹ "Still Unanswered," The Morning Leader, 19 Feb. 1923.

⁵⁰ A. L. Hollis, "A System That Has Failed," The Western Producer, 16 Oct. 1930, 21.

irrelevant to political life.⁵¹ Annie Hollis was very irritated by his posturing and condescending treatment of the women leaders. She commented to Violet McNaughton:

And I still think that the attitude of our General Sec. [Musselman] (above all) towards the Women's Section does not redound to his credit! and most of the other officials seem to be too readily led by the nose! I'll be generous and say it may be unintentional but that does not improve matters, then it is due to lack of insight and to ignorance of the value and worth of you all!⁵²

In mid-1921 Annie Hollis began distancing herself from the SGGA leadership. She did not wish to be seen to be supporting men with whom she so fundamentally disagreed, nor did she want to be inadvertently drawn into working in their fashion as a result of close association.⁵³ Yet she did not want to abandon her quest for building a co-operative society in which women took a full part in governing.

When "The Ginger Group" of the SGGA formed, Annie Hollis was involved, along with Violet McNaughton, Alexander McPhail, George Edwards, and others who opposed Maharg and his allies. Its aim was to bring in a more responsive and democratic style of leadership to the organization.⁵⁴ The Annual Convention of the SGGA in 1922 resulted in significant gains for the Ginger Group, with George Edwards winning the vice-presidency and Violet McNaughton being elected to the Central Board.⁵⁵ Annie Hollis renewed her work in the WSGGA, taking on a Board position.

The Wheat Pool was being organized at this time as an effort to strengthen the collective power of farmers to market their grain, get higher prices for their crops, and control the distribution of profits gained.⁵⁶ Annie Hollis spoke at meetings to help

⁵¹ Garry Fairbairn, From Prairie Roots, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984), 7.

⁵² Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 11 Sept. 1921. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers' Association, 1912-1926.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Georgina M. Taylor, "A Splendid Field Before Us"

⁵⁵ "G.G. Ginger Group Felt in Election," The Star Phoenix, 18 Feb. 1922, 5.

⁵⁶ Foster J. K. Griezic, "Introduction" in A History of Farmers' Movements, L. A. Wood, xv.

convince men and women on the farms to sign a contract to sell their wheat to the Pool for five years. She toured the southwest with Everett Baker, another innovative organizer and dedicated supporter of the co-operative movement.⁵⁷ The farmhouse to farmhouse campaign by volunteer organizers was successful in overcoming powerful, well-financed opposition from the established grain companies.⁵⁸

Annie Hollis's conviction that education was vital for social change led her to convene the first Education Committee of the WSGGA, established in 1923. Education had been the centre of lively discussion and serious concern among farm women for many years. Many of the Women's Section members were former school teachers, and the great majority were mothers, so their concerns for schools, school children, and teachers were firmly based in their everyday experience.⁵⁹ Annie Hollis tapped into a strong vein of farm women's political passion when she took on organizing the work of this new committee.

Annie Hollis also became the convenor of the Legislation Committee in 1923. This committee had been active for several years and had established an agenda of reforming property rights for married women.

Annie Hollis continued to take on official responsibilities when in 1924 she was elected Vice President of the Women's Section. The position entailed serving on the SGGA Central Board. She continued to convene the Education and Legislation Committees as well.⁶⁰

The Hollis family grew in 1924 when George and Annie adopted twelve-year-old Chester Hunt. He came to Shaunavon from the Moose Jaw Children's Home, an orphanage. His mother had been deserted by her husband after he returned from the Great War. Without his support she was not able to earn enough to keep her children. Chester lived with George and Annie until he was about twenty-two when he married Annie

⁵⁷ Maria Wilkins, Shaunavon, interview with author, 3 Sept. 1994.

⁵⁸ Lipsett, Agrarian Socialism, 85.

⁵⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Child Nature and Training," The Western Producer 28 Jan. 1926, 13.

⁶⁰ Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Yearbook 1924, 4.

Knight of Shaunavon.⁶¹

By mid-1923 the farm movement recognized the need for a newspaper to spread the word about the Wheat Pool and other farm movement initiatives. The mainstream publications such as Macleans magazine and the large local dailies were controlled by loyal Liberals or Conservatives who did not hesitate to undermine the organized farmers. Independent publisher, Harris Turner, agreed to turn his presses over to the farmers. Turner's Weekly became The Progressive on August 27, 1923. It was renamed The Western Producer on 18 September, 1924.

Annie Hollis and Violet McNaughton had previously discussed using farm papers such as Ontario's Women's Century and Winnipeg-based The Grain Growers Guide to further the cause of farm women.⁶² They quickly became involved with the new Saskatchewan farmers' movement paper. Annie Hollis published her first item, an article called "Education," in The Progressive dated May 15, 1924. In February of 1925, the editor, Mr. A. P. Waldron, approached Violet McNaughton with a proposal that she become the editor of the regular women's page.⁶³ She discussed the idea with Annie Hollis who gave her friend her commitment to help in any way she could.⁶⁴

Soon after, Hollis began to write her own column, called "With the Women Grain Growers."⁶⁵ In it she reported on the local and the provincial WSGGA activities and on other farm women's organizations in Canada, USA, Australia and other countries. She passed along reports from women's labour and co-operative organizations from North America, England and Europe. She wrote editorial pieces giving her own opinions and observations on the issues of the day in the farm movement.

⁶¹ "Anonymous," Shaunavon, interview with author, 4 Sept. 1994.

⁶² Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 12 April 1921. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

⁶³ Violet McNaughton, Harris to Annie Hollis, Vice President WGGGA, Regina. 22 Feb. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Western Producer, General 1924-1926.

⁶⁴ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 25 April 1925. McNaughton Papers, Western Producer, General 1924-1926.

⁶⁵ "With Women Grain Growers" first appears in The Western Producer on Sept. 10, 1925, page 5.

The regular writers for The Western Producer, their friends, and readers shared resources by passing along clippings and the papers and magazines they had access to.⁶⁶ Annie Hollis often summarized or highlighted articles from publications she received this way, including The Nation, The Irish Statesman, the Manchester Guardian, the Vote, Labour News, Justice, and other political and farm journals. She also quoted from books by politically active authors such as Benjamin Kidd, Dora and Bertrand Russell, Ramsay MacDonald, and Ray Strachey. Through her column she was able to disseminate political ideas to isolated farm people and whet their appetites for more reading. Their access to books was enhanced through the Open Shelf Library, which had been started by the efforts of the WSGGA.

The Western Producer was not only a bulwark against an onslaught of negative press from those who opposed the farm movement's socialist agenda, but it also became a forum for debate within the farm movement. A group had split from the SGGA in 1921 and organized itself as the Farmers Union of Canada. The Union was founded in response to the conservatism and Anglo-Saxon bias of SGGA leaders as more radical organization based in trade union traditions and a strong determination to organize a wheat pool as soon as possible.⁶⁷ In 1924, debate between the two organizations increased, yet there was recognition that division among farmers was detrimental to their common interests.⁶⁸

In 1925, steps toward amalgamating the FU of C and the SGGA began. By this time Annie Hollis had been the vice-president of the WSGGA for a year, then elected Woman President at the SGGA's Annual Convention in January 1926. She sat on the fifteen-member Amalgamation Committee, which met from March 1925 until July

⁶⁶ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 14 Dec. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

⁶⁷ Garry Fairbairn, From Prairie Roots, 7.

⁶⁸ For example see A. L. Hollis, "Nation-Wide Farmer Organization," in "Letters to the Editor" The Western Producer, 4 Dec. 1924, 9; and A. L. Hollis, "Tolerance, Organization and Co-operation," The Western Producer, 16 April 1925, 9.

1926.⁶⁹ The committee was responsible for developing a process to join the two organizations and drawing up a constitution for the new farm movement organization.

Committee members toured the province, speaking at meetings in many small towns in order to organize new locals and discuss the proposed amalgamation agreement with people in the country.⁷⁰ Hollis described one of these meetings thus:

... we had a good meeting last night but were not able to form a local here; there were only 2 women there, They spoke of working with the men, one of them said they did not know a woman was speaking; I suppose the phone message sent out did not mention that little fact.

We were in the meeting from 8 until about midnight so you can guess some talking was done.⁷¹

With such great responsibilities and time commitments within the farm movement, which also included representing the WSGGA on the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the Provincial Council of Women,⁷² Annie Hollis resigned from her position at Numola School in 1925, ending her career as a teacher at the age of 55.⁷³

Some of the main issues of amalgamation were membership qualifications, affiliations with other agricultural organizations, the issue of becoming a national versus a provincial organization, and the role and status of women in the new organization. Meetings were often intense, with strong feelings and raised voices, as the two

⁶⁹ Members of the Amalgamation Committee were: George Edwards, W.A.S. Tegart, A. Baynton, Mrs. A.L. Hollis, Mrs. John Holmes and Mrs. Ida McNeal from the SGGA, and L.P. McNamee, J.A. Law-Beattie, W.M. Thrasher, W.J. Fisher, J. Stoneman, Wm. Laird, J.J.L. Bergen, J. Arnott and C.H Harris from the Farmers Union.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Amalgamation Records, 1925-1926, Amalgamation Conference.

⁷⁰ Annie Hollis, Limerick to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 25 March 1926. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

⁷¹ Annie Hollis, Kincaid to Miss Lenhard, Regina. 23 March 1926. Women's Section, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, General Correspondence 1922-1926.

⁷² A. L. Hollis, "With Women Grain Growers," The Western Producer, 29 April 1926, 13.

⁷³ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter of resignation, written on SGGA letterhead, March 28, 1926. Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928.

organizations' political cultures clashed.⁷⁴ Yet there was enough determination to find a way to unite the movement to see the process through. The two organizations held a Joint Amalgamation Convention in Saskatoon from July 13 to 15, 1926 where the new United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) constitution was closely debated and finally ratified unanimously with over one thousand farm men and women present, crowded in and around Third Avenue Methodist Church late on the last night of the convention.⁷⁵

The transition phase following amalgamation was administered by a ten-member Board of Trustees to which Annie Hollis was elected.⁷⁶ There was a lot of technical, legal, organizational, and financial work to be done. Perhaps most crucial though, was the social process of uniting two groups of people who had recently been at odds. Even where people had not been antagonistic, each local lodge had to learn how to merge with its counterpart from the opposite organization.

Annie Hollis took on peacemaking work to smooth the transition.⁷⁷ As one of the trustees, she went on arduous speaking tours around the province encouraging women and men to form strong local organizations to pursue their common interest:

Before setting off, we took the precaution to provide ourselves with a shovel. This had frequently to be used, while "yours sincerely" was often obliged to perform the service of "pusher behind."

Travelling after dark on unknown roads is more risky than is imagined by those who oblige by giving directions as to the best road to be followed. It is very easy to miss a turn and perhaps go several miles out of one's ways.

Still, in spite of all these "ups and downs," we arrive at last – and to find a large, enthusiastic company awaiting is certainly some recompense. If, as sometimes occurs, the opposite condition awaits at the end of a difficult run, one is apt to feel somewhat downcast. A few days with real

⁷⁴ Minutes, Amalgamation Conference, Saskatoon, 5-6 June 1925. Farmers Union of Canada, Amalgamation Records.

⁷⁵ "Not a Vote Registered Against Amalgamation at Big Joint Convention," The Western Producer, 22 July 1926, 1; and "Aaron Sapiro Utters Rousing Appeal for the Spirit of Cooperation," Saskatoon Daily Star, 15 July 1926, 6.

⁷⁶ Trustees were Mrs. Hollis, George Edwards, J.A. Stoneman, J.W. Robson, George Langley, Mrs. Ida McNeal, W.M. Thrasher, Mrs. A.W. Selby, A. Baynton, N.J.L. Bergen. See "Farmers of Saskatchewan United" The Western Producer, 22 July 1926, 1.

⁷⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Convention Notes," The Western Producer, 5 Aug. 1926, 13.

good meetings certainly makes one feel much better.⁷⁸

She used the language of both former organizations in her appeals for unity: the "comrades," "sisters," and "brothers" of the former FU of C as well as the "co-operators" of the old SGGA.⁷⁹ She also commented on the diversity in the province in her reports to The Western Producer in the months following Amalgamation, as a way of promoting unity in the farm movement.

Almost every nationality on the face of the earth seems represented in our cosmopolitan population. Again, we say, no one need complain of monotony! The only similarity we noticed was the general kindness and goodwill shown quite irrespective of "descent or creed." This is the outstanding feature which gives us hope for the future of our new farm organization.⁸⁰

When legislation was passed to formally establish the UFC in February of 1927, the Board of Trustees became the Provisional Board of Directors until elections could be held. At the first Annual Convention of the UFC held in March at Moose Jaw, Hollis was elected Woman President.

At this convention Annie Hollis presented a Memorandum, which she and Violet McNaughton had prepared, concerning the standing of women in the new organization to the Women's Session. The preamble of the document noted that the 1926 declaration regarding the equal status of women in the new farm organization was inadequate:

Theoretically the term involves equality, payment of the same fees, and rights to all the duties and privileges of full membership. In practice, however we are still in a transition period with regard to the public position of women in the eyes of many citizens. Women are not yet merely persons.⁸¹

The Memorandum, which was adopted by the convention, recommended a constitutional amendment to provide for three special women officers, a president and two vice-presidents of the Women's Section, be elected to the Central Board of the UFC.

⁷⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Campaign Notes," The Western Producer, 9 Dec. 1926, 13.

⁷⁹ A. L. Hollis, "News from Saskatchewan," The Western Producer, 10 June 1926, 13.

⁸⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Campaign Impressions," The Western Producer, 16 Dec. 1926, 13.

⁸¹ "The Memorandum," reprinted in "With Organized Farm Women," The Western Producer, 31 March 1927, 13.

In addition, the Memorandum recommended that special women organizers be hired and paid at the same rate as male organizers. However, the latter was promised but never implemented.

Annie Hollis was a very active president. In addition to attending the board meetings, she sat on several committees, did research into relevant policy areas, and met with the provincial government officials and ministers concerned.⁸²

The Public Health Committee which Hollis chaired advanced some of the early principles that led to the establishment of Medicare. Resolutions dealt with included support for a scheme for municipal doctors and hospitals, a scheme for a permanent consultative clinic that would be co-operative and involve other agencies as well as government, and a resolution that favoured "socialization or nationalization of the medical profession."⁸³

Annie Hollis continued to write her column in the Western Producer (re-named "With Organized Farm Women" after Amalgamation) where she publicized UFC activities and encouraged women members to contribute their ideas and publicize their local work.

One of the women's major accomplishments was organizing the Farm Women's University Week, first held in June 1928. It was in effect a "women-only" convention of the UFC.⁸⁴ Originally Annie Hollis had hoped they would be able to organize a joint convention with the Home Makers Clubs, but this did not prove to be feasible. Many of the women who attended the United Farm Women's University Week had never been to a farm movement convention before, so it provided a valuable opportunity from an organizational point of view. Some of the issues advanced during the week dealt with

⁸² Minutes of Executive Board Meeting, UFC, June 1928, 21. "After last Board meeting, Mrs. Hollis interviewed the Minister of Education, Hon. J. G. Gardiner, with reference to this new Education Legislation." United Farmers of Canada, Executive Minutes, 1926-1949.

⁸³ A. L. Hollis and R. M. Glassford, "Report of the Public Health Committee", Minutes of Executive Board, UFC, June 1928, 20.

⁸⁴ A. L. Hollis, Circular Letter to UFC women members, 1928. United Farmers of Canada, Farm Women's Week: Correspondence, 1928-1932.

improving access to health care, availability of nursery stock so women could grow trees and shrubs around their farm yards, better water supply for farm homes, and access to education for deaf and blind children in Saskatchewan.⁸⁵ The success in 1928 allowed for a second women's summer convention to be planned the following year.

Annie Hollis and her male counterpart in the UFC, President J.A. Stoneman, went on a major four-week organizational speaking tour in co-operation with the Wheat Pool in the summer of 1928. The purpose was two-fold: to reduce remaining divisions at the local level, and to increase the overall membership. Unfortunately, the weather hampered their efforts. Heavy rains kept roads in terrible condition, preventing some potential members from attending meetings, and at times delaying Hollis and Stoneman themselves. In spite of these difficulties membership did increase as a result of the summer's membership drive.⁸⁶

Immigration was a controversial topic on the prairies by late 1928. Annie Hollis took a position against the federal government's plans for assisted immigration on the grounds that people in Europe were being misled about the economic opportunities for them in Canada,⁸⁷ and that a large influx of population to the prairies would likely undermine efforts to increase wages and farm commodity prices by making it easier for farm labour to be exploited.⁸⁸

In March 1929 Premier Gardiner invited Annie Hollis to be a member of a four person committee to tour schools for the deaf in the northern United States and Manitoba. The committee's purpose was to gather information upon which to base a school for the

⁸⁵ "Report of the United Farm Women's Week," Minutes, UFC Executive Meeting, June 1928, 16.

⁸⁶ Minutes, Executive Board Meeting, August 1928, 20. United Farmers of Canada, Executive Minutes, 1927-1947.

⁸⁷ A.L. Hollis, "Who Is Responsible?" in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 10 Sept. 1928, 10.

⁸⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Reply to 'Don'," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 11 Oct. 1928, 10.

deaf in Saskatchewan.⁸⁹ Hollis reported on her experience and the value of suitable education for deaf children in a "rambling chat" she wrote for The Western Producer.⁹⁰ By October 1929, in spite of the intervening change of government, there was a commitment to build the School for the Deaf in Saskatoon.⁹¹

In the fall of 1929 Violet McNaughton went to Europe to attend an international women's peace conference. In McNaughton's absence Annie Hollis took responsibility for the women's' pages in The Western Producer. Women's role in peace and anti-war work, the status of women's work and their right to paid employment after marriage, censorship, and the rise of fascism were issues to which she gave considerable space.⁹²

The UFC constitution limited elected leaders to two years in any elected position. By 1929 Annie Hollis's term as Woman President was up. At the annual convention the UFC women presented her with a set of silverware in appreciation for her work.⁹³ However, it seems this happened at quite an awkward moment for Hollis. She had been nominated for President, then Vice-President of the organization as a whole, and had let her name stand for each position in turn.⁹⁴ For many years, her ideal had been that men and women govern together as equals. For a woman to hold a leadership position which had been an exclusive masculine preserve would have been a vindication of her work. She was certainly not ready to retire!

Unfortunately, there is no record of the vote for vice-president, so it is impossible

⁸⁹ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to George Edwards, Regina, 19 March 1929. Edwards Papers United Farmers of Canada Correspondence, 1929.

⁹⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Education for the Deaf in the United States," The Western Producer, 20 June, 1929, 17.

⁹¹ R.J.D. Williams, "New School for the Deaf," The Western Producer, 31 Oct. 1929, 17.

⁹² See for example, A. L. Hollis, "Equal Citizenship: New Order is Women, Peace and Harmony," The Western Producer 24 Oct. 1929, 18.

⁹³ "Official Minutes and Report of Proceedings of Third Annual Convention, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, Regina, February 12-15, 1929," 166. United Farmers of Canada, Conventions 1926-1947.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 154.

to say how close she came to achieving this breakthrough. In subsequent UFC Conventions Annie Hollis was nominated for Woman President, and Woman Vice President, but she declined each time, saying there were other capable women who should be given the opportunity to lead.

By 1929, a growing faction which included Annie Hollis had become dissatisfied with the lack of results from farm organizations' efforts to change the economic framework by applying pressure to either Liberal or Conservative governments. Before the previous election campaign, Annie Hollis had put her frustration this way: "Each voter must decide for herself, but we are sure that the present condition of party politics is creating an impossible condition of affairs; legislation seems to make no progress, and administration is being left in the hands of permanent officials."⁹⁵

By late November 1929 the federal constituency of Maple Creek had organized a Farmer's Political Association with Clarence Stork as president and Annie Hollis as secretary of the new independent organization.⁹⁶ It seems Mrs. Hollis put her still great political energy and enthusiasm into this organization.

New difficulties arose as a result of the stock market crash of 1929. Wheat prices fell drastically and threatened the viability of the Wheat Pool. In response, there was a push for compulsory pooling. If all farmers sold through the pool, grain companies would be less able to bid down prices. In 1930 the "100 Per Cent Pool" campaign was under way. The provincial government passed enabling legislation which would take effect if farmers voted in favour of a province-wide compulsory pool on the condition that two-thirds of Saskatchewan farmers first joined voluntarily.

Debate was contentious as some influential leaders opposed the compulsion aspect and government involvement in operating the pool. Annie Hollis supported 100 Per Cent Pooling as a way for farm people to gain more control over their economic lives. She was instrumental in getting farm women's names included on the voters' list for the

⁹⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Women and the Coming Election," The Western Producer, 26 Aug. 1926, 13.

⁹⁶ "New Farmers Political Party Organized Here," The Shaunavon Standard, 21 Nov. 1929.

referendum.⁹⁷ She toured the province with Mrs. Pearl Johnston speaking about the referendum and urging women to vote. Hollis also wrote a long and detailed pamphlet explaining the proposal to women and presenting arguments in its favour.⁹⁸ The vote did not take place in the end because the bill was declared *ultra vires*, or outside of provincial jurisdiction.⁹⁹

Partly due to the 100 Per Cent Pool issue, as well as the economic crisis, there was agitation within the farm movement in favour of permitting the UFC to enter electoral politics as an organization.¹⁰⁰ At the February 1930 UFC Convention a constitutional amendment was brought forward to bring the organization into politics. The motion failed by nine votes to attain the required two-thirds majority.¹⁰¹ However, many people were convinced that a farmers' party should be established in spite of the failure of the amendment since a federal election was imminent. A subsequent motion was passed, virtually unanimously, endorsing the formation of a political organization outside of the UFC.¹⁰² A small group of people began to organize the Saskatchewan Farmers Political Association.

In April 1930 the new party was officially founded. It was based in the prairie populist "anti-party" tradition. Candidates were pledged to support organized farmers interests and were subject to recall if their constituency became dissatisfied with their performance. Nationalization of railways, natural resources and public utilities were some of their goals.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ "Grain Growers Hear 100 P.C. Pool Discussed," The Shaunavon Standard, 12 Feb. 1931.

⁹⁸ Annie L. Hollis, "Grain Marketing Act #11: Mainly For Women" (Regina: Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., April 1931).

⁹⁹ Lipsett, Agrarian Socialism, 104.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 104.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰² "New Political Crusade," The Western Producer, 6 March 1930, 6.

¹⁰³ "Successful Convention of Farmers Launches New Political Organization," The Western Producer, 10 April 1930, 1 and 15.

The internal structure, as well as the platform, of the SFPA was anti-party. The members refused to elect a "leader." Ida McNeal argued that the SFPA wanted voters to "rally around a movement and not a leader." The founding executive committee members were: W.H. Harvey Flaxcombe, president, Annie Hollis vice-president, M.J. Coldwell, W. Moss Thrasher, R. M. Johnson, C.M.W. Emery, J. W. Robson, and W.A.S. Tegart.¹⁰⁴

A federal election was called for July 28, 1930. On June 19 Annie Hollis won a close three-way race for the nomination to run as the SFPA candidate in the Maple Creek constituency.¹⁰⁵ Early in the campaign local SFPA meetings were sparsely attended, but by the last few weeks they were quite lively affairs.¹⁰⁶

When the ballots were counted Hollis had come in third place with 2,388 votes. The winner, Conservative Party candidate Dr. Swanston, had polled 7,792.¹⁰⁷ Annie Hollis was disappointed. However, she did see the campaign as valuable in getting the organized farmers' message out to a broader audience.

In the aftermath of the election there were criticisms of the SFPA to which Hollis replied in The Western Producer:

I still feel that the formation of the S.F.P.A was a sincere attempt to carry out the spirit of the U.F.C. resolution and to meet a difficult situation partly caused by the decision of the U.F.C. delegates not to take political action as an organization. Many farmers felt that we were on the verge of an election and that something should be done to try to get away from the party spirit in politics; it was vital for the farmers to make an attempt to show a united front as voters; the attempt failed from many very complex reasons, chiefly from lack of realization of the vital necessity of political action as a group. It now remains for the U.F.C. to clarify its position.¹⁰⁸

Political action was again debated at the UFC Convention in 1931. The constitutional amendment initially put forward was somewhat awkwardly and

¹⁰⁴ ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "Mrs. Annie L. Hollis Farmers' Nominee," Shaunavon Standard, 26 June 1930.

¹⁰⁶ "Around Our Town," The Shaunavon Standard, 17 July 1930.

¹⁰⁷ Parliamentary Guide, Saskatchewan, 1931, 272.

¹⁰⁸ A.L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Replies," in "The Open Forum," The Western Producer, 20 Nov. 1930, 10.

ambiguously worded.¹⁰⁹ Annie Hollis suggested an amendment that allowed the organization more freedom in the kind of political action it could take.¹¹⁰ The amended motion was passed unanimously with cheers. This vote was one of the factors that supported the formation of a new socialist party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, in 1933.¹¹¹

Annie Hollis's involvement with the UFC waned after 1931, though she continued to be involved as a UFC representative to the Provincial Council of Women and as a UFC District Director for the next few years.¹¹² At the annual convention of 1931 she declined a nomination for Woman President:

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I wish to thank my nominee for the great honor of being again nominated to this very important office. It always gives me great pleasure to think that, though I have been in this organization as an officer in one form or another since 1917, I am not yet considered too old to be of service. That's the woman of it. Well, I feel I am so many years young. I won't tell you how many. But I don't think at the present time it would be wise for me to stand for election and so, with

¹⁰⁹ The original resolution read as follows:

Whereas this Convention have formulated a set of demands which have been constituted the economic policy of this organization;

And Whereas the Executive Board have been authorized to ask the Federal and Provincial Governments to put into operation this new economic policy;

Therefore Be It Resolved that should the Federal or Provincial Governments or either of them fail to accede to these demands that the United Farmers of Canada take political action as an organization to supplant that Government who refuses to put into operation the economic policy of this Association and that this organization shall cause to be set up a political party whose platform shall consist of this new economic policy and which shall seek the cooperation of all citizens in electing candidates pledged to this platform.

Minutes, UFC Annual Convention, Feb. 24-27, 1931, 286. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention, 1927-1947.

¹¹⁰ Mrs. Hollis's amendment read: "Therefore Be It Resolved that the United Farmers of Canada take political action as an organization which shall seek the cooperation of all citizens in electing candidates pledged to these principles." *ibid.*, 290.

¹¹¹ Lipsett, Agrarian Socialism, 106.

¹¹² Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 2 May 1931. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

the consent of my nominator, I will withdraw.¹¹³

Hollis was unable to attend the 1932 Convention because of ill health. She was elected in absentia to the Board of Directors. Due to a tie vote between Sophia Dixon and a Mr. Graham for the third of the three available positions, it was decided that Sophia would be the "alternate" for Annie Hollis and would serve in her place if she was unable to take on the job.¹¹⁴ Further records show that it was Sophia Dixon who served on the Board for the rest of the year.¹¹⁵

Sophia Dixon and Annie Hollis developed a close working relationship and friendship as a result of this arrangement. Annie Hollis acted as the younger woman's mentor throughout the time she was a director and later, Woman President of the UFC.¹¹⁶ Several letters between the two women in the following years are full of practical suggestions and discussions about organizing farm women, raising the profile of women's work in the farm and labour movements, and developing the intellectual base and leadership opportunities of rural women.¹¹⁷

Though her health and lack of money prevented her from attending meetings for much of 1932, Annie Hollis campaigned by letter to have housewives represented as one of the major industrial/occupational groups at the World Economic Conference at Ottawa planned for October. She wrote a memorandum outlining her arguments and sent it far and wide – to the Provincial Council of Women, the UFC leadership, Ontario's Farmers

¹¹³ Minutes, UFC Annual Convention, 1931, 396. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention, 1926-1947.

¹¹⁴ Minutes, UFC Annual Convention, Feb. 23-26, 1932, 30. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention, 1926-1947.

¹¹⁵ Minutes, UFC Annual Convention, July 25-27, 1932. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention, 1926-1947.

¹¹⁶ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 15 March 1931, and Sophia Dixon, Unity letter to Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, 21 March, 1931. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

¹¹⁷ For example Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 6 March 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

Sun, and even to the Conservative editor of Toronto's Saturday Night magazine.¹¹⁸ To raise discussion on the issue and get further support, she also wrote to her international contacts, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence of the Women's Freedom League in England, Frau Emmy Freundlich of Vienna, president of the International Co-operative Women's Guild, and to the Women's Party leaders in London, England, and in the United States.¹¹⁹

In the provincial election of 1932 the organized farmers were ready to run candidates. Annie Hollis had been nominated locally, but withdrew her name. She said it was partly due to her health, but also she felt that, based upon her knowledge of prevalent local attitudes, a woman would not be able to win in that constituency. Instead, she supported the male candidate, Clarence Stork, who was successful.¹²⁰

The CCF provincial constituency of Shaunavon was organized in June of 1933. Annie Hollis was the only woman listed on the twenty-eight person organizing committee.¹²¹ She worked in the 1935 federal election as a campaign speaker for Maple Creek candidate the Rev. Armand Stade.¹²² Her involvement in the CCF, however, was primarily supportive, rather than directive.

Drought and the Depression of the 1930s hit the Shaunavon area hard. The crop failure in 1931 was a severe blow to the Hollises. In a letter Annie wrote, "For the first time in our existence we have not even got our seed back; we have not paid our taxes, and

¹¹⁸ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 20 Aug. 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

¹¹⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Women and the World Economic Conference," The Western Producer, 13 July 1933, 10; also, Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 26 Sept. 1932, Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

¹²⁰ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 3 Feb. 1933. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

¹²¹ Shaunavon CCF Constituency, 1933-1937. Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Provincial Constituency Files, 1932-1950.

¹²² CCF (Saskatchewan Section) Elections: Provincial Campaign Speakers, 1934. CCF Files.

have been obliged to ask for relief."¹²³ They did not get another crop until 1939. The intervening years barely supplied feed for the animals, and frequently did not even provide seed.

Annie made butter to sell, but was forced to barter it at the local store, and even then at only ten to fifteen cents a pound.¹²⁴ The garden was also sparse. One heartbreaking year promised a good harvest, but a fifteen-minute hailstorm meant "corn in strips and tatters, cabbage battered beyond recognition, peas, lettuce, chard almost unrecognizable! A few broad beans remain on the stalks – perhaps enough to supply one or two meals; tomatoes – so carefully tended during the early spring – pitted, lying on the ground useless ..." ¹²⁵

There were many meetings, including Farm Women's University Week, the Provincial Council of Women executive, and the UFC Political Action Committee, that Annie Hollis was unable to attend because she could not afford train fare. She was frustrated that she could only be there in mind, but not in body. At times it was even hard to keep up her correspondence because she could not afford stamps.¹²⁶

During the Depression Annie Hollis appreciated being able to earn a little money through writing for the bi-weekly paper The Saskatchewan Farmer. She had a column called "Mrs. Hollis Says ..." from 1932 until she died in 1941. She wrote candid and insightful commentary on a very broad range of topics. She was able to express her outrage at callous attitudes and ignorant policies she saw coming from government offices, as well as her encouragement and support for the efforts of women and farm people surviving and fighting on.

Here is an example of her style:

What remarkable cures for economic and social worries are being put forward by all and sundry. Why not join the busy throng.

¹²³ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to George Edwards, Regina, 2 Dec. 1931. Edwards Papers, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1926-1939.

¹²⁴ A.L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 3 July 1939, 6.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 1 Sept. 1938, 6.

¹²⁶ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 7 June 1933. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

The suggestion that our wheat grown, threshed and put on the market at such cost of labor and money, should be destroyed by being dumped into the sea scarcely appeals to those of us who have labored hard and agonized over its production. I would like to suggest that the surplus of which seems to be steadily increasing should be stored for future use, while we the producers be given a well-earned holiday! Why not charter some of the unremunerative trains and steamboats, hire some of the surplus unemployed to act as sailors, stewards, cooks, stewardesses, etc., and ship a few thousands of us off on a cruise 'round the world! This would give work and pleasure to crowds of the idle, get rid of surplus coal, oil and other produce, and wouldn't we have a jolly time? Hundreds of men and women who have not had a real holiday since they went on to the farms years ago; children who have never seen anything but the prairies. Teachers, nurses, doctors, pastors, etc., could be employed to look after the kiddies. What an educational opportunity.

Surely a better way of spending national money than by trying to cure depression and unrest by increasing our police forces.

In the meantime some of the arm-chair agricultural experts and other advisers might have a chance to try out a few of their theories — say, re mixed farming without funds and moisture on a real farm, and do chores in zero weather.

On our return, perhaps weeds and other pests would have disappeared, drifting would be a thing of the past, shelter belts would be flourishing, and the dry areas of southern Saskatchewan be blossoming like the rose.¹²⁷

The irony of her column was compounded by its placement within the paper. It was usually found on the same page as "Labor Saving Ideas," a feature devoted to the pioneer arts of making do: how to can fruit without sugar, make a lady's slip from two fifty-pound flour sacks and a ten-pound sugar sack, a boy's coat from gopher skins, a churn from an old syrup pail, and so on.

In addition to her column Mrs. Hollis did freelance writing for Regina's daily, the Leader, Ontario's Farmer's Sun, the national Canadian Forum, and the British women-owned and operated paper, Time and Tide. She was a member of the Canadian Women's Press Club, which provided some moral and technical support for "lone" women journalists like herself.

In the mid-1930s Annie Hollis repeatedly drew attention to the economic value of women's work, and its undervaluation by policy makers. She crusaded to have housework

¹²⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 June 1933, 6.

included in labour statistics in the national census (a demand that was finally recognized for the first time in the 1996 census).¹²⁸

After years of intensive activity, Annie Hollis found the isolation and the curtailment of her ability to travel very heavy. She continued to receive and appreciate letters from her readers: "They give me food for thought and help to keep me in touch with other workers and thinkers and keep me from becoming too self-centred."¹²⁹ Occasionally she had a chance to meet some of her readers. At a Girls' Homecraft Achievement Day in 1936:

One woman said: "I always imagine what writers are like, and you are just about what I imagined." Whereat we all laughed.¹³⁰

Reading allowed her an escape. "How welcome is a batch of papers or magazines, especially when they take one into a world far from our narrow environment."¹³¹ Though Armand Stade later remembered her as "not a satisfied person, she was very dissatisfied and often unhappy. What she wanted was room for her spirit to rove and be recognized."¹³²

A welcome reprieve from the monotony of home came when, with the help of friends, Annie and George Hollis were able to go to Cypress Hills Park for a picnic in June of 1934. With no end to the drought or Depression in sight, "What a treat to sniff the odor of pine instead of dust; to lie on the grass among wild flowers and look up at the blue network of sky through the branches."¹³³

Another break came when Annie Hollis went to Vancouver to attend the PanPacific Women's Conference in 1937 with Violet McNaughton. There they met women from Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Japan, China, Korea, and the USA. She

¹²⁸ ibid., 15 May 1936, 8.

¹²⁹ ibid., 1 Sept. 1939, 6.

¹³⁰ ibid., 15 Oct. 1936, 8.

¹³¹ ibid., 2 Nov. 1936, 8.

¹³² Armand Stade, Regina to Maria Wilkins, Shaunavon, 20 Oct. 1975. Maria Wilkins Private Papers.

¹³³ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 June 1934, 8.

remarked, "A most notable feature of the discussions was the similarity of problems of all nations ..." ¹³⁴

Annie Hollis stayed on in Vancouver visiting her sisters who had earlier moved there. She delighted in the fresh green abundance of coastal British Columbia and sent back glowing reports of the beauty of the west coast to her land-locked and dust-weary readers on the Prairies. She dreamed of finding a way to bring the experience of the natural beauty and the hope that the dry years had robbed from of the lives of prairie farmers.

During a dust storm another woman and I took refuge in our town rest room. She told me that, on the previous Sunday a black dust storm made it impossible to see out of the windows; lamps had to be lit at 5 o'clock. She thought the end of the world had come – but felt quite resigned – in fact it would almost have been welcome.

As I came through the mountains and saw how majestic and awe-inspiring Nature can be in Canada, I thought if I were a millionaire I'd gather together those folks who have never had a holiday or change of scene for years, also, the children and young folks who have seen nothing but the flat dusty prairie; I'd hire a train and transport them though the Rockies to the coast and let them see, and enjoy, some of the beauties of Canada while they can enjoy them. I'd show them that life can contain joy of which they have never dreamt! ¹³⁵

She treasured her holiday at the coast, but still longed to travel. She was deeply disappointed that the CPR refused her request for special a railway pass that would have allowed her to go to the triennial Canadian Women's Press Club meeting in Winnipeg in 1938.¹³⁶ She could not afford to go to Farm Women's University Week that year either.¹³⁷

In the fall of 1938 the Hollises bought a radio. This helped overcome isolation somewhat, though having the sound of "Hitler and his crowd – roaring in unison; that was

¹³⁴ ibid., 16 Aug. 1937, 6.

¹³⁵ ibid., 2 Aug. 1937, 6.

¹³⁶ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 2 May 1938. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942.

¹³⁷ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 14 June 1938. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942.

fearful to hear."¹³⁸ She frequently commented on radio offerings in her Saskatchewan Farmer column, particularly when the program was by or about Canadian women such as Irene Parlby and Mme. Therese Casgrain.

As she approached her seventies Annie Hollis began to look back on her youth in England more frequently, regretting that she could not go back and visit the old places and see old friends. "Still memory lingers over the scenes and FOOLISH longings arise to revisit old familiar places."¹³⁹

On June 26, 1941 Annie and George Hollis got up early, around 4:00 am, to make butter before the day got too hot. Just before breakfast Annie said her head felt funny, then fell. George got the doctor, but there was nothing to be done. She died peacefully around 2:00 in the afternoon from a severe brain haemorrhage.¹⁴⁰

At her funeral at Center Street United Church in Shaunavon, Rev. George E. Robins referred to Psalm 90, "Life is like a tale that is told," saying, "Mrs Hollis's life was a story of many chapters, each devoted to some form of service. Running through the whole story was a golden thread of courage — she had a brave spirit and a bright mind."¹⁴¹

A year later George wrote to Violet McNaughton and told her of how he missed his late wife. He told Violet that they had often reminisced about the old days in the farm movement. He missed her terribly, and said "Mrs. Hollis was a wonderful woman and no man could wish for a better wife."¹⁴²

Friend and political ally Armand Stade later remembered her as "a character to be reckoned with and respected. As a friend she was loyal and kindly. And, above all, what made her interesting was her way of seeing through outer coatings to the heart of

¹³⁸ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 20 Oct. 1938. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942.

¹³⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says;," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 Nov. 1940, 6.

¹⁴⁰ George Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 12 July, 1942. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942.

¹⁴¹ "Mrs. George Hollis Died Suddenly on Thursday, June 26," The Shaunavon Standard, 2 July 1941.

¹⁴² George Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Violet McNaughton, 12 July, 1942. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis 1938-1942

things."¹⁴³

Perhaps the most fitting tribute was by Mrs. Darwent of Moose Range, Saskatchewan, who wrote the following to The Saskatchewan Farmer:

I had known Mrs. Hollis since the early days in the W.S.G.G. association. She was a woman of outstanding ability insofar as she knew the everyday problems which confronts us farm women, she herself being a farmer's wife. I now wonder who will take up the burden she has laid down, who will carry on the splendid work she did for the women of Saskatchewan. She is not dead, she is only sleeping, for her influence will be felt for many years in the work she has done. Her life brings to mind: 'And in passing leave behind us footprints in the sands of time.' Her footprints and her writings are there for us to see.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Armand Stade, Regina to Maria Wilkins, Shaunavon, 28 Oct. 1975. Maria Wilkins Private Papers.

¹⁴⁴ Mrs. J. L. Darwent, "Real Loss," in "Voice of the Prairies," The Saskatchewan Farmer 15 Aug. 1941, 24.

CHAPTER 3

The Political Beliefs and Values of Annie Hollis

Introduction

This chapter will attempt to place Annie Hollis's political beliefs, values, and ideas in the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The task of understanding, interpreting, and communicating the political ideas, beliefs, and values of a person using only the relatively little primary written source material available is somewhat daunting. The intellectual life of a person is a dynamic, interrelated whole. The challenge is to reflect the interwoven complexity of Annie Hollis's ideas in the necessarily linear medium of written language.

Annie Hollis was born into a highly politicized region. Northumberland was one of the areas where the co-operative movement had its greatest strength in the 1870s. Trade Unionism was rising among the coal miners of Durham County, memories of the Luddite, Radical and Chartist¹ agitations were still fresh, the male working-class vote had recently been won, and the struggle for women's vote was just beginning. Elementary schooling for most working-class children had only become available with the Education Act of 1870.² Enlightenment ideas of rationalism, individualism, and progress were politically charged. It was the height of Victorian capitalism. The ideas of Thomas Malthus, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer provided support for doctrines of competition and survival of the fittest in the political ideology of laissez-faire liberalism.

¹ M. Beer, A History of British Socialism (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1948); and E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Aylesbury Bucks: Hazel Watson & Viney Limited, 1968).

² Harold Silver, The Concept of Popular Education (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965), 232.

Thomas Malthus's Essay on the Principle of Population was a pessimistic assertion that population growth would always outstrip food supply, leading to poverty, famine and death by malnutrition unless checked through voluntary measures such as late marriage. He supported the abolition of the Poor Laws, laws that assured a portion of local taxes were set aside to provide relief for paupers. Such laws, in his view, increased poverty by supporting population growth without contributing to food production.³

Charles Darwin was influenced by Malthus's Essay, which he read shortly after returning from his voyages on the *Beagle*. He saw Malthus's principles of competition for scarce food as the mechanism that drove the process of natural selection. Darwin published his major work, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, in 1859.⁴

Herbert Spencer took Darwin's ideas about evolution and applied them to human societies. His ideas became known as "social Darwinism." Spencer believed societies had developed from simple to complex forms through the mechanism of competition with each other, the weakest societies being vanquished by the strong. Spencer coined the term "survival of the fittest." He believed that state interference with the "natural laws" of social and economic life was wrong. Laissez-faire policy would, in his opinion, allow social evolution to proceed, as the strong prevailed over the weak in economic competition.⁵

Yet at the same time the legacy of the previous generation's Owenite socialism along with emerging "scientific socialism" based upon the writings of Karl Marx supported working-class aspirations for economic and social justice.

Annie Hollis began forming her own opinions on public questions at an early age. Her parents were politically active. They discussed public questions and shared their

³ Ian P. McGreal, ed., Great Thinkers of the Western World (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 328-330.

⁴ McGreal, Great Thinkers, 364-368.

⁵ ibid., 382-387.

ideas and opinions with the children.⁶ Annie Hollis said her political direction was set at home through talks with her parents.⁷ The three strongest currents which shaped her thought come out of the moral and political ideas of Primitive Methodism, Owenite socialism's influence on the British co-operative movement, and her experience of the militant women's suffrage campaign in England.

Annie Hollis was also immersed in modernism. In her writing she posed a dialectical opposition of modernity versus feudalism, claiming the former for the co-operative movement and identifying elements of the latter with the capitalist system. She believed in Enlightenment ideals of progress, rationalism, and justice, and saw her own life and work as part of a great historical project.⁸ Yet she rejected the Newtonian idea of a "clock-work universe" and the concomitant idea that society could be manipulated as a kind of complex machine. She said, "society or the social fabric is not a rigid machine, but an organism, constantly developing."⁹ Her metaphor of society was the slow-growing, deep-rooted oak tree. She saw her work and her ideals as revolutionary, part of the struggle against reaction, entrenched privilege, and injustice, but disagreed with those socialists who believed violence was necessary to bring about change. Annie Hollis believed a knowledgeable and discerning spirit of co-operation along with determination and a sense of social responsibility among farm women and men would provide the firm ground necessary for economic and political struggle to succeed in Western Canada.

Annie Hollis's early life immersed her in a political culture and tradition of dissent which she largely embraced. Her formal education at the teachers colleges and later through St. Andrews University provided her with both new knowledge and a formal intellectual training. She read extensively throughout her life, once commenting "all

⁶ "Woman President," The Western Producer, 28 April 1927, 3.

⁷ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 3 March 1938. McNaughton Papers, Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942.

⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Co-operation A Great Turning Movement," The Western Producer, 14 Oct. 1926, 16.

⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Group Representation," The Western Producer, 18 Sept. 1924, 11.

seems grist that comes to this mill."¹⁰ She learned much from others, but by the time she became active in Saskatchewan she had a great deal of self-confidence in her own political opinions. This sense of authority was likely facilitated by her work as a teacher in England, and further developed through her experience in the farm movement. Without such intellectual surefootedness she could not have developed and expressed her ideas, which, as will later be elaborated, were especially significant in forwarding an identity of farm women as producers of political ideas.

Primitive Methodist Heritage

Primitive Methodism was an offshoot of the original Methodist denomination established by John Wesley in the mid-1700s. Wesleyan Methodism differed from the Established Church of England in its emphases on evangelism and lay participation in spiritual matters. Until Wesley's death, Methodism was governed by him and a committee of clergy he appointed. However, there were tensions within Methodism that could not be contained after Wesley died.¹¹

One of several splits occurred as a result of the Wesleyan governing body's ban on outdoor camp meetings, which one faction had adopted as its means of evangelization¹². Instead of acquiescing, Hugh Bourne and William Clowes organized and initiated the Primitive Methodist Connexion, formally established in 1812 at Tunstall, north of

¹⁰ A. L. Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Saskatoon, 3 March 1938. McNaughton Papers.

¹¹ Robert Currie, "Methodism Divided," in Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England ed. G. W. Olsen (Landham MD: University Press of America, 1990), 88.

¹² *ibid.*, 83-84

Birmingham.¹³ The Primitive Methodists made remarkable gains in their first decades, going from 200 to over 100,000 members in less than forty years.¹⁴

This growth can be attributed partly to social conditions that had created a large population of displaced people. Industrialization and the consolidation of small holdings and common land into large estates contributed to massive migration to towns and cities.¹⁵ Primitive Methodism offered newcomers a community structure they could belong to where each individual soul was valued as equal to the soul of anyone else regardless of social class.

The name "Primitive" refers to the break-away group's identification with early Christian communities that simply preached the gospel and were of the poor.¹⁶ The name differentiated the denomination from "modern" (Wesleyan) Methodism, which was seen to be embracing the worldly practices of the Established Church – professional clergy, expensive church buildings, and a preference for well-off members who could support these trappings.

Primitive Methodism was based upon the doctrine that salvation was present and assured and available to all, and that spiritual perfection was possible, attainable through the efforts of believers who helped one another via participation in small local "class meetings".¹⁷ In Primitive Methodist theology the experience of conversion, rather than orthodox training, was authoritative.¹⁸ Leadership was accessible to the poor and the illiterate. All who felt God's call to preach were allowed, even duty-bound, to bring new

¹³ ibid., 55.

¹⁴ Robert Wearmouth, "Loyal and Liberal Methodists," in Religion and Revolution in Early-Industrial England: The Halevy Thesis and Its Critics ed. G. W. Olsen (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 119.

¹⁵ Julia Stewart Werner, The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 97.

¹⁶ ibid., 74.

¹⁷ ibid., 147.

¹⁸ ibid., 147.

souls to salvation. Age, sex, education, and social class were irrelevant to this calling. Thus, there were well known and successful woman, boy, and girl preachers.

One of the distinguishing features of Primitive Methodism was its itinerant preachers. These men and women travelled to several villages on a circuit in order to serve isolated rural people. Itinerancy aimed to prevent a complacent sedentary clergy from forming and it ensured that the ministry was connected to the lives of members. Itinerancy also required a high level of responsibility from local lay members because each class was responsible for leadership in their own local group.¹⁹

Women played a larger role in Primitive Methodism than they had in Wesleyan Methodism. John Wesley had allowed women preachers only if they had an extraordinary calling, and they were to preach only to all-female audiences.²⁰ However, Hugh Bourne was in favour of women preaching and encouraged them. In his eyes women were highly successful revivalists.²¹ Thus there was a large number of women itinerants in the early years of Primitive Methodism. Women also made up a high proportion of local preachers, exhorters, praying labourers, and class leaders. When the Wesleyan conference increased restrictions on women's participation, many left and joined the Primitive Methodists. Primitive Methodists were less strict about segregation, and often had women leading all-male, and mixed-sex classes.²²

Another aspect of Primitive Methodism that advanced the leadership of women, and the poor in general, was the value placed upon literacy and education. Hugh Bourne had been converted through his readings and thus encouraged others to learn to read and write in order to study the Bible and other theological works.

As a protestant sect, Primitive Methodism differed from the Calvinist protestant belief system in that any riches which accrued as a result of the believer's disciplined and

¹⁹ (Rev.) John Miley, Treatise on Class Meetings (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1854), 15.

²⁰ Paul W. Chilcote, She Offered Them Christ: The Legacy of Women Preachers in Early Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 120.

²¹ Werner, Primitive Methodist Connexion, 69.

²² Elizabeth Gillan Muir, Petticoats in the Pulpit (Toronto: The United Church of Canada Publishing House, 1991), 13.

temperate lifestyle were seen not as a "badge of election,"²³ but as "an agency of divine charity."²⁴ When Primitive Methodists prospered, they were not to hoard or display their wealth, but share it.²⁵ This practice led to some of the early social programs, such as orphanages and widows' pensions.²⁶

The official stance of Primitive Methodism was that its role was to care for the soul and the spiritual perfection of its members. Some preachers expanded their domain into the arena of temporal economic and political salvation as well.²⁷ "Though preachers were debarred from politics, several 'probably interpreted this to mean that they were only prohibited from making speeches in the Tory interest.'"²⁸ Many Primitive Methodist lay people also applied their new literacy, oratory skills, methods of mutual adult education, and the forms of organization learned as Primitive Methodists to political agitation in the Radical, Chartist, Trade Unionist, and Owenite movements.²⁹

The Rev. John Snaith's early career as an itinerant occurred around the height of Primitive Methodism's expansion. Though Annie was born after the sect had become more established, clearly values and ideals upon which Primitive Methodism was founded continued to guide her. She embraced the idea that the individual and the community existed through a mutual and reciprocal relationship as found in the Primitive

²³ Wealth as a badge of election was a Calvinist belief that God showed who was chosen for salvation by rewarding them materially during their life on Earth.

²⁴ Methodism's view was that "Human beings were only stewards of God's wealth and were obliged to spend it in God's service. Sumptuous living and unnecessary possessions were sinful wastes." Neil Semple, The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 340.

²⁵ Bernard Semmel, "The Methodist Revolution" in Religion and Revolution in Early-Industrial England: The Halevy Thesis and Its Critics ed. G. W. Olsen, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 177.

²⁶ Nigel Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt in the Field (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1981), 171.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 8.

²⁸ E. J. Hobsbawm, "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain," History Today, 7 (No. 2, 1957): 118.

²⁹ Silver, Popular Education, 230.

Methodist institution of the class meeting. She wrote, "On the surface individuality and co-operation may appear antagonistic; though in reality their development must be parallel."³⁰ She used this belief in her arguments against the "individualism" of laissez-faire liberalism. In her 1928 Address as Woman President of the UFC she said, "The choice before us lies between competition, which is tending towards monopoly and the crushing out of individuality under the modern 'Moloch'³¹ of business and profit-making, or co-operation for the service of all."³²

The mixture of spiritual and temporal concerns found in Primitive Methodism is reflected in the moral basis for Annie Hollis's condemnation of capitalism. It produced extremes of poverty and wealth, both of which, in her view, were detrimental to spiritual life.³³ Her political and religious ideas and beliefs were intertwined and mutually supportive, as indicated by her statement: "I cannot agree with those who say it does not matter what we believe. It matters very much. 'As man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' To change the world we must change ourselves; and the change must go down to our deepest thoughts and feelings."³⁴

Primitive Methodist practices of governance are seen in Annie Hollis's ideas about grassroots democracy. Her desire to develop leadership among the women of the farm movement through active involvement in the Women's Sections is parallel to the leadership development that was supported by the class meeting structure of Primitive Methodism. Likewise, the relationship of mutual support and guidance between the members of local groups and the elected leadership of the provincial organization of the SGGA/UFC is similar to the Primitive Methodist Connexion's ideals of lay participation

³⁰ "Mrs. Hollis Analyses Past and Present Position of Women," The Shaunavon Standard, 15 March 1928. (Reprint of Presidential Address to 1928 UFC Convention)

³¹ Moloch – Canaanite idol to whom children were sacrificed; (fig.) tyrannical object of sacrifice. Oxford English Dictionary.

³² A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," March 1928, 19.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 March 1937, 6.

and responsibility in church governance. In addition, the tradition of female leadership in Primitive Methodism must have bolstered her position regarding women and political action in the farm movement and given her additional encouragement in her own leadership role.

I would speculate that Annie Hollis's familiarity with her father's work as an itinerant preacher in the North of England contributed to her own style of work. She too toured rural areas, preaching the message of the SGGA and the UFC to isolated rural people. His example likely provided moral support for her to defy cultural proscriptions against women in politics and to take on the gruelling schedules, rough weather conditions, and other risks and hardships involved in her extensive speaking and organizing tours.³⁵

Another of Annie Hollis's maxims was that farm people needed to, and could, "work out their own salvation."³⁶ This conviction indicates a merging of political and theological principles typical of Primitive Methodism. Improved economic conditions on the farms and better returns to women's labour were forms of the earthly salvation attainable through the perfection of co-operative spirit and responsible action of individuals in the larger community. During the 1930s Depression Annie Hollis was of the opinion that "it was an insult to God to expect Him to do for us what we can do for ourselves."³⁷

Annie Hollis's faith was clearly very much a part of who she was, and in many ways defined her work, yet she was also opposed to organized religion entering state policy.³⁸ Her experience of religious discrimination in England likely fuelled her

³⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Campaign Notes," The Western Producer, 9 Dec. 1926, 13.

³⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Looking Backward," The Western Producer, 1 July 1926, 13.

³⁷ A. L. Hollis, "God and the Depression," The Western Producer, 3 Aug. 1933, 10.

³⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 May 1937, 6.

objection, particularly when the Saskatchewan government proposed to require that school teachers have religious qualifications.³⁹

Owenite Heritage

Owenite socialism developed in England from the early 1800s into the late 1830s. Though named for Robert Owen, the industrialist who developed model communities in New Lanark, Scotland and other places, it was a rough amalgamation of many Enlightenment rationalist ideas directed through a lens of co-operation and mutual self-help.⁴⁰ Its rise coincided with the surge in Primitive Methodism, and many beliefs are common to both.

One of Owen's fundamental principles was that human beings' characters are what they are as a result of the environments in which they have lived.⁴¹ As a rationalist he rejected the concept of original sin and the innate corruption of human nature as being the root of societal evils.⁴² If society were to be improved, conditions in which people lived must be improved.

Owen also had an overriding belief in the promise of widespread material prosperity through industrialization. He had confidence that new technology and mass production could provide enough for working people to live comfortably. He predicted that the poverty would be eliminated through "newly produced wealth," and not by the messier and more dangerous route of redistribution from the rich.⁴³

Owen built model industrial communities in which sound housing, health and sanitation measures, child care for the babies, schools for young children, and uplifting

³⁹ Annie Snaith, Nottingham, to A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, Regina, 22 June 1913. Records of the Department of Education, Saskatchewan Teaching Profession, Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928.

⁴⁰ Silver, Popular Education, 56.

⁴¹ M. Beer, A History of British Socialism (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 163.

⁴² Silver, Popular Education, 55.

⁴³ E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Aylesbury Bucks: Hazel Watson & Viney Limited, 1968), 885.

leisure activities for the adults were provided for families of workers. Hours of work were limited, and wages, pay equity, and working conditions were far better than the contemporary standard for factories.⁴⁴ Owen promoted his communities as places where Utopian life was attainable. His solutions were, however, highly paternalistic, and depended on large sums of money being provided by wealthy supporters.

However, in spite of his class position, Owen's ideas provided a vision of social possibilities for working-class people trying to solve the problems industrialization was creating in their lives. His ideas were adopted in part, added to, or completely changed in what was called "Owenism" or "Owenite socialism".⁴⁵

Owenites organized co-operative retail stores as worker-owned alternatives to those controlled by capitalists. The most well-known of these was organized by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, established in 1844. It became a model for later co-operatives, and its rules became known as "the Rochdale Principles".⁴⁶

Dr. William King, influential in the establishment of early co-operatives including Rochdale, differed from Owen by proposing that people raise the money necessary to found egalitarian communities of their own through co-operative business ventures. His ideas called for people starting from where they were to create a new system which would gradually grow and become more complex as it developed. This contrasted with Owen's approach in which he drew up detailed plans *a priori* and then insisted upon implementing the whole scheme at once.⁴⁷

Most early retail co-operatives were set up as a means to serve members by providing quality goods and a means to build up family savings while simultaneously raising the capital needed to eventually buy land where members would establish agrarian communities. The dream of each member having a stake in some land lived in the hearts

⁴⁴ Arnold Bonner, British Co-operation: The History, Principles, and Organization of the British Co-operative Movement (Manchester: Co-operative Union Ltd., 1961), 6.

⁴⁵ Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, 868.

⁴⁶ Brett Fairbairn, The Meaning of Rochdale: The Rochdale Pioneers and the Co-operative Principles (Saskatoon: Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, 1994).

⁴⁷ Bonner, British Co-operation, 27.

of many Owenites, especially the poorest.⁴⁸ The value of rural life was strongly held. It was seen as healthy, wholesome, and allowing more freedom in daily life than did life in the cities and work in the factories. In effect, Owenite agrarianism offered a way for people to gain a living, if only subsistence, by means of their own unalienated labour.

The quality of working life and the degree of control workers had over their work were major elements of Owenite socialism. Not only did workers want to have a fair share of the economic value their labour produced, but they wanted control over how business decisions were made and over how the value produced was distributed. Reducing the power of the middleman was not just a way to get a larger share of the value produced by capturing profit, but it was a way for working people to gain control over the whole productive enterprise. "What was at issue was not the machine so much as the profit-motive; not the size of the industrial enterprise but the control of the social capital behind it."⁴⁹

The matter of control was an important difference between Owenism and Trade Unionism. As the rules of one co-operative stated in the 1830s: "... by uniting we do not mean strikes and turning out for wages, but like men of one family, strive to begin to work for ourselves..."⁵⁰ Whereas at some level the Trade Unionists accepted capitalist control over production, the Owenites were still attempting to take control of the systems of production and distribution in order to make profit serve social rather than private ends.

The Owenites, like the Primitive Methodists, put a high value on education, including adult education, or "mutual instruction,"⁵¹ for members of their co-operatives. It was, first of all, a practical necessity in running co-operative businesses, and also a way to diffuse the idea that societal betterment was possible,⁵² and a means to strengthen

⁴⁸ Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, 874.

⁴⁹ ibid., 885.

⁵⁰ ibid., 873.

⁵¹ Bonner, British Co-operation, 43.

⁵² Silver, Popular Education, 203.

members' understanding of and commitment to co-operation.⁵³ In 1853 the Rochdale Co-operative dedicated two and a half per cent of its profits to education. Co-operatives set up libraries and reading rooms for the use of members and held evening classes on a wide variety of subjects.⁵⁴ The Open Shelf Library established by the Women's Section of the SGGA, and Annie Hollis's promotion of it, are reminiscent of Owenite adult education efforts.⁵⁵

Owenite philosophy viewed existing economic and social processes, rather than persons, classes, or technologies, as faulty. It framed its critique of existing conditions in terms of competition versus co-operation. Barbara Taylor describes the Owenites' overarching critique of "the competitive system" thus:

[it] moved freely between an economic analysis of workers' exploitation, a moral condemnation of selfish individualism, and a psychological account of the 'dissocial impulses' which were being bred not only in the factories and workshops, but in schools, churches and – above all – in the home.⁵⁶

The role and status of women was addressed in practical everyday life as well as in political terms. Owenite Anna Wheeler and her husband William Thompson wrote Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, an important early feminist work.⁵⁷ Owenites also published an early manifesto calling for women's suffrage.⁵⁸ In their model communities, Owenite women and men suggested ways to share the responsibilities of child care and domestic work. Nurseries were set up to allow mothers opportunity to do other kinds of work, and to provide safe and stimulating places for children to grow and

⁵³ ibid., 203.

⁵⁴ Bonner, British Co-operation, 55.

⁵⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Group Representation," The Western Producer, 18 Sept. 1924, 11.

⁵⁶ Barbara Taylor, "Socialist Feminism: Utopian or Scientific?," in People's History and Socialist History ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 160.

⁵⁷ Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness, 225.

⁵⁸ An article by "E. P.," "Women's Co-operative Guilds," The Western Producer, 13 Aug. 1926, 13, mentions the publication in 1857 of a "political manifesto demanding the franchise for women" in the Women's Journal published by George Jacob Holyoke, an early co-operative movement leader.

learn. Communal kitchens were set up to reduce the overall labour involved in feeding the people by employing the latest technology and taking advantage of economies of scale. Owenites also saw these kitchens as a way to reduce the isolation and the double shift of women who would otherwise go home, tired from work in the factory, to cook for their individual families. That cooking and caring for children was primarily women's responsibility was only challenged to the extent that this work could be communally supported. Owenite communities did not go as far as requiring men to take equal roles in this reproductive work.

Annie Hollis took up the Owenite idea that the emancipation of the working-class involved simultaneously breaking down culturally sanctioned exploitation of women and capitalist exploitation of labour. Capitalism, to the Owenites, involved "multiple contradictions, each of them lived in the hearts and minds of women and men, as well as in their material circumstances."⁵⁹ Thus the struggle was not merely to create a different economic system, but to challenge the stifling effects of culture and tradition as well. A similar position is reflected by Annie Hollis's statement, "Cooperation must begin in the mental or spiritual realm; it is of slow growth, but nevertheless, its results are sure and permanent."⁶⁰

Following the eclipse of Owenism at the end of the 1830s, economic conditions in Britain, along with socialists' adoption of Marxian analyses of capitalism and the class struggle, polarized labour and capital more than ever by the 1880s. The struggle for women's equality within socialism was subordinated to the fight against the common class enemy, capitalism.⁶¹

Annie Hollis did not accept the idea that better status for women would automatically result once the class struggle had been won. Perhaps as a result of her geographical origins in one of the strongholds of the co-operative movement, she was able to continue the older Owenite approach. She critiqued the Marxist socialist definition

⁵⁹ Taylor, "Socialist Feminism: Utopian or Scientific?" 160.

⁶⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Closed Minds," The Western Producer, 8 July 1926, 13.

⁶¹ Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), xv.

of "worker" as solely the waged worker, or proletarian.⁶² In the Saskatchewan farm movement she used an Owenite conception of the worker, a definition that went beyond the industrial wage-earner. On this basis she promoted the need for the struggle for women's rights within the co-operative movement.⁶³ Recognition of women as productive – though unpaid or underpaid – workers would, she believed, augment the whole farm population's struggle to gain materially. The movement would benefit from the full involvement of women in political struggle, and the younger generation would be raised into a stronger political consciousness.

She also reiterated the desire that the material benefits of industrialization be used to better the life of all. She shared the Owenite belief that technology could be directed to serve community purposes. She said, "Mass production is production for the masses, not for standardizing the masses, but for liberating them from the struggle for mere existence and enabling them, for the first time in human history, to give their attention to more distinctly human problems."⁶⁴ It was not the machinery, but who controlled it, and how, that was significant.⁶⁵

By the time Annie Hollis was writing, the ideas of Malthus, Darwin, and Spencer had added fuel to the debate over whether competition or co-operation was the appropriate basis of social life. Ideas of hereditary class, race, and sex superiority or inferiority were bolstered by the ideology of social Darwinism. Annie Hollis adhered to the belief that the social environment of individuals, and the history and culture of a society were stronger factors than biology in creating differences among people.⁶⁶ Her support of education as a means of bringing about social change hinged on this belief. Her ability to visualize a different and better world also stemmed from her belief that

⁶² A. L. Hollis, "Women of No Occupation: Universal Discrimination Against Housewives," The Western Producer, 14 Nov. 1929, 18.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 May 1934, 8.

⁶⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address" 1928.

⁶⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Environment and Heredity," The Western Producer, 30 Sept. 1926, 2.

social conditions could be changed through collective action directed by human will.⁶⁷ The Owenite emphasis on the importance of education as a tool of emancipation and the belief in the possibility of community-based self-help are evident in Annie Hollis's work.

The agrarian ideal of the early Owenite co-operators was also present in Annie Hollis's thought. Perhaps it was one of her motivations for emigrating to Saskatchewan after working for nearly two decades in English cities. She often stated that rural life should be the best for children and adults, and it was the faulty economic system that resulted in so much hardship on the farms.⁶⁸ She valued the mix of freedom and responsibility possible in farm life. That the whole family participated in economically productive work on the farm allowed them all to claim political rights.⁶⁹ She was concerned about trends towards tenancy and the accumulation of repossessed farmland by mortgage companies as well as the consolidation of small farms into large holdings. This "collectivisation" of farms by finance companies was, in the opinion of Annie Hollis, a danger to farmers' ability to control their own material conditions. In contrast, the old agrarian ideal was to have independent producers who would create beneficial economic institutions through their own political action.

The Suffragist Movement

Annie Hollis's experience of the women's suffrage movement in England was an education in political action. From 1909 she was a member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), the most militant of the suffragist groups. She wrote of marching with the WSPU and being thrown out of anti-suffragist Liberal Party meetings during the suffrage campaign.⁷⁰ The campaign's influence upon her thought seems to have

⁶⁷ A. L. Hollis, "The Retiring President Women's Section UFC Urges Higher Education," The Western Producer, 14 Feb. 1929, 18. [transcript of address to UFC convention].

⁶⁸ A. L. Hollis, "The Value of Organization for Farm Women," The Western Producer, 23 Dec. 1926, 13.

⁶⁹ A. L. Hollis, "The Modern Home," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 11 June 1931, 7.

⁷⁰ "Woman President," The Western Producer, 1927.

come more from the experience of activism than from embracing all the assumptions of the organization's leadership. The WSPU had an ambivalent relationship to working-class women's organizations, as it found strategic alliances with wealthy women to be more politically advantageous.⁷¹ There were also separatist tendencies, expressed particularly by Christabel Pankhurst who came to believe that relations between the sexes were necessarily detrimental to women. She advocated celibacy and separatist campaigning strategies.⁷² The other large suffragist organization, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, had strong, though informal, ties to the Liberal Party. Its strategy was to influence Members of Parliament in order to get an enfranchisement bill passed.⁷³

My speculation is that Annie Hollis was drawn to the determination of the militants in the WSPU as well as their opposition to the existing political conditions for women. She may have rejected the NUWSS's approach because of its entanglement in party politics. Her later views regarding political parties in Saskatchewan would support this conclusion. It is not clear how involved she became with the Women's Freedom League, though in comparison with the WSPU, its politics were more consistent with Annie Hollis's socialist values and the positions she took later as an activist in Saskatchewan. After she emigrated, Hollis quite deliberately distanced herself from being identified as a feminist. Her relationship to the feminism of the time will be discussed in detail below.

Annie Hollis became involved in the suffragist struggle in Portsmouth after she returned from France to teach at St. Bernard's Residential Girls' School in 1909. Portsmouth was one of the centres of suffragist activity. A sea coast town, it had a strong community of women. Many of their husbands were sailors, absent for long periods. Therefore the wives had to take on responsibilities and roles that would have been thought masculine in places where the husband was routinely at home. Economic

⁷¹ Sandra Stanley Holton, Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36.

⁷² *ibid.*, 17.

⁷³ *ibid.*, 32.

exploitation of women was also rampant in Portsmouth, reflected in its high proportion of female sweated labour.⁷⁴

Annie Hollis may have come to the WSPU via membership in the faction of the National Union of Teachers that was fighting for equal pay for women teachers during this same period. There were many parallels between the internal NUT situation and the national scene regarding political and economic rights for women. The feminist faction within the NUT was up against an entrenched male leadership which refused to recognize women teachers' claim for equal pay.⁷⁵ The connection between the injustice prevailing in teachers' day-to-day economic situation and the suffragist cause was a subject of discussion in the local branch of the teachers union.⁷⁶

In addition to marches, demonstrations, and mock-parliaments, the WSPU organized civil disobedience actions including window breaking campaigns, hunger strikes, firing of letter boxes, and other acts of arson as the fight for the vote escalated. Annie Hollis identified herself as a militant. She participated in demonstrations and disruptions of Liberal Party meetings, but did not commit acts which would have led to her imprisonment. This may have been because she could not afford to lose her job, or perhaps because it was contrary to her values regarding violence.

Through the campaign for the vote Annie Hollis came to know that reason alone would not ensure justice – people had to fight for their own emancipation because those who held power would not willingly give it up. She saw that the mainstream press published exaggeratedly negative reports of the suffragists actions in order to discredit them.⁷⁷ She was surrounded by women of courage who stood up in public and were politically effective in spite of prevalent theories about female abilities. She saw that the

⁷⁴ Sarah Peacock, Votes for Women: The Women's Fight in Portsmouth (City of Portsmouth: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1983), 21.

⁷⁵ Patricia Owen, "'Who would be free, herself must strike the blow': The National Union of Women Teachers, Equal Pay, and Women Within the Teaching Profession," History of Education 17.1 (1988): 88.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁷ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 24 July 1919. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

ridicule and censure of men who disapproved of women in politics was not an insurmountable obstacle.

She later drew parallels between farmer and labour struggles in Canada and her experience of the suffrage campaign.⁷⁸ The bitterness of the suffragists' fight for the vote made Annie Hollis value her political rights highly. Her passion for getting women involved in Saskatchewan's farm movement politics was motivated at least in part by her desire to prove the sacrifices of the suffragists worthwhile.⁷⁹ After she emigrated Annie Hollis used the National Union of Women Teachers' motto "Who would be free must herself strike the blow" to encourage Saskatchewan farm movement women in their political efforts.⁸⁰

The Saskatchewan Scene

Before she emigrated Annie Hollis was situated in marginal positions in many respects: a woman, from an outlying region, a member of a dissenting sect, an unmarried wage-earning woman, a socialist, and a suffragist. She was well-grounded in opposition through her early political and social experience. In Saskatchewan she found herself more powerfully situated, being British, university educated, married to a farmer, and with additional economic security gained from working as a teacher. These advantages likely allowed her entry to and the ability to operate within the farm movement organizational structure. Her former marginalized status, most specifically as a suffragist, had trained her to fight for political change, and likely was key to her prominence within the movement.

Annie Hollis and her colleagues were quite conscious of being on the edge between the recent past in which landed aristocracy held power, and the possibilities of a future in which democratically self-governing working people might come into power. The determination prevalent among people in the farm movement in the twenties is, I think, hard for people in the 1990s to grasp. In the 1920s the struggle between socialism and

⁷⁸ A. L. Hollis, "The Subtle Power of the Press," The Western Producer, 27 May 1926, 13.

⁷⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Women in Politics," The Progressive, 31 July 1924, 6.

⁸⁰ Annie L. Hollis, "'Mainly for Women' Grain Marketing Act #11", 8.

capitalism was very real, yet less rigid and ritualized than it became during the Cold War of later decades. Laissez-faire capitalism was dominant, but its dangers were apparent to ordinary working people who were not protected in any way from the boom and bust of business cycles. Capitalists were also vulnerable to wild shifts in market and political conditions. Fortunes could still be made quickly and lost overnight evidenced by the wartime boom followed by a severe recession in the early 1920s, the "roaring twenties," and the Crash of '29.

Simultaneously, socialism was rapidly being constructed as a potential alternative through workers' movements in many countries, most dramatically with the Russian Revolution in 1917, and in Canada with the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. The growth of trade unions, the Independent Labour Party in Britain, and the Social Democratic and Communist parties in Canada all provided for an alternative economic and social discourse. The Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, were building up strong indigenous co-operative systems. Communist parties were a significant force in Europe, particularly in Germany and Italy. The co-operative farm movement in Saskatchewan, and Annie Hollis's part in it, fit into this world scene of determined action to shape the foundations of the political and economic systems. For these people the future was a challenging field of work, not an unyielding landscape to which they must adapt.

The major focus of Annie Hollis's work was on efforts to develop a social force that would see a co-operative socialist society come into existence. This work rested on her belief that human beings are naturally active, but that too many – especially women – had been trained into passivity through culture, tradition, and an economic system which thwarted and oppressed them.⁸¹

Annie Hollis had little use for experts whose knowledge was not connected to the lives of those they advised.⁸² She bestowed her most biting sarcasm on government officials who, for example, presumed to tell farm women how to manage their meagre household resources during the 1930s Depression. The following is an example:

⁸¹ A. L. Hollis, "Women in Politics," The Progressive, 31 July 1924, 6.

⁸² A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 Dec. 1932, 9.

Perhaps if Sir John [Aird] had come into closer touch with the everyday life and work of Western farmers his eyes might have been opened to facts, and he would not have made such foolish statements as those reported.

It might be a valuable experience for these great financiers and business men occasionally to step outside the realm of High Finance and come into contact with the realities of life.⁸³

For Hollis, authority came from a combination of knowledge and experience – a trained mind able to use reason to make sense of experience – along with a moral stance which desired benefit for one's neighbour as well as for one's self. Her adult education work was aimed at getting women, farmers, and young people to take up their own authority and thus to become involved in and take responsibility for public decision-making. She strongly believed that citizens of a self-governing society could not rely on the unexamined opinions of others, no matter how erudite or commanding those people might be.⁸⁴

Annie Hollis's writing was often polemical, pointing out contradictions in popular and established theories and opinion. Through her writings we find out where she stood on social issues, and we also see that she believed that writing was an effective political method. Referring to an exchange of letters in the "Open Forum" of The Western Producer, she commented to Violet McNaughton, "I'm glad everybody does not agree with what I say for it gives a chance to push the argument."⁸⁵ She assumed she had an astute and informed readership who would engage in a dialogue.

The Metaphor of the Oak: Slow Growth versus Violent Revolution

Annie Hollis frequently referred to the oak tree as a symbol of the co-operative movement. She contrasted it with the mushroom, to emphasize the qualities of solidity, durability and intrinsic worth of the slow-growing tree in contrast to the fleeting qualities

⁸³ ibid., 1 Dec. 1932, 9.

⁸⁴ ibid., 1 Sept. 1937, 6.

⁸⁵ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 25 Oct. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

of the mushroom.⁸⁶ She also contrasted the oak with the machine, emphasizing the positive values of inner motivation, organic growth, and the value of life and living as opposed to the controlled and lifeless qualities of the machine.

The oak as a metaphor is loaded with meaning. It is not only a tree, but an English tree, with long association with the history of Britain. It also has some mystical associations, as the prehistoric Druids held the oak sacred in their religion. Annie Hollis's use of the oak metaphor indicates deep-seated allegiance to her British heritage and traditions. She referred to the oak when contrasting the Saskatchewan co-operative movement with American methods of organizing co-operatives. Her criticism of "American hustle" was sharp. She wrote, "It always strikes me that the Americans want to get results quickly; they are not content with natural development or growth and want an oak to grow in a few days."⁸⁷ Annie Hollis approvingly linked the slow and steady pace of co-operative organizing with English culture and heritage. Fast-paced American methods she not only disagreed with, but mistrusted as contrary to the logic of nature.

She equated society with the oak, both being living processes. "Society, or the social fabric is not a rigid machine," she said, "but an organism, constantly developing."⁸⁸ She proposed this metaphor in opposition to theorists who viewed society as a kind of mechanism that could be manipulated with economic tools and levers. In her view, society had an internal life. It could be guided and nurtured but not controlled like an inert, though highly complex, object.⁸⁹ This was part of her dialogue with economicistic interpreters of Marx's work who viewed economic factors as the sole determinants for bringing about or preventing a socialist revolution.

Closely related to Annie Hollis's view of society as a developing organism, and of the co-operative movement as a growing oak, was her opposition to force or violence as a means to bring about social justice. She said,

⁸⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Leadership," The Western Producer, 11 July 1924, 5.

⁸⁷ A. L. Hollis, Shaunavon, to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 25 Oct. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

⁸⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Group Representation," The Western Producer, 18 Sept. 1924, 11.

⁸⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," 1928.

Revolutions, even the best and most necessary, leave behind a trail of misery and injustice; and the slow work of education and reconstruction has still to be done. This is not an argument for inaction, but for considered action which will make for real advancement.⁹⁰

Annie Hollis believed the slow work of adult education was the only course leading to long-term success for the co-operative movement. If people did not understand and believe in the changes being made they would not persist through difficult times.⁹¹ Similarly, she saw a logical inconsistency between force and co-operation. For her, the strength of co-operation was in widespread commitment to its principles among the population, which was not something to be gained through coercion.⁹² She asserted, "The only revolution (or change) we have to fear is a revolution which is not according to knowledge but according to blindness and ignorance of passion. A revolution according to knowledge is only possible through a study of the past history of the human race in its struggle towards the light."⁹³

This should not be taken to mean that she believed natural evolution would automatically bring about an improved social system. Progress was something to be achieved through struggle. The obverse face of progress, regression, was the consequence of shirking the work of creating a better society.

Democratic forms are changing; we have won political freedom only to be in danger of losing it because it is not enough. Economic and industrial freedom are yet to be won. How? Freedom is only gained and retained by constant struggle, but surely at this stage of civilization it need not be bloody. Neither group or national hatred will produce worthwhile results; co-operation and good will are needed but that does not imply supineness.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ A. L. Hollis, "To Help or Not to Help?," in "Letters to the Editor," The Western Producer, 30 Oct. 1924, 5.

⁹¹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Feb. 1941, 6.

⁹² A. L. Hollis, "Closed Minds," The Western Producer, 8 July 1926, 13.

⁹³ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," 1928.

⁹⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Sept. 1936, 8.

Annie Hollis believed societal change was possible through the creation of a system of co-operative institutions by an active and politically sophisticated public who would use parliamentary power to create the necessary legal framework to support and safeguard the emerging co-operative system.⁹⁵ In preparation for the 1930 federal election she urged farmer voters to "realize that we must work out our economic salvation, which is even more important than our political salvation, and indeed cannot be separated from it, by voting together and working together as an economic group."⁹⁶

Annie Hollis's sense of the rule of law was strong. In her view, laws were the framework of freedoms – once the rules were established, people could move as they wished within those limits.⁹⁷ The key, in her eyes, was for power to make laws to come under popular control. Thus her willingness to fight for women's suffrage, her urging of women to vote and be involved in policy making, her involvement in creating a new political party, and her attempt to win a seat in parliament.

Annie Hollis – Not a Feminist?

Annie Hollis consistently refused to be labelled a feminist.⁹⁸ Yet the label certainly fits quite well if we use Gerda Lerner's definition of feminist consciousness:

... the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but societally determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally that they must and can provide an alternate vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ ibid., 1 Sept. 1937, 6.

⁹⁶ A. L. Hollis, Secretary, Farmers' Political Association, Maple Creek Constituency, "Women and the National Budget," The Western Producer, 22 May 1930, 31.

⁹⁷ Annie L. Hollis, "'Mainly For Women' Grain Marketing Act #11," April 1931, 4.

⁹⁸ A. L. Hollis, "With the Women Grain Growers," The Western Producer, 6 May 1926.

⁹⁹ Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness, 14.

Annie Hollis's rejection of a feminist identity for herself only makes sense when her other political values are juxtaposed with the concept of feminism as it was popularly understood in the first decades of this century.

A dominant strand of British and North American feminism in the early 1900s had its origins in nineteenth-century liberal individualism, the ideology that supported the capitalist middle-class' rise and the concomitant displacement of the landed aristocracy as the political and economic elite. According to liberalism, rights and privileges should not be bestowed or withheld by virtue of birth. Rather, individuals should have the freedom to achieve or fail according to their own abilities through the mechanism of competition.

Early middle-class feminists sought to extend the freedom and privilege of individuals to include women. J.S. Mill's book The Subjection of Women was very influential. Unlike some later versions of feminism, Mill doubted there were significant innate differences between the male and the female personality. If there were differences, he thought the social conditions were far more powerful in creating them than any biological factors that might exist.¹⁰⁰ However, he promoted equal political status of middle-class women while at the same time he was quite silent on political rights for working-class women.¹⁰¹

Annie Hollis's political values were not based in liberalism, but in the co-operative socialist traditions. The Owenite stance situated women as members of a community whereby the interests of the community and the individuals within it could be strengthened by the participation of women in leadership roles and by relieving the harshness of women's everyday lives. While liberal feminism was largely concerned with eliminating legal barriers to women's participation in the laissez-faire capitalist economic system, the Owenite tradition was concerned with changing the economic system and the class and sex relationships that went with it.¹⁰² Annie Hollis's aim was to redefine the

¹⁰⁰ John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1988), 22.

¹⁰¹ Evans, The Feminists, 30.

¹⁰² Holton, Feminism and Democracy, 17.

struggle for a new socialist co-operative state from an essentially masculine one to one that included women, and was a women's, as well as men's, struggle.

The feminism of the early 1900s also drew upon "separate spheres," another concept that had originated in the ideology of the Victorian middle-class.¹⁰³ It understood men and women as complements of one another. According to this view, there were innate masculine characteristics which suited men to decision-making and public life, and feminine characteristics which predisposed women to private life, to follow and support rather than to be leaders. It was supposed that the masculine and the feminine character each needed its opposite for happiness and completion. In practice, the ideal of the purely domestic woman, married and at home with the children, was only attainable in a minority of upper- and upper-middle-class families. Whether this minority of women was happy is yet another question.¹⁰⁴

The theory of innate sex difference was promoted as the quasi-scientific basis of an identity of women as being morally pure "angels in the house" and guardians of the nation's purity. However, the ideal of female innocence and moral purity separated women from political life and provided the pretext for male protection of women from the corruption endemic to public life. Because innocence and moral purity prevented women from fighting back against wrongs, their only recourse was passive endurance of hardships, or a sort of everyday martyrdom. In the separate spheres ideology, a woman who asserted herself to oppose her own victimization was unfeminine, or "unsexed".

Annie Hollis rejected the notion that women needed, or even wanted, protection. "Is this not placing her too much in an inferior position as if she were a weak individual and needed looking after like a child? The true home maker, we imagine, would prefer

¹⁰³ ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁴ See for example, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories (New York, Penguin Books, 1995), 1-28.

the position of partner or comrade."¹⁰⁵ She identified martyrdom and passive endurance with oppression, not virtue.¹⁰⁶

Late nineteenth century Liberal feminists strategically combined individualism with the separate spheres concept to argue that women should not be denied the equal political status due free individuals, and that political rights should be granted to women since their moral superiority was necessary to counteract the moral weakness of male voters.¹⁰⁷ Some feminists expressed this claim in classist and racist terms, objecting to the fact that working-class men (in England) and Black men (in the southern United States) had rights that middle-class white women did not.¹⁰⁸

This type of feminism was unacceptable to Annie Hollis primarily because she did not accept the theory of innate sex difference with its implications of race and class differences. Her position was that attitudes and behaviour are learned, and social practices are culturally and historically based.¹⁰⁹ "Because of centuries of training during which it has been impressed on the whole human family, both men and women, boys and girls, that women's place is in the home, a false idea has developed as to the so-called "sphere of women."¹¹⁰ In 1940 she wrote:

All talk of natural inferiority or superiority as existing between the sexes is just as fantastical and nonsensical as the talk of naturally inferior and superior 'races' of mankind; and to my mind the same is true when speaking of social classes or groups. Existing differences are man-made and can be removed when we are wise enough to recognize this scientific truth.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Is Lack of Supply of Domestic Workers Due to Low Status?" The Western Producer, 18 Oct., 1928, 18.

¹⁰⁶ A. L. Hollis, "The Uses of Leisure," The Western Producer, 14 May 1925.

¹⁰⁷ Evans, The Feminists, 36.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 205.

¹⁰⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 April 1940, 6.

¹¹⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Value of Organization for Farm Women," The Western Producer, 23 Dec. 1926, 13.

¹¹¹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 April 1940, 6.

Using moral superiority as the basis of claims for political status, the liberal feminist position became a weak demand for special privileges instead of for serious political rights, in Annie Hollis's opinion.¹¹² For women voters to complement male leaders by softening the harshness masculinity was prone to, was unacceptable to Hollis because it denied, even absolved, both men and women full responsibility as political and social beings.

Annie Hollis recognized difference as much more subtle and ambiguous than the neat symmetry posited by the separate spheres ideology.¹¹³ She repeatedly stated that women and men were partners — sharing decision-making in the home, on the farm, and in political life. She suggested men and women take part in all phases of work together and for both to take responsibility for outcomes. Differences between the abilities of individual men and women were due to culture, tradition, history and variations in individual circumstances.¹¹⁴

Annie Hollis saw the feminism of her day as a potential hindrance to partnership and co-operation among men and women. Neither sex should claim superiority, she felt, though she did not deny that historically this is exactly what men have done. Rather, people within the co-operative movement should be looking for ways to effectively work together according to their individual and varied abilities.¹¹⁵ "Present conditions require co-operation of all citizens; so a truce to any sex antagonism."¹¹⁶ By framing women's capacity and responsibility to be political actors within the co-operative movement, she aimed for a reciprocal strengthening of both individual women and the movement as a whole. Ignorance of politics or passive acceptance of exploitation by half the population was not conducive to efforts to create a better society.¹¹⁷

¹¹² ibid., 15 May 1933, 8.

¹¹³ ibid., 15 April, 1941, 6.

¹¹⁴ ibid., 15 April 1940, 6.

¹¹⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Is Man Naturally Selfish?" The Western Producer, 7 Nov. 1929, 23.

¹¹⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 May 1933, 8.

¹¹⁷ ibid., 15 Aug. 1940, 8.

Strategically, Annie Hollis's disassociation from feminism allowed her to put issues which concerned women into the agenda of the co-operative movement as problems which concerned all, not just the special interests of a disaffected faction. By not identifying their struggle with feminism, Annie Hollis attempted to counteract the marginalization of women in the farm movement.¹¹⁸

Annie Hollis's rejection of an identity as a feminist also may have stemmed from contradictions that became apparent in the internal politics of the WSPU. The organization was far from democratic. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her oldest daughter Christabel Pankhurst organized the WSPU around their own charismatic leadership abilities and the loyalty and discipline of rank and file members. The two Pankhursts' refusal to accept a democratic constitution for the organization in 1907 led to the formation of The Women's Freedom League by a number of left-leaning WSPU branches.¹¹⁹ A schism in the top leadership of the WSPU occurred in 1912. Emmeline and Richard Pethick-Lawrence, who had shared leadership and provided substantial financial support for the WSPU, were completely cut out of the organization when they disagreed with the Pankhursts' new policy of increased militancy. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel took full control of the WSPU from then on.

When World War I broke out, Mrs. Pankhurst suspended suffragist militancy and threw her support behind the war effort.¹²⁰ Many of the suffragists, including her second daughter Sylvia Pankhurst, were pacifists and opposed to the war.¹²¹ In 1916 the franchise was extended to propertied women. This was seen as a victory by Mrs. Pankhurst, but as a betrayal for many women who had fought for the vote for all women. After the war Mrs. Pankhurst toured North America speaking against Bolshevism while Sylvia Pankhurst became involved in socialist and anti-fascist work.¹²²

¹¹⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Where are the Women?" The Western Producer, 26 Dec. 1929, 14.

¹¹⁹ Holton, Feminism and Democracy, 41.

¹²⁰ Barbara Castle, Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1987), 133.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, 134.

¹²² *ibid.*, 143-146.

In these schisms Annie Hollis seems to have identified with the Pethick-Lawrences and Sylvia Pankhurst. In the 1920s she subscribed to The Vote published by the League of Women Voters, the suffrage organization Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence supported after leaving the WSPU.¹²³ Annie Hollis also wrote to Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence when she was campaigning to have women represented at the World Economic Council meetings during the 1930s. Annie Hollis's obituary in The Western Producer referred only to Sylvia Pankhurst when mentioning her suffragist activism. This makes sense in light of Annie Hollis's own attitudes towards war, fascism, grassroots democracy, and socialism.

A Counter-hegemonic Identity of Women

Hand in hand with Annie Hollis's views on women as political beings go her ideas about femininity, masculinity, and the identity of women. She placed contemporary ideas about women into historical context. "Custom is difficult bondage to throw off; but women are gradually losing the shackles of the past," she said.¹²⁴ She applied the same analysis to traditional male roles. She commented, "... to me the facts do not speak of natural selfishness [of men], but of wrong training. From their babyhood boys are steeped (so to speak) in the idea of male superiority and dominance, even by their mothers and of course by their fathers. And this seed bears its due harvest."¹²⁵

Annie Hollis's foremost self-definition was as a woman. She was married and cared for her husband, adopted son, and home, but her identity as a woman did not depend on fulfilling prevalent ideas of feminine domesticity. People who knew her commented on her somewhat careless dress – hems sometimes needed pinning – and the fact that she would leave the dusting and write letters or her column for the paper instead.¹²⁶ At times she became so engrossed in listening to political broadcasts she forgot to mind the stove, with burnt baking the result.

¹²³ A. L. Hollis, "Women's Freedom," The Western Producer, 10 Aug. 1933, 10.

¹²⁴ A. L. Hollis, "The Use of Leisure," The Western Producer, 14 May 1925, 11.

¹²⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Is Man Naturally Selfish?" The Western Producer, 7 Nov. 1929, 23.

¹²⁶ Kay Lidfors, Shaunavon, interview with author, 28 Aug. 1995.

By associating ideals of courage, strength and virility with masculinity and manhood, Hollis felt these personal qualities were diminished in meaning and scope. She suggested these qualities be disassociated from violence, and de-sexed. She believed that women and men were equally endowed with the capacity for so-called manly virtues.¹²⁷ Annie Hollis did not like the term "feminine" either, whether used to describe fashions or personal qualities. The "feminine" virtues of compassion, peacefulness, and gentleness could not, in her opinion, be meaningfully practised without courage and determination. She refuted the idea that peacefulness meant acquiescence.¹²⁸

Annie Hollis still saw women in the home as doing vitally important work. Mothers raising children, and women in productive farm work were, to her, foundational in the social life of rural Saskatchewan.¹²⁹ She said, "For a long time I've been trying to bring forward the idea of the importance of the work of the domestic woman in the home; responsible for the early training of all citizens."¹³⁰ She wanted to raise the economic value and the status of women's labour, whether in the home or otherwise.¹³¹ She did not suggest men take over child-rearing and housework, but that they take greater responsibility for both.¹³²

Annie Hollis's critique of unpaid domestic work focused on the fact that its value was not officially recognized or counted, and thus remained outside of the economic valuation system. She asserted the economic significance of women's domestic work, and

¹²⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer 1 June 1939, 6.

¹²⁸ ibid., 15 Dec. 1937, 6.

¹²⁹ A. L. Hollis, "The Modern Home," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 11 June 1931, 7.

¹³⁰ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 2 May 1931. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

¹³¹ A. L. Hollis, "Should Married Women Be Gainfully Employed?" The Western Producer, 27 Feb. 1930, 23.

¹³² A. L. Hollis, "Women's Organizations in Saskatchewan," The Farm and Ranch Review, 1 May 1930, 20.

its vital importance to the overall economy and the continuance of social life.¹³³ Her analysis redefined women from being "dependent" to "productive," in order to advance the legitimacy of women's interests as part of larger economic system and to break down the separation of private from public life.¹³⁴

This realignment of women's identity to that of producer negated the patriarchal formula of women's dependence on a male provider. In effect, it had radical implications for releasing women from economic bondage and freeing them to realize political and intellectual possibilities of their own making. In her words, "... only by economic independence and by real equality between the sexes can the stigma of inferiority be removed from women as a class. Woman then becomes neither a parasite nor a drudge, but a comrade working with man for the dawning of a better economic and social civilization."¹³⁵

Her position on women's identity in turn implied for men that they were in fact also dependent on women, and that their own masculine "producer" identity was possible only through the widespread institution of the unpaid work of women.¹³⁶ By linking exploitation of women to the exploitation of agriculture as a whole, Annie Hollis attempted to mobilize women while avoiding internal division of the co-operative movement along sex lines. Her aim was to convince women and men that improvements to farm women's status would be beneficial for farm conditions in general.

Annie Hollis saw the family as an essential element in society, but she also saw it as something which was open to change.¹³⁷ In her view, women need not be economically

¹³³ A. L. Hollis, "Home Economics: Why Not Elevate the Kitchens?" The Western Producer, 26 Sept. 1929, 21.

¹³⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Women's Place in an Economic Association," The Western Producer, 30 Sept. 1926, 16.

¹³⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Women of No Occupation," The Western Producer, 14 Nov. 1929, 18.

¹³⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Value of Organization for Farm Women," The Western Producer, 23 Dec. 1926, 13.

¹³⁷ "WSSGGA Education Report, 1924-1925," 2. Women Grain Growers Association, Convention Reports 1924-1926.

exploited for home life to exist and be socially uplifting. Some of the heavy work could be eliminated by, for example, modern household machinery.¹³⁸ Women as mothers and homemakers had a vital role to play in raising children. She preferred to see women supported in their home-based responsibilities rather than have professionals usurp child-rearing, health, education, and household production.¹³⁹ She believed that improved labour-saving devices, access to preventative medicine, and reduction in social isolation would go a long way to improving quality of life for farm women and allow them the time and energy to devote to the more interesting and rewarding aspects of child care and home making. She supported birth control and socialized medicine to relieve women of excess child-bearing, child care and health problems within the family, and lighten the burden of nursing family members through illness.¹⁴⁰

The Dialectic of Feudalism versus Modernity in Co-operation

The impetus for Annie Hollis to work so hard to create co-operative structures in Saskatchewan was not only her vision of a better future, but she was also driven by concern that right-wing and traditional forces would create a feudalistic type of economic system in Canada if they were not opposed. By framing the political struggle in these terms she enhanced the idea that the co-operative movement was a vital historical force for social change.

Annie Hollis also used the idea of feudalism as a rhetorical means to identify the values of modernity, such as progress, justice, and equality, with the co-operative movement while equating the retrogressive, anti-democratic tendencies she saw in capitalism with feudalism. By pointing out capitalism's atavistic tendencies towards concentration of the power of the wealthy and the institutionalization of indentured labour of the poor through the mechanism of mortgage indebtedness and foreclosure, she was

¹³⁸ A. L. Hollis, "What Are Farm Women Thinking?" The Country Guide, 1 Nov. 1928, 20.

¹³⁹ A. L. Hollis, "The Modern Home," The Western Producer, 11 June 1921, 7.

¹⁴⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Socialization of Medicine," The Western Producer, 20 Jan. 1927, 13.

able to criticize capitalism and avoid being immediately dismissed as a communist by skeptical farmers.

Her feelings regarding feudalism and the impoverished lives of peasants were long standing. She deplored the unnecessarily hard work peasants were forced to do. She was obviously moved by circumstances she described from a photograph taken near Posen, Germany which was given to her before 1914: "... land workers, Polish men and women, bare-footed, bare headed and very scantily clad, reaping grain in a very primitive way. No machinery excepting a kind of knife, and their own brawny arms. One woman is twisting band of straw to bind a sheaf which she is holding in her left arm. I was told this picture was true to life."¹⁴¹

Annie Hollis compared the origins of western Canada's economy to the European feudal system. She saw "... a parallel between the way homesteads were given to settlers for duties to be performed and the establishment of the Feudal System in olden times for duties performed – fighting for lords, tithes, &c."¹⁴² Annie Hollis identified a trend toward increasing farm size, increased land holdings by mortgage companies, along with greater numbers of tenant farmers. She warned of its implications on the eve of the farm organizations' amalgamation convention: "We have here a clear indication of the growing danger of the change in the status of the farmer, from that of an owner to that of the standard of the European peasant."¹⁴³

Annie Hollis's concern about the re-creation of feudalism and the possibility of a North American peasantry allow some insight into her theories of social change and history. She clearly did not see history as a simple case of progress or natural evolution. Her views seem to be based in a Hegelian dialectic understanding of negation of opposites. She saw the future unfolding through the effects of human agency. Progress would only occur if people could create a strong enough force to direct social life towards chosen goals. Regression would occur if progressive forces were not strong enough, not

¹⁴¹ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 Nov. 1939, 6.

¹⁴² Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 25 March 1925. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

¹⁴³ A. L. Hollis, "Looking Forward," The Western Producer, 1 July 1926, 13.

well enough established to withstand attacks, or were misguided. The status quo was not a choice available for Annie Hollis, as she saw it as only a temporary phase. In the turmoil following the collapse of wheat prices for the 1929-30 crop and the shock of the October 1929 stock market crash, she encouraged farmers to keep working to establish co-operative institutions:

"The Wheat Pool ... taught us or should have taught us a great deal. That is that we as agriculturalists can attend to our own business. Now that we have a start wouldn't it be foolish to cast it all up in despair just because we have struck a snag, reached a crisis? It simply shows that the Pool in itself is not all that was wanted; it is not a cure-all for the ills that affected the producer and further co-operative action must be taken. The Wheat Pool is a right step in the direction the agriculturalist must proceed to solve its difficulties."¹⁴⁴

Annie Hollis's opposition to assisted immigration in the late 1920s makes sense when related to her concerns about the potential for capitalist regression to feudal patterns and the danger of setbacks to the co-operative movement. She came out against federal government plans to help Eastern European peasants settle in Western Canada. Annie Hollis was concerned that assisted immigration was a way for railways and finance companies to take advantage of the poverty and vulnerability of the newcomers, while at the same time undermining the co-operative farm movement by introducing large numbers of people who were accustomed to dire poverty. She outlined her concerns in an article where she referred to a Canadian Pacific Railway Colonization Company document which described Mennonite immigrants thus: "their wants were few, they could live a more primitive life, and thus more readily meet their mortgage indebtedness."¹⁴⁵ She was concerned that the availability of abundant, low-waged, immigrant labour would reduce established farmers' incentive to work for collective improvement of agricultural

¹⁴⁴ "United Farmers Open Forum Well Attended," The Shaunavon Standard, 11 Dec. 1930.

¹⁴⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Immigration and Agriculture," The Western Producer, 17 Feb. 1927, 13.

conditions. "Some farmers, as well as some manufacturers, etc. like cheap human labor; but is that an advantage to any society?"¹⁴⁶

Her response to the immigration question in many ways contradicted her belief in the efficacy of adult education to overcome traditional assumptions regarding economic life and political action (or at least indicates a sense that she felt the barriers of language and tradition might be too much for the existing co-operative organizations.)¹⁴⁷

Once the immigration of Eastern Europeans was underway however, Annie Hollis was involved in efforts to recruit them to the co-operative movement. Printed material and speakers fluent in Polish, German and Ukrainian were made available in high immigration areas so that the modern co-operative message would reach the newcomers.¹⁴⁸

The dualism she saw between the creation of a co-operative society versus the establishment of a new feudalism has resonances with Christian interpretations of Biblical struggles of good versus evil. Her ideas regarding struggle and progress likely owe something to her understanding of Hegel's dialectic philosophy, as she had studied his work when helping her father with his manuscript on Kant and Hegel in 1912 and 1913. In the late 1920s she also began to highlight danger of fascism as the dialectic opposite to co-operation and democratic self-government.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

Annie Hollis's political beliefs and values were consistent with her becoming an organic intellectual of the Saskatchewan co-operative farm movement. She was rooted in her Primitive Methodist and Owenite socialist heritage. These antecedents supplied not

¹⁴⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Reply to 'Don,'" in "The Open Forum," The Western Producer, 11 Oct. 1928, 10.

¹⁴⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Building For the Future," The Western Producer, 16 June 1927.

¹⁴⁸ Minutes of UFC Executive Meeting, 20 March 1928, 12. Executive Minutes 1926-1949.

¹⁴⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Freedom of Thought or Dictatorship?" The Western Producer, 7 Nov. 1929, 38.

only a set of ideas about politics and social life, but also the idea that it was possible, even a duty, for people to change the economic and political system through co-operative action.

Annie Hollis's activism in the suffragist movement and in the Saskatchewan farm movement was an expression of her long-held values as well as an extension of her basic principles into new areas of political action. Her sense of purpose was supported by values of modernity – truth, justice, rationalism, and progress. The social position of her family in England, formally educated intellectuals in a working-class and rural milieu, likely was also influential in forming her political strategy of choice, a combination of popular education and class (and sex) solidarity, to be examined in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Annie Hollis's work as an organic intellectual

Introduction

The role of organic intellectuals in a social movement is to create counter-hegemonic knowledge based upon their own experience as members of a social group, and in the interests of the group concerned; to articulate and interpret that knowledge; and to create organizational places where further counter-hegemonic knowledge can emerge, and in which others also develop as organic intellectuals. The overarching goal of organic intellectual work is for the oppressed group to attain the power of self-government of their society.

The following pages will show some of the ways Annie Hollis worked as an organic intellectual of the Saskatchewan co-operative farm movement and of women within the movement during the 1920s. Her primary goal was to ensure that women in the farm movement were not marginalized, and that women's political rights were translated into actual gains in rural women's political power and living conditions so that they could take part in economic and political life on equal footing with farm movement men. In effect, Annie Hollis was an organic intellectual of a "class within a class": agrarian women within the predominantly patriarchal co-operative farm movement.

This chapter will look at some of the major issues Annie Hollis paid attention to during the 1920s: education as a political task for the co-operative movement, creation of counter-hegemonic pedagogical spaces for farm women, formation of an identity of women as economic and political producers, and the development of a sense of political power and responsibility among rural women.

Education

For a long time it has appeared to me that the two most important problems before us are education and economic conditions. Which is the cart and which is the horse? I incline to vote for education as the horse.¹

In the debate over the best way to organize the farm movement which preceded amalgamation in 1926, Annie Hollis was firmly in the camp that put a priority on building an enduring intellectual base for the long-term project of changing the basis of Canadian society from the competitive values of capitalism to the co-operative values of socialism. Her allies included Violet McNaughton, Ida McNeal, George Edwards, J. S. Woodsworth and others who are less well known.

Their opposition came primarily from members of the Farmers Union of Canada, a group that had formed as a response to dissatisfaction with the SGGA leadership in 1921, and which grew in strength through the campaigns to organize a province-wide wheat pool in 1923 and 1924.² In the context of the amalgamation discussions, the quotation that began this section marked Annie Hollis as a conservative in the eyes of Farmers Union men.³ However, her goals for the farm movement were far from conservative.

Hollis took the view that the kind of education chosen by a society largely set, and reflected, the priorities of that society. She worked on many fronts to establish in Saskatchewan an education system based upon Owenite socialist values. She taught in one-room country schools, and later, was a school trustee for the Anglo School District. She established and convened the Education Committee of the WSGGA where she pushed for higher standards of teacher training, better wages, and higher status of the teaching profession. As Woman President of the UFC she framed education as a means of ensuring the success of the co-operative movement into the coming generations.

In 1924 she wrote, "Education must not mean merely the eradication of illiteracy," but also a means of moulding the public mind, and thus the national character:

¹ A. L. Hollis, "Education," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 22 Oct. 1925, 11.

² Garry Fairbairn, From Prairie Roots, 7.

³ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 March 1938, 6.

"Hence the necessity that the citizens of this province and Dominion engaged in its 'basic industry', agriculture, must decide what they wish our education system to do for the children – the future citizens – and then try to devise means by which these ideals may be realized."⁴

In articles Hollis wrote for The Western Producer she used the examples of other countries, including Germany, Denmark, Japan and the United States, to show that choices made regarding education of the young were affected by the values and national goals of each country. Thus, she opened the purpose of the education system to scrutiny. She posed questions of how and why to educate as the concerns of farm women and men as citizens, instead of something best left to the educational experts.

Annie Hollis was concerned that neglect of education for rural children could lead to the farm people becoming both culturally ghettoized via second-rate education and geographic isolation, and economically marginalized due to exploitation by the large grain, railway, and mortgage companies. If farm people were to form a self-governing co-operative society, Annie Hollis believed they had to have well-trained minds. They needed to be able to make decisions based upon sound reasoning and good moral judgment. As she stated in her address to the 1928 convention of the UFC:

'Self-government means intelligence, self-control and capacity for co-operation.' This in turn involves training and education for life, not the education of a narrow scholastic type that is an end in itself, but rather that which will be an equipment for usefulness and service to others, an education or growth which can only end with life itself.⁵

Annie Hollis's long view of history and of the slow and steady pace of change led her to think in terms of generations, rather than years or even decades. Thus it was important to ensure the rising generation was well-equipped to take up the task of building a better society.

In tracing Annie Hollis's work in education we can see how the scope of her action expanded – from classroom teacher in 1915 to Woman President of the UFC in

⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Education: Its Function in Life of the Community," The Western Producer, 13 Nov. 1924, 11.

⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," 1928.

1929. At Numola School she set up a curriculum based upon co-operative principles. She refused to publish examination results in the local newspaper as was then common practice. She stood by her decision saying, rather than encourage a competitive "healthy spirit of rivalry," she preferred to promote a "healthy spirit of endeavour and a joy of achievement."⁶

She used what she termed "the Socratic method" to teach history and social theory in her schools. She was confident that her young pupils could learn to analyze their own social and economic conditions through an active, dialectic method of teaching and learning. She was opposed to too much memorization, as she felt it produced in students an aversion to learning. She emphasized the practical value of knowledge by integrating school lessons with the daily lives of the children.⁷ She also rejected the idea that education was "the pouring in of knowledge" to passive students, because she knew from her own teaching experience that even small children were capable of appreciating literature and the beauty of Nature.⁸ In the classroom Annie Hollis was able to use counter-hegemonic method and curriculum to support the interests of farmers' children. She aimed to build an intellectual and moral foundation which would facilitate the formation of a younger generation of organic intellectuals for the co-operative movement.

In her last two years as a teacher Annie Hollis also convened the first Education Committee of the WSGGA (1923 to 1925). The knowledge she gained through her own experience as a female worker in the education system and as a school trustee grounded her agenda in the committee. It focused on teacher training, teacher salaries, the status of teachers, and effective school financing.⁹ In this committee, the WSGGA went beyond what Gramsci called the "economic-corporatist" level of interest (that being the interests

⁶ A.L. Hollis, "Education," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 22 Oct. 1925, 11.

⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 1 April, 1939, 6.

⁸ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 27 Nov. 1924. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association 1912-1926.

⁹ A.L. Hollis, "Report of the Committee on Education," The Western Producer, 22 May 1924, 6.

of teachers as an occupational group) and tackled these issues as class and gender issues within the farm movement.¹⁰

In 1923 teachers could become qualified to teach in rural schools with as little as fifteen weeks of Normal School training. Teachers were paid low wages, and few stayed in the profession for very many years.¹¹ Annie Hollis argued for a longer training period and no differential between qualifications for rural and urban teachers. She argued that rural children deserved as good an education as town and city children and that country school teachers needed better training in order to have the self-confidence to do the job properly. She was convinced that better training and higher pay would lead to more permanence and higher status for teachers. In her view these improvements in working conditions would bring dedicated people into teaching as a career rather than as a stop-gap until a better position came along.¹²

Hollis thought better teacher training would also lend the teacher more authority to approach the task with a critical stance, and therefore, to teach in a counter-hegemonic fashion. Poorly trained and inexperienced teachers were more likely to perpetuate the old system: "I argue that one of the big defects of our present education is that memory and the textbook are too much in evidence. Successful teaching too often merely means 'getting children through the grade.' It has to conform to ideals of social and economic life — that 'success' can only be attained by ruthless competition."¹³

She expressed her ideas about teachers thus in a letter to Violet McNaughton: "I still think the teacher is more important than the text-book, they [sic] can be used to teach the horrors of war — and even Rule Britannia can be used to show them the need for different expression. I would use it as I would the 'damning psalms' &c. in the Bible to

¹⁰ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 16.

¹¹ Irene Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers, 1905-1920: Their Contributions (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing Ltd., 1990), 35-60.

¹² A. L. Hollis, "Education," The Progressive, 15 May 1924, 6.

¹³ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 15 Feb. 1934, 9.

show how we are developing."¹⁴ In effect, Annie Hollis was promoting the role of teachers as organic intellectuals instead of as mere technicians. Teachers with confidence in their ability to create new ways of teaching would be able to develop the intellectual base of the farm movement. A generation taught only obedience to the authority of textbooks which expressed the interests of the ruling class, would be detrimental to the movement.

Higher status and better wages for teachers might be seen as in conflict with the interests of farmers who paid the teacher's salary and upkeep of the school from local property taxes. Annie Hollis promoted the idea that ensuring a well-educated younger generation served the long range interests of the farmers movement. Rural children would thus be prepared to carry on the work for improved rural economic conditions in the future.¹⁵

In order to pay for an improved education system she supported equalized funding for school districts through the financial involvement of the provincial government. Education, she argued, was a concern for the whole province and nation. Taking responsibility for preparing the new generation of citizens was in the larger collective interests of society as a whole. The availability of good education should not depend entirely upon local economic conditions.

In the early 1920s education was assumed to be a women's issue within the farm movement.¹⁶ Most teachers were women. Teaching and child-rearing were both seen as women's work, so it was primarily the farm women, rather than the men, who discussed education problems.¹⁷ As a result, the formation of the younger generation was being accomplished through the unpaid and underpaid labour of women. Annie Hollis sought to raise the status of the work itself, and the economic power of the workers, by creating

¹⁴ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 19 Nov. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association 1912-1926.

¹⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Report of the Committee on Education," The Progressive, 22 May 1924, 6.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Child Nature and Training," The Western Producer, 28 Jan. 1926, 13.

favourable public opinion within the farm movement via The Western Producer and the SGGA conventions.¹⁸

One way she presented her ideas about education was by reporting on the Danish Folk High School system in The Western Producer. She emphasized how the Danes had been able to increase their prosperity by focusing on cultural and spiritual values (and not technical vocational programs) in their Folk Schools. She quoted from one of her sources: "A poor land may be made rich if there is a wealth of ideas among the people."¹⁹

She contrasted the existing school conditions of Western Canada with the methods of Denmark, a more fully developed rural co-operative society. She drew attention to differences between the two and asked readers to consider how the Saskatchewan education system might be improved. She invited readers to create a vision of education based on thoughtful consideration of possibilities for integrating academic, cultural, social, and economic knowledge with the goals and values of the co-operative movement and the practical daily lives of students.²⁰

Annie Hollis conducted her work as convenor of the Education Committee – doing the research, presenting the reports – in ways that engaged the participation of rank and file women in researching and reflecting upon their own local conditions. For example, she asked the women in each local to report on the qualifications of school teachers in their districts, on the number of students completing grade eight, and other similar concerns.²¹ This encouraged rural women to place their local situations into the broader economic and social picture. Annie Hollis published the Education Committee

¹⁸ "Education Report," Minutes of WSGGA Executive Meeting, 9 June 1925, 299. Saskatchewan Grain Growers, Women's Section Minutes 1919-1925.

¹⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Education Convenor's Report," The Western Producer, 12 Feb. 1925, 11.

²⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Rural Schools in Denmark," The Western Producer, 9 July 1925, 4; and A. L. Hollis, "Elementary Schools in Denmark," 16 July 1925, 4; and A. L. Hollis, "Relation of Education to the Cooperative Commonwealth," The Western Producer, 12 Nov. 1925, 3.

²¹ "Education Committee Report for 1924," WSGGA Annual Meeting, Jan. 1925. Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section, Convention Reports 1924-1926.

reports in The Western Producer to keep members in touch with work being done by WSGGA leaders, and also to provide topics for further discussion in local meetings.²²

When the Education Committee annual report was read to the whole convention of the SGGA in 1924, the discourse on education expanded from the realm of women's issues into the realm of movement-wide politics.²³ Two debates became prominent in the ensuing discourse: the debate over whether vocational training in agriculture should be taught in rural schools, and the debate over how co-operation should be taught.

There was a strong contingent in favour of a special curriculum for rural schools with added vocational or practical subjects for young children. Such a program would train the children to be farmers and reduce the numbers who left the farm when they grew up, these people argued. Annie Hollis was opposed to this position for two reasons. One was that she did not think a child's vocation should be selected for her or him at a young age. She felt this would likely limit the rural child's intellectual scope and consequently, his or her choices in life.²⁴ In her opinion children under the age of 14 were too young to decide upon a future occupation, and therefore should not be forced into agriculture just because they were born in a rural area. It bothered her that some people saw rural vocational training as a way to ensure young people would stay on the land. She wrote: "Agriculture is a dignified profession worthy of an equal place with all other arts and sciences. The farmer's child is entitled to choose his own profession. Too often he is looked upon as a source of cheap labour to be exploited."²⁵ Give all children, whether rural or urban, a good education, she urged, then see that economic conditions on the

²² "Put First things First," page edited by Annie L. Hollis, The Western Producer, 12 Feb. 1925, 9.

²³ SGGA Annual Convention, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. 23-25 Jan. 1924. Saskatchewan Grain Growers, Annual Conventions.

²⁴ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 5 May 1923. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers' Association 1912-1926.

²⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Rural Education," The Western Producer, 3 April 1930, 23.

farms were attractive enough to ensure young people would choose to stay.²⁶ As she wrote on the eve of the 1926 amalgamation convention:

By means of our co-operative enterprises we hope to do our own uplifting; to place the farming business more on the same footing as other business concerns – when our work shall receive returns which shall be an inducement to our young people to take up farming as their life work with the hope of being able to live a full and satisfying life on the farm.²⁷

The debate over teaching co-operation in schools was in many ways parallel to the vocational training debate. Some people suggested that co-operative marketing should be introduced as a school subject. However, Annie Hollis argued instead for teaching co-operation through all aspects of the curriculum – that actual methods of teaching all subjects should be based upon co-operative principles. In other words, she was advocating praxis, the unity of knowledge and experience:

What we must guard against however is the thought that co-operation is a subject which can be taught by means of set lessons in the same way as say arithmetic. Co-operation is a mode of life, a spiritual and mental atmosphere which must surround the lives of the younger generation and in which they must, to use a figure of speech, live, move and have their being. It must not be confused with the technique of Co-operative Marketing, which is more directly a matter for expert knowledge and practice.²⁸

In addition she promoted teaching the history of the co-operative movement. She felt that teaching the techniques of co-operative marketing without the context of the co-operative movement history would be a wasted effort.²⁹

Annie Hollis's 1929 Address was an important occasion where she expressed her ideas about education in the co-operative movement to the men and women delegates at the UFC annual convention. This speech was her last formal opportunity as an elected officer to speak to the movement as a whole, since leaders were limited to a two-year term of office. Her own approach to writing the speech and the audience's sense of its

²⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Rural Education," The Western Producer, 3 April 1930, 23.

²⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Looking Forward," The Western Producer, 1 July 1926, 13.

²⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Building for the Future," The Western Producer, 16 June 1927.

²⁹ A. L. Hollis, "The Co-operative Education Committee," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 10 Jan. 1929, 10.

significance were surely heightened by these circumstances. The address was printed in full in The Western Producer following the convention, which also attests to its perceived importance at the time.³⁰ The speech deserves close attention as it is a document where Annie Hollis summarized her views regarding the political role of education in developing an intellectual basis for the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan.

In this address Annie Hollis represented education as essential to the growth and survival of the co-operative movement, and as a matter that concerned all, not just women and children. She brought in the concerns outlined above in the preceding paragraphs, with which UFC members would be familiar, and put them into a larger political framework and a long-range perspective. She articulated the issues in such a way that they would be understood as parts of a larger political project, namely, bringing the intellectual development of the younger generation under the purposeful direction of the farm movement.

The gist of her talk is contained in the following paragraph:

The value of the great Co-operative movement, of which our organization is one of the most important factors, lies in the fact that we, men and women, are the workers and actors ourselves; we are *making* the movement what it is, and those who come after us will make, or mar, the movement in the future. This explains the general interest of Farm and Labor organizations in the spread of co-operative ideals among the young, for until we are one and all, old and young, thoroughly permeated with these ideals of working, learning and living together, Co-operation will never be the success for which we are all hoping.³¹

She cautioned against being satisfied with the simple economic successes of co-operative economic enterprises, and urged people to see these instead as means to an end. She said as "the advantages of co-operation as a method of existence become more evident; new possibilities rise before us ..." ³² Clearly she saw the new method of

³⁰ "The Retiring President Women's Section U.F.C. urges Higher Education," The Western Producer, 14 Feb. 1929, 18.

³¹ Mrs. Geo. Hollis, (Women's Section, United Farmers of Canada) "Presidential Address," The Third Annual Convention, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section Limited, Regina, February 12-15, 1929, 155.

³² *ibid.*, 156.

economic organization as creating situations where the creative power of farm people could be realized. The ability to take advantage of this potential, however, rested on being intellectually prepared to do so. As she put it:

The very complexity and the far-reaching connections of these co-operative experiments make the training and education of our youth of the greatest importance; this is why we insist that no group of men and women should be more concerned about the kind of education being given in our schools, and the aims of our education system, than are the members of the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section.³³

She expressed her conviction that establishing a society based upon co-operative principles was necessarily a slow process, and called for patience and determination. She contrasted the steady grassroots organizing efforts of the UFC with the "direct method of autocracy, or dictatorship, such as according to all accounts is being adopted in Italy [by Mussolini] at the present time."³⁴ Dictatorship and revolution might appear to be quick and easy ways to make improvements but, she argued, change that is made quickly may likewise be undone quickly.

She cited the example of large corporations in the United States using their influence on education methods and curriculum in American public schools. She drew attention to the parallel need for the co-operative farm movement to direct the nature of education in Saskatchewan's rural schools. She went on to pose a series of questions to her listeners regarding both the current state of rural education and their wishes concerning the future of education. These paragraphs of her speech again place education in the political realm, as a problematic, multi-faceted issue concerning leadership, control, values, and quality of life upon which members' opinions, put into action, could "make, or mar, the movement."

Having given this theoretical framework, Hollis proceeded to place the concerns which had been expressed through the Women's Sections regarding teacher training, rate of teacher turnover, size of administrative units, and the suitability of the school curriculum, into the larger political context of farm movement control of the education

³³ ibid., 157.

³⁴ ibid., 157.

system. She ended her speech with "Who can say then that Rural Education should not be a matter of deep concern to the farm people of Saskatchewan, or that it should not be made 'vocal' at this Convention?"³⁵

The speech was important in the farm movement as it located a "women's issue" forcefully in the general discourse of the organization. It articulated a counter-hegemonic way of thinking about education, and therefore the value of intellectual leadership in bringing about economic and political changes. The speech asserted Annie Hollis's belief that farm movement members had the capacity, as well as the responsibility, to be organic intellectuals who could create a form of government which would bring in a co-operative social and economic system.

Creating Pedagogical Spaces for Women in the Farm Movement

Social movement adult education is a process involving many people with a common interest in developing and advancing their alternative world views. It is essential therefore that spaces be created under the control of members of this rising group where new ideas can be discussed and put into practice. Gramsci saw this as the central function of the political party, as he broadly defined it.³⁶

One of the most important roles of the organic intellectuals is to organize and nurture these pedagogical spaces, as was outlined in Chapter One. In the Saskatchewan farm movement organizations the local clubs or lodges, as they were called, were key pedagogical spaces. The existence of the Women's Section lodges was critical for the development of women's political voice and subsequent power within the movement.

Annie Hollis was adamant that women have a place where they could overcome centuries of tradition as well as contemporary values which insisted that politics and economics were of no concern to women, and that women were incapable of understanding and speaking intelligently about public questions.³⁷ She worked to ensure that the Women's Section would exist as both a place where women could develop their

³⁵ *ibid.*, 158.

³⁶ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 15.

³⁷ Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers, 16-21.

political skills without interference from men, and at the same time, as a real power structure within the male-dominated farm organization.

Annie Hollis made a significant impact on the position of women in the farm movement through her ongoing attention to how women held power within the SGGA and the UFC. She asserted the importance of women taking full public roles and political responsibility within the movement.³⁸ Her overarching view was that a self-governing co-operative society is one with full and equal participation by men and women. In order for this to occur women had to overcome the beliefs of both men who relegated women to the home, and those women who did not yet have the confidence or skills to take on political work. This view of the situation allowed Annie Hollis to negotiate successfully the treacherous terrain between separate women's organizing that would likely result in near-powerlessness and irrelevance to male dominated politics, and mixed-sex organizing that would in all likelihood result in women being intimidated and pushed aside by the male members whose culture and experience told them that they had a greater right and ability to be public decision-makers.

The period leading up to the amalgamation of the FU of C with the SGGA provided an opportunity to make significant structural changes in the farm movement organization. Hollis was on the Amalgamation Committee, along with Mrs. Ida McNeal and Mrs. A.W. Selby. The women worked to abolish the separate Women's Board which tended in Annie Hollis's opinion to function as "a kind of a side-show." Instead, the women proposed to have women officers elected to the main Board by the whole Convention.³⁹

They faced opposition from the FU of C committee members on the issue of recognition of women as farmers.⁴⁰ These men were adamant about restricting membership of the new organization to "bona fide farmers" so as to assert and protect its

³⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Women in Politics," The Progressive, 31 July 1924, 6.

³⁹ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 20 Aug. 1932. Sophia Dixon, Private Papers.

⁴⁰ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Violet McNaughton, Harris 12 Jan. 1926. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association 1912-1926.

class integrity. The FU of C men's definition of "farmer" was implicitly masculine. The "bona fide" clause was intended primarily to restrict capitalist farmland owners such as bankers and mortgage companies from the organization, however it also had the effect of segregating the organization along sex lines as long as the concept of "farmer" remained exclusively masculine. Annie Hollis, Ida McNeal and Violet McNaughton pushed to open the definition to include farm women, whether they did field work, housework, or were owners of farms. The idea that farming was a partnership in which the productive labour of both husband and wife was essential to success supported including women under the "bona fide" clause. In discussing the problem with Violet McNaughton, Annie Hollis said,

If the bona-fide clause carries well and good – but it is very difficult to define and I believe it will come to question in usage of 'local option.' ... In Old Country Labour Unions a woman is eligible in any Union if she works that trade even if only 1 or 2 are workers, and that is my point with regard to our farm women. We are also *farmers*.⁴¹

In the months leading up to the July 1926 Amalgamation Convention, Annie Hollis had an internal struggle over what would be the most effective way for women to work within the farm movement. She felt it was important for women to have their own separate place to operate, to learn and develop free from the kind of intimidation and self-censorship which tended to occur when inexperienced women began to work with men. She knew, too, that many farm women preferred to organize and work separately from the men. It was safer for them to speak in front of other women, and easier to control the agenda of their own organization.

Yet Annie Hollis also strongly believed that the project of building a co-operative society was one where women and men had to work together. She refused to see "women's issues" as independent from the interests of the whole farm movement. Likewise she knew that a separate women's organization would have little real political power given the historical male dominance over political life.

Her struggle was between her own strong preference for women being organized as part of the mixed farmers group and the consequent potential for women to become

⁴¹ ibid.

more powerful leaders, and her allegiance to the democratic principle of majority rule, knowing many women preferred the older, safer structure. She spoke of her dilemma in a letter to Violet McNaughton:

I'm convinced too that our best women are just as much alive to the national problems as are the men; though of course I grant that there are hundreds of us whose horizon is bounded by recipes, fancy work &c. and not much more. Still if I were to take any action whatever along the lines of forming a separate Women's Organization, I should feel like a deserter, as if I had betrayed my trust.⁴²

Annie Hollis finally decided to support a structure where women would be members of the whole organization with equal standing to men, yet would still have the option of forming separate women's locals analogous to standing committees of the mixed local. By abolishing the separate Women's Section Board of Directors, the women would have to work hard to ensure that their agenda was taken up by the organization as a whole and not shunted off onto a sideline, as she felt often happened in the old SGGA structure.⁴³

The kind of struggle Annie Hollis went through in deciding upon her course of action is an integral part of the work of an organic intellectual.⁴⁴ A decision in these circumstances must be based on a counter-hegemonic analysis of the interests of her own sex and class. The majority may prefer to follow the path to which they have become accustomed as a result of the powerful ideological force which exists in the hegemony of the ruling class. To diverge from this path on the basis of her own understanding of the situation and faith in her own principles, and to take responsibility for a decision of this magnitude, took a great deal of courage.

At the Joint Amalgamation Convention there was a last ditch attempt to formally isolate women when a Mr. Hearne moved that the women form a separate organization. The motion was a surprise move, not dealt with through the Amalgamation Committee

⁴² ibid.

⁴³ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 20 Aug. 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 333.

process. Annie Hollis spoke to oppose Hearne's motion on the grounds of its content as well as the manner in which it was brought forward. By defending the original proposal, Annie Hollis defended the above-board process used in the Amalgamation Committee against back room "wire-pulling" tactics. She also defended women's authority to define their own political/pedagogical spaces. Hearne's motion was defeated.⁴⁵

The strength and increased numbers of women present at the 1926 convention was likely affected by Annie Hollis, Violet McNaughton and the other women leaders' efforts to raise awareness of the issues around amalgamation among rural women who read The Western Producer and attended talks at their local meetings.⁴⁶ In her column Annie Hollis urged women to fully discuss the upcoming convention issues in their club meetings so delegates could be confident they were representing the views of their local.⁴⁷ This was also a way to ensure that the discourse on women and amalgamation permeated the whole organization. Hollis also emphasized the importance of women translating their ideas into action. A month before the Amalgamation Convention she wrote: "If a woman tells me she has no time for politics, I tell her that the people who are working against our interests are finding time for politics and voting every time they have a chance."⁴⁸

The new arrangement adopted by the Convention raised the membership fee for women making it the same as men's fees and eliminated the Women's Board. Although allies Ida McNeal and George Edwards worried the changed structure would reduce the numbers of women in the organization, Annie Hollis thought it was worth the risk. Reflecting on this period, she later told Sophia Dixon:

I firmly believe that women will have to come out more into public and work with or against men as human beings even if it means we get hard knocks instead of silly sugary compliments which mean nothing. If rural women want to work alone, without the men, there is the Home Makers, a

⁴⁵ Official Report of Proceedings at Special Amalgamation Convention of SGGA Ltd., 1926, 125. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention, 1927-1947.

⁴⁶ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Violet McNaughton, Harris, 27 April, 1926. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association 1912-1926.

⁴⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Amalgamation," The Western Producer, 6 May 1926, 13.

⁴⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Politics," The Western Producer, 24 June 1926.

fine organization doing good work, but yet having little effective influence on public policies ...⁴⁹

Shortly after the 1927 Convention, the three women on the UFC Board, Annie Hollis, Ida McNeal and Mary St. John, proposed a committee structure "for the purpose of studying our general economic and social problems including those more directly touching the women and children." They suggested the committees make recommendations to the Board of Directors which would then be referred to a research department (if and when formed) "to compile suitable material for presentation to the Local-Lodges and for use by speakers." The committees and their personnel reads like a "shadow cabinet," reflecting a broad and comprehensive political perspective on how the province could be governed.⁵⁰

The UFC was actively preparing proposals for social and economic alternatives and setting its own political agenda, with the women directors taking a significant leadership role. The categorization of areas of concern for the committees reflects the priorities of the co-operative movement, indicating the UFC was more than an "unofficial Opposition" reacting to the existing government, but was pro-active, and in many ways acting like a political party in spite of its policy of not entering electoral politics. By organizing tasks and research areas the women were creating important pedagogical spaces in which knowledge was being developed for the farm movement as a whole.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 26 Sept. 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

⁵⁰ Suggested Committees: Legislation – Tegart, Robson, Mrs. Hollis; Home Economics – Mrs. St. John, Mrs. Moen; Public Health – Glassford, Wellbelove, Mrs. Hollis; Education and Rural School Administration – Williams, Mrs. Hollis; Marketing and Pools – McAuley, Mrs. St. John; Junior Work – Simmons, Mrs. McNeal, Mrs. St. John; Relief or Welfare – Mrs. Hollis, Mrs. McNeal, Mrs. St. John; Insurance – Bickerton, Mitchell, Bettschen; Rail Road Rates or General Transportation – Edwards, Hart; Banking and Finance – Robson, C. Coe; Immigration – Huddleston, Doe, Mrs. McNeal; Co-operative Buying – Murray, Williams, Edwards; Community Welfare – Stephens, McCloy; Live Stock – McCloy, Williams; Grain Pools – Stoneman, Murray.

Minutes, United Farmers of Canada Board of Directors Meeting, 9 April 1927, United Farmers of Canada, Executive Minutes 1926-1949 (1926-1927).

⁵¹ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 365.

However, resistance to women in farm movement politics continued and the political authority of women had to be defended. At the 1929 UFC Convention an attempt was again made to reduce women's formal participation in the organization. A motion was proposed to eliminate "the women's section" on the grounds that it was an unnecessary expense to have two sets of officers.⁵² Annie Hollis spoke to oppose the motion. It erred in matters of fact: The "women's section" under the new constitution was defined simply as the women members of the UFC. Therefore the motion, likely unwittingly, proposed eliminating female membership altogether. Secondly, the women directors were elected by the whole membership and operated as members of the UFC Board – there had not been a separate women's section board since 1926. Bringing her point home Annie Hollis finished her statement with: "Of course theoretically we have equal status but if you were a woman and were sitting down listening to you men talking you would realize that it is only in theory we have equality. And I of course oppose this [motion]."⁵³ It was defeated.

The women's locals of both the SGGA and UFC had to resist being relegated to the status of a Ladies Aid, a social club, or a "pink-tea" organization, as they were often portrayed by mainstream and left-wing presses respectively. Defending the seriousness of women's activities in 1924, Annie Hollis responded to an article in The Western Producer by A. J. Lewis, MP, in which he made disparaging statements about the participation of "the frail sex" in politics. Her reply was scathing. She suggested women would be no more extravagant than men have been in governing the country. She concluded with "One thing at least is clear – the 'strong sex' has not changed much since the days of Adam! They can still fall back on 'the woman whom thou gavest me.'"⁵⁴

In a pro-active vein, Annie Hollis presented the work of organized farm women in a short history of the WSGGA published on the eve of amalgamation. "We farm women

⁵² Annual Convention Minutes, 1929. motion by McNamee, seconded by Duric, 304-306. United Farmers of Canada, Annual Convention 1927-1947.

⁵³ *ibid.*, 336.

⁵⁴ A.L. Hollis, "The Frail Sex," in "Letters to the Editor," The Progressive, 27 March 1924, 5.

of Saskatchewan have every reason to be extremely proud of the pioneer women of this movement. Our section was never intended to function as what is sometimes referred to as a pink-tea association. From the beginning it has been an economic organization."⁵⁵

The difference between the "pink-teas" and the farm movement Women Section's was the fact the first was an expression of the separate spheres ideology in a political context, while in the latter, real power was in the hands of the women. Annie Hollis and her allies realized that power would not be given to the women – the women had to create their power within the organization, something which could only be done if women took responsibility to make changes. It was no use waiting for someone else to do it.

Annie Hollis was clear that real public responsibility was necessary for the political development of women. It was not enough to have the right to vote and to exercise it by simply registering her choice of delegate, candidate, or party. It was necessary for women to take part in creating parties, issues, policies, and take the consequences, good or bad, of doing so.⁵⁶ In effect, women had to become producers of political initiatives and have a stake in the success or failure of their own proposals.

Through her use of The Western Producer and the offices she held in the SGGA and UFC Annie Hollis helped to define pedagogical spaces where women's political agency could be nurtured. In this she was very explicit, as she wrote to Miss Lenhard, the WSGGA office worker, "We must try especially to stress the advantage of taking our paper [The Western Producer] and following up the Committee Work as there referred. It ought to form a good 'co-ordinating agency' for the Clubs."⁵⁷

Annie Hollis and Violet McNaughton worked together on the "Mainly For Women Page" of The Western Producer to raise issues and create a political discourse on the conditions of farm women's everyday lives.⁵⁸ They also used the paper as an

⁵⁵ A. L. Hollis, "Looking Backward," The Western Producer, 1 July 1926, 13.

⁵⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Women's Aptitude For Public Housekeeping," The Western Producer, 5 Sept. 1929, 20.

⁵⁷ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon to Miss Lenhard, Regina 12 Jan. 1926. Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section, General Correspondence.

⁵⁸ Violet McNaughton, Harris, to Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, 21 Aug. 1919. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association 1912-1926.

organizing tool.” To some extent their columns could be seen as a recruiting medium, but much of Annie Hollis’s writing was aimed at women who were already part of the movement. She urged women to take an active part in their locals, framed farm movement issues in the context of women’s lives, and suggested controversial topics for discussion in lodge meetings.⁶⁰

The paper was a pedagogical space in itself since it presented knowledge produced by the organic intellectuals of the farm movement for the purpose of further organizing the movement. It provided a place for the creation of a discourse on women’s lives, opening topics for discussion that were otherwise taken for granted, letting women know they were not alone in their dissatisfaction and in their dreams for a better life.⁶¹

Annie Hollis’s column “With Women Grain Growers” (1924 to 1926) and “With Organized Farm Women” (1926 to 1929), and the pages devoted to youth which were conducted by other farm movement women, stand out among the regular columns and features of the paper in that they often dealt specifically with developing the organizational skills of the readers.⁶²

Another important pedagogical space that Annie Hollis influenced was the Farm Women’s University Week, first held in June 1928. The UFC women organized a week of activities which included speakers, home economics demonstrations, and social and cultural events for farm women. For some who attended it was their first holiday in over ten years. These women valued the break from their hard work at home and the chance to

⁵⁹ Violet McNaughton, Harris, to Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, 22 Feb. 1925. McNaughton Papers, Western Producer, General 1924-1926.

⁶⁰ See “Put First Things First,” The Western Producer, 12 Feb. 1925, 9. A whole page is devoted to education issues. Ideas are presented and suggestions made for discussing and acting upon ideas at the local and provincial levels. Suggested topics for debate included: ‘Are we getting value for money spent on education?’ ‘What is education: mere gaining of knowledge or development of faculties and character?’ ‘Are we an educated nation?’ ‘Do our present educational system and methods repress or develop individuality?’ ‘Do we make an ‘idol’ of arithmetic?’

⁶¹ Christa Scowby, “I am a Worker, not a Drone’: Farm Women, Reproductive Work and the Western Producer, 1930-1939,” Saskatchewan History (Fall 1996): 3-15.

⁶² A. L. Hollis, “Use of the Open Shelf Library for Meetings,” The Western Producer, 28 Jan. 1926.

take part in serious discussions which honed their collective ability to generate and accomplish their own political agenda.

We wanted to try a new experiment: i.e., that the women members of our organization should meet and discuss special problems which might not otherwise receive due consideration. We wished, so to speak, to boil down our ideas and crystallize them for presentation to the main convention of men and women.⁶³

In setting up the program for Farm Women's University Week, Annie Hollis was careful not to schedule speakers too tightly. The experts had their role in providing valuable information to the women, but she emphasized that it was in discussing ideas and proposals for action that leadership development took place. This is what Annie Hollis valued most highly and saw as the most important outcome of the University Weeks.⁶⁴

Women as Economic and Political Producers

Annie Hollis saw the economic status and political status of women as completely intertwined. The political project of the emancipation of women was only just begun with the attainment of the vote. Real equality and justice were still far off. "We are self-governing as far as political life goes (at least nominally) but we must gain more control over our economic life also."⁶⁵

One of the constant refrains in Annie Hollis's writing was that women's work was economically productive and women had a right to the full value of their labour. She asserted that farm women had a claim on income generated on the farm, as well as to the property itself, since their labour helped to create the wealth. In her 1926 radio broadcast

⁶³ A. L. Hollis, "Mrs. Hollis Says ...," The Saskatchewan Farmer, 3 Jan. 1938, 6.

⁶⁴ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 6 March 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

⁶⁵ Open letter from Annie Hollis to the Executive of the WSGGA, 14 May 1923. McNaughton Papers, Women Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926.

to the general public she stated that a central aim of the organized farm women was "that no longer should our industry be dependent on the unpaid labor of women and children."⁶⁶

She also put the struggle for economic rights in the historical and theoretical contexts of traditional culture, the industrial revolution, and capitalist exploitation of labour. In her 1928 Presidential Address to the UFC Convention she said:

Large numbers of girls and women were forced to leave their homes and take a share in the industries developing on every hand. In doing so they have had to struggle against a mass of taboos and restrictions that had grown up during the past centuries. Even when performing the same task as men they were given lower pay often simply because of their sex. In many cases men were completely shut out of certain branches of work because women could be engaged to do it more cheaply. Thus women were affected in two ways during the 19th Century, they were forced into competition with men in labor markets of the world, and the work of the homemakers or housekeepers as wives and mothers was in many cases reduced to a part time job, or became merely routine work.⁶⁷

By putting the issue of the economic position of women into historical context she presented it to the farm movement as something which was subject to change and part of a legitimate political struggle. Discussing women's work and its rewards as historically and culturally created offered alternatives to the old maxim, "women's work is never done."

Over several years Annie Hollis articulated both the value of farm women's labour and the fact that it was not being counted in official statistics. She repeatedly drew attention to census labour statistics in which farm labour was defined as exclusive of housework: "Many of these workers act as cook, housemaid, nurse, teacher and seamstress or dressmaker, yet according to the census she (not long ago) was stated to be of "No occupation"! In our farm homes most domestic workers add to the above the

⁶⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Value of Organization for Farm Women," transcript of radio talk printed in The Western Producer, 23 Dec. 1926, 13.

⁶⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," 1928.

occupations of gardening, poultry raising, dairy work, etc. Yet she is not an agriculturalist!"⁶⁸

She also challenged the idea that payment of wages alone defines the worker:

Is the housewife a 'worker'? To many of us such a question borders on the ridiculous, but when we come down to cold economic facts as tabulated in the "Census of Occupations" we find that the housewife is conspicuous by her absence. In other words, she is not a wage-earner, therefore political and social science has hitherto held that a married woman, looking after her own household and family ... is not a 'worker' in the technical sense of the term because she is not 'gainfully employed'.⁶⁹

There are parallels between the concerns Annie Hollis expressed about the status of peasants under feudalism and those regarding the economic status of prairie women. Tradition and the political and economic structure resulted in both women and peasants being born to their inferior economic status, neither having control of money or property. Both were expected to labour long unpaid hours – women, for love of husband and children, serfs out of loyalty and obligation to landlord. Neither women nor peasants were provided with much formal education or a choice of occupation. Annie Hollis's emphasis on the economic value of domestic work was a way of promoting an identity of women as economic producers who were being exploited, in contrast to the notion that women's unpaid drudgery in life was pre-ordained, and that virtue lay in accepting it without complaint.

She cited a set of statistics which reported the number of women gainfully employed in the United States. She inverted the report's findings by subtracting the number of employed women from the total population of women, and commented "That an additional 21,000,000 were employed 'without gain' is a fact we are curiously prone to ignore."⁷⁰ She reversed the commonly held notion that being a housewife was not of economic value. Instead she highlighted the injustice of housewives doing valuable work

⁶⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Home Economics: Why Not Elevate the Kitchens?" The Western Producer, 26 Sept. 1929, 21.

⁶⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Women of No Occupation: Universal Discrimination Against Housewives," The Western Producer, 14 Nov. 1929, 18.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

without due pay. This is one way Annie Hollis took information created within the hegemony of the dominant system and re-presented it to support the interests of the oppressed.

Her purpose in emphasizing the exploitation of women's work was to create the opinion among women that their activities were affected by larger economic and political structures, and that these structures could be changed if women organized to make the changes. Her attitude was never simply to bemoan the victimization of farm women, but rather, that by becoming conscious of injustice women could fight it.

From 1923 to 1925 Annie Hollis was convenor of the Legislation Committee of the Women's Section. This committee was one of the earliest established in the WSGGA. In 1923 its priority was to amend the laws regarding women's property rights. One of the major concerns was succession of property when the owner, usually male, died without leaving a will. Annie Hollis not only studied existing law and proposals for change, but worked at creating public opinion among farm people that would see the desired changes get political support.⁷¹

She examined proposals for the joint ownership of property by husband and wife, including the bill Irene Parlby had introduced to the Alberta Legislature, under the title "Community of Interest or Joint Ownership of Property."⁷² In early 1926, in Annie Hollis's judgment, "much education is necessary before we could advise the passing of any compulsory measure along these lines ..." She recommended that all WSGGA locals study the laws concerning joint ownership of property in order to help create the requisite public opinion. She said, "Such ownership would we believe, be especially applicable to Western farms, where women have worked equally with men to obtain ownership [likely

⁷¹ "Legislative Committee Report" Minutes of Annual Meeting of WSGGA, Jan. 1925. Women's Section, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Minutes.

⁷²

"Report of the Legislative Committee 1925-1926," presented by Annie Hollis. Minutes of 1926 Annual Meeting, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section, Convention Reports 1924-1925.

referring to conditions for settlers obtaining title to land under the Homestead Act]."⁷³ As an interim measure she publicized how existing law could be used by married couples who wished to voluntarily establish joint ownership of their property.⁷⁴

Annie Hollis also asserted women had a right to income earned on the farm. Otherwise, better grain prices would not provide better living conditions for farm women. For example, she pointed out that many farm homes lagged behind the farm machine shops where the quality of equipment was concerned. Men, with the grain cheques in their own names, would buy new field implements while their wives' housework continued to consist of unnecessary toil.

When you step from the modernized farm yard and into the farm home ... what do you find in this woman's domain? Why, you go back a whole generation, living conditions have not kept pace with the economic returns from the crops ... Farm women were beginning to wonder why they have put up with old-fashioned methods of doing their work when the barn and the implement shed are modernized ...⁷⁵

When in 1926 the UFC annual membership fee was set at the same rate of \$5.00 for both men and women, there was a certain amount of resistance. To convince women to pay the new higher fee to support their organization, Annie Hollis presented arguments asserting the equal value of men's and women's political work in the farm movement, and the right of farm women to have access to and control over an equal share of income produced on the farm. She said that by not embracing the equal fee structure, women were cheapening their own work and undermining their ability to organize and agitate for better economic conditions.⁷⁶ She further suggested that women pay their UFC fee using the Wheat Pool's requisition system. The \$5.00 payment would come directly from the

⁷³ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Miss Lenhard, Regina, secretary of SGGA, 11 Jan. 1926. Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section, General Correspondence 1922-1926.

⁷⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Legislation Affecting Women," The Western Producer, 17 March 1927, 8.

⁷⁵ "Stoneman Talks Pool and UFC," The Shaunavon Standard, 28 June 1928.

⁷⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Do Women Wish for a Smaller Fee?" The Western Producer, 16 Oct. 1926, 16.

farm's grain sales. This is how many of the farm movement men paid their fees. By suggesting this method of payment, she further strengthened the identity of women as economic producers on the farms.⁷⁷

One of the initiatives of the WSGGA was the creation of an Egg and Poultry Pool. The new co-operative was informally known as "the Women's Pool." It was a way for women to take greater control of their economic resources. For many, it was one way "to have a dollar to call their own."⁷⁸ They co-operated to get better returns for their labour in raising chickens, and in addition took on the management of a large economic enterprise. This task provided a way for women to gain valuable experience in economic self-government. Annie Hollis was not directly involved with the egg and poultry co-operative, other than being a contract signer herself, but she urged women to take part in every aspect of the pool. When a poultry culling course being offered by the university was attended only by men, she addressed the issue in her Western Producer column. "It is a great commercial undertaking, with a woman president and five women directors. If women are qualified for directing the work of the pool, then women can qualify themselves for any work required in 'our pool'."⁷⁹

Hollis also used the Egg and Poultry Pool as an entry point for women to study economic and political theory. This was another way she connected the small and local with the international and structural. She wrote, "Now, with our first attempt at co-operative marketing of our by-products [egg and poultry], we ought to determine to study the latest methods and theories of finance. Do not think it is too difficult or 'dry'. Our lives – and those of our children – are vitally affected by such methods and theories."⁸⁰ The Egg and Poultry Pool was another pedagogical space for the farm movement women. It provided an opportunity for women to learn to operate a large

⁷⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Value of Organization for Farm Women," The Western Producer, 23 Dec. 1926, 13.

⁷⁸ A. L. Hollis, "Joint Ownership of Property," The Western Producer, 13 May 1926, 13.

⁷⁹ A. L. Hollis, "With Women Grain Growers", The Western Producer, 15 July, 1926, 13.

⁸⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Child Nature and Training," The Western Producer, 28 Jan. 1926, 14.

co-operative enterprise in their own interests and thus take on a form of self-government and a measure of economic self-reliance.

Annie Hollis advanced a discourse on the value of domestic work and the relationship of its exploitation to the sex of workers. She suggested that certain kinds of work were low paid because they were done by women, not because the work was less valuable.

Have you ever heard the expression "That is a good wage for a girl?" regarding payment evidently being given to the sex of the worker, rather than to the kind of work done. Notice in harvest time that women working on cook cars are rarely paid as high wages as men or boys, even though their hours are longer and the work very strenuous.⁸¹

She called for sex solidarity, for women to unite in recognizing the economic value of women's work. The value of women's domestic work could not be fully realized as long as women assisted in keeping wages low for the domestic help they employed. She pointed out that women who could afford to hire help often were happy to exploit other women's labour. She wrote:

Only a certain section of women has been freed from slavery, and I am often tempted to think these who have thus freed themselves are unwilling to emancipate the home workers because they want to keep their services in the home for themselves, so that they, the emancipated, may be free to devote themselves to higher interests. This is exactly the attitude of men in 1850.⁸²

In tandem with her opposition to exploitation of domestic workers, whether low-paid maids or unpaid housewives, she suggested that labour-saving technology be applied to domestic work in order to increase the leisure time of women, rather than to reduce paid employment for workers (and labour costs for owners) in manufacturing industries. This approach resonates with the old Owenite belief in the potential for developing new technologies for the purpose of lifting the burdens of routine labour from working people's lives in order to increase both leisure and quality of life for all.

⁸¹ A. L. Hollis, "Is Lack of Supply of Domestic Workers Due to Low Status?" The Western Producer, 18 Oct. 1928, 18.

⁸² A. L. Hollis, "Home Economics: Why Not Elevate the Kitchens?" The Western Producer, 26 Sept. 1929, 21.

Alongside her efforts to have housework recognized as economically productive, Annie Hollis asserted the right of women to paid employment in whatever field they chose, whether married or not. In 1930, the Federal Government restricted married women from working in the civil service. Annie Hollis strongly protested this, pointing out that these restrictions were not being applied to the lowest paid occupations: "We have not yet heard it stated that any married woman working as a charwoman or office cleaner have been dismissed by the federal or provincial government ..."⁸³ The effect of the restriction was to reserve the best paying jobs for men. Nor were the restrictions applied to the highest levels of service, as Annie Hollis pointed out, when a married woman was appointed to the Senate with motherhood being touted as one of her qualifications.⁸⁴ By exposing these contradictions she interrupted the logic of the ruling class, showing it was based on political interests favouring male employment, and not on reason or Nature.

Annie Hollis put the question of women's right to employment into the larger framework of capitalism as a system which produces unemployment and misery. It distressed her that many farm women supported restrictions on married women's employment in order to reduce competition for jobs their sons and daughters were seeking.⁸⁵

Hollis saw the danger in restricting women's economic freedom as a political issue related to the growing danger of fascism in Europe and fascist sentiment in Canada. In a letter to The Western Producer's women's page, she quoted Frau Emmy Freundlich of the International Women's Co-operative Guild, who said, "Hitlerism is a danger to women all over the world, and women's organizations should make this clear. Victory for Hitlerism means defeat for women's equality."⁸⁶ Hollis connected the international

⁸³ A. L. Hollis, "Should Married Women Be Gainfully Employed?" The Western Producer, 27 Feb. 1930, 23.

⁸⁴ A. L. Hollis, "Recommendations re: Married Women," in "The Open Forum," The Western Producer, 3 April 1930, 10.

⁸⁵ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, letter to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 28 Sept. 1932. Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

⁸⁶ A. L. Hollis, "Women's Freedom," The Western Producer, 31 Aug. 1931, 10.

economic and political situation to that of women in Saskatchewan: "Housewives as an occupational group are practically unorganized, and therefore an easy bait. If we submit quietly to a boycott on our public activities [referring to the ban on married women's employment] we will deserve all we may get; attacks on other groups will follow."⁸⁷

Creating a Consciousness of Leadership Among Women

One of Annie Hollis's strongest convictions was that women had to take responsibility for political decision-making once they had the right to vote. Instead of resigning themselves to poverty and exploitation, she urged rural women to take political action to change conditions.

She turned the ideology of separate spheres inside out. In her columns she showed example after example of how world economic conditions affected the everyday life of the housewife, and how continued reliance upon the unpaid labour of women and children was detrimental to the farm movement as a whole. She asserted that in order to take care of her home, the wife and mother had to be involved in public political and economic decision-making. "Let us mind our own business – that of governing ourselves," she said.⁸⁸

Many times in The Western Producer she connected simple everyday activities to major economic structures and political concerns.⁸⁹ For example, when the Wheat Pool was under attack for raising the price of wheat, and thus bread (an attempt by capitalists to undermine socialist strength by dividing organized labour in Eastern Canada from organized farmers in the West), Annie Hollis asked farm women to report on the local price of bread in order to expose the political motivation of this attack.⁹⁰

Likewise she maintained the quality of home life was a political issue. She said, "... what is to be the nature of the home in the new social state which is gradually

⁸⁷ ibid.

⁸⁸ A. L. Hollis, "The Men Who Stay," The Western Producer, 2 Sept. 1926, 13.

⁸⁹ A. L. Hollis, "Politics and Economics," The Western Producer, 15 July 1926, 13.

⁹⁰ A. L. Hollis, "Our Co-operative Efforts," The Western Producer, 11 March 1926, 13.

developing? Are we as citizens going to leave this problem to haphazard chance, or are we going to assist actively in making our homes what we think they should be?"⁹¹ If women were over-worked, unpaid drudges with conventional ideas and narrow horizons they would not be able to properly carry out their existing responsibilities, particularly for child-rearing, which would be detrimental to society as a whole. She suggested that the growing professionalization of many aspects of home life, such as education, medicine, and child-rearing, might be a socially detrimental trend. She thought training parents to better perform these duties was preferable to taking responsibilities away from them.⁹²

One of the important tasks of organic intellectuals is to become able to lead. Through socialization the oppressed are trained in obedience and resignation so as to fulfill their function of working in the interests of the rulers. In this case, rural women were trained to serve both farm men as well as the capitalist class, through domestic service to the former and by subsidizing agricultural production and the raising of the next generation of workers via their unpaid labour for the latter.

In order to become self-governing, the oppressed need to overcome the mentality of servitude, obedience, and adjustment to conditions they assume to be beyond their control, and learn how to lead, make decisions and live with the consequences, to plan and co-ordinate, to discern their own real interests and act accordingly. Developing this consciousness of leadership among oppressed people is a vitally significant process in a social movement.⁹³

Annie Hollis urged women to take up this mentality of leadership when she spoke of "throwing off slavishmindedness" and "working out our own salvation." The first meant to think independently, not to merely repeat the thoughts of those who are able to wield more power: in effect, to resist the hegemony of the ruling class. The second meant farm women, and the co-operative movement in general, needed to take action in their own interests and not wait for others who were more powerful to save them, or solve their

⁹¹ A. L. Hollis, "Presidential Address," 1928.

⁹² A.L. Hollis, "The Modern Home," in "Open Forum," The Western Producer, 11 June 1931, 7.

⁹³ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 16.

problems for them. These qualities are essential to self-government. At times Annie Hollis was rather harsh in goading women into action. Yet her assumption that women do have the capability to lead and direct, and that women's situation was a product of history and culture and therefore not inevitable, must have been heartening to women in the co-operative movement.

During the campaign on the 100 Percent Pool referendum in 1931, farm women held considerable power. The organized farmers had succeeded in getting the Government of Saskatchewan to draft a bill that would see all wheat grown in the province sold through a farmer-controlled pool once two-thirds of farmers had joined the pool voluntarily. The law was contingent upon a referendum in which a majority of farmers in Saskatchewan would approve or reject the proposal. Annie Hollis moved a resolution in the Shaunavon District of the UFC that would explicitly include farm women on the voters list.⁹⁴ The resolution was passed then sent on to the Minister in charge who approved the change.

That women were to vote in the 100 Percent Pool referendum was significant in a number of ways. It advanced the identity of women as farmers. It also required the men of the organization to take seriously the power of the women to sway the vote. As Hollis said in a letter to Sophia Dixon, "I believe the 'powers that be' in our wheat Pool [sic] are beginning to realize that farm women can wield a tremendous power over this Referendum vote ..."⁹⁵

The debate on "compulsory pooling," as it was also called, was very lively and at times acrimonious. Women's votes could not be taken for granted by either side. Annie Hollis and Mrs. Pearl Johnson went on an extensive and well-publicized speaking tour where they were able to discuss this issue with farm women.⁹⁶ Hollis wrote a pamphlet called "Mainly For Women" in which she emphasized to women the importance of their

⁹⁴ "Grain Growers Hear 100 P.C. Pool Discussed," The Shaunavon Standard, 12 Feb. 1931.

⁹⁵ Annie Hollis, Shaunavon, to Sophia Dixon, Unity, 5 April 1931. Sophia Dixon, Private Papers.

⁹⁶ The Western Producer, 23 April 1931, 20. Photos of the two women with a caption indicating they will be doing a speaking tour on the topic of the 100% Pool issue.

taking part in the vote as a political responsibility, along with arguments in favour of 100 Percent pooling. She concluded the pamphlet with:

Study the problem for yourselves, do not be misled by the plausible tales of what "the Grain Trade" has done, and will do to help you and your family; look over the history of farm organizations in Canada and realize that the real helpers of the farm people have always been themselves.⁹⁷

The referendum did not take place in the end because the proposed legislation was challenged in the courts and declared *ultra vires*, or outside of provincial jurisdiction. But the campaign itself constituted an important pedagogical space where farm movement women's power was exercised and advanced.

Conclusion

Annie Hollis's work as an organic intellectual in the farm movement was characterized by a strong commitment to the efficacy of developing a responsible, critical, and informed intellectual base among farm women and men for the achievement of substantial long term gains for the co-operative movement. Through her writings, her speeches, and her actions she questioned hegemonic assumptions about rural life, the role of women, the purpose of education, and the divergence of interests between men and women. Her passion for change was based both upon idealism coming out of her intellectual roots in the British left and women's suffrage movements, and upon her life experiences as a farm woman, female school teacher, and political activist. She asserted the necessity of women taking responsibility for self-government against hegemonic prescriptions that women suffer and serve in silence.

Annie Hollis believed that farm men and women had the capacity to develop their abilities to lead and to become a self-governing society if they had the faith and courage to take up the task. She viewed education as a place where children's intellectual abilities could be developed in order for them to later advance the interests of farm people. At the same time she urged adults to govern the methods and purposes of their children's education system as a way to enhance their collective goals. In effect, Annie Hollis

⁹⁷ A. L. Hollis, "Mainly for Women" Grain Marketing Act Pamphlet #11, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, April 1931, 8.

viewed education as a means to permeate society with organic intellectuals, as opposed to education being a system for simultaneously sorting workers into jobs and reproducing a traditional intellectual elite.

By identifying the Women's Sections of the SGGA and the UFC as economic and educational associations, as opposed to social service organizations or pink-tea clubs, Annie Hollis was instrumental in ensuring that pedagogical spaces were available for women to develop their own political theory and practice, and again, become knowledge producers instead of mere consumers. In promoting an identity of women as economic producers she was laying the ground for women's legitimate participation in political decision-making. By urging women to be producers of their own political initiatives, rather than passive consumers of male-defined political choices, she identified women as responsible, and therefore powerful leaders. Her work encouraged women to see the legitimacy of the concerns that rose out of their own lives, the efficacy of improving their lives through political action, and their own capacity to organize themselves for leadership and self-government.

CHAPTER FIVE

Implications of Annie Hollis's Work for Adult Educators

This story of Annie Hollis's life and work as a woman, an educator, and a political activist in Saskatchewan's co-operative farm movement is part of the "struggle of memory against forgetting"¹ that is an element of every movement for emancipation. The hegemony of the ruling class continually erases the histories of the social groups it dominates. But knowing our past gives us strength in our present day struggles. The values and beliefs we absorb through our socialization can be traced historically and thus become open to scrutiny, and accepted or rejected with deeper understanding. As Gramsci put it, "The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory."²

Adult education has a long history: our foremothers and forefathers have many descendants who are now working in varying degrees of isolation. If the roots of the oak tree Annie Hollis envisioned go deep, the branches also spread far, and each leaf sustains the life of the whole. Searching out connectedness to our own histories can contribute to our ability to create alliances in our work as adult educators.³

In the course of writing this thesis I have learned much about Annie Hollis, reading and rereading documents, her seventy years' life compressed into the files of

¹ bell hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990), 147. She writes: "Throughout Freedom Charter, a work which traces aspects of the movement against racial apartheid in South Africa, this statement is constantly repeated: *our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting.*"

² Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 324.

³ Anne Bishop, Becoming An Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1994).

papers before me. I also learned from her; she became a mentor. I know I will always be able draw upon the knowledge I have gained from Annie Hollis and her engagement with the rural women and the co-operative movement of Saskatchewan. Her example of courage, hard work, clear thinking, and commitment to her ideals inspires and supports me in my writing, my adult education projects, and in the political work I do.

Witnessing the collision of this compassionate, intelligent, strong-willed, courageous woman with patriarchal conventions highlighted for me how much has been accomplished by the women of past generations, as well as the fact that much of the tradition, culture, and legal structure of patriarchy remains in our psyches and our institutions. As Annie Hollis said in 1926, "Let us never descend to the smallness of belittling the work of those who have gone before; rather let us try to be more worthy of the heritage they have left us, and recognize that 'others have labored, and we have entered into their labor.'⁴"

If past struggles can be made meaningful in our present political work, we can be better prepared to defend the heritage of values and institutions that are important to us. Many of the issues Annie Hollis and her contemporaries addressed in the 1920s are still alive today: there has been a resurgence of "competitiveness" as the key to economic survival; women's labour is still routinely unpaid or underpaid, democracy tends to be popularly conceived as an intermittent consumer activity undertaken only at election time; the emphasis on primarily vocational education for young people has re-emerged; "women's issues" continue to be politically marginalized and defined as a "special interest." At the same time, gains made in the early decades of the century such as co-operative grain marketing, socialized medicine, and equitable, reliable funding for public education are being steadily dissipated. An organic intellectual response is needed to counteract the continuing hegemony of laissez-faire capitalism.

I also think it would be worthwhile for adult educators to reflect upon Annie Hollis's dedication to youth and her understanding of social change as inter-generational. It does not seem to me that the lives of young people are being addressed seriously enough in much of the adult education discourse. Yet with official rates of youth

⁴ Annie Hollis, "Looking Backward," The Western Producer, 1 July 1926, 13.

unemployment around twenty percent in Canada, high rates of teen pregnancy and child poverty, and the financing of post-secondary education being shifted from governments to individuals via student loans, economic, social and intellectual support gained for the younger generation in the 1960s and 1970s is increasingly being withdrawn in the present decade. Adult educators may find it helpful to revisit the idea that young people are going to carry our work into the future. Adult education's role could certainly be more far-reaching than the training of young adults to fit into a shrinking and increasingly stratified labour force.⁵

Popular education in Western industrialized societies has always been embedded in politics. In the early years of Wesleyan Methodism, new converts and children were taught to read the Bible at Sunday schools, but they were not taught to write. Reading the Word was understood to be a pious activity, but members of the lower classes producing their own written word was seen by traditional secular and religious leaders as arrogant and dangerous to the social order.⁶ In the 1830s, the elite's control over the education of working people was seen by Chartist leader and co-operative publicist William Lovett as the upper class "seeking to perpetuate that state of mental darkness most favorable to the securing of their prey."⁷

Annie Hollis had the benefit of an extensive formal education. She was very well read, but did not simply absorb the words of others. She also wrote, as a farm woman and as a female teacher, pointing out contradictions between the taken-for-granted role of women and the conditions of their actual lives. She affirmed the moral and intellectual capacity of women to produce effective political ideas and to act upon them. She exposed and undermined the separate spheres ideology through her actions as well as in her writings.

The task of producing and communicating counter-hegemonic political ideas is still relevant work for adult educators as organic intellectuals. In some respects, Western

⁵ Mechthild U. Hart, Working and Educating For Life: Feminist and International Perspectives on Adult Education (New York: Routledge, 1992), 63.

⁶ Silver, The Concept of Popular Education, 17.

⁷ *ibid.*, 23.

society has returned to a state where people are encouraged to read passively, and the opportunities to create counter-hegemonic ideas are weakened or undermined. Though the internet is often touted as increasing popular access to information and ideas, it still functions within a narrow population sector which is even further divided into specialized niches. Access is limited to those who have access to and are able to use computers. I would argue that the "Open Forum" pages of The Western Producer in the 1920s and 1930s offered much greater opportunity for expressing and developing counter-hegemonic ideas to a broader sector of the population, even considering the barriers of language and subscription cost, than does the internet today.

In the 1990s people are inundated with information produced by others, much of it broadcast from far away through satellite systems. Television networks provide a stream of pundits who produce commentary for mass consumption, but there are few places in everyday life for people to come together to create and refine their own political ideas. In this relative vacuum, there must be opportunities to create situations where people can talk about their own experience, and recognize and analyze the contradictions in hegemonic capitalist ideology. Adult educators as organic intellectuals have a role in organizing these alternative spaces.

A key insight that has come out of this thesis is an understanding of the relationships between the political values of individuals and the structures of social group organization. The relationship between Annie Hollis and the SGGA Women's Sections and the UFC was certainly reciprocal. It has become clear to me that there needs to be both the agency of individual organic intellectuals and the relationships which they structure through their organizations' counter-hegemonic pedagogical spaces in order for either the individual or the organization to be effective. The SGGA Women's Section is one example of the kind of social structure Gerda Lerner has identified as key to the development of feminist consciousness for women:

Unlike the social spaces in which women could have equal or nearly equal leadership roles, but in which the hegemony of men remained unchallenged – such as the salon, the Utopian communities, the socialist and anarchist parties – these all-female spaces could help women to advance from a simple analysis of their condition to the level of theory formation. Or in other words, to the level of providing not only their own

autonomous definition of their goals, but an alternative vision of societal organization – a feminist world view.⁸

One of the most important roles of the organic intellectuals is to speak openly about assumptions regarding who can lead, speak, vote, or act, and then to challenge these assumptions by creating, developing, and defending counter-hegemonic pedagogical spaces where they live and work. This is an aspect of Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual which, in my opinion, has not been given enough attention in the field of adult education. The significance of organic intellectuals is not only derived from their social allegiances, but also from the responsibility they take on in organizing political action.

As a woman who refused the patriarchal prescription for women's lives, Annie Hollis is a particularly significant model of organic intellectualism. She was surrounded by ideas of femininity that declared women were biologically incapable of responsible decision-making on public matters. In addition, the class she was born into was not socialized for leadership, but instead socialized to implement the decisions of the patriarchal middle and upper classes. Annie Hollis resisted her culture's assumptions about class and sex roles, and in so doing, created new possibilities for herself and others.

Annie Hollis went beyond recognizing the contradictions of class and sex barriers in political life. She took the step from the position of critic into the responsibility of leadership, a necessary step for a person to take in order to function as an organic intellectual.⁹ This is a challenge that faces adult educators, especially those working in institutions and academia.¹⁰ They hold positions which allow them to learn, analyze, and develop a critique of things as they are. To take this knowledge and join it to commitment and action entails risk, responsibility, and the possibility of real change.¹¹ Adult educators

⁸ Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness, 279.

⁹ Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 333.

¹⁰ Kathleen Rockhill, "Challenging the exclusionary effects of the inclusive mask of adult education", proceedings of Educating the Adult Educator: Role of the University Michael Collins, ed., 1995, 1-6.

¹¹ Michael Collins, Adult Education as Vocation: A Critical Role for the Adult Educator (New York: Routledge, 1991), 111.

committed to being organic intellectuals avoid the cynical fatalism that deems no intellectual responsibility is required of individuals; the stagnation of activists who, rejecting theory, rebel but do not create; and the false innocence of traditional intellectuals who deny their tacit commitment to the hegemonic relations of dominance by claiming political neutrality.¹²

The field of adult education has been characterized as one split ideologically between "professionalized" and "transformative" pedagogies.¹³ The former's adherents include authors such as Malcolm Knowles, Allen Tough, and Cyril Houle – men who have written in support of the professionalization of the field and whose work is located within the hegemonic apparatus of mainstream education for a capitalist society. Others are committed to the counter-hegemonic practices of emancipatory adult education, including authors bell hooks, Mechthild Hart, Phyllis Cunningham, Myles Horton, Paulo Freire, and many who do not identify themselves primarily as "adult educators."¹⁴ Annie Hollis is located in this latter category. She certainly saw herself as an educator, and an educator of adults, but her commitment was to changing the world, not to advancing the field of adult education, nor to legitimizing her educational practice within the existing power structures of her day.

This biographical study of Annie Hollis, an organic intellectual of farm women and the co-operative farm movement, provides a connection between past and on-going struggles for social justice, and it enriches the theoretical basis for emancipatory adult education responses to the challenges of our day. I have learned much from Annie Hollis. I hope this study begins to do her justice and will be a contribution to extending her legacy into the next generation. As Annie Hollis said, "... everything is possible to men and women armed with faith and courage. Let us face the future with a cheer."¹⁵

¹² Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 337 on mechanism; 12 on the traditional intellectual's political role; Gramsci, Pre-prison Writings, 130, on the anti-intellectualism of anarchists.

¹³ Collins, Adult Education as Vocation, 118-120.

¹⁴ Rockhill, "Challenging the Exclusionary Effects", 1.

¹⁵ "Mrs. Hollis Analyses Past and Present Position of Women," The Shaunavon Standard, 15 March 1928.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Unpublished Sources

"Anonymous." Interview with author, Shaunavon, 4 Sept. 1994.

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Provincial Constituency Files, 1932-1950,
Shaunavon (1933-1937). Saskatchewan Archives Board,
Saskatoon.

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. CCF (Saskatchewan Section) Elections:
Provincial Campaign Speakers, 1934. Saskatchewan Archives Board,
Saskatoon.

Dixon, Sophia. Private Papers. Courtesy of Georgina Taylor, Saskatoon.

Edwards, George. United Farmers of Canada Correspondence, 1927-1929. Saskatchewan
Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Edwards, George. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1926-1939. Saskatchewan Archives
Board, Saskatoon.

Farmers Union of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Amalgamation Records. Saskatchewan
Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Force, Art. Interview with author, Shaunavon, 3 Sept. 1994.

Lidfors, Kay. Interview with author, Shaunavon, 28 Aug. 1995.

McNaughton, Violet. Women's Grain Growers Association, 1912-1926. Saskatchewan
Archives Board, Saskatoon.

McNaughton, Violet. Western Producer, General 1924-1926. Saskatchewan Archives
Board, Saskatoon.

McNaughton, Violet. Personal Correspondence, Hollis, 1938-1942. Saskatchewan
Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Reid, Norman H., Keeper of Manuscripts and Muniments, University of St. Andrews Library, Fife, Scotland. Letter to the author, Saskatoon, 1 Feb. 1996.

Saskatchewan Department of Education. Records of the Department of Education, School Inspection, Inspectors' Annual Reports. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina.

Saskatchewan Department of Education. Records of the Department of Education, Minutes of Annual Meetings, 1915-1926, Anglo SD #516; Marcliffe SD #3355; Nummola SD #3520; Vidora SD #3576. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina.

Saskatchewan Department of Education. Records of the Department of Education, Saskatchewan Teaching Profession, Files of Former Teachers, 1926-1928, A. L. Hollis (1926). Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Annual Convention, 1919-1925. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Amalgamation Conference, 1925. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Amalgamation: Minutes of Meetings, 1925-1927. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section. Convention Reports, 1924-1926. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section. General Correspondence 1922-1926. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, Women's Section. Minutes 1919-1925. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Amalgamation Records, 1925-1926, Amalgamation Conference, 1925. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Amalgamation: Minutes of Meetings, 1925-1927. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Swanson, W.W. Royal Commission on Immigration and Settlement, 1930. Vol. 1 no. 29, Friday April 4, 1930. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Executive Minutes 1926-1949. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Annual Convention 1927-1947.
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Farm Women's Week:
Correspondence, 1928-1932. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Report of Proceedings of United
Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section Limited, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,
Feb 12 to March 2, 1928. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Wilkins, Maria. Private Papers, Shaunavon.

Wilkins, Maria. Interview with author, Shaunavon, 3 Sept. 1994.

Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. General Correspondence
1922-1926. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. Convention Reports
1924-1926. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon.

Published Sources

Adamson, John William. English Education 1789-1902. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1964.

Alpern, Sara, Joyce Antler, Elizabeth Israels Perry and Ingrid Winther Scobie, eds. The
Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the Lives of Modern American
Women. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Armstrong, Paul F. "L'Ordine Nuovo: The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci and the Education
of Adults." International Journal of Lifelong Education Vol. 7 no. 4 (Oct-Dec.
1988): 249-259.

Beer, M. A History of British Socialism. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948.

Bishop, Anne. Becoming An Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression. Halifax:
Fernwood Publishing, 1994.

Bonner, Arnold. British Co-operation: The History, Principles, and Organization of the
British Co-operative Movement. Manchester: Co-operative Union Ltd., 1961.

Broag Bell, Susan and Marilyn Yalom, eds. Revealing Lives. Albany: State
University of New York Press, 1990.

- Castle, Barbara. Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1987.
- Chilcote, Paul W. She Offered Them Christ: The Legacy of Women Preachers in Early Methodism. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Collins, Michael. Adult Education as Vocation: A Critical Role for the Adult Educator. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Courville, Leo David. "The Saskatchewan Progressives." Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1971.
- Cunningham, Phyllis M. "From Freire to Feminism: the North American Experience with Critical Pedagogy." Adult Education Quarterly Vol. 42 no. 3 (Spring 1992): 180-191.
- Currie, Robert. "Methodism Divided." In Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England, edited by Gerald Wayne Olsen. Landham, MD:University Press of America, 1990.
- Davidson, Alastair. Antonio Gramsci: Towards an Intellectual Biography. London: Merlin Press, 1977.
- Evans, Richard J. The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920. London: Croom Helm, 1977.
- Fairbairn, Brett. The Meaning of Rochdale: The Rochdale Pioneers and the Co-operative Principles. Saskatoon: Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, 1994.
- Fairbairn, Garry. From Prairie Roots: The Remarkable Story of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984.
- Forgacs, David, ed. A Gramsci Reader. London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1988.
- Foster, Jason. "Business Bias in the Media: It All Depends on Your Point of View." Briarpatch Vol. 26 no. 5 (June 1997): 5.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. Feminism Without Illusion: A Critique of Individualism. London: University of North Carolin Press, 1991.
- _____. "Placing Women's History in History." New Left Review 133 (May-June 1982): 5-29.
- Freire, Paulo. Education for Critical Consciousness. New York: The Seabury Press, 1973.

- _____. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.
- Garrison, Dee, "Two Roads Taken: Writing the Biography of Mary Heaton Vorse." In The Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the Lives of Modern American Women, edited by Sara Alpern, Joyce Antler, Elizabeth Israels Perry and Ingrid Winther Scobie. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories. (Originally published in 1892). New York, Penguin Books, 1995.
- Gramsci, Antonio. Pre-Prison Writings. Edited by Richard Bellamy, translated by Virginia Cox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- _____. Selections From Political Writings (1910-1920). Edited by Quintin Hoare. London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1977.
- _____. Letters from Prison. Selected and translated by Lynne Lawner. London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973.
- _____. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.
- _____. The Modern Prince and Other Writings. London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1957.
- Harrison, John F. C. Utopianism and Education: Robert Owen and the Owenites. New York: Teachers College Press, 1968.
- Hart, Mechthild U. Working and Educating for Life: Feminist and International Perspectives on Adult Education. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. Writing A Woman's Life. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain." History Today Vol. 7 (1957): 115-123.
- Hoffman, George. "The Saskatchewan Farmer-Labor Party, 1932-1934: How Radical Was It At Its Origin?" Saskatchewan History Vol. 28 (1975): 52-64.
- Hollis, A. L. "What Are Farm Women Thinking?" The Country Guide, 1 Nov. 1928, 20.
- _____. "Western Farm Women's Organizations" The Canadian Forum, April 1930, 238-239.

- _____. "Women's Organizations in Saskatchewan." The Farm and Ranch Review, 1 May 1930, 20.
- _____. "Grain Marketing Act #11: Mainly For Women." (Regina: Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., April 1931).
- Holton, Sandra Stanley. Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Hommen, Leif. "On the Organic Intellectualism of Antonio Gramsci: A Study of the Concept as a Contribution to the Politics of Adult Education." Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1986.
- hooks, bell. Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990.
- hooks, bell and Cornel West. Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life. Boston: South End Press, 1991.
- Horton, Myles and Paolo Freire. We Make The Road By Walking. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.
- Iles, Teresa, ed. All Sides of the Subject. New York: Teachers College Press, 1992.
- Irwin, Robert. "'The Better Sense of the Farm Population': The Partridge Plan and Grain Marketing in Saskatchewan." Prairie Forum: The Journal of the Canadian Plains Research Center Vol. 18 no. 1 (Spring 1993): 35-54.
- Jahn, Cheryle. "Class, Gender and Agrarian Socialism: The United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, 1926-1931." Prairie Forum: The Journal of the Canadian Plains Research Center Vol. 19 no. 2 (Fall 1994): 189-206.
- Kinnear, Mary, ed. First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1987.
- Knuttila, Murray. "That Man Partridge": E. A. Partridge, His Thoughts and Times. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994.
- Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy. Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Lichtman, Susan A. Life Stages of Woman's Heroic Journey. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991.

- Lipsett, S. M. Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- Marshall, Rosalind K. Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980. Chicago: Academy Chicago Ltd., 1983.
- McDermid, Jane. "Women and Education." In Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945, edited by Jane Purvis. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Middlebrook, Diane Wood, "Postmodernism and the Biographer." In Revealing Lives, edited by Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Miley, (Rev.) John. Treatise on Class Meetings. Cincinnati, Swormstedt & Poe, 1854.
- Mill, John Stuart. The Subjection of Women. Edited by Susan Moller Okin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988.
- Moffatt, Aileen. "Great Women, Separate Spheres, and Diversity: Comments on Saskatchewan Women's Historiography" In "Other Voices": Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women, edited by David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995.
- Morgan, W. John. "The Pedagogical Politics of Antonio Gramsci: 'Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will.'" International Journal of Lifelong Education. Vol. 6 no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1987): 295-308.
- Muir, Elizabeth Gillan. Petticoats in the Pulpit. Toronto: The United Church of Canada Publishing House, 1991.
- Olsen, Gerald Wayne, ed. Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England: The Halevy Thesis and Its Critics. Lanham, New York and London: University Press of America, 1990.
- Owen, Patricia. "'Who would be free, herself must strike the blow': The National Union of Women Teachers, Equal Pay, and Women Within the Teaching Profession." History of Education, Vol. 17 no. 1 (1988).
- Peacock, Sarah. Votes for Women: The Women's Fight in Portsmouth. City of Portsmouth: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1983.
- The Personal Narratives Group, eds. Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Prell, Riv-Ellen, "The Double Frame of Life History in the Work of Barbara Myerhoff." In Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory of Personal Narratives, edited by The Personal Narratives Group. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

The Progressive. Aug 1923 to Sept. 1924. (became The Western Producer).

Quilligan, Maureen. "Rewriting History: The Difference of Feminist Biography." Yale Review 77 (March 1988): 259-286.

Robinson, James Franklin. "Reification and Hegemony: The Politics of Culture in the Writing of Georg Lukacs and Antonio Gramsci (1918-1938)." PhD Thesis, McGill University, 1983.

Rockhill, Kathleen, "Challenging the Exclusionary Effects of the Inclusive Mask of Adult Education", In Proceedings of "Educating the Adult Educator: Role of the University" Conference held in Canmore, Alberta, May 14-17, 1995, edited by Michael Collins, 1-6.

_____. "Between the Wars: Liberalism and the Eclipsing of Conflict in the Framing of Adult Education." In Proceedings of the 25th Annual Adult Education Conference, held in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1984, 159-164.

Rosen, Andrew. Rise up Women! The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

Saskatchewan. Parliamentary Guide, 1931, 272

The Saskatchewan Farmer. Dec. 1932 to July 1941.

The Saskatchewan Farmers Political Association, "Constitution." Saskatoon, (Saskatchewan Archives Board Pamphlet Collection, n.d.).

Scotland, Nigel. Methodism and the Revolt in the Field. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1981.

Scott, Joan Wallach. Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Scowby, Christa. "'I Am A Worker, Not A Drone': Farm Women, Reproductive Work and the Western Producer, 1930-1939." Saskatchewan History (Fall 1996): 3-15.

Semple, Neil. The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

The Shaunavon Standard. 1914 to 1941.

Simon, Brian. Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965.

Semmel, Bernard. "The Methodist Revolution." In Religion and Revolution in Early-Industrial England: The Halevy Thesis and Its Critics, edited by Gerald Wayne Olsen. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

Silver, Harold. The Concept of Popular Education. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1965.

South Shaunavon History Club. Quarter Stake Echoes -- Area South of Shaunavon. Shaunavon: South Shaunavon History Club, 1981.

Spender, Dale. "Learning to Create Our Own Knowledge." Convergence Vol. 13 no. 1-2 (1980), 14-23.

Taylor, Barbara. Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

_____. "Socialist Feminism: Utopian or Scientific?" In People's History and Socialist History, edited by Raphael Samuel. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Taylor, Georgina. "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later? The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and their Participation in the Homemakers Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967". In Women: Isolation and Bonding -- The Ecology of Gender, edited by Kathleen Storrie, 79-100. Toronto: Methuen, 1987.

_____. "'A Splendid Field Before Us' Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909 to 1926." In Proceedings of Canadian Historical Association Conference held at Carleton University, Ottawa, 1991.

Taylor, Jeffery. Fashioning Farmers Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994.

Thomas, Lewis H. "A History of Agriculture on the Prairies to 1914." In The Prairie West: Historical Readings, edited by R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 221-236. Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985.

Thompson, Dorothy, "Women and Nineteenth-Century Radical Politics: A Lost Dimension." In The Rights and Wrongs of Women, edited by Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, 112-138. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1976.

Thompson, E. P. The Making of the English Working Class. Aylesbury Bucks: Hazell Watson & Viney Limited, 1968.

Trofimenkoff, Susan Mann, "Feminist Biography." Atlantis 10 (Spring 1985): 1-9.

Tropp, Asher. The School Teachers. London: William Heineman Ltd., 1957.

United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. The Third Annual Convention.
United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section Limited, Regina, February 12-15, 1929.

Wearmouth, Robert. "Loyal and Liberal Methodists." In Religion and Revolution in Early-Industrial England: The Halevy Thesis and Its Critics, edited by Gerald Wayne Olsen. Landham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990.

Werner, Julia Stewart. The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.

Welton, Michael. "Gramsci's Contribution to the Analysis of Public Education Knowledge." Journal of Educational Thought Vol.16 no. 3 (Dec. 1982): 140-149.

West, Cornel. Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism (Vol II). Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993.

_____. The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991.

The Western Producer. 1924 to 1941.

Williams, R.J.D. "New School for the Deaf" The Western Producer, 31 Oct. 1929.

Wilkins, Maria. "A Tribute to Annie Hollis" The Shaunavon Standard, 1975.

Women's Auxillary, Farmers Union of Canada. "Constitution and Bylaws." Farmers Union of Canada. (Saskatchewan Archives Board Pamphlet Collection).

Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. "Yearbook." 1915, 1917, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924. (Saskatchewan Archives Board Pamphlet Collection).

Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. "The Women's Section: Past, Present, Future." Regina: Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, 1923. (Saskatchewan Archives Board Pamphlet Collection).

Wood, Louis Aubrey. A History of Farmer's Movements in Canada. (Reprint of the 1924 edition). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975.

Vicinus, Martha. Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972.