CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
A Tale of Two Cemeteries: Aboriginal and Oblate Space, Control, and Identities

"Because she was not Catholic she was buried outside the cemetery, and you find a lot of that through our nation here. You ask people, "are there any graves outside the cemetery?" They would not let anyone in unless they were Catholic"

-Michael Kelly, Shxwõwhámél
Resident, BC

"It caused a lot of pain and problems for community people…we did not understand a lot of the laws involved in being a Catholic"

-Dorothy Dubrule, Île-à-la-Crosse
Resident, SK

Growing up during the last decades of Oblate cemetery control, Stó:lõ Michael Kelly and Métis Dorothy Dubrule came to understand first-hand how spatial policies and practices of the Catholic church divided their spiritual communities. Until the 1960s the Catholic missions of Île-à-la-Crosse (ILX) and Shxwõwhámél (SHX), along with much of the rest of the Catholic world, adhered to the lingering ultramontane system of Catholic policies of inclusion and exclusion of deceased remains in Catholic burial sites. According to Catholic policy, only blessed souls could be interred in Catholic cemeteries; stillborn infants, undisciplined Catholics, and non-Catholics were excluded. Not until Vatican II (1963-65) were such policies revised by Rome. In Aboriginal communities where familial networks were paramount, these divisions caused significant internal problems. The exclusion of non-blessed Catholics from Catholic cemeteries is one example of the way in which aspects of cemetery space came to be associated with concepts of indigenous self identity. This study illustrates how aspects of Oblate doctrine both complemented and conflicted with Aboriginal systems of understanding, and how cemeteries serve as theatres for political, social, and spiritual power conflicts. As well, this study will examine mnemonic aids within cemeteries and the effect these artefacts

have on identity formation and kin relationships. This comparative analysis narrates Aboriginal agency at the micro and macro levels, and explores the remnants of a cultural identity struggle between two different world views as evidenced by the silent markers still standing in the stillness of the cemetery. It also shows how Oblate and Aboriginal perspectives, whether complementary or contradictory, operated in ways that just as often enhanced aspects of one another's authority as it undermined it.

This introductory chapter argues the relevancy of cemetery spatial analysis as an appropriate and effective methodology and ethnohistorical tool. Likewise it advocates the merit of such an approach conducted in conjunction with an assessment of individual Aboriginal communities and also explored within the broader context of Canadian and Oblate historiography. I begin with a brief account of my engagement with ILX and SHX and close the chapter with a framework of my approach and outline.

The cemeteries of Shxwõwhámél (SHX), a Stó:lõ community along British Columbia's lower Fraser river, and Île-à-la-Crosse (ILX), a Métis settlement in Saskatchewan's northern Churchill river system, were both established alongside their respective chapels during the mid-nineteenth mission fervour of *les oblats de marie immaculée* (OMI). Founded in post-revolutionary France, *les oblats* would become a veritable, yet tenuous, intruder in Canada's Aboriginal northwest. Following in the wake of the Hudson Bay Company's York boats and canoes, the OMI's purpose was not economically motivated like their fur trading rivals, but spiritually guided. Their paternalistic *mission civilitrice*, to baptise and civilize the Métis and First Nations of the northwest, was carried out with zealous determination along these trade route missions. Not without agency, the Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse and Stó:lõ of Shxwõwhámél, responded

in different ways to this acculturative force. In reaction to the difficulty of retaining

converts, the Oblates attempted to adopt some syncretic methods to increase the number

of parishioners. These mission sites manifest not only the syncretic and often-

acculturative relationship between Oblate and Aboriginal, but also reveal diverse

intersections of spirituality, culture, disease, of the familial and personal, of local history

and at times larger trends. [1] Aspects of regional and native-newcomer experience become

spatially pronounced when analysing these cemeteries within their historical contexts.

In terms of syncretism, this study relies on a wide variety of scholarly studies of

cemeteries that will help to me analyse complementing and competing cultural values. In

addressing the dominance of archaeology in mortuary studies, Margaret Cox in her article

about an English 19th century cemetery concludes that "the lesson … is that osteologists

who are studying historic cemetery samples must collaborate with historians."[2] Along

these lines, in April of 2001 ethnoarchaeologists Lynn Gamble, Phillip Walker, and

Glenn Russell published the results of their research of a Chumash Aboriginal cemetery

in present-day California. In their preamble, they highlight the importance of their

methodological approach, stating that beyond the discipline of archaeology, "new

approaches to mortuary analysis are needed that emphasize the many ways in which

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[1] Abel describes the syncretism of modern Mackenzie basin Dene culture as non-static while maintaining "a sense of cultural distinctiveness in the face of overwhelming economic, political, and cultural pressures from the Europeans", see *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*. (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2005) p. xi; In *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. (New York: Routledge, 1994). Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart discuss the changing definition of syncretism. For them, older references to the word implied "inauthenticity or contamination," but with the "simmering scepticism about perennial, stable 'traditions," boiling over into scholarly discourse, syncretism has come to embody a new and different meaning: "An optimistic view has thereby emerged in post-modern anthropology in which syncretic processes are considered basic not only to religion and ritual but to 'the predicament of culture in general;" see p. 1. For the purpose of this study, this will provide a workable definition.

[2] Margaret Cox, "Lessons From Spitalfields," *Grave Reflections: Portraying the Past Through Cemetery Studies*, Shelley Saunders, Ann Herring eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1995), p. 28.

ideology and ritual behaviour can transform social reality."[3] Four years later, Wendy

Ashmore and Pamela Gellar collectively published their Mayan archaeological

examination "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Space," also noting that "in short, we need

fuller examination and comparison of mortuary space across social class, gender, age and

other social signifiers…. This bespeaks a regional approach, crosscut by examining

dimensions of time and social identity."[4] Collectively, the literature on mortuary studies

highlights the need for historic mortuary analysis that emphasizes regional spatial

representation and has the potential to contribute not only to mortuary studies, but also to

our understanding of the Aboriginal past and self-identification.

A study of an Aboriginal cemetery also necessitates the importance of

acknowledging cultural relativity. Marshall Sahlins understood the importance of

comparative cultural studies when he noted "if the past is a foreign country, then it is

another culture." Sahlins was comparing the nineteenth century Polynesian War of the

conservative Rewa and naval Bau to the Spartan and Athenian Peloponnesian war of fifth

century Greece. In his discussion of the comparison, he comes to the same conclusions

of former American Civil war comparative historian Basil Gildersleeve, that what was

"found to be similar in the two wars was common to all the wars." [5] Although this study

does not entirely adhere to the same approach as Sahlins, searching, and discovering

similarities amongst diverse entities is an important quest of this thesis.

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[3] Lynn H. Gamble; Phillip L. Walker; Glenn S. Russell, "An Integrative Approach to Mortuary Analysis: Social and Symbolic Dimensions of Chumash Burial Practices**,"** *American Antiquity*. Vol. 66, no. 2 (Apr., 2001), p. 186.
      [4] Wendy Ashmore and Pamela Gellar, "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Space," *Interacting with the Dead: Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millennium*, G.F.M. Rakita et al., eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), p. 92.
      [5] Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa*. (Chicago: University Press, 2004), p. 3, 17.

My comparative research of the Île-à-la-Crosse graveyard in Northwest Saskatchewan and the Shxwõwhámél cemetery in the lower Fraser Canyon of southern British Columbia attempts to broaden the scope of Métis historiography which has, to date, been heavily influenced by what Professor J.R. Miller describes as "Red River myopia,"[6] and a First Nations scholarly literature tradition that has privileged archaeology over historical analysis. A spatial analysis of the cemetery, mapping the cemetery, recording the epitaphs, and talking to elders, provides a culturally sensitive understanding of Aboriginal cemeteries. Often, in terms of Aboriginal cemeteries, researchers turn to the tools of the archaeologist and study material remains. Usually, this approach has currency in cemeteries that are no longer used and as a result, communities have less of a concern regarding exhumation. However, communities whose cemeteries are currently used will often balk at the use of traditional methods of archaeological cemetery analysis which often includes removal or displacement of artefacts. Such is the case of the ILX and SHX cemeteries where a more culturally sensitive approach was necessary as both sites are presently in use. The findings of this research suggest that a spatial analysis approach such as the one used in this study would also benefit archaeological research in areas where contemporary sites still hold currency among community members.

Unlike archaeological research, a comparative regional and spatial ethnohistorical analysis of the Île-à-la-Crosse and Shxwõwhámél cemeteries has the potential to elucidate aspects of the past without disturbing and destroying the historical features.[7]

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[6] J.R. Miller, *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 54.

[7] *Grave Reflections: Portraying the Past Through Cemetery Studies*, Shelley Saunders, Ann Herring eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1995), p. 4.

Supplementing monument data with oral histories suggests a culturally sensitive interpretation of regional history. Because cemeteries are a present-day physical manifestation of a people's historical recollection, studying gravesites enables scholars to understand how space is used to bridge a people's past memory to their present social understanding. Such an approach is central to this study.

In the case of cemetery documentation, local parish priests often stood to gain from the church's early monopoly on demographic administration: baptisms, marriages, and burials. Taking advantage of the vast amount of data in their control, cemetery information published by clergy historians often subscribed to the providential history of church-sponsored academics. However, in the nineteenth century this power base changed as bureaucratic authority was slowly transferred from church to state. The changing of the administrative guard was lamented by clergy such as Father Brabant, a New Westminster Diocese Oblate, who noted in his article "Historical Notes of Victoria Cemetery" that "Before Canadian Confederation, the church registers were the legal registers...th[is] old system worked satisfactorily."[8] Although Father Brabant may have preferred ecclesiastical claim to cemetery documentation, the transfer ultimately benefited secular scholars as cemetery information became more accessible at a time when academic professionalism was improving.

The first university discipline to engage in analysing cemeteries was anthropological studies, although its members were uninterested in studying contemporary sites at the time. The temporally myopic, albeit well intentioned, desire to retain Aboriginal knowledge and artefacts increased in response to threats of a "vanishing

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[8] Auguste Joseph Brabant, "Historical Notes of Victoria Cemetery," in *The B.C. Orphan Friend* (Victoria, B.C.:s.n., 18??), p. 6.

Indian" race at the end of the nineteenth century.[9] In this curatorial climate cemetery analysis proved a useful source of ethnographic data for anthropologists. In his 1878 analysis of a Pueblo settlement along the Rio San Juan, anthropologist Edwin Barber took special note of the area's "extensive graveyard."[10] Five years later Royal Geographic Society member A.P. Maudslay mapped and observed many abandoned native cemeteries during his Guatemalan expedition. As these early publications note, most research into burial grounds focused on ancient cultures, predominantly ones that no longer existed that is, salvage ethnography. The same is true in the case of the Stó:lõ, where Charles Hill-Tout documented Stó:lõ burials and customs in anticipation of their decline, highlighting the currency of salvage ethnography well into the twentieth century.[11] These studies also demonstrate that by the end of the nineteenth century cemeteries had become standard academic resources to be mined like archives, often without Aboriginal involvement or consent. By the late 1980s Harold Mytum was commenting in *World Archaeology* that "there has been an increasing interest … in the study of funerary remains of the recent past."[12]

With regard to the Oblate presence in Canada, more recent history has focused on the Oblate missionary works in the west. The Western Oblate History Project has brought more contemporary analysis of the Oblates. Raymond Huel's *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* takes on the large task of describing the Oblates across the prairies, and Vincent McNally's 2005 thorough analysis of Oblates in B.C.,

[9] See for example Brian Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy.* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Press of Kansas, 1991), p. 56.

[11] Charles Hill-Tout, *The Salish People, Volume I-III:* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978).

[12] Harold Mytum "Public Health and Private Sentiment: The Development of Cemetery Architecture and Funerary Monuments from the Eighteenth Century Onwards," *World Archaeology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, The Archaeology of Public Health. (Oct., 1989), p. 297.

The Lord's Distant Vineyard, provides background information regarding some of the history of the Oblates in British Columbia.

The first of the Oblate History Project volumes (1967), by Donat Levasseur, OMI, provided the foundation for missionary history in western Canada. Huel kindly describes Levasseur's work as "reflect[ing] the strengths and the deficiencies of a history from the pen of a participant."[13] Much of the early historiography of this era is permeated with such strengths and deficiencies. Writing of the Oblate mission, *Lac Ste. Anne Sakahigan*, Emeric O'Neil Drouin OMI presents an extensive history that remains nonetheless rooted in the triumphalist historiography upon which many twentieth century Catholic narratives were based. Drouin writes about the "Red Indians"[14] and their spirit lake briefly before moving on to discuss the nomadic Aboriginals and their eventual decline:

> Finally, with more foresight than the indigenous people the Black Robes foresee the total disappearance of the buffalo from the prairies, a fact which occurs in the late seventies. Hence their sustained efforts to change the life habits of Indians and Métis from the hunters' nomadic style to that of the farmers' sedentary one.[15]

Drouin, and many other Catholic historians of the time, adhered to the civilization thesis, whereby the Oblates saved the Aboriginals from a backward, uncivilized nomadic life, or worse, a future plagued by western vices and degradation by superimposing a settled, temperate agricultural lifestyle on them. The civilization thesis was timely, especially as it justified early missionary work, in an era when Oblate involvement in Aboriginal education was in decline, and had begun to be questioned.

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[13] Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, p. ix.

[14] Emeric O'Neil Drouin, *Lac Ste. Anne Sakahigan*. (Edmonton: Éditions de L'Ermitage, 1973), p. 3.

[15] Drouin, *Lac Ste. Anne Sakahigan*, p. 15.

The proximity to major transportation routes and the growing Vancouver metropolis, combined with the distinct Pacific coast Aborginal culture has gained the Stó:lõ a significant amount of scholarly attention over the last century. Beginning with Franz Boaz's salvage ethnography of the turn of the 20th century, to Marion Smith, Wilson Duff, and many others anthropologists who have collected important oral histories throughout the 20th century, scholarly research, despite some professional bias, has accumulated a considerable amount of information regarding the Stó:lõ. This historiographical development continues as many historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists tackle the complex history of Pacific slope Aboriginals. Even so, anthropologist Wendy Wickwire has noted that recent scholarship has "been slow to incorporate strong indigenous perspectives because of its dependence on [such] an ethnographic archive that is largely devoid of cultural context."[16] Attempting to address this lack of perspective, historical geographer Cole Harris, and historians Keith Carlson and John Lutz, among others, have published articles in which Stó:lõ worldview and creation stories are analysed not as folk tales, but as culturally intrinsic to their world view. Stó:lõ intellectuals such as Sonny McHalsie and Jo-Ann Archibald have begun to write and publish research from a decidedly Stó:lõ perspective. This interest in the Stó:lõ has been beneficial as the band has created a research office and archives to facilitate the studies of a variety of researchers within the last forty years. The Coqualeetza archives was created in the 1970s to originally collect oral histories and later collect archival documents. More recently, the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SSMRC) was created to house additional scholarship on the Stó:lõ relating to

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[16] Wendy Wickwire, "Stories from the Margins: Toward a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, J.S. Lutz, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 120-121.

the protection of Aboriginal rights and title, including maps, articles, oral histories, theses and dissertations. Given the political and scholarly significance of the Stó:lõ and the accessibility provided by Coqualeetza and the SSMRC, this study was able to take advantage of both a well documented historiography and extensive research facilities.

ILX presents an opposite challenge in the paucity of information related to Metis culture. Métis historiography has been overshadowed by an abundance of information and research related to First Nations studies. Until recently, most history regarding Canada's diverse Métis has been concerned with the stain of the Riel Resistance and Northwest Rebellion. Philip Spaulding's anthropological dissertation looked at social kinship networks in the 1970s at ILX. He noted that ILX male Metis avoid "the sole responsibility and burden of supporting a growing family, and can therefore enhance his prestige in the community through continued involvement in drinking parties and sexual (extramarital) conquests."[17]   Needless to note, Spaulding's work is regarded with ridicule by the Métis community and considered an example of misguided research. Following in the wake of Spaulding, Robert Jarvenpa and Brenda Macdougall have provided more sensitive interpretations of Métis relationships. These kinship relationships will be analysed in depth in the following chapter. In addition, extensive oral interviews collected on site for this project will provide a more comprehensive exploration of Metis culture at ILX.

Cemetery analysis has long proved a useful source of ethnographic data for anthropologists, with ethnoarchaeologists, necrogeologists, and the study of memorialisations and deathscapes also adding fresh perspectives to mortuary analysis.

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[17] Philip T. Spaulding, "The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse." Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1970, p. 97.

The study of cemeteries has benefited from recent scholarship on how spaces are controlled in the burial site. In his explanation of bio-power Michel Foucault describes the principle of enclosure as key in controlling individuals: "disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies… each individual has his own place; and each place its individual."[18] Given the importance laid on both discipline and religious orders, it seems appropriate to import Foucault's analysis into my study of Canada's west. Researching the ILX and SHX cemeteries reveals not only how Oblates attempted to discipline space themselves, but also how space was used to reinforce aspects of Aboriginal culture. Cemetery artefacts also show how Aboriginals resisted the imposition of this discipline and in some cases the manner in which Aboriginals tried to impose a counter discipline. When considered in tandem, such analysis has the potential to reveal the various theatres of political and social power within a community. Cemeteries also demonstrate the values which a community chooses to remember, and how these spaces have changed to reveal aspects of the past in the present and the way in which space and memorialisations impact on community memory and identity formation.

Because of their organizational features, graveyards lend themselves particularly well to an analysis of space. Cultural and religious protocols dictate the space allotted to each individual. Generally, Catholic teachings dictate that each individual receive a space ten feet long, four feet across, and six feet deep. Graves are organised, usually, within family clusters; often these clusters will physically manifest aspects of their life stories. How these clusters are oriented within their spatial organisation ultimately

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[18] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1975), p. 232-233. In reference to the application of Foucault's methods to Canadian Aboriginal groups, Mary Ellen Kelm has provided a bio-power analysis interpreting the intersection between bodies and space. *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia 1900-50*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

reflects the family's story and structure, organising family memories of grandparents, fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, all geographically and mathematically organised to fit into their specified space.

Cole Harris, who used a Foucauldian analysis with regard to the manner in which colonized space affected Aboriginals in *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, has pioneered spatial studies in that province. Harris demonstrated that culture and space are integrated: "Societies and their places and spaces exist in ongoing, reciprocal relation with each other."[19] The analysis of culture and space is therefore integral to an understanding of native-newcomer history. Although Harris did not extend his approach to cemetery space, this study uses a similar approach for the Stó:lõ in BC, as well as the Métis of ILX. Harris largely ignores the Oblate presence in British Columbia, an unfortunate and significant oversight that this paper addresses.

This analysis will use a large time frame, analysing the cemeteries from their founding in the mid to late nineteenth century, up to the early 1960s. Cemeteries manifest many parts of local culture and history. However, it would be false to suggest that every aspect of a community history rests in its cemetery. Significant events and personages will be memorialized in the cemetery, not always explicitly, and obviously not all details of a community history can be discovered *in situ*. Therefore a Braudelian-like *longue durée* approach will be employed. Following how these cemeteries were established, controlled, and came to manifest stories is my approach.[20] The discussion will conclude in 1960 with Vatican II, a papal bull that liberalized some aspects of Roman Catholic liturgy. The effects of this bull were worldwide and greatly changed the

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[19] Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, p. xiv.

[20] Fernand Braudel *Écrits sur l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969).

way in which the church interfaced with its congregation; mass was no longer recited in Latin with the priest's back turned to the congregation; the church changed its stance on Limbo, altering its view that children who died before baptism were no longer held in a stage of purgatory. However, the revision did not fully recognize unbaptised infants as worthy of heavenly reward. Nonetheless, this theological revisionism resulted in allowing unbaptized children to be buried in the blessed grounds of the Catholic cemetery. As will become clear throughout this thesis, this revision resolved many problems associated with the kinship values of both these indigenous communities. The 1960s heralded an era of rapid Aboriginal politicization[21] and resulted in increased Aboriginal access to community resources including school boards and cemetery administration. In the case of both ILX and SHX, the cemeteries came under the control of the local Aboriginal community organisations during this same time.

Huel and McNally have noted the effects of Vatican II on the western Oblate missionary routes. "Not since the French Revolution had the Catholic Church officially questioned where it was going," writes McNally of the monumental changes introduced by Vatican II.[22] Maire Kathleen Anderson-McLean, in her theological-anthropology dissertation, discussed the resulting native Catholic rite that emerged after Vatican II : "With respect to religion, Vatican II (1962-65) fostered a more ecumenical attitude among denominations and contributed to fostering a keener appreciation of spiritual

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[21] Some examples of Aboriginal politicization include the polemical response to the 1969 White paper, this is of course preceded by their 1960 political enfranchisement under the Conservative party of John G. Diefenbaker, as well as the earlier 1957 law that reinstated Aboriginal rights to petition the government, removing a previous ban on the subject.

[22] Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), p. 327.

traditions that were outside traditional Christian forms."[23]   Indeed, given the changes

wrought by Vatican II it seems appropriate for a *longue durée* analysis of the ILX and

SHX cemeteries. Also, the changes brought by Vatican II were noted by community

members themselves as a point where the church became more amenable to Aboriginal

concerns.

The ILX and SHX sites were chosen for their historically similar nature. The

study began several years ago while working as an undergraduate researcher in the

community of ILX for the CURA project. The University of Saskatchewan researchers

were presented with topics identified by community members. My interest with ILX

grew from there, as I began researching the area's history and collecting oral histories

from a variety of community members. At that point, aspects of inclusion and exclusion

in the cemetery were areas of growing concern. Increased interest on my part combined

with community concerns and Dr. Keith Thor Carlson's support encouraged me to

become more directly involved with issues surrounding the cemetery and its relevance to

the community. As an ethnohistorian of the modern day Stó:lõ in British Columbia, Dr.

Carlson noted similar historical contexts regarding the Oblate cemeteries in Stó:lõ

territory and ILX, as well as the interest of the community in participating in the research.

This proved fortuitous as it is often difficult to make community connections. Also,

recent work by Marshall Sahlins indicates the utilitarian advantage of comparative

studies. Sahlins compared the battles between the Rewa and Bau of Polynesian War to

those between Sparta and Athens some 1,000 years earlier in *Apologies to Thucydides*.

Both events shared social and political characteristics. The Rewa and Spartans were

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[23] Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Metis*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), p. xviii.

closed, land-based societies, while the Bau and Athenians were commercial naval societies. Each of these societies was headed into a war of domination that had deep historical roots. There are certainly differences between the Stó:lõ SHX and the Métis of ILX, but their cemeteries show definite signs of similarity which are underscored by larger themes of Canadian Aboriginal history.

The major focus of this thesis is Aboriginal voices. Keith Carlson has noted how Aboriginal studies have long favoured textual narratives: "the judicial system considers those oral histories that lack documentary confirmation to be a subordinate order of information."[24] In order to respect the established oral history methods of Stó:lõ and Métis Elders, the principal method of research involved collecting oral histories from Aboriginal community members. The semi-structured oral interview process, as outlined in Bernard Russell's "Unstructured and Semistructured Interviewing," was adopted for research in ILX and SHX. The semi-structured method allowed some slight direction from the interviewer but also adhered to the preferred approach of the respondent. An informed structure enabled the respondent to answer questions in his or her unique manner and encouraged responses that reflected the community's interests.[25] Altogether, twenty-four interviews were collected from community members in both ILX and SHX. Furthermore, as cemeteries and memorials often provide mnemonic aids to memory, walkabouts through each cemetery were organised with various community members.

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[24] Keith Thor Carlson. "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*. J.S. Lutz, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 48.

[25] Bernard H. Russell, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994. Chapter Nine, "Unstructured and Semistructured Interviewing," p. 208-236.

Both ILX and SHX cemeteries were founded in the mid 19th century by the Oblates.   As a Catholic missionary order headquartered in France, the Oblates inherited a strict adherence to Roman precedent and theological standardisation. Foucault, too, found particularly that "for centuries, the religious orders had been masters of discipline: they were the specialists of time, the great technicians of rhythm and regular activities."[26] During the better part of the 19th century, both missions were controlled by the Archdiocese of St. Boniface located in Red River. Also, both riparian missions existed within a nation of villages, greatly steeped in their riverine networks of kin, culture, and religion. As Oblate priests attempted to acculturate their respective Métis and Stó:lõ congregations, each Aboriginal community responded in a distinctly unique manner to the process. Different aspects of power played out in these cemeteries, as Oblate and Aboriginal cultures expressed their values in the spaces of their dead.

Despite similar backgrounds there are, of course, inherent differences between the two sites. The tall cedars and steep canyon walls of the rolling Fraser contrast with the gentle sloping hills of the slower moving extensive Churchill River system in Saskatchewan's northwest. When ILX was created in 1846 and Shxwõwhámél some fifteen years later no grandiose embarkation of Canadian nation building had been attempted and the present day provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan had not yet been established. Rather, Canada's west was predominantly a Hudson Bay Company (HBC) domain and the fledging Oblate missions existed among a sea of distinct indigenous linguistic and cultural groups.

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[26] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1975), p. 175.

The Shxwõwhámél reserve, initially called Ohamil by the federal and provincial governments, was founded long before the collective identity of Stó:lõ had taken a meaningful political form. Before Governor Sproat allotted 388 acres alongside the Fraser between Chilliwack and Hope in 1879, SHX cemetery had already been administered for almost two decades by the Oblates. The ILX cemetery too, long before its Métis residents received scrip land allotments or cash payments, was administered by the local Oblates. After land transfers with the federal government were completed the Oblates still maintained a principal presence in these communities. They also spearheaded the controversial residential schools and much-needed hospitals in these communities. ILX was the Oblate beachhead for the whole of the Churchill River system and provided services all the way into the Athabaskan system in northern Alberta. SHX was under the care of St. Mary's, the Oblates' major station supplying northern interior BC and the Okanagan. Both communities, then, were situated along what were initially busy river transportation routes. ILX was an isolated community situated in the ever-peripheral north of Saskatchewan. However, SHX's proximity to the Fraser River attracted greater immigration traffic and unlike ILX experienced some of the first blows of acculturation. The Fraser epidemics are well documented and the last major outbreak to reach SHX affected the community in the mid-nineteenth century. Given their proximity to the coast and situated along the Fraser, the SHX were firsthand witnesses to colonialism.

The ILX and SHX Oblate missions, although sharing similar objectives, differed somewhat in method. Vincent McNally discusses Oblate missiology at length in his *The Lord's Distant Vineyard* which is evidence of the importance of Oblate missionary

methodology. Given their ultimate method of achieving Aboriginal acculturation, the Oblates provide a method in which not to gauge similarities, but deviations. In this thesis I ask: how have the Métis or Stó:lõ reacted differently; how have aspects of their culture been reinforced in the cemeteries?   I ask these questions in order to illuminate the issue of how status is conferred in these sites, how the cemeteries are remembered over time, and what the ramifications are for community and individual identity. Exploring Aboriginal agency in areas of Oblate control is integral to my study. This study provides a comparative examination of Stó:lõ and Métis adaptation to the Oblate incursion in each of their respective regions. Questions regarding Aboriginal agency in areas of Oblate control and the development of Aboriginal identity and kinship customs are explored at each site. Cemetery data from the burial sites of both cultures are collected and interpreted within the context of the dominant European culture of the era and at a more personal level from stories told by descendants of the deceased as well from evidence provided by physical artefacts still present in the cemeteries today.

When approaching a historical subject that is foreign to one's own background, a cultural understanding of the subject is necessary in order to understand the ideas that motivate certain actions. In this way anthropology can inform history by providing a context for interpretation of these events or ideas. Patricia Galloway, Choctaw ethnohistorian, believes that Aboriginal history has long been biased by euro-centric approaches, but that cultural background provided by anthropological methods can help to overcome this cultural centrism by explaining the intrinsic methods, rituals, and

symbols of the Other: "Anthropology has had increasing influence on the writing of ethnohistory precisely because it made this kind of contextualizing possible."[27]

There is perhaps no culture on earth that does not have prescribed methods to deal with a deceased human body. Within a culture, when a death is experienced, it is often entered into a realm of ritualization and ceremonialism integral to the culture's religious and mourning stratagem. The body, even after life, remains an integral part of a community's culture. Even upon death, the deceased still remains a person in the lives and memories of others. How bodies are disposed of and remembered are important to most cultures, and the same can be said of the Métis, First Nations, and Oblates and their death practices in northwestern Canada. Each group had distinctly different conceptions of life and death but also shared some complementary beliefs.

When discussing the ILX and Stolo Aboriginal groups it is necessary to address syncretism. Syncretism, the blending of two cultural belief systems, is a definition often used to describe aspects of many modern-day Aboriginal groups who have become integrated into euro-American culture. The term is frequently used to describe the Métis, which, by definition, are a mixed-race people. However, the term is not exclusive to the Métis, something the researcher must keep in mind when studying most Aboriginal groups. The Indian Act, Bill C-31 and other legislation were enacted by the federal government in attempts to literally define who is and who is not Aboriginal. However, these definitions remain hotly contested by not only Aboriginal people but also Canadian

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[27] Patricia Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p. 8.

society at large. As such, these definitions are useless as an identification framework for this study.[28]

Discussing identity is a tricky subject. J.R. Miller finds that many definitions of "Aboriginal" are social constructs, or "designer labels." Within his discussion of *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada* Miller notes how blood quantum definitions as well as classifying peoples according to linguistic groups "imparts a misleading impression of precise boundaries between the various social collectives," and that in general, "the labels are arbitrary and shifting."[29] Defining First Nations is a trying task, so attempting to discuss identity for mixed-blood Métis can be even more difficult, if not an impossible Sisyphean task. In terms of mixed blood discussions of identity, Theda Perdue came to the same conclusion in her 2003 *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South*. Like Miller, Perdue found that blood quantum was a fault-ridden approach in defining racial categorizations. "The time has come to move beyond… the construction of the racial category of "mixed blood"."[30] Indeed, this opinion of the difficulty in defining First Nations, let alone mixed-blood, communities has currency among historians. More recently, in his discussion of African Creeks during the Allotment process of the Dawes commission near the end of the nineteenth century, Gary Zellar noted the many problems officials within and outside of the Creek nation encountered when trying to define African Creek citizenship. "It was impossible to tell in the Creek country whether someone was Indian, black, or white," making the process

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[28] In terms of Aboriginal, this study will use the term loosely in order to define peoples of Aboriginal heritage, whether Métis or First Nations. When discussing the Stó:lõ specifically, this study will use either their name, Stó:lõ (the river people).

[29] J.R. Miller, *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada*, (Toronto: M&R, 2004), p. 10.

[30] Theda Perdue, *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), p. x.

of deciding Creek citizenship an arbitrary one. [31] These monographs from established academics in the Aboriginal history field demonstrate race as an impossible categorization to define, on the micro or macro level and problematize definitions of Aboriginal people that are based on blood or appearance. The academic environment does note the difficulty in discussing racial categorizations, but it does not disapprove of scholarly attempts at describing local identity. What this means is that, although this study discusses identity at length, it is in terms of the predominantly Métis residents of ILX and Stó:lõ of SHX. In no way am I attempting to discuss precisely what defines Métis or First Nations in the locale or the wider region, but I am trying to define locally what values the predominantly Métis community of ILX and Stó:lõ of SHX use to identify themselves within the framework of oral histories. The Métis of ILX identify themselves as Métis, but these definitions vary in terms of religion, family, and historical experiences. The wahkootowin model proposed by Macdougall encompasses some of these aspects, hence its application in the study. In terms of the Stó:lõ, references to the First Nations retain their preferred Stó:lõ, the river people in Halkomelem, title, meant to demonstrate an internal indigenous definition rather than an imposed one. Nonetheless, as the scholarship on the subject suggests, racial categorizations are difficult to define, and this study will instead focus on aspects of local identity as noted in oral histories, rather than blanket definitions of what makes up a Métis or Stó:lõ member or community.

By definition syncretism resulting from colonialism is not just a one-way transaction. Keith Carlson, in his article "Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of "Post-Contact" Coast Salish Collective Identities,"

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[31] Gary Zellar, *African Creeks: Estelvste and the Creek* Nation, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), p. 202.

noted that "contact could and did have different results on indigenous identity…. such changes were not necessarily unidirectional."[32] Maire Kathleen Anderson-McLean used a theological and anthropological approach in her dissertation regarding the Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimage and noted that any study that overlooked Aboriginal and Catholic perspectives in Native Catholicism could not cover the "breadth and depth" of syncretism.[33] My thesis analyses the way in which various layers of control and cultural identity are manifested in these cemeteries and how cemetery memorialisations are used today to remember aspects of a community's past. Oblate and Aboriginal perspectives, whether complementary or contradictory, are included in order to demonstrate that control issues were not always one-sided but nuanced by the particular customs of each group.

Studying relationships between communities and their cemeteries necessitates a an analysis that explores the history of the past as well as contemporary commemoration of that past and collective memory. As New Cultural historians and anthropologists studied western cemeteries at the turn of the twenty-first century questions regarding the relationship between commemoration, collective memory, and history in these sites were being addressed.

Contributing to Pierre Nora's 1997 (from the 1992 translation) three-volume tome, *Realms of Memory*, Antoine Prost analysed the proliferation of France's First

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[32] Carlson wrote in relation to Chilliwack migration movement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Colonial forces along the coast precipitated a change of migration as the Chilliwack movement transferred along a north-south axis to an east-west along the Fraser river, beginning the construction of distinct Stó:lõ identity among the Fraser's inhabitants. See "Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of "Post-Contact" Coast Salish Collective Identities," p. 140.

[33] Maire Anderson-McLean discusses the emerging Native Catholic Rite in Canada, drawing global examples in Catholic Africa and Asia. She also attempts to address the previously acculturative objective of the Oblates, and how syncretism would have not resulted without complementing Native cultural values, such as the importance of water and gift giving. See "To the centre of the circle: Pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne." PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2005, p. 170.

World War commemorations in "Monuments to the Dead." Charged with meaning, these "war memorials embody an intricate system of signs" whose significance changes from generation to generation.[34] The meaning and contemporary perception of commemorative objects such as war memorials and cemeteries are rooted in the present; what initial meaning is carved into them will inevitably be adjusted by generations of visitors. Ten years later, French Canadian historian Patrice Groulx would agree.[35] Bridging the past with the present, anthropologists and historians now discuss cemeteries as liminal spaces where the interaction between living descendants and their deceased kin is ever changing. The relationship between these liminal spaces of collective memory of the past as represented through commemoration is best articulated in Stephen Heathorn's explanation of Pierre Nora:

> Nora and collective memory paradigms…study memory in which the act of remembering is seen as a complex social and cultural construct in which particular locations/objects…come to be associated with particular ideas about the past.[36]

Contrasting the way in which memorialisation is cast in the cemeteries within their historical context, with the way in which tangible remnants are actually remembered reveals how history has been used as a method of identity building in the respective cemeteries.

My second chapter will explore the ILX cemetery as a case study, demonstrating the issues of control between Oblates and residents, as well as discussing how aspects of

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[34] Antoine Prost, "Monuments to the Dead," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past, Vol II.* P. Nora, ed., translated by A. Goldhammer. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 309-310

[35] Patrice Groulx, *La marche des morts illustre: Benjamin Sulte, l'histoire et la commemoration.* (Gatineau: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2008), p. 15, 18.

[36] Stephen Heathorn, "The Mnemonic Turn in the Cultural Historiography of Britain's Great War," *Historical Journal,* Vol 48, 4 (2005), p. 1111.

Métis identity are evidenced on site. The third chapter uses the same approach, revealing how some aspects of Oblate control were continuous, but also how Stó:lõ identity is highlighted in their riverine cemetery; headstones denoting tribal status and sites that recall memories of disease are present in the community cemetery.   These two chapters reveal continuity and change within the Oblate cemeteries, ultimately displaying aspects of Métis and Stó:lõ social identity to argue that cemeteries are spaces of nuanced control and representations of community and individual identity. Finally, the last chapter reviews my research conclusions and their ramifications for Aboriginal history and social identity.

The cemeteries of ILX and SHX are Oblate and Aboriginal spaces where community history and identity are revealed. As this chapter has demonstrated, an ethnohistorical spatial approach to analysing these cemeteries is relevant given the historiography of Aboriginal people in B.C. (including spatial studies) but the Oblate presence has only begun to be analysed, a neglected scholarship exacerbated by a deficient Métis history. This paper addresses the common Oblate thread which connects these communities and reveals distinct Métis and Stó:lõ self-identification in their respective cemeteries that will help us attain a better understanding of the way Aboriginal identity is constructed and the role of Catholic colonial forces.

CHAPTER 2
Memory and Identity in the Île-à-la-Crosse Cemetery

As places where humans remember and represent their lived pasts, whether implicitly or explicitly, cemeteries provide a unique source of spatial data regarding memorialisation. Remembrance is also influenced by nuances of memory that change from generation to generation and from individual to individual. This spatial study of the Île-à-la-Crosse (ILX) cemetery in northwestern Saskatchewan will focus on relationships of power and aspects of memorialisation and identity formation manifested in the physical layout of the cemetery as well as information provided by local Métis and other secondary academic sources. Analysing cemeteries on a micro level fleshes out the nuanced relationships within a community as well as major historic changes. Humans remember certain aspects of their past and forget others. However, in terms of memory, mnemonic aids, and identity formation, what a community has chosen to celebrate physically in a cemetery and talk about publicly is perhaps more useful as a tool for judging how a community defines itself than as an objective history.

The purpose of this case study is to draw on these cemetery stories and places in the context of the secondary history of the area to better understand ILX: its values, its relationships within and outside of the community and the trials and tribulations of its community history. The ILX cemetery reveals a micro-history of the community and its values. This chapter addresses aspects of memorialisation and spatial control within ILX cemetery as highlighted by oral histories of descendants of the deceased, Hudson's Bay Company records, secondary written sources and the spatial layout of the graveyard as outlined on the map of the ILX cemetery (Figure 2.1). Stories of heritage, relationships

of power, community kinship, and memories of diseases interact in somewhat unexpected ways to forge a sense of community and self-identification in ILX.

A review of research articles and monographs explores the impact of previous scholarly research of ILX. As well, this study builds on existing local and thematic historiography and employs several methodologies including oral histories and ethnohistorical upstreaming. Other than Macdougall, an otherwise lack of previous scholarship exists regarding the Métis of ILX; information gleaned from other northwestern Saskatchewan Métis oral histories is applied when deemed appropriate to the present study. Current cultural understandings of the Métis, as identified through oral histories, are used to help conceptualize the past. The upstreaming method was popularized in the mid-twentieth century to address the need to re-evaluate primary sources for ethnographical information.[37] William Fenton, who premised his work on an assumption of cultural continuity, pioneered the approach in the 1950s.[38] More recently Theda Perdue, in her analysis of *Cherokee Women*, supported "the well established practice, which Ethnohistorians term "upstreaming"."[39] Although upstreaming received systematic criticism in the 1980s and 1990s, it has recently gained significant currency in

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[37] Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p. 199.

[38] Fenton worked predominantly with the Iroquois. His accomplishments are highlighted in his obituary, published by the Journal of American Folklore in 2005; see *Journal of American Folklore* 120.475 (2007), p. 73-75.

[39] Upstreaming is a metaphor, if time was a river, and oral histories the vehicle to navigate that river, then using present oral histories would be the method of understanding/navigating the past. Perdue gained appreciation of the upstreaming method from historian James Axtell; she writes that "the best description of ethnohistory remains James Axtell," Professor of History at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Axtell has made major contributions to ethnohistorical writing throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Perdue continues the approach in her evaluation of female Cherokee in order to elucidate aspects of female agency missing from textual sources; see Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, p. 8.

ethnohistorical forums where existing gender information is lacking, as is the case with the history of ILX.[40]

Oral histories collected in ILX were researched as part of a larger Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) Métis Atlas project.[41] This study relied on interviews that I and other researchers conducted under the auspices of the University of Saskatchewan's (U of S) CURA project. Many of these interviews are general in nature and are meant to reflect the history of a variety of topics investigated by U of S students. Although some of these interviews do not provide a detailed study of the ILX cemetery, they do highlight specific stories related to the cemetery and generally complement each other, placing the site at the centre of several other broad historical topics and thereby providing a qualitative approach to understanding the cemetery. However, qualitative interviews directly related to the cemetery were conducted to develop a micro-history of the cemetery and its relationship to the community. Oral histories recorded in the cemetery provided an effective way of capturing respondents' reactions to tangible mnemonic devices that recalled aspects of ILX history as manifested on site. *In situ* recorded interviews enabled individuals to trace their familial networks as represented by burial patterns within the cemetery more easily. These interviews developed a deeper understanding of the community's cemetery. Indeed, community members were able to identify people buried in the cemetery where inscriptions had long since faded, as evidenced in the ILX cemetery map (Figure 2.1).

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[40] Gail H. Landsman, Professor of Anthropology at the University at Albany, criticizes Fenton's methods as trying to recreate a supposed original Aboriginal culture in her description of Mohawk politicization in the 1970s, see Gail H. Landsman *Sovereignty and Symbol: Indian-White Conflict at Ganiékeh* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).
[41] Community-University Research Association. *The Métis People and Lands of the West Side: An Atlas*, (tba). Social Studies and Humanities Research Council funded study of Northwest Métis.

The historiography of the ILX region reflects traditional religious and economic and methodologies. Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) records and Oblates of the Mary Immaculate (OMI) registers and journals are the dominant primary sources used in the historical evaluation of the region. Religious history, using parish and missionary journals, provided readers with a triumphant spiritual narrative of the development of the Churchill River system: dedicated religious leaders spreading the word of God to Aboriginals and Métis; missionaries winning a bitter battle against the geographical elements. The economic history of the region is similarly expansive in describing the perseverance of the HBC against its economic rivals in the sub-arctic environment.[42] Both of these approaches examined the history of Aboriginals and Métis in terms of their relationship to the church and to economic enterprise. Both failed to develop an understanding of Métis cultural attributes outside the realm of western religious and economic values.

The fervent evangelical perspective of the Oblates is especially evident in OMI historian, Gaston Carrière's 1970 study "The Oblates and the Northwest, 1845-1861." Carriere described the Oblate westward migration as one of "unflinching courage and the grace of God they overcame these tremendous difficulties and forged their way ahead."[43] Carrière's work focused solely on the evangelizing efforts of the Oblates and the "war" raging between them and the Church of England.[44]

Philip Spaulding's attempts in the 1960s were much more, indeed perhaps too critical, of the existing power relationships in the community of ILX. Spaulding's social

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[42] See J.P. Crean, *New Northwest Exploration: Report of Exploration, Seasons of 1908 and 1909.* Ottawa: Department of Interior, 1910

[43] Gaston Carrière, OMI "The Oblates and the Northwest: 1845-61," *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions* (1970), p. 38.

[44] Carrière "The Oblates and the Northwest: 1845-61," p. 54.

history explained relationships within the community in economic terms, and found that many problems associated with machismo attitudes and alcoholism arose from power relationships among the federal government, HBC, Oblates, and community members themselves. Writing in an era of great change, Spaulding witnessed the decline of the HBC and church's role in the community at the expense of the provincial CCF government and the Métis local government, the latter involved in what could now be described as nascent politicization, assuming control of former Oblate spaces in the community. In this context, Spaulding's conclusions often seem extreme.

Two decades later, in the early 1990s, Robert Jarvenpa's spiritually focused studies were especially effective at addressing aspects of gender in the community. Particularly relevant to this study is Jarvenpa's research on pilgrimages in the region, which inform questions regarding spirituality in the cemetery. Aspects of pilgrimage symbols are also found in the ILX cemetery, such as Virgin Mary statuettes and other expressions of spirituality, a phenomenon Jarvenpa was explicitly studying. [45]

Contemporary histories have imported new methods of historical evaluation, such as those found in Brenda MacDougall's dissertation "Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in North-western Saskatchewan." Her study adopts a kinship, or a "wahkootowin," approach as central to her evaluation of Métis culture and identity in northwestern Saskatchewan. In this study she analyses Métis cultural attributes and the way in which reciprocal relationships affect and form

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[45] Dr. R.W. Jarvenpa, Department of Anthropology, Albany State University of New York, has written a number of articles based on archaeological and oral history research among the Dene, Woodlands Cree, and Métis in the area. In terms of spirituality, see "The Development of Pilgrimage in an Inter-Cultural Frontier." *Culture and the Anthropological Tradition*. New York: University Press of America, 1990. pp. 177-203

regionally specific Métis culture. Macdougall also provides a limited spatial analysis of the Métis community. Her kinship approach to Métis history in the Ile-a-la-Crosse region helps to explain the predominance of family and community values in Métis culture although she overlooks expressions of community disunion.

Stories about the deceased buried within the cemetery were gathered from Métis community members' oral narratives about the community plot. Most stories relayed to the writer regarding the cemetery and deaths in the community could be summed up as a series of vignettes. These are not the traditional Aboriginal creation stories typically understood to be "oral histories." Rather, they are less structured, but remain important windows looking into the formation of community and individual identity. There is not an all-encompassing definition of ILX Métis; within the community there are serious political schisms that identify some individual members by their opposition to other ILX community leaders. Nonetheless, the fact that various Métis people mentioned identical stories suggests that these vignettes do represent something of importance to each of the storytellers. Therefore, in addressing the *longue durée* analysis, community members' stories are examples of specific aspects of identity formation based in local experience.[46] These memory formations are often represented by physical markers in the cemetery such as headstones and sunken burial grounds. These stories span a large breadth of human experience, from the pre-Oblate burial practices, diseases and their death toll's effect on the community, to how the members remember their family burial plots. These oral stories will be investigated within their historical context complemented by either

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[46] The longue durée method in reference to structure, conjoncture, and event as pioneered by Fernand Braudel and the Annales school, see his *Écrits sur l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969). See also Marshall Sahlins discussion regarding structure and event in *Islands of History*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

existing HBC documentation, secondary resources, or upstreaming. Ultimately, it is through the vignettes relayed by community members that this study examines and describes aspects of local history while also contextualizing aspects of created history and identity formation.

It is important to examine the role of change in ILX burial patterns, although this is difficult given the lack of scholarship on the subject. Reviewing oral histories discussing pre-Oblate burial practices demonstrates how certain performances and ceremonies complemented Oblate doctrine after their arrival, while others became points of contention. Burial patterns of the Métis prior to the Oblate arrival were similar, with family based interments. However, little ceremony followed Métis family burials, as compared to the Oblate emphasis on burial. Examples of pre-OMI practices discussed by various community members were supported by the findings in recent years of human remains in and around the community. These findings function as mnemonic devices that help inform community members of their previous burial customs while also serving as tangible evidence of pre-missionary identity formations. That is to say, spaces where remains were found remind residents of stories they identify with the creation of their community.

The first story relates to the discovery of a body wrapped in birch bark in the sandy bluff across the bay from the settlement. Because the remains were found wrapped in birch bark, and given the ability to easily bury someone provided by the open sand face, the remains were identified by members of the community as likely being Woodlands Cree. Dorothy Dubrule recalled:

Up the hill, where the other cemetery is, we call it Côte jaune, there was a couple times some of the children in the village, and this would have been in the 60s, found some bones. At one time I think they found a head; there must have been burial graves all over the place, where people died they were buried there.[47]

When describing this story, respondents often added that they understood these remains must be old remnants and were more likely associated with the nearby Woodlands Cree reserve history than with their own Métis community. Regardless, the fact that numerous community members repeated the same story suggests that Métis people identified with the historical burial, perhaps due to its proximity to the community, or as part of their initial Métis heritage.

The second story regarding pre-Oblate burials was more recent and entangled with stories of the community's development. When excavating a basement in the newer "upper snob" housing developments skeletal remains were found, halting construction.[48] Further analysis suggest that the remains were those of a European who had died and buried in the area. Although certainly structured, both stories suggest that burial customs for the Métis were not as formal preceding the arrival of the Oblates.

Like most Christian practices, Métis burials were local family-based plots, located within family lots along the lake. Indeed, the structure of the early community was not central, as emphasized and organised by the Oblates, but rather dispersed family-based lots along the Aubichon arm. Living within familial clustered lots, family members were buried within private family plots. As Figure 2.4 shows, although the

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[47] Dorothy Dubrule Interview, June 19, 2007.

[48] Katya MacDonald has looked at the meanings regarding the colloquial civic spatial nomenclenture in ILX in her thesis "Looking for Snob Hill and Sq'éwqel: Histories of Aboriginality and Community in Two Aboriginal Communities," MA Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2009. "Upper snob" was a place name given to the new housing development in the community.

church preferred central control, semi-independent family plots still existed around ILX, Canoe Lake, Fort Black, and indeed all along the Churchill between communities.

The ILX cemetery was likely established in 1846 shortly after the mission's construction that year. The chapel and eventually its rectory, residential school, male and female boarding houses, hospital, and cemetery, would become an important "civilized" refuge along the Churchill river system. The ILX mission was an Oblate gateway for missionaries and fur traders alike, before they headed over La Loche's Methye Portage and into Alberta's Athabaskan River system, and for a select few, into the Yukon's Mackenzie River system. Because of its position along Canada's early northwest transportation system, the riverine mission became an important beachhead for the Oblate *mission civilitrice* in an otherwise unforgiving environment. This providential *mission* combined Oblate emphasis on evangelization with the need to baptise *les sauvages* that the Oblates believed would result in their safe transition from polytheist nomads to settled Christian agriculturalists. "The Oblates expected great things from the Métis," explains Raymond Huel of *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*. "They offered the first glimpse of hope, partially settled and devout Catholics, the first born of the faith in the west."[49]

The Oblate cemetery, located on a short hill behind the chapel, houses some of the unsettling elements of acculturation. Highlighting the Oblate emphasis on baptism, those uninitiated into the Catholic faith were excluded from the blessed grounds of the principal cemetery. An unbaptized stillbirth section separated unbaptized Catholics from those fortunate enough to receive the initial sacrament (Figure 2.1). This division

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[49] Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), p. 20.

fomented tensions within the Métis communities where kinship and familial ties were central cultural features. Although this fostered criticism within many Aboriginal communities, the fact of baptismal segregation was a Catholic decree, and was therefore a global Catholic conundrum. The unbaptized infants may have been separated from the blessed grounds by a fence, but it was the Protestant émigrés who were totally separated from the mission property; their cemetery came to be located across the bay. This sectarian policy caused further division in the community. Here, HBC traders, Scandinavian fishermen, Protestant Métis, and other non-Catholics were laid to rest away from the central Catholic community. The problematic division highlighted the paramount values of the Oblates, that is, that humans were initially defined by faith, in contrast to Métis values of family kinship. These differences and separations are not only remembered today, but because families have become accustomed to using separate burial grounds, the two cemeteries continue to be divided, and will likely remain so well into the future.

Within the old section, Oblate emphasis on hierarchy is revealed by the separation of their own clerical burial plot, straddling the hill within the overall old section of the cemetery (Figure 2.1). In contrast to the predominantly eroded epitaphs of the Métis community burials, the deceased OMI and Grey Nun granite headstones dating back to the 19th century remain legible and in good repair. This blatant historic laity/clerical separation speaks volumes today regarding past divisions within the community. Contained and rigidly organised, the clerical section stands in stark contrast to the shifted eroded cement headstone and wooden crosses of the surrounding Métis cemetery.

Interestingly, lying within the clerical section is the grave of Sister Marguerite Riel, a Grey Nun working with the Oblate priests. Sister Marguerite was Louis Riel's older sister, who drowned in the lake in 1883 (Figure 2.2). Today, respondents, after noting her burial, tell the story of how when Riel led the Northwest Rebellion he had some riders make their way to ILX. Fearing Riel might be seeking retribution for his sister's death, residents and Oblates retreated to a nearby island until the political storm had passed. Gaston Carrière writes along the same lines in his early history of the community.[50] This is an interesting statement, given academic emphasis on Red River heritage. Residents of ILX, through telling and remembering this particular story, demonstrate that their response to the Northwest Rebellion was the opposite of commiseration; they were not willing participants in the Rebellion and shared no empathy with the leader's cause. As an aspect of memory and identity formation, this story tells of ILX identification in opposition to the Red River norm. It also gives credence to recent history statement regarding Métis history and its "red river myopia."[51]

There are three established cemeteries in ILX. The original section (Figure 2.1) was established around the same time as the church in 1846, but has not received a burial since the 1980s.[52] Across the bay from the settlement, Mackay Point, is where the initial non-Catholic, or Protestant cemetery, was established in the 1930s.[53] The third section is an

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[50] Carrière "The Oblates and the Northwest: 1845-61," p. 41.

[51] See Trudy Nicks, and Kenneth Morgan, "Grande Cache: the Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Metis Population," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America*. J. Peterson and J.S.H. Brown, eds. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), p. 163-181; also paraphrased by J.R. Miller, *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 54.

[52] Most burial ended in the 70s, and the only recorded burials in the 1980s were kookums (Cree for grandmother) being buried with their late husbands (grandfather-mochum).

[53] There are a few different reference points to describe the area, Côte Jaune, Mackay point, or michif spelling.

extension of the old cemetery, established in the 1960s. As for the Protestant cemetery, the first use of headstones in the plot seems to be for the burial of seven Norwegian fisherman who drowned in stormy waters in 1936. As non-Catholics, they were not welcome in the cemetery. Métis émigrés of Protestant descent also used the cemetery, as well as Catholic-leaning individuals who did not conform to the Catholic status quo, and were therefore, like the Protestants, unwelcome in the Catholic blessed grounds. Such was the case with Dorothy Dubrule's father: "I have family buried up there, my father is buried up there, simply because my father was not a church goer."[54]

Over time, as Protestant and excluded Catholic family members were buried alongside their respective kin, the cemetery evolved to become less a Protestant cemetery and more of a non denominational burial ground. Here families who did not necessarily want to be entirely associated with the church came to be buried, as well as those Catholic families who had become accustomed to using the grounds. That the cemetery is still referred to as the Protestant, other, or non-Catholic cemetery, suggests that its creation marks a history of exclusion in a community when Catholic interests were paramount.

The ILX cemetery is not just an Oblate colonized space, but also, like Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, a place of complementing cultural values. The Métis burials that dominate the cemetery are clustered into families, the remaining tombstones testifying to the dominant family names in the community. The Oblate's emphasis on monogamy and recognized marriages complemented Métis who were generally similar. Oral history provides a mechanism to view these kinship patterns in the cemetery. George Malbouef's mother,

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[54] Dorothy Dubrule Interview, June 19, 2007.

father, and brother are buried on one side, but also linked to the Bouvier burials, through

George Malbouef's father, on the other side of the cemetery, and also the Gardiner section

through his grandmother's side (see Figure 2.1). Of course the ILX Métis do not solely marry

within the community; names of those buried in the cemeteries not only link the families living

within the community and display the more established local familial nomenclature, but also

link these families with other community cemeteries along the upper Churchill river system.

Without the oral histories the subtleties of Métis family connections within the cemetery and

among communities would be difficult to ascertain or perceive.

The closure of burials in this site, and the separate Protestant cemetery, indicate that

those buried in the old section were members of the more established families in the

community. Informants in the study linked their recent familial burials in the newer adjoining

section to this older section, thereby indicating how established their families were in this

community. Status is not just a matter of proving one's established surname, but is also

achieved through acts of memorialisation, which can often be demonstrated in more subtle

manners. The decoration of graves with artificial flowers is a popular custom, as is the

construction of unique headstones. Most of the headstones in the old section were

constructed locally with unique features such as stained glass decorations, Virgin Mary or

Jesus statuettes, and painted gravestones. Dr. Lavoie, a non-Métis who gained fame in the

region he served, is buried there and his grave is an example of such;[55] with a rock serving as his

headstone with a painting and stenciled inscription. Lavoie's burial plot is one of the few

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[55] Dr. Germain Lavoie, served the community from the 1940s until his death in 1954. His
journals were posthumously published, see Germain Lavoie, *Maskikhiwino, The Medicine Man* (Beauval,
SK: Amyot Lake Publications, 2005).

maintained graves in the older section, an excellent example of fictive kin. Lavoie devoted his

work to the community and his child still lives in the region which marks the family's loyalty

to the community. In return for his devoted service, Dr. Lavoie was one of the last deceased to

be buried in the older section, and his grave is still tended by members of the community. Such

continued service and attention is a significant example of fictive kinship ties memorialized and

honoured by the community. [56]

Aboriginal voices are present within the cemetery. Many of the problems encountered

by separating the baptized were not exclusive to ILX, but were also dominant across Canada's

northwest, and likely in other missions and parishes across the world. The Oblate practice of

exclusion in the cemetery helps demonstrate how familial identity was formed for the Métis of

ILX, in opposition to exclusionary Oblate policies.

Far removed from the missions of the upper Churchill, the ultramontane

discussion/debate regarding the fate of unbaptized infants has long preoccupied the Vatican.

Beginning with St Augustine, who established the doctrine of Original Sin within the Catholic

Church, and Pelagius, who disagreed with him and was subsequently excommunicated,

theologians have been eager to interpret the Bible in order to establish precisely what happens

to those who die before receiving the Grace of Baptism. Although not an official doctrine of

the Catholic Church, most Catholic orders relied on interpretations of Limbo not unlike those

discussed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who surmised that although unbaptized infants

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[56] Janet Carsten discusses how non-related exceptional outsiders are viewed as kin through the use of nicknaming or directly calling someone an ancillary family member in order to welcome them into the community as local members, see "The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi". *American Ethnologist* (May, 1995), p. 223–241.

were not destined to the worst throes of hell (purgatory), they were, nonetheless, certainly not going to heaven. Because they had not yet received the initial sacrament, unbaptized infants were guilty of Original Sin. The 1439 Council of Florence got right to the point regarding unbaptized infants, stating that they were not destined for heaven.[57] A hundred years later, in reaction to Protestantism, the Council of Trent reaffirmed this view, stating in Canon V that the notion that unbaptized infants were destined for heaven was anathema to Catholic theology.   However, the house of God has many mansions (John, 14:2), which led some Catholic theologians to question whether perhaps the souls of unbaptized infants might indeed be destined for something similar to heaven.

The Second Vatican Council (1963-65) finally addressed this problem in a circumventive manner. Acting in response to global complaints regarding exclusion, Vatican II revised Catholic interpretations of heaven and hell for unbaptized infants by de-emphasizing Aquinas' conception of Limbo. However, although Vatican II did address the question of unbaptized infants by de-emphasizing the separation of those in heaven and those in Limbo, it did not adopt any official doctrine that precisely states the fate of these infants, thus leaving the question open for interpretation.[58]

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[57] The Council of Florence 1439, DS 1306 (693): "The souls of those who depart in actual mortal sin or only original sin descend into the realm of the dead (infernum), to be punished however with unequal punishments."

[58] See, Catholicism.org: An Online Journal edited by the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. St. Benedist Centre, N.H.. "The Fate of Unbaptized Infants in Light of the Universal Necessity of Baptism." http://catholicism.org/unbaptized-infants-malone.html; Greenspun Thread. "Were there any changes in the doctrine of Limbo from Vatican II?" Paul. M. http://www.greenspun.com/bboard/q-and-a-fetch-msg.tcl?msg_id=00CKVR

In many ways, the effects of Vatican II are often overlooked in the context of the liberalization and civil rights movements of the 1960s. In Canada, the effects of enlightened Aboriginal policy were manifested in areas such as First Nations' 1960 enfranchisement under the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker's tenure, increasing representation in government (i.e. the appointment of the first Aboriginal to the Canadian Senate, James Gladstone), as well as their own local and umbrella self-government organizations. In Saskatchewan and Canada these newly organised Métis and First Nations political organizations began lobbying the provincial and federal governments for increased representation and rights. Any history devoted to discussing Aboriginals throughout the twentieth century would be flawed without recognizing these innovations, yet many histories overlook the changes introduced by Vatican II.[59] Many Canadian Aboriginal communities included Catholic missions, if not Catholic community members, and even today the discussion in these communities regarding the church notes how Vatican II eased local restrictions and opened up relations between the community and the Catholic Church. Raymond Huel and Vincent McNally devote much attention to these changes in their histories of the Catholic Church in the west. [60]

The long reliance on HBC records for western history primary sources has led to an efficient organization of their present collection. Every day in each post across the northwest Chief Factors recorded their charge's daily activities. These entries give an economically

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[59] Philip Spaulding is an example of overlooking the effects of Vatican II. He fails to discuss the spiritual changes in the community, even though he was studying it in the immediate aftermath of Vatican II, he chose to focus instead on the role of the HBC and the new CCF provincial government's role in his "The Social Integration of a Northern Community: White Mythology and Métis Reality." In Arthur K. Davis, ed., *A Northern Dilemma: Reference Papers.* Bellingham: Western Washington State College, 1967, p. 91-111.

[60] Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis, p.* xviii; and Vincent McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia.* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), p. 178.

minded perspective of the fort's inventory, with some tidbits of community life creeping in. The usual entry recorded the price of their furs as well as those of the competing Revillon Frères, the weather, and work being completed in and around the fort. Only brief sentences described aspects and events of the surrounding community. The HBC, Oblates, Métis, First Nations, and Euroamerican populations constantly interacted along the Aubichon arm in ILX. Many Factors mention visiting with resident priests, and some even attended the Catholic Church regularly. These entries suggest that Oblate historians Huel and McNally's discussion of an "unholy alliance" between the two competing colonizers in other parts of western Canada was also the case in ILX. Oblates depended on provisions transported via the fort. Oblate goals of settling the Métis were parallel to the HBC, who could better exploit a settled labour force.[61]

This reciprocal relationship manifested itself in the cemetery. Factors and HBC employees were buried there.[62] Demonstrating the company's loyalties to the church, the Métis, or both, on July 30th, 1940 the ILX's Bay Company's records indicate that employees were sent to tidy the local Catholic cemetery.

Much work has also been written regarding Aboriginal spirituality, but much of this has neglected individual differences and experiences within these communities. Indeed, syncretism is a useful concept when approaching the topic of Aboriginal spirituality. Many Métis and First Nations consider themselves spiritual in both Christian

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[61] Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, p. xxi.

[62] Many of the Factors noted having a positive relationship with the local Oblates. Some had the Priest over for dinner, and others attended the church regularly, suggesting that they were Catholic. Other HBC employees were Métis, as can be surmised by the fact they are mentioned in interviews and named in the work ledgers. Given this information it is likely that some factors and Métis employees were buried in the Catholic cemetery.

and their respective First Nation spiritual background.[63]   However, this can vary

significantly among communities and individuals. The oral interviews collected from

Woodlands Cree First Nations and the Métis of ILX obviously indicated that spirituality

is a major form of identity although subject to individual variability. The Métis of ILX

embrace a predominantly Catholic and Woodlands Cree background as the basis for their

spirituality, although some more recent families are Protestant. Some respondents, many

of whom were in the residential schools program, did not identify whatsoever with the

Catholic Church, while others, more heavily involved in the church, did not identify with

their First Nations traditions. Given this wide spectrum, the inherent difficulty of

defining spiritual identification in this micro-study is obvious. Some background

knowledge of Aborginal Catholicism is necessary before explaining the role of religion

and spirituality and how these play out in the ILX cemetery.

Steve Simon, in his *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne,* attempted

to address the question of why so many Aboriginal people were drawn to the Catholic

event. "The grandmother is an important figure in native culture,"[64] notes Simon,

drawing similarities between the dominant role of grandmother in Cree culture with the

figure of Ste. Anne, Christ's grandmother. A decade later Maire Kathleen Anderson-

McLean took the comparison further, noting how the family of Cree elders (nookum

grandmother and moshum grandfather) dove-tails with aspects of the Roman Catholic

family of saints (Ste. Mary, Ste. Anne and St. Joachim). This interpretation is

[63] Maire Kathleen Anderson discusses Aboriginal syncretism in great length in her dissertation, particularly Asian and African missions in context of her own Cree background in NW Alberta. See Maire Kathleen Anderson-McLean, "To the centre of the circle: Pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne." PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2005.

[64] Simon's analysis is the first published account relating the family of elders with the family of Christ, but the same conclusion is also reached by Alice Charland in her thesis "First Nations and the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage." Master's thesis, Athabasca University, 1995.

particularly applicable given the extent of Virgin Mary adoration in northwestern Saskatchewan. Ste. Mary is an omnipresent figure in the northwest, with shrines and grottos devoted to Christ's mother dotting transportation networks across the northwest. These representations of the Virgin Mary are also manifested in the ILX cemetery. Small personal shrines containing Virgin Mary effigies adorn graves in the cemetery, evidence of the importance of the Virgin. The ILX Métis, then, engage in predominantly Catholic and First Nations spirituality, but this varies significantly. Within the community, members were quite open about their faith, while also vocalizing their acceptance of other indigenous spiritual paths.

One significant aspect of memorialisation that is blatantly apparent upon visiting any cemetery in northwestern Saskatchewan is the prominence of artificial flowers. The geography and climate make it difficult for those without greenhouses to grow most flowers, yet Catholic protocol requires flowers to be used at shrines and graves. However, finding other reasons for their popularity remains difficult. Perhaps a simplistic approach suffices in finding the link between the traditional Christian practices conveyed to the Métis today. The practice certainly seems widespread in the western world. Alf Lüdtke in his article "Histories of Mourning: Flowers and Stories for the War Dead, Confusion for the Living- Vignettes from East and West Germany" notes "the persistent usage of flowers in post-WWII cemeteries around Berlin and the surrounding Brandenburg province."[65] The western tradition of leaving flowers is very much a metaphorical gesture representing the value of life and beauty lived and bestowed upon the deceased. However, it also has roots in consumption patterns of increasingly

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[65] Alf Lüdtke, "Histories of Mourning: Flowers and Stories for the War Dead, Confusion for the Living- Vignettes from East and West Germany." *Between History and Histories: Tha Making of Silences and Commemorations*. G.M. Sider, G. Smiths, eds. (Toronto: University Press, 1997), p. 152.

industrialized countries, as well as the wish of the mourner to leave a token of his or her visit. It seems reasonable to assume the Métis custom represents some aspects of the same gesture. The use of artificial flowers is not a trifling matter in regards to the cemetery as it represents the predominant method of tangible gift giving to the deceased. In regards to consumerism, in her analysis of a Victorian cemetery, Aubrey Cannon found that ornate inscriptions increased in England's cemeteries throughout the 19th century, reflecting increased consumerist tendencies.[66] In the case of ILX it seems that leaving flowers likely satisfies a few cultural mores, the need to show tangible memories to the deceased, to show one had visited, a method of celebrating the life of the deceased, while also representing the increasing consumerism in the region as it became increasingly connected to the south. The practice of leaving flowers also links to other global Catholic customs of bestowing idol statuettes, rosaries, candles and such, connecting ILX Métis to the overall Catholic theatre, while also highlighting particularities to their community.

The effect of disease is also apparent in the cemetery. Analysing the advent of disease within oral histories and textual accounts provides insight into the confusing nature of disease. When first collecting oral histories regarding disease in the cemetery, respondents seemed unsure of the precise ailments and when they struck. Although unsure of these details, respondents were sure to point out that many of the large depressions in the cemetery marked former mass graves attributed to these disease outbreaks within the community. ILX was a central location for the northwestern missionary circuit in Saskatchewan, with a hospital administered by the Grey Nuns and,

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[66] Aubrey Cannon, "Material Culture and Burial Representativeness." In *Grave Reflections: Portraying the Past through Cemetery Studies*. S.R. Saunders, A. Herring, eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1995), p. 10.

by the second decade of the twentieth century, a visiting doctor. However, this would prove inadequate for some later epidemics.[67]

Discerning the likely timeframes possible for the mention of epidemics was referenced in secondary literature on epidemics and Aboriginals. These references helped point the direction of possible timelines when diseases struck. Research in the HBC archives revealed journal entries that briefly describe aspects of disease in the community. The 1919 Spanish flu and a 1937 rubella outbreak seem to have been two major diseases to affect the community, both referenced by oral narratives and textual accounts.

The Factors' journals provide an opportunity to glimpse the effects of disease throughout the colony and region. When epidemics broke out, their omnipresence becomes evident in the Factor's daily journals. On October 24th, 1919, the resident HBC Factor writes: "Joseph Caisse *returned soldier* [author's emphasis] died this morning after little over two weeks illness." Over the next few months the HBC logs are replete with deaths in the community as the Spanish flu epidemic spread through the northern settlements. The appearance of the flu is on par with the south, but with fewer doctors and greater distances between communities these northern Aboriginal missions suffered acutely. The confusion regarding precisely which disease affected the community is also revealed in the textual narrative. After months of reporting increasing deaths due to a mysterious disease over the spring and summer of 1920, "Doctor Dymand, Miss Pearce (nurse) – Health Inspector Mr. Allen – and Mr. Malbouef arrived" to inspect and diagnose the circumstances. The

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[67] In terms of the facilities at the Île-à-la-Crosse mission see Barbara Benoit, "Mission at Île-à-la-Crosse," *Beaver* Winter (1990), p. 40-50.

difficulty of understanding the pandemic and its source is evident not only from contemporary oral histories, but also from the HBC clerk records. A day following the doctor's 1920 arrival, the clerk wrote: "Doctor and party go over to village – Sickness not [Factor's emphasis] Typhoid but intestinal trouble arising from dirty water." Contradicting this medical prognosis ascribed by the clerk, and the information suggests that it was the doctor's diagnosis, the next day the clerk writes of "Receiv[ing] injection of Typhoid vaccine this morning by D. Dymand." One week later the clerk received the "last injection." [68] The confusion regarding the disease was not only evident in the oral histories, but also in the textual documents of the HBC. The primacy of textual documents as compared to oral histories in Aboriginal cultures as revealed here is a fallacy, as both records proved to be equally confused in terms of the effect of the disease in the community. Keith Carlson, in "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact" notes that textual documents are usually the preferred evidence in court cases concerning Aboriginal land claims and notes that this preference overlooks traditional methods of knowledge that are not necessarily textual.[69] As the case regarding the Spanish Flu in ILX amplifies, oral histories and textual narratives can sometimes be equally unclear.

Maureen Lux, in her *Medicine that Walks: Disease Medicine, and the Canadian Plains Native People* notes that "native people were particularly susceptible" to the 1919 Influenza pandemic due to their often over-crowded living conditions, and "boarding schools… achieved what influenza alone could not by bringing vulnerable children together and exposing them to

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[68] Sept. 14-23, 1920, p. 198-199.

[69] Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*. J.S. Lutz, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

the virus."[70] Lux's comparison between Natives and non-natives also raises interesting

questions regarding the difference between Métis and First Nations effects of the disease.

Most reserves in Saskatchewan were Treaty and Treaty 6 received medicine chest clauses in

their respective agreements with the government. Métis scrip, however, was simply land or

money, and ILX, a partially subsistent community with its boarding school, was especially

prone to the disease. The 1919 Spanish Flu pandemic affected the community as it did the

world, but with probably more losses due to the lack of available services (see Figure 2.5).

Eighteen years later the HBC Factor would record, "epidemic of measles and the flu

has broken out at ILX and surrounding districts. Many deaths have occurred at Beauval, Clear

lake(?) and here."[71] The advent of two epidemics within two decades had a lasting impact on

the present day community, both visibly and in terms of identity formation. Many

respondents, most of whom had not directly experienced the last 1937 epidemic, mentioned

these diseases and their effects on the community, although unsure precisely what diseases

they were. This demonstrates the powerful mnemonic effect of disease on the community;

deadly disease is often seen as an effect, if not a tool, of colonization, and this links the Métis

of ILX to the colonization process within Canada. By relating their community's history with

the process of colonization the ILX Métis identify closely with other Aboriginal groups

within the dialectical colonizer/colonized relationship set up by traditional interpretations of

colonization. Also, as an outside researcher, aspects of disease may have been mentioned to

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[70] Lux estimates Aboriginal deathrates due to disease in Saskatchewan to be 37.7 per thousand, as compared to 6.5 per thousand for non-natives, see *Medicine that Walks: Disease Medicine, and the Canadian Plains Native People*, p. 185-187.
[71] HBC Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, March 4th, 1937.

the writer to highlight some of the negative influences of the outside world on an isolated community.

Disease, the fatal signifier of Aboriginal suffering through indirect colonization, is apparent not only in HBC journals, but in the former mass graves that have created depressions in the ILX cemetery. These unmarked graves are remembered by the community, pointed out by Elders and youths as the last physical scars of past epidemics. George Malbouef, walking through the cemetery, remembered where some of the epidemic burials were: "That's an epidemic there, see, 1-2-3-4-5 people buried there, that's a family."[72]

In these stories, dates are forgotten, and sometimes disease etymology is interchanged, but, nonetheless, the remaining physical consequences remain undisturbed in the cemetery (Figure 2.1). The spaces within the cemetery now serve as mnemonic devices which represent the local effects of colonialism on contemporary Métis residents, as noted by respondents. In Canada, most epidemics that harmed predominantly Aboriginal people are associated with nineteenth century expansion, but diseases continued to exact their tolls on the Métis well into the twentieth century, making their effects much easier to remember.

Kinship is an integral aspect of Métis identity in ILX, as evidenced by Macdougall's dissertation on the aspect of wahkootowin, or kinship and also noted by other historians such as Philip Spaulding. Kinship networks are very much apparent in the ILX cemetery, and using an ethnohistorical and spatial approach helps to diagram some of these kinship relationships (see Figure 2.1). As is evident in all community cemeteries, thick webs of

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[72] George Malbouef Interview, June 21, 2006.

kinship networks exist in the cemetery. In the case of ILX, these webs link families within the old section of the cemetery with the new site, and the Protestant cemetery. Furthermore, linking families along the Churchill River demonstrates the relationships existing between the Woodlands Cree and Dene Métis of northwestern Saskatchewan. As an example, Dorothy Dubrule's family has networks all across the northwest. Her father came from Buffalo Narrows where his late family is buried, all of whose members were lost to the 1937 measles epidemic in that area.[73] Her family also shares links with the old and new sections of ILX cemetery, evidence of her family's established history in the town and region.

The first section of the Catholic cemetery at ILX has the distinction of being the first centrally organised cemetery in the community and thus bestows status to present day descendants of those buried within its confines. The original site was not extended until the 1970s, so those who can trace their lineage to the original site also gain a degree of status within the ILX community. Families who are not buried in the area but have family born from the area will often mention where their family is buried. Conversely, families who were not established local families were also frank about their lack of family in the area. Overall, respondents openly talked about their family burial plots, whether in ILX or elsewhere. These discussions highlighted the important role of burial sites in providing respondents with a sense of community based in a particular locale and the strong kinship ties associated with that

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[73] Dorothy Dubrule, interview June 19, 2006 "my father had a first family, and his first wife and three children died in the flu epidemic, or measles, this would be in the 1930s, none of his family was buried here because they were from the Cree lake area, so wherever his child or children died, that is where my father buried, I am told by some people in buffalo there is a little island where my father buried the son of his family."

place. In this manner, burial sites earmarked valuable stories of family histories including the movement of families within the area and kinship connections to their place of origin.

Cemeteries display a variety of spatial distinctions. On a micro level, this study focused on the inherent power issues and conflicts associated with the imposition of foreign burial practices on the ILX Métis community as evidenced by such mnemonic aids as tombstones, crosses, spatial layout of graves etc. These mnemonic aids reveal cemetery stories of identity formation and kinship ties of the ILX community, where familial inclusion became an aspect of identity formation in opposition to Catholic policies of exclusion. They also provide a glimpse into the cultural implications of indigenous contact with a foreign belief system based on a hierarchy of rights and privileges. The early Oblate presence in the ILX community introduced Catholic burial rites with cemetery practices under the authority of the local priests. Ultramontane directions established Catholic control and authority within the jurisdiction of the cemetery. The exclusion of unbaptized Catholics from the cemetery and the decreed spiritual unworthiness of these deceased contrasted sharply with the beliefs and practices of the indigenous community. Subtler distinctions between the two cultures are also evident in memorialisation customs. Individual community plots of the indigenous dead are marked by floral displays whereas gated, separated granite headstones of deceased Catholic clerics mark their graves. The effects of disease associated with colonialism is witnessed and mnemonically manifested by large sunken plots of ground within the cemetery which bear testament to elders' stories of mass burials. In this manner the ILX cemetery provides evidence of profound community division and competing voices of authority.

CHAPTER 3

Oblate and Stó:lõ Space, Status, and Kinship in the Shxwõwhámél Cemetery

The Shxwõwhámél cemetery (SHX) divides the Fraser River and the Trans-Canada Freeway, separating the former means of transportation by river from the newer automotive route. The small reserve's residents have lived within the region for centuries, but have changed with their altered landscapes and newer methods of transportation. As at Île-à-la-Crosse (ILX), the Oblates arrived here in the mid-nineteenth century, establishing riverine missions in their wake and slowly altering the Native culture with their projections of Catholic order. Within the local cemetery evidence of the ways in which these ideologies complemented and conflicted with each other can be found. This is a space where intermingled layers of hidden stories of local Stó:lõ identity and Oblate ideals cover the grounds with ordered plots and engraved gravestones set among the brambles.

This chapter demonstrates the manner in which spatial approaches and oral histories work together to provide a unique conduit for understanding Oblate acculturation, Native-newcomer syncretism, and Stó:lõ status, kinship, and identity concerns. Oblate control issues are apparent in the Shxwõwhámél cemetery, where deceased indigenous non-Catholics were excluded from the burial ground and denied traditional Stó:lõ rites. Together, these acts of exclusion served as a method of community control and expression of cultural hegemony. The spatial layout of the cemetery also has signs of pre-contact Stó:lõ burial patterns and ritual mortuary burnings which suggest aspects of Catholic syncretism with Stó:lõ cultural mores. Tombstones and familial clusters in the cemetery provide evidence of kinship networks. This

evidence, combined with oral histories and genealogy stories of Stó:lõ kinship, links

these deceased ancestors buried in the Shxwõwhámél cemetery with other Stó:lõ

communities along the Fraser River and demonstrates the mobile and sometimes fluid

nature of Stó:lõ family structures. Subtle distinctions of status and individual and

familial identity can also be traced in the cemetery. The cemetery acts as an identifying

agent to mark the final outcome of population loss from epidemics introduced by foreign

colonizers. Cemetery artifacts support oral histories of disease that describe experiences

of suffering and the difficulties associated with the process of adapting to an imported

culture. These stories which are central to current Shxwõwhámél identity issues were

vividly recalled by respondents as they walked through the gateways of their dead.

Unlike the relatively scant ILX historiography, the historiography of B.C. and the

Stó:lõ nation is rich and diverse and as a result spatial studies conducted in B.C. have

enriched this present research and influenced its direction.

Historian John Lutz noted in his 2008 *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White

Relations* that post-modern theory has greatly influenced the writing of British

Columbia's (B.C.) Aboriginal history. "Much of the pomo wawa has been expressly

political, the goal being to show how colonial processes have marginalized indigenous

peoples."[74] Writing in regard to Native-newcomer relations and Aboriginal involvement

in the economy of B.C., Lutz has found post-structuralist and post-modern theory to have

impacted positively on recent narratives of the northwest because it provides an effective

new method of analysis, that is, the study of doctrine and spatial management. As this

spatial historiography demonstrates, Foucauldian methodologies have influenced

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[74] John Sutton Lutz, *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), p. 15.

academic studies in B.C. Spatial studies have come a long way in B.C. Aboriginal

studies over the last two decades, largely in response to land claims documentation, as

well as responses within academia demanding deconstructive techniques.

Aboriginal studies in British Columbia have benefited from the post-structuralist

academic environment of the 1990s. Drawing from Michel Foucault's works the *Birth of

the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*, historians have applied aspects of Foucault's theory

of the deconstruction of control systems to look at how spaces are manipulated to

emphasize ideologies.[75] Such approaches have inspired historians to import aspects of the

same deconstruction techniques into their analysis of Native-newcomer interactions in

British Columbia, and in particular, to spatial studies that examine the role of bio-

power.[76]

Historical Geographer Cole Harris' pioneering spatial studies along Canada's

Pacific Slope, for example, uses a Foucauldian analysis to look at how colonized space

affects Aboriginal people. In *The Resettlement of British Columbia* Harris looks at the

effects of changing geographies within BC; from river to rail, from the 1858 Gold Rush

and the associated increased pressure on Aboriginal lands, to the rise in lumber, salmon,

and hop production, Harris studies the effects of these changes in mobility patterns, tribal

affiliations, and community structure for the Coast Salish. The analysis highlights how

culture and space are integrated: "Societies and their places and spaces exist in ongoing,

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[75] Like Catholic school regimentation within classroom organisation or the use of health censuses to justify medical examinations of a population's bodies. See, Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. A.M. Sheridan, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), *Surveiller et punir*, (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1975).

[76] Bio-power: "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations." See, Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* Vol. 1, R. Hurley, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1980). P. 140.

reciprocal relation with each other."[77] In his most recent monograph, Cole Harris has

continued the analysis of space in terms of Aboriginal reserves in British Columbia.

Delineating 19th century conceptions of reserves, Harris' analysis finds that spaces

allocated to Aboriginals in the 1800s have little economic relevance in the contemporary

era and are the roots of many of the problems faced by Aboriginals today.[78] Although the

book emphasizes Foucauldian control and associated terror wrought by the influx of

settlers, it lacks discussion regarding resistance, an oversight this study will address.

Still, as Cole Harris demonstrates, the analysis of space is integral to an understanding of

Native-newcomer history—an insight that is integral to my cemetery analysis.

    Historian Mary-Ellen Kelm likewise takes a similar bio-power approach to the

historical categorization of the Aboriginal body in *Colonizing Bodies*. She shows how

through the use of medical studies, forced education, resource restrictions, and

marginalizing Aboriginal healing, indigenous people became a foil for judging the

progress of assimilation policies during the first half of the twentieth century. Like

Foucault, and his argument of bio-power forwarded by *Birth of the Clinic*, Kelm found

that missionaries played a central role in this internalized colonization process.[79]

    Unlike the works of Harris and Kelm, the 2001 *Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical*

Atlas provides an entirely spatial analysis which highlights Aboriginal understanding of

their places over time. Spatial approaches are included in the discussion of a variety of

topics: myth-age transformers, salmon fishing sites, ancestral mobility, and reserve sites

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[77] Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), p. xiv.
[78] Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).
[79] Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia 1900-50*, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1998), ps. xv, xiv.

among the various tribal communities that make up the Stó:lõ Nation. Cultural Advisor Sonny McHalsie, archaeologist Dave Schaepe, and historian Keith Carlson compiled a comprehensive pedagogical atlas while employed by the Stó:lõ Nation which aimed to "build cross-cultural understanding, and to establish respect." Toward that end, the authors found "the atlas form offered the best way of presenting a body of cultural information in a manner accessible and palatable to Stó:lõ community members, who continue to prefer oral and visual communication over written text."[80] The goal of this chapter is to explore a similar social landscape but on a smaller physical scale of the Shxwõwhámél cemetery and to ensure that the research findings will be accessible to the Stó:lõ community..

The *Stó:lõ Atlas* demonstrates that space and identity are interrelated. Archaeologist Dave Schaepe echoed this in his article "Stó:lõ Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S'ólh Téméxw:" and explained that it was important to "emphasize anthropological linkages between landscapes and identity as a common ground."[81] Although identity can be a difficult topic to discuss, it is central to the discussion of Stó:lõ history. "History, therefore, is regarded by Salish people as an important arbiter of both identity and political authority," writes Keith Carlson in his article discussing the post-contact formation of a collective Stó:lõ political identity.[82] This present study of identity formation, community kinship associations and the impact of foreign contact with the indigenous people of ILX and Stó:lõ nation takes its guidance from spatial

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[80] The Honourable Steven L. Point and Keith Thor Carlson, *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2001) p. xiv, xv.

[81] David M. Schaepe, "Stolo Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S'ólh Téméxw" in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* B.G. Miller, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 237.

[82] Keith Thor Carlson, "Towards an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of "Post-Contact" Salish Collective Identities," in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* B.G. Miller, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 139.

studies conducted by scholars such as those mentioned and hopes to extend our current understanding of contemporary history. Although it will be a difficult path discussing such identity-related matters as internal political difference, changes over time, community difference, and the potential for multiple identities, this study takes guidance from, and seeks to build upon, the pioneering spatial studies in the field.

The *Stó:lõ Atlas* has two plates that incorporate case studies of Shxwõwhámél. Each of these is directly relevant to this study of the Shxwõwhámél cemetery. Sonny McHalsie, Stó:lõ community member and current co-director of the Stó:lõ Research and Resource Management Centre, authored a plate "Intergenerational Ties and Movement" which discussed the movements of the McHalsie lineage over a series of generations. He traced "a complex web of family relations linking people and place to a broad landscape" in which ancestors were found to live amongst a variety of Stó:lõ reserves along the Fraser.[83] A similar case of ancestral genealogies found in the Stó:lõ cemetery links the community with other Stó:lõ groups along the Fraser. Sonny McHalsie's house, located on the Shxwõwhámél reserve, is discussed in the *Stó:lõ Atlas* in terms of spatial organisation. Traditional Stó:lõ cultural mores of "allowing sleeping inhabitants to keep their beds aligned with the east-west travels of the sun" were a key concept in the house designs, and the same spatial orientation is found in the burial patterns examined as part of this study of the Shxwõwhámél cemetery.[84]

Many of these spatial approaches were largely inspired by the demand for land use studies. Court litigation regarding land claims often required historic land use and

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[83] Sonny McHalsie, *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2001), p. 32

[84] "Changing Households, Changing Houses" *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2001), p. 45.

mobility studies of Aboriginal groups which resulted in a high demand for geographical data. The 1996 *R. v. Van der Peet* decision established "where an Aboriginal community demonstrates that an activity had been an integral part of its ancestor's society…that activity could be protected as an Aboriginal right," beginning a large volume of land use studies to provide the necessary spatial component for court proceedings and land claims.[85] Keith Carlson noted that the 1997 *Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia* resource usage case "served to invigorate the discipline by motivating strong but reasoned academic response" to the demand for judicially inspired Aboriginal research.[86] Thus, litigation provided much of the impetus for importing academic research into spatial studies within B.C. Aboriginal history.

Recent spatial historiography in B.C. proved the value of spatial approaches to Aboriginal history. As a result of court demands for land use studies, as well as recent post-structuralist critiques of spatial organisation and control systems, spatial studies in B.C. have grown significantly. Harris's *The Resettlement of British Columbia* pioneered spatial approaches in B.C., while recent publications such as *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* honed the use and accessibility of spatial information for communities. This study benefited from the wide array of spatial historiography available in B.C. and guided the direction of this study of the Shxwõwhámél cemetery. The intent of this cemetery analysis is to provide a micro-history approach to the control of space within the Shxwõwhámél cemetery which will further inform the well-developed spatial

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[85] Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflection on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in Myth & Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact, J.S. Lutz, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 47.

[86] Keith Thor Carlson, Melinda Marie Jette, Kenichi Matsui, "An Annotated Bibliography of Major Writings in Aboriginal History, 1990-99" *The Canadian Historical Review* (Vol. 82, March 2001), p. 125.

historiography of the area.

The spaces of the dead are central to Stó:lõ understandings of the afterlife. When Oblates arrived they soon learned about Stó:lõ burial rites and modified these death rites to align more closely with their own Catholic worldview.[87] The Shxwõwhámél cemetery is an example of how Oblates used existing beliefs among the Stó:lõ to reinforce Oblate doctrine.

When the Oblate missionaries arrived along the Fraser during the nineteenth century, the dominant manner of stowing the dead was to hang them in trees. However, this was not a static burial rite. Archaeological work completed by field school students in the Stó:lõ territory found burial mounds and pits dating approximately 1,000-1,500 years ago. The remains were confirmed as Coast Salish.[88] Thus when the Oblates arrived and re-introduced burials the transition to internment was not an entirely foreign concept as it marked a return to ancient ceremonial practices of the Stó:lõ.

The Shxwõwhámél cemetery was founded in the mid-nineteenth century shortly after the establishment of the area's diocese. The hierarchy and structure of B.C. 's "reduction system" contributed to the conservative elements of Oblate doctrine that emphasized original sin.[89] These reduction model systems extolled the opposing virtues of penance and play, emphasizing strict control of temperance missions and public shaming, while also encouraging organised group activities and sport. These "reduction

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[87] In terms of Oblate history within BC, see Vincent J. McNally's *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia.* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000).

[88] Brian Thom, "The Dead and the Living: Burial Mounds & Cairns and the Development of Social Class in the Gulf of Georgia Region," MA thesis, UBC 1995.

[89] Jansenist elements of the Durieu system included emphasis on original sin, human depravity, the necessity of divine grace, and predestination, and had a strong temperance outlook. See McNally *The Lord's Distant Vineyard*, p. xxii-xxiv.

models" were innovative in encouraging the traditional *siyam* in which family elders chose community chiefs. Unfortunately, the watchmen chosen to patrol the mission streets often represented the repressive nature of these controlled communities. Paul Durieu employed this system universally during his tenure as Bishop of New Westminster from 1890 to 1899. *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography* notes that the Durieu system was "a strict Roman Catholic tribal theocracy…although it encouraged missionaries to use native languages, the system opposed Indian religious traditions."[90] This reduction model system, although seen as severe in retrospect, would come to emphasize aspects of local Stó:lõ structure and status as well as Oblate hierarchy.

Such was the case for St. Mary's mission, outside of Mission City, founded in 1861, which quickly became the principal Catholic mission along the Fraser River, servicing missions as far away as the Kootenays. Despite competition from Anglicans and Methodists, the Oblate presence continued to grow as they extended missions beyond the mountain passes.

Perhaps the well-organised layout of the SHX cemetery, as compared to ILX, owes credit to Durieu's attempts at Oblate omnipotency. However, adherence to some Stó:lõ cultural protocols was also necessary. Post-contact Stó:lõ historically buried their dead with their heads pointing toward the rising sun. The Oblates followed this practice by facing all remaining graves to the east in the SHX cemetery. Michael Kelly, local resident and shaker priest, recalled an example of a woman buried outside the cemetery, "because she wasn't catholic they[the local Catholic clergy] buried her not facing

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[90] Dictionary of Canadian Biography. "Durieu, Paul." http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6080 (Accessed July 12, 2009).

east…they turned them this way so they couldn't see in the spirit world."[91] This

comment demonstrates that the Catholics in charge of the site were aware of Stó:lõ

cultural protocols regarding death and manipulated this knowledge to punish non-

Catholics. The punishment for non-observance of Catholic customs within the

Shxwõwhámél community was severe and extended to the afterlife in instances of Oblate

denial of funeral rites to Stó:lõ community members.

Respondents in SHX voiced negative opinions of the former Oblate practice of

excluding non-Catholics and unbaptized infants from the blessed grounds of the

cemetery. The Catholic Aboriginal consensus regarding the negative impacts of doctrinal

exclusion suggests that Canadian Aboriginal antipathy towards this rule was voiced and

that the reforms brought by Vatican II came about partially due to Canadian Aboriginal

opinion on the matter.[92] Not only did the SHX communities note the problems that

existed prior to the Vatican II reforms, but many other Aboriginal people interviewed

during the Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimage by the author in 2008 voiced the same criticisms.

Kathryn McKay's 2000 research for the Stó:lõ, "Reburial: Ideas for Stó:lõ Policy and

Protocol" cited community member Betty Charles, who noted that it was "The Catholics,

for example, [who] would not bury those who were unbaptized or who were considered

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[91] Michael Kelly Interview, June 13, 2008; the shaker church (a predominantly Indian church blending Catholicism, Aboriginal traditions, Methodism and others) began in the late nineteenth century by John Slocum and his family in Washington. Shaker refers to the shaking trance that is direct revelation from God, as first experienced by John Slocum. The religion does not use Bibles and has no central authority. After meeting much resistance from churches and Indian agents in Washington, the religion spread throughout the northwest. Although a sect of Christianity, Shakers will often perform services for any Native-Christian religions. Although outdated, the H.G. Barnett's work on the Shakers provides an effective structural analysis, see *Indian Shakers: A Messianic Cult of the Pacific Northwest*, (Carbondale: Outh Illinois University Press, 1957).

[92] Raymond J. Huel noted "Long before Vatican II, however, the Oblates had recognized that their apostolate, with its emphasis on conformity to Roman Catholic norms and values, was being rejected by a large number of Natives who abandoned Christianity in favour of traditional forms of spirituality and worship." See Huel, Raymond. *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), p. xxiii.

to have clung to their 'heathen practices.'" McKay believes "this restriction did not allow those Stó:lõ who followed the traditional religion, whether wholly or inpart, to be interred in 'holy ground.'"[93] As in ILX, the same Oblate exclusionary rules appeared to be universally negative among Aboriginal communities.   This exclusionary practice had serious ramifications for the SHX because the OMI imposed Catholicism on the entire Stó:lõ nation and extended their ecclesiastic jurisdiction to the Stó:lõ cemetery. Community and locale were closely connected to SHX identity formation and to be buried within the local cemetery signified that the deceased and the family were part of the community. To be buried outside the cemetery meant you were ostracized from the community. With control of the cemetery, Oblates became the principal arbiters of community inclusion or exclusion.

Retaining aspects of Native culture after years of Oblate acculturation is an important goal of present-day descendants. Elders who walked through the Shxwõwhámél cemetery with this writer pointed to a large cedar tree with an oblong branch which grew perpendicular to the trunk of the tree which was the likely location of a former mortuary box. The fact that the cemetery is closely located to this former hanging tree suggests the Oblates may have taken advantage of a pre-contact established Stó:lõ deathscape when they established the cemetery and church in the same place. Or it may suggest that Stó:lõ people reinvented the use of the tree in order to meld both Catholic and Stó:lõ practices within one space. Nonetheless, the tree is an identifier of past Stó:lõ death practices and continues to be included in Stó:lõ stories of burials.

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[93] "Reburial: Ideas for Stó:lõ Policy and Protocol" Kathryn McKay, July 2000 Field School paper, p. 16.

Today the hanging tree, although not used for stowing bodies, is a signifier that recalls former indigenous death practices of the community.

As the establishment of the Oblate Catholic cemetery space demonstrates, aspects of acculturation and syncretism are apparent. As noted earlier, the introduction of below-ground burials was not an entirely foreign concept for the Shxwõwhámél Stó:lõ, who had practiced the custom 1,000 to 1,500 years ago. However, the Durieu system employed in the area left its mark in the cemetery where its orderly nature speaks of Oblate control and oral stories tell of exclusionary practices designed to align the Stó:lõ faithful to the Catholic church.

The Stó:lõ believe that their deceased are omnipresent and take precautions to protect the living from the spirits of the dead. These spirits are particularly potent during the transition between night and day. Previous work accomplished by the Stó:lõ in mapping cemeteries were thought to have led to ailments wrought by spirits residing in the spiritual gateways which the cemeteries represent.[94] As a precaution, Stó:lõ are warned to wear ochre as protection against spirits during the liminal hours of dusk. This researcher was asked to avoid the dusk hours altogether as a bulwark of protection for the writer as well as for the community which would also feel the repercussions of upset spirits.

Hierarchy and status are particularly important in Stó:lõ culture where status is in a large part marked by having access to key fishing spots along the Fraser with kinship based rights linking individuals and families to these areas. Most historians believe the Stó:lõ had a complex class system with at least one free, land-holding and political upper

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[94] "Account and Status of Cemetery and Burial Grounds Project," Alice Marwood, Project Supervisor, Dave Schaepe, Archaeologist, Riley Lewis, Assistant Archaeologist, Keith Carlson, Historian, Sonny McHalsie, Cultural Advisor. (May 2001).

class and a lower slave class who did not enjoy the same freedom of movement as the other classes.[95] Although the slave class would diminish after contact, likely due to Euro-cultural moral projections, it was an entrenched cultural structure prior to, and shortly following contact. Brian Thom's analysis of the transition from burial mounds to tree hanging approximately 1,000 to 1,500 years ago found that the "switch from below ground to above-ground marks change in social make-up where class is the main signifier."[96] Although burial mounds included burnt ceremonial offerings, tree hangings seemed to have increased material items left with dead. These items would implicitly mark the status of the deceased. Such items often included copper disks, leather straps, abalone shells and sectioned dentalium beads, which were left with the deceased in order that they may be useful to them in the afterlife. The more materials, the better the status, as Thom demonstrated in his discussion of a slave burial that "received little more than a box in tree."[97] As these articles noted, the manner in which a deceased person's status was remembered was directly related to the material items their family could afford to send to them in the spirit world. The burnt offerings became the method of remembering, respecting, and honouring the dead, a culturally intrinsic method of memorialisation.

Burnings, or feasts for the dead, required food to be literally burned in order to feed the spirits of the deceased. The burnings reminded the Stó:lō of their responsibilities to their ancestors. There were important protocols to follow, as burnings were not only

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[95] G.M. Guilmet, R.T. Boyd, et.al. "The Legacy of Introduced Disease: The Southern Coast Salish." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 15, no. 4 (1991), p. 3.

[96] Brian D. Thom, "The Dead and the Living: Burial Mounds & Cairns and the Development of Social Class in the Gulf of Georgia Region" MA thesis (UBC, 1995), p. 15.

[97] Brian Thom found his conclusions reached the same as Stó:lō historian William Elmendorf who studied the Stó:lō in 1960s; see "The Dead and the Living," p. 14.

offered to supply the spirits of the dead, but also to protect the living. In her unpublished

MA thesis on the Stó:lõ cemetery I:yem, Amanda Fehr noted that "the burning of food

for the dead… is another way that respect continues to be shown to the dead and beyond

that a means for people to re-connect with their ancestors, their history, and their canyon

places."[98]

The practice of offering burnt items continued with tree-hangings, and continued

to some degree with Catholic burials. The persistence of these customs highlight's the

cultural strength of the Stó:lõ and the syncretic nature of dovetailing aspects of Christian

concepts of the afterlife with traditional Stó:lõ understandings of the spiritual need for

material wealth in the afterlife.

Remembering a deceased siyam requires a significant amount of material goods

in order to memorialize the individual within the community.[99] However, since the

materials are burnt as an offering to the deceased, the focus of the memorialisation has

been redirected from the offering of tangible objects to a ceremony that emphasizes

communication between the living and the dead. Local Elders and ritualists are often

sought to open limited dialogue with past spirits and it is via this spiritual link that the

deceased are remembered. However, offerings remain an important means of ensuring

that the deceased will be comfortable in the spirit world. Therefore, although

memorialisation of the deceased via material items remains an important aspect of

remembering the dead and their accomplishments in the community, it is not necessarily

a tangible memorialisation, but rather an action of local and spiritual communication.

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[98] Amanda Fehr, "The Relationships of Place: A Study of Change and Community in Stó:lõ Understandings of I:yem," MA thesis (University of Saskatchewan, 2008).

[99] *Siyam*, or the respected ones in Halkomelem, refers to Elders and leading families.

Other oral histories tell of disease in the area. Like ILX, many respondents do not remember the exact dates for which diseases occurred. The pH level of Shxwõwhámél soil is low, encouraging quick decomposition, unlike the sands of ILX.[100] The 1862 smallpox epidemic is said to have resulted in mass burials in the SHX cemetery. The 1919 influenza pandemic, as in the rest of the world, left its mark on SHX soil. However, given the occurrence of floods in both communities and the soil composition in SHX, it is likely that these mass burial sites cannot be pinpointed.

The effects of epidemics are relative to, among other things, geography and proximity to flash points where diseases are introduced. At ILX, their isolation from major centres safeguarded them from some of the worst epidemics encountered by other Aboriginal groups throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. However, while coming into the fold of globalization in the twentieth century, this Métis settlement became more prone to diseases as increasing contact via steamships, planes, and eventually vehicular traffic connected them to the rest of the world. On the other hand, the community's distance from major centres hampered the recovery of the residents from diseases and made their impact acute in these periphery regions. The case of Shxwõwhámél may be the opposite. Buttressing the Fraser, a busy central transportation network for Aboriginals and euro-Americans alike, and being close to the port settlement of Vancouver and the major fur-trading Fort Langley, the Stó:lõ residents of Shxwõwhámél, along with the rest of their Stó:lõ family and community members, were especially vulnerable to some of the diseases encountered early in the colonization process.

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[100] McKay, "Reburial: Ideas for Stó:lõ Policy and Protocol," p. 3.

Many articles have been written approximating death rates on virgin soil conditions but most studies do not agree on the numbers of those afflicted nor are they sure which particular diseases were problematic.[101] What these articles do generally agree on is that diseases had profound effects on traditional aboriginal cultures and left these cultures prone to colonial incursions.

Although the chronology of diseases is still debated, it is clear that the first disease to hit the Coast Salish was the 1770s smallpox epidemic, with successive ebbs and flows which finally ended with the 1862 scourge. Although the HBC offered a smallpox vaccine in 1837, it would have been limited to acculturated natives who traded with the HBC (in the case of the Stó:lõ, Fort Langley). In 1862 measles also swept through the region and was likely the last obvious disease (aside from sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, and other less apparent long-term introduced diseases) to take a toll on the Stó:lõ.[102] Unfamiliar with these diseases and their manner or method of transmission, Aboriginal coping mechanisms failed to adequately ease the situation. In some cases, the touching of the body by shamans to heal would have exacerbated the situation. Shamans were often killed if they were unable to provide a cure, and an ensuing fissure developed in the Stó:lõ metaphysical belief system as death rates dramatically increased, thus paving the way for Oblate evangelization. The failure of shamans to reduce the death rates and "loss of confidence in the efficacy of traditional

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[101] George Guilmet, Robert Boyd, David Whited, and Nile Thompson discuss the "Legacy of Introduced Disease: The Coast Salish" and how different diseases affected the Pacific Slope after contact. See also, Keith Thor Carlson, "The Numbers Game: Interpreting Historical Stó:lõ Demographics." In *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2001).

[102] Boyd, Guilmet, Whited, Thompson "The legacy of Introduced Disease," p. 6-16.

metaphysical and moral beliefs and practices" led the Stó:lõ "to more easy conversion to introduced religious beliefs."[103]

Mass burial graves do not exist in the present Shxwõwhámél cemetery as most epidemics struck early in the 19th century and the original cemetery was moved in the mid-twentieth century in order to save it from flooding. However, not all Stó:lõ burials are contained within the Catholic plot as it was strictly a Catholic space and non-Catholics were not allowed to be buried there. Michael Kelly talks about his experiences coming across abandoned smallpox mass burials:

> A lot of the ones in the area that had gotten small pox they elected to just go down into their dwellings and have people cover it up, and the whole family would die in it. Their pit houses became their graves. They did that to sacrifice themselves so it wouldn't spread…just across the freeway just starting way around the weigh scales, we found like 22, 26 pit houses that weren't scared by the power lines or pipelines.[104]

Mr. Kelly's account combines historical geography with present day spatial understandings as well as issues of current land use. Furthermore, it also presents Aboriginal agency as central to Stó:lõ reactions and containment of the smallpox scourge. According to Mr. Kelly, the Stó:lõ came to some difficult realizations regarding the limitations of their traditional medicinal techniques. However, Aboriginal agency in terms of their reaction to illness reveals a selfless system of disease containment which is a perspective often overlooked in histories of aboriginal epidemics. Although no longer physically manifested within the cemetery as grave sites, the cemetery grounds reminded

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[103] Boyd, Guilmet, Whited, Thompson "The legacy of Introduced Disease," p. 24.
[104] Michael Kelly interview, June 13, 2008.

respondents of stories of widespread disease and their fatal consequence. [105] Thus, for these residents the burial grounds are not only a space of the dead, but also a mnemonic that links the living with the realm of the dead.

Like ILX, the SHX site is a syncretic space, with its own regional expression. Unlike ILX, some of the iron crosses announce that those buried there include Chiefs (see figure 3.1). This correlates with the importance of status in Stó:lõ culture and again complements Oblate emphasis on hierarchy. Under the Durieu system, Oblates created village police forces to enforce temperance laws and maintain good Catholic order. Often these village captains would be chosen from among the Stó:lõ *siyam*. Such was the case with Jimmy Joseph, whose " name also appears on lists of Chiefs, Subchief, Captains, Councillors, and watchmen," and whose son would later become Chief in Shxwõwhámél (see figure 3.1). The recent revival of the siyam system within individual bands of the Stó:lõ nation began with Shxwõwhámél, highlighting the strength the siyam system must have had in the region.[106] Local siyam member, Roger Andrews notes that Shxwõwhámél "is one of the very first communities that could be turned into a custom band. What that means is that we can do away with elections, have what we call… family leaders, siyams."[107]

Village chiefs, captains and the watchmen that worked with them, are among those buried within the cemetery. Chief Jimmy Joseph and Chief George, two early 20th century Shxwõwhámél chiefs have their status engraved on their concrete grave markers. Adhering to the chieftain system imposed by the federal government, it is not unusual that high status families would then choose this single epitomizing word to announce their local station. As of

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[105] It was moved because of flooding, see Roger Andrews interview, June 11, 2008.

[106] Keith Thor Carlson, "Colonial Fracture and Community Cohesion: Governance in the Stó:lõ Community of Shxwõwhámél," Paper prepared for the Stó:lõ Research and Resource Management Centre (2000).

[107] Roger Andrews interview, June 11, 2008.

1994, Shxwõwhámél governance has been administered via family siyams; the old hierarchies of Chiefs, Captains, and watchmen are no longer used. However, during the era of euro-American cultural projection, the Stó:lõ, drawing from histories of their own internal siyam hierarchies, were apt to adopt the same practices within their cemeteries.

Announcing status via cemetery memorialisation is not strictly a Stó:lõ practice. In her Victorian cemetery analysis Aubrey Cannon showed, in comparing burial records to existing 19th century tombstones, that the local elite were over-represented.[108] The industrial town's elite of Cannon's analysis were caught up in a society of increasing consumerism and would bestow great sums to memorialize their deceased. At the other end of the class scale, the working class graves, those with fewer resources to expend on cemetery memorialisation, became less represented as their inscriptions decayed. The same situation is applicable to the Shxwõwhámél cemetery, where chiefs are statistically over represented in the cemetery. Lower class families are more likely to purchase wooden graves or construct their own concrete tombstones, both of which degrade more easily than Iron or granite. In ILX the clerical section's granite stones are some of the last few with surviving inscriptions from the 19th century; in Shxwõwhámél chiefs' graves and notable anthropological informants are some of the most elaborate in the site.[109]

Noting his relation to the local political-social structure, Michael Kelly talked of his grandmother on his father's side, Lillian George, who is buried within the George family plot

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[108] Aubrey Cannon, "Material Culture and Burial Representativeness." In *Grave Reflections: Portraying the Past through Cemetery Studies*. S.R. Saunders, A. Herring, eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1995), p. 10.

[109] The Lorenzetto plot within the Shxwõwhámél cemetery, notable informants for Wilson Duff, suggest that as informants they held a significant position within the cemetery. This also raises questions regarding the relationship between community informants and researchers.

which houses the gravestones of Chief George and Captain George.[110] By explaining his relationship to the chieftain/*siyam* of Shxwõwhámél, Mr. Kelly not only highlights the Stó:lõ custom of noting upper class ancestry within one's own family, but also displays the importance of kinship relations as representations of local stature. This is not simply a self-serving cultural mechanism, but also, as evidenced by Julie Cruikshank, an example of oral foot-noting that reinforces Mr. Kelly's oral histories. Fidelity to the stories of one's ancestors is integral to Stó:lõ culture, and Mr. Kelly's transparent ancestry proves consistent with Julie Cruickshank's notations regarding oral footnoting.[111]

As the example of Mr. Kelly's ancestry demonstrates, the gravestones in the SHX cemetery mark more nuanced relationships within the local community but they also links with other Stó:lõ communities along the Fraser. Oblate emphasis on monogamy and recognized marriage combined well with Stó:lõ marriage systems resulting in the same paternally based familial burial clusters as evidenced in the ILX cemetery. Given the resources of the present Stõ:lö Nation, existing genealogical charts for those buried in the cemetery have been obtained which help to demonstrate the mobile nature of the Stõ:lö along the Fraser River. These charts help map out the relationships along the Fraser valley, among the Shxwõwhámél, Seabird Island, Hope, and other bands of the Stó:lõ. Using the existing engravings on the Shxwõwhámél tombstones, their spatial burial patterns, and genealogical information reveals nuanced aspects of kinship within the community. Marie and Ed Lorenzetto were born in 1888 and 1889, respectively, to Margaret (née Silva) and Andrew Lorenzetto. After their father's death their mother remarried a widower, August Jim. Not all

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[110] Michael Kelly interview, June 13, 2008.
[111] Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

relationships are bound by blood quantum kinship rules. Although from Chawathil, August Jim moved to SHX, against the patrilocal custom, and lived with his new family. August Jim was also buried alongside his surrogate children, Marie and Ed, including Ed's wife Adeline (née Pierre) Lorenzetto. This example demonstrates the fluid rules governing kinship and individual community identity within Stó:lõ culture. Most Shxwõwhámél residents married outside of the band and most wives moved to their husband's band. However, August Jim's burial within his wife's local burial grounds suggests that kinship could be redefined in terms of residence and burial patterns. This arrangement conflicts with most literature on the subject which generally views kinship as rigidly structured within Stó:lõ culture.[112]

Interestingly, Marie and her brother Edward, buried together alongside their mother and surrogate father, were principal informants for Wilson Duff. Although Duff goes to great lengths in discussing their Aboriginal lineage, he fails to make any notation regarding European descent within their ancestry which is a common failure of salvage ethnographic approaches. This oversight also serves as a cautionary tale for contemporary scholars to be careful about relying on the field work of such early ethnography.[113]

The example of August Jim's lineage provides some insight into the mobility of the Stó:lõ. Respondents also noted how they were related to people buried in this cemetery, as well as other ones further upstream. This also complicates the understanding of locality in terms of Aboriginal identification. Not bound by bands, the Stó:lõ moved, married, and were buried all along the Fraser. Knowing one's family and where they are buried becomes a large

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[112] In comparison to ILX, the example of August Jim suggests the fluid and dynamic nature of Stõ:lõ kinship, much like Brenda Macdougall's analysis of wahkootowin within ILX.

[113] Wilson Duff discusses these informants in *The Indian History of British Columbia: The Impact of the White Man* (Victoria: Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, 1964).

part of familial local identity. Therefore, having a relative buried in the local cemetery helps establish families within various localities and acts as a method of kinship and community identification among the Stó:lõ along the Fraser river.

Spatial approaches and oral histories work together to clarify our understanding of Oblate methods of acculturation, Native-newcomer syncretism, and Stó:lõ status, kinship, and identity concerns as revealed within the Shxwõwhámél cemetery. Oblate spatial control issues are apparent in the Shxwõwhámél cemetery, where indigenous non-Catholics were not only physically excluded from, but also sometime denied, traditional Stó:lõ rites. These acts of exclusion were an effective method of community control and expression of cultural hegemony. The cemetery and community also spatially manifest sites of pre-contact Stó:lõ burial patterns and ritual mortuary burnings which suggest aspects of Catholic syncretism with Stó:lõ cultural mores. Kinship networks and family clusters are apparent in the cemetery and when paired with oral histories and genealogical stories of Stó:lõ kinship reveal cross-community ties between Stó:lõ communities and deceased family members buried within the Shxwõwhámél cemetery with other Stó:lõ cemeteries. These demonstrate the mobile and sometimes fluid nature of Stó:lõ families, displaying subtleties of individual and familial identity and status within the cemetery. Finally, population loss from epidemics is an identifying agent within the traditional dialectic of the colonizer-colonized relationship. Oral histories of disease highlight experiences of suffering, and processes of adaptation that are central to current Shxwõwhámél identities and memories. These histories also demonstrate Aboriginal agency with regard to disease containment, an aspect often overlooked in articles on New World epidemics.

These stories demonstrate how micro-history cemetery approaches can benefit spatial studies. Importing spatial studies into the cemetery helps elucidate aspects of control, showing the potential of academic interest in cemeteries.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION
Comparing Cultures: The Local and the Similar

Île-à-la-Crosse has often been portrayed as a distant and isolated riverine mission, but today most historians find it necessary to note how roads and cars have turned the focus of the community away from the water and towards the road. Although separated by distance, in a community hours from the next, these distances become relative and ILX no longer seems a world away. These same roads which connect ILX to the more heavily populated south of Saskatchewan eventually connect with other more distant roads and eventually lead to the long and winding roads of the B.C. Pacific coast. Here too, the Stó:lõ community straddles between the riverine life of its past and the fast-paced highway of contemporary mainstream culture. In both ILX and Shxwõwhámél, past values and present day concerns are manifested in the cemeteries. In their unique manner they each tell stories of the local Métis or Stó:lõ identities, and in similar ways their grounds are covered with historical remnants of Oblate management. These cemeteries are now mapped and recorded, with copies provided to the communities of ILX and SHX and this information is now archived.

There will always be decaying plots and abandoned cemeteries; the march of death is relentless and space is at a premium. Still, while they last, cemeteries tell stories about the locale of a particular place and time. These stories are subject to Time's efface, and while these cemetery tales will never tell the whole story, they do reveal through spatial analysis and oral histories, stories of local identity. After briefly recapping the spatial findings from ILX and SHX cemeteries this chapter will interpret them in terms of their meaning for local identity then note their contribution to the historiography of the region.

Working within the communities as an outsider and interviewing community members inside and outside of the cemetery was insightful. On one hand, the information conveyed by respondents probably contained some bias as these informants inevitably relied on references from others and often led this researcher to similarly disposed social and kinship networks. Thus, although this method of data collection provided a uniquely family-based approach, it does not necessarily reflect all aspects of other groupings within the communities. In an attempt to overcome this barrier, a wide variety of community members were contacted, although contact was not always entirely successful.

This is a comparative study, and Marshall Sahlins discussed the importance of comparative cultural studies. Sahlins emphasised "the value of anthropological concepts of culture for the study of history, and vice versa, as along the way it shows certain values of history for the study of culture." In *Apologies to Thucydides* Sahlins found common cultural values between the nineteenth century Polynesian War of the conservative Rewa and naval Bau to the Spartan and Athenian Peloponnesian war of fifth century Greece. "If the past is a foreign country, then it is another culture…and if it is another culture, then discovering it takes some anthropology – which is to say, some cultural comparison."[114] Thus, Sahlins demonstrated the necessity of cultural relevance in comparison studies. Raymond Grew notes "for historians to think comparatively, to compare histories, is to do what we already do."[115] A comparison of the ILX and SHX cemeteries elucidated aspects of local identity and their histories. In both communities

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[114] Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa*. (Chicago: University Press, 2004), p. 1, 2.

[115] Raymond Grew, "The Case for Comparing Histories," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85 (Oct., 1980), p. 777.

similar stories were told: stories of disease and Aboriginal suffering, stories of misconceived Oblate spatial control issues, stories of regional aspects of identity and memorialisation and stories illustrating the importance of kinship networks were all apparent .

Discussing identity is difficult, and as recent Aboriginal history demonstrates racial categorizations are an impossible group to pin down with one definition. Therefore, this study uses local Aboriginal oral histories to speak of community identity, not racial constructions. These identities are similar in the micro region, and are not meant as a blanket definition of ILX Métis or SHX Stó:lõ identity. In this manner they do inform a collective local identity but avoids troublesome definitions of Métis and First Nations

Both the ILX and SHX cemeteries provide evidence of the incursion of Oblate missions during the mid-nineteenth century. In particular, Oblate attempts at exclusion from the cemetery were abrasive to the ILX and SHX value systems. Both the ILX and SHX communities expressed difficulties adjusting to the exclusion of unbaptized infants from the cemetery prior to Vatican II Catholic church reforms. The discussion regarding the former exclusion of unbaptized infants in both communities resulted in stories which highlighted problems with certain aspects of Oblate doctrine. Within the Métis community of ILX oral histories highlighted the conflicted world views of Oblate cemetery exclusion and Aboriginal obligations of kinship. In Shxwõwhámél, Catholic exclusion was also a matter raised in interviews. People spoke not only of being excluded, but also of having cultural rites withheld, of the humiliation of the deceased not being faced burying east simply because they did not strictly follow Catholic customs.

Together, the cases of ILX and SHX suggested that reforms attributed to Vatican II in the 1960s were influenced to some degree by local Canadian Aboriginal concerns. Although the changes in church doctrine were in response to global advocacy for a more inclusive liberal doctrine, this author believes that Aboriginal agency such as that evidenced by the ILX and SHX communities played a minor but important role in this liberalization process.

Within Canadian history, Vatican II's reforms are often overlooked in comparison to other high profile liberal movements of the 1960s. However, within Catholic history circles Vatican II is recognized as a profound change within the church. Catholic priest and historian Carl Starkloff noted that Vatican II "effectively symbolized, I believe, a "paradigm shift" in consciousness, in that it began to advocate listening to traditional cultures and spiritualities , not simply as objects of study, but as "objects" of history and as partners in a conversation."[116] There are also many histories exploring the overall effects of Vatican II changes, but none are limited to the effects of Canadian missions.[117] This is a historiographic oversight.

Prior to Vatican II, the Catholic Church's control of the ILX and SHX cemeteries included aspects of local Aboriginal culture that complemented Oblate doctrine. In both cemeteries, as in many others across Canada, familial plots reflected the value Aboriginal people placed on kinship. Not just generalizations, these syncretic practices also reflected local values. Iron crosses and ornate granite adorned the graves of chiefs,

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[116] Carl F. Starkloff, "Hindsight and Foresight: The Catholic Church and Native North Americans, 1965-1997" *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Native-American Catholics (Spring, 1998), p. 110.

[117] For example, see John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*.(Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

elders, and informants in SHX. In ILX, the many artificial flowers and statuettes bespoke a Catholic identity linked to the hyperdulia of the region.

Discussions regarding disease permeate oral histories of the cemetery. In ILX, sunken graves evidence mass deaths due to the Spanish flu and measles. Residents in ILX recalled later diseases of the Spanish flu and measles affecting the community. SHX, along the busy, more accessible Fraser River, was more prone to trans-oceanic diseases and suffered heavily from smallpox and measles scourges in the 19th century.[118] Inoculation arrived earlier in SHX than ILX because the B.C. community was closer to medical services whereas ILX became more isolated from mainstream culture in the twentieth century. SHX, with low pH soil, a moved cemetery and later diseases, does not manifest the more recent mass graves associated with 20th century epidemics of ILX. Nonetheless, the surrounding hills of Shxwõwhámél hold remains of family pit houses which contain the remains of the deceased from earlier epidemics.

Similar stories of kinship are revealed in both cemeteries. George Kelly pointed to his family plots within the cemetery to illustrate his ancestral connections to the George family – a lineage remembered for its siyams and leaders. Through the placements of graves within the Lorenzetto plot we also saw strong indicators of the importance of kinship, but what is perhaps more interesting is the fact that August Jim's remains were interred alongside his wife's children, suggesting that in death as in life, kinship does not always manifest itself patrilocally. The SHX cemetery also links other families along the Fraser, with respondents noting their relationships among the river communities of the

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[118] In terms of B.C. diseases, see George Guilmet, Robert Boyd, David Whited, and Nile Thompson discuss the "Legacy of Introduced Disease: The Coast Salish" and how different diseases affected the Pacific Slope after contact. See also, Keith Thor Carlson, "The Numbers Game: Interpreting Historical Stó:lõ Demographics." In *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2001).

Stó:lõ , and genealogical charts supporting this claim. ILX's cemeteries link its deceased with other families along the Aubichon arm and throughout the northwest Churchill River system. ILX resident Dorothy Dubrule's father from Buffalo Narrows has family buried in both cemeteries. Within the cemeteries too, family networks can be mapped. George Malbouef's family plot is linked across the cemetery to the Bouviers through his mother and the Gardiners through his great-grandmother. These examples demonstrate the power of wahkootowin within the community of ILX.

This study contributes to regional Aboriginal scholarship, as well as to a broader thematic historiography centred on spatial analysis. Regionally, these studies add to local histories of ILX and SHX, but also add to the wider historiography of the northwest Saskatchewan and Pacific slope regions. They do so by analysing the control of space as an identifier of community history and local values. Locally, aspects and stories of kinship are similarly demonstrated in the cemeteries, which highlight the importance of family ties within aboriginal cemeteries.

Spatially, this study contributes to cemetery studies long steeped in archaeological methods, as well as demonstrating the micro spatial control history evident in both ILX and SHX cemeteries. Cole Harris's *The Resettlement of British Columbia* tells the story of spatial control with BC's Aboriginals and the influx of American and Canadian settlers.[119] By telling the stories of kinship, disease, and identity within these cemeteries this study tells the micro-history of communities affected by native-newcomer relations, but it does so in a spatial manner. As Cole Harris was cautiously inspired by Michel Foucault, so too is this author influenced by Foucault's work on control in *Surveiller et*

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[119] Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

Punir,[120] which used Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as an example of how space can be controlled and manipulated to the square inch. But control is also a two-way relationship. Ultimately, the stories of cemetery control in ILX and SHX are not one-way relationships and different layers of control and complementing ideologies are revealed when analysing these cemeteries at the regional level. For example, the story of the hanging tree suggested aspects of spiritual syncretism, a reciprocal spiritual relationship between the Stó:lõ and the Oblate missionaries. As such, a micro-spatial analysis serves not merely to confirm larger studies like Cole Harris' but also serves to demonstrate that space can by analysed within a dialectic which could not be known except through small-scale, intimate, local analysis.

In terms of regional scholarly contributions, this study draws from, and builds upon, Brenda Macdougall's dissertation "Socio-cultural development and identity formation of Métis communities in northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907." Macdougall describes how wahkootowin serves to explain Métis "actions and reactions to internal community relationships that were expressed intergenerationally through the extended family," in the ILX region, "as well as those formulated with the two dominant institutions in northwestern Saskatchewan – fur trade companies and the Roman Catholic church."[121] This interpretation addresses not only the kinship networks within an Aboriginal community, but also other local actors like the Hudson's Bay Company and Oblate missionaries. Relationships between the two were omnipresent historically, with both complementary doctrine as well as competing belief systems. The same

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[120] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1975).

[121] Wahkootowin, derived from the Cree word "relationship," or "relative, see Brenda Macdougall, "Socio-cultural development and identity formation of Métis communities in northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776--1907." Ph.D. Dissertation (Saskatoon: The University of Saskatchewan, 2005), p. 3.

wahkootowin is also present at the micro-level within the ILX cemetery where oral histories and genealogies link families not only within local cemeteries but also to other Métis communities along the Churchill River.

In ILX, evidence of Wahkootowin is particularly discernible within the cemetery. Kinship networks are revealed from talking with local Métis residents and charting their family's networks throughout the cemetery as well as blending spatial data with these oral histories. This research supplements previous scholarly discussions of kinship, first noted by Philip Spaulding, and explored by Macdougall in early ILX history. Also, discussions regarding Virgin Mary spirituality, as researched by Robert Jarvenpa, are evident in memorialisation methods of the Métis of ILX. Overall this study of the ILX Métis community and its gravesite will add to a historiography long dominated by HBC economic and Oblate triumphalist approaches.[122]

In SHX, a similar kinship approach can be discerned within the cemetery, where Oblate emphasis on control clashed with Stó:lõ beliefs on kinship inclusion. Of course, the Cree/Métis wahkootowin of ILX does not have an exact counterpart in SHX where kinship systems are more enclosed, but similar relationships relating to family identities emerge. The kinship of Michael Kelly's family was explored and revealed the importance of status and lineage, while the Lorenzettos, whose surrogate father, August Jim, is buried with them, demonstrated the fluid nature of endogamous networks in Shxwõwhámél.

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[122] Examples of economic and triumphalist perspectives of the history of Northwestern Saskatchewan include, but are not limited to, Frank Crean, *New Northwest Exploration: Report of Exploration, Seasons of 1908 and 1909*. Ottawa: Department of Interior, 1910; Barbara Benoit, "Mission at Ile a la Crosse." *Beaver* Winter (1990), p. 40-50; Gaston Carriére, OMI. "The Oblates and the Northwest, 1845-1861." *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions* (1970), p. 35-66.

The topic of disease is central to conversations about the cemeteries, reflecting the centrality of epidemics in the construction of Aboriginal identity. Many respondents mentioned diseases and their effects on the community, in both ILX and SHX. Although discussions regarding disease were dissimilar regarding dates and diseases, with ILX suffering acutely from the Spanish flu and 1937 measles epidemics, and SHX experiencing mid 19th century scourges of small pox and measles, both communities identified cemeteries as platforms for discussion regarding local effects of epidemics. This demonstrates the lasting mnemonic effect of disease on Aboriginal communities; deadly disease is often seen as an effect, if not a tool, of colonization, and this helps the Métis of ILX and Stó:lõ of SHX identify within Canada's colonization process. By relating their histories to such a process they are able to identify more closely with other Métis and First Nations within the dialectical colonizer/colonized relationship set up by traditional interpretations of colonization.

Discussion of diseases in ILX in relation to Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) documentation also raises important questions regarding the primacy of textual sources in Aboriginal studies. In the 1919 ILX HBC ledger, confusion regarding the symptoms and diagnosis of the Spanish flu was unclear in the documentary evidence. Keith Carlson, in "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," asks "if, for example, oral history is seen as contradicting or running contrary to evidence gleaned from documentary sources, how will the courts determine the relative validity of the two bodies?"[123] In the case of ILX, the textual documents can be as unclear, if not factually incorrect, as oral histories are perceived to be. Textual

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[123] Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*. J.S. Lutz, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 48.

documents are usually the preferred evidence in court cases concerning Aboriginal land claims, and this overlooks traditional methods of knowledge that are not necessarily textual. The case of the ILX 1919 Spanish flu epidemic suggests that primary documents can be as equally unclear or incomplete as the written record.

Spatial studies in BC have grown significantly in the past two decades. Works like Harris's *The Resettlement of British Columbia* have pioneered spatial approaches in BC, while recent publications like *A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* have made spatial information accessible for communities. An analysis of the Shxwõwhámél cemetery stands to inform this well-developed spatial historiography by delivering a micro-history approach to the control of aboriginal space in BC. Spatial native-newcomer relationships studies based in the Shxwõwhámél cemetery adds to an Oblate and aboriginal perspective to the Foucault-inspired approach. Furthermore, this study complements existing scholarship generated by the Stó:lõ, in terms of native-newcomer stories, spatial and cemetery studies, that help demonstrate the kinship networks between Stó:lõ communities as well as their own acts of resistance. As the burial patterns in SHX suggest, kinship is not always easy to define.

This study also contributes to cemetery spatial studies. Cemetery studies have traditionally preferred archaeological excavations as a source of analysis. However, this method is often limited to unused cemeteries where excavations are possible. Cemeteries that are still in use demand a more sensitive approach. By mapping the cemetery and linking oral histories, genealogies, and textual documents with it, a subtler way of reading cemetery information is conducted. Like archaeology, spatial and material information is discovered, and excavations are unnecessary.

As the study anticipated, there were similarities and differences within the ILX and SHX cemeteries. Comparing the ILX and SHX cemeteries elucidated aspects of local identity and history; disease told stories of Aboriginal suffering, Oblate spatial control issues were similar, kinship networks as well as regional aspects of identity and memorialisation were apparent. Although these communities differed in terms of memorialisation and kinship identity, with ILX hyperdulia and SHX burnings and narrow kinship networks, both sites offered similar stories within the framework of Oblate management. Together these Aboriginal cemeteries told stories of the local and recounted wider stories of outside control, inevitably marked and scarred by histories of acculturation and syncretism, but always retaining aspects of their regional Métis and Stó:lõ identity.
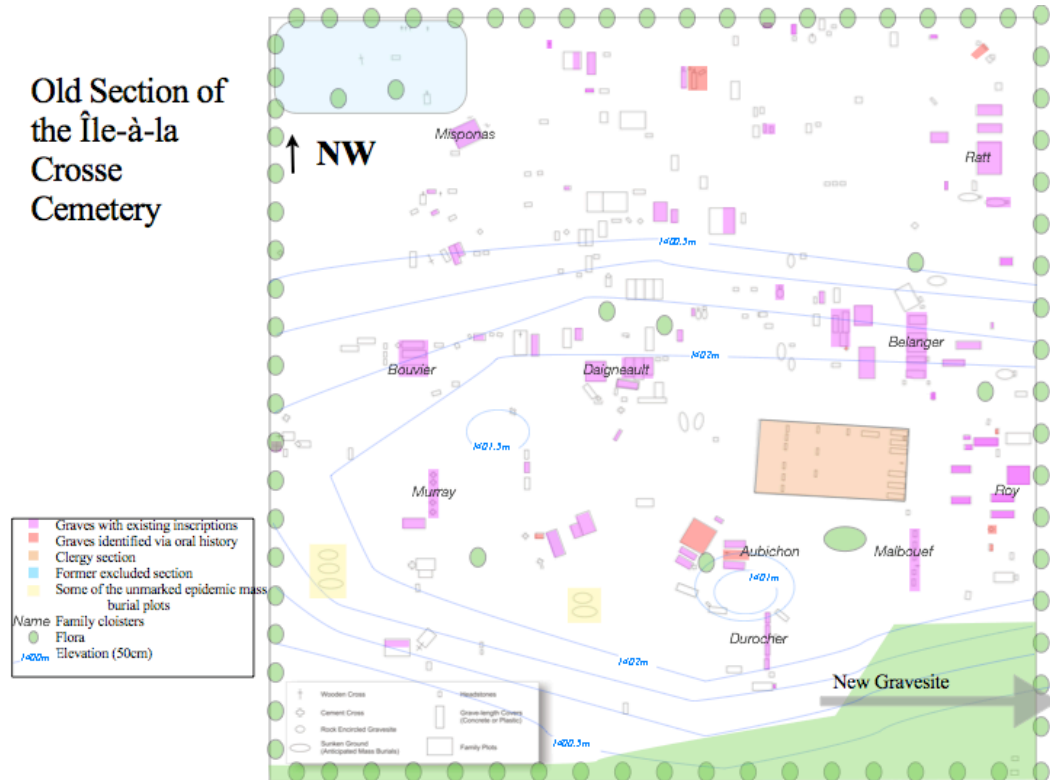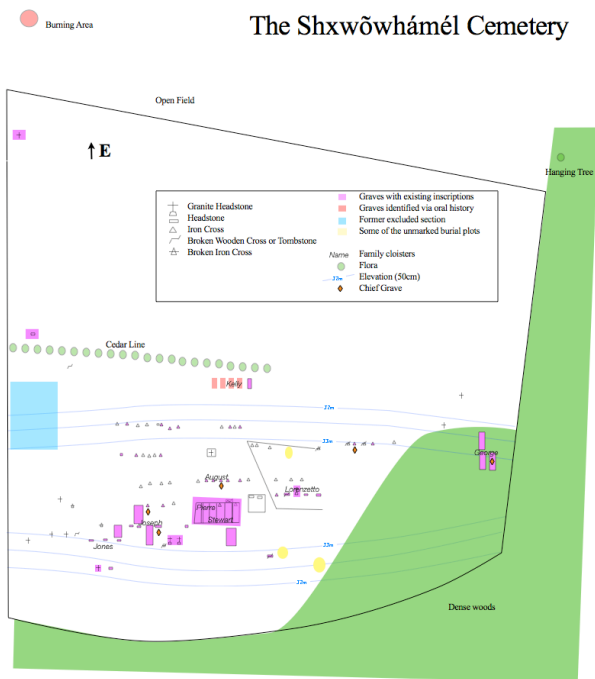
Figure 1 Île-à-la-Crosse Cemetery Map

Old Section of the Île-à-la Crosse Cemetery

↑ NW

Misponas
Ratt
Bouvier
Daigneault
Belanger
Murray
Roy
Aubichon
Malbouef
Durocher
New Gravesite

Graves with existing inscriptions
Graves identified via oral history
Clergy section
Former excluded section
Some of the unmarked epidemic mass burial plots
Name   Family cloisters
        Flora
1400m   Elevation (50cm)

Wooden Cross
Cement Cross
Rock Encircled Gravesite
Sunken Ground (Anticipated Mass Burials)
Headstones
Grave-length Covers (Concrete or Plastic)
Family Plots

Figure 1.2 Shxwõwhámél Cemetery Map

The Shxwõwhámél Cemetery

Figure 2.2 Marguerite Riel's Grave

The epitaph reads: "Ici repose Rev. Souer Marguerite Marie (Riel), décedée 12 décembre, 1883, agée 34 ans, RIP" Photographed by Kevin Gambell, June 20, 2006.

Figure 2.3 The ILX Cemetery

Photographed by Kevin Gambell, June 29 2006.

Figure 2.4:

1913 HBC Map of ILX and surrounding community. The existence of lots around the central peninsular missionary settlement demonstrates the scattered and non-centralized riparian Métis method of habitation in Canada's northwest. Originally, residents would have buried family members in their respective family lots, before the centralization efforts of the church managed to organise a single Catholic burial site beside their mission. Note the surveyed lots near Canoe River, Beaver River, and along and across the bay from the principal settlement. HBC. B.89/a/36 no. 12
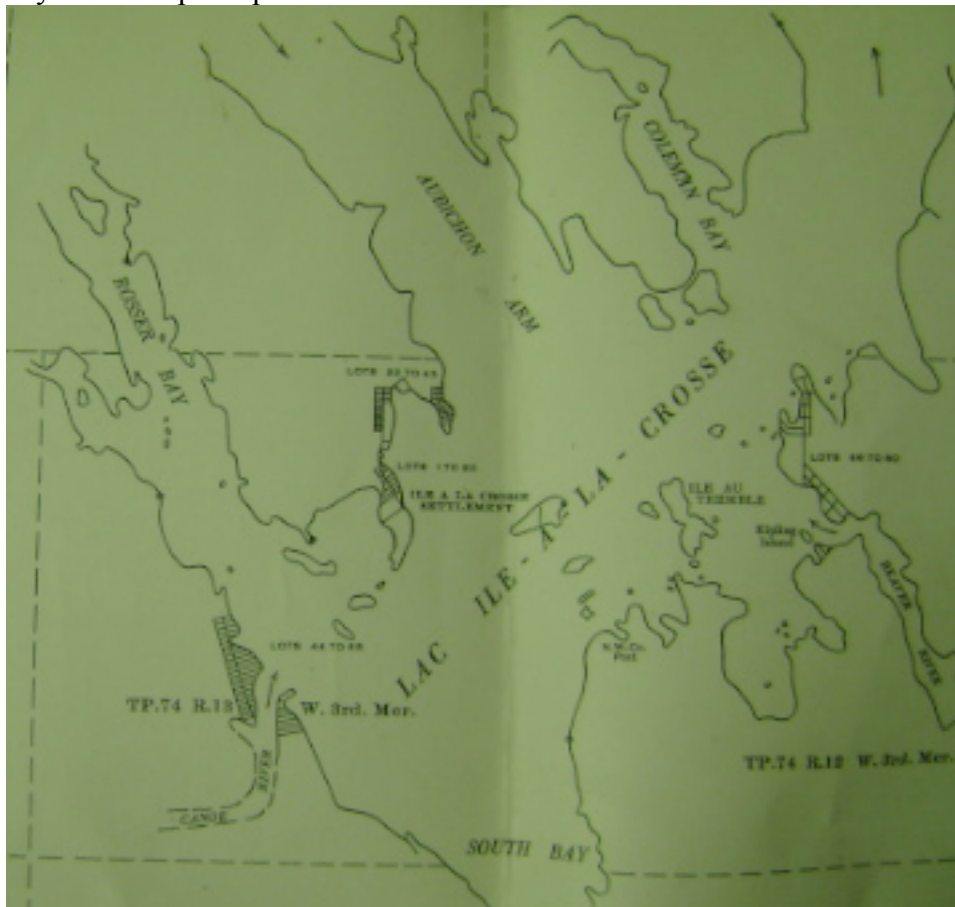
Figure 2.5: 1919 Influenza Epidemic
This graph demonstrates the peak of the 1919-1920 influenza epidemic as mentioned in the HBC journals. The numbers suggest that the death toll peaked over the summer of 1919, but as some oral histories and the HBC Journal notations suggest, more deaths went unaccounted. On January 29th, 1919 the Factor wrote that "trapping seems to have given them all the Fever [author's capitalization]," suggesting not only that people caught the fever while working their traplines, but along with metis oral histories, that many would have died unaccounted for alone on traplines. Altogether, 39 people in the community were affected by the disease (either died or mentioned ill), half the number of people recorded in the 1911 census (78, which is a problematic figure, given some residents, usually the eldest male in the family, would be on their trap line during census, therefore not included in the calculation). Information gathered from HBC. B.89/a/36 no. 12
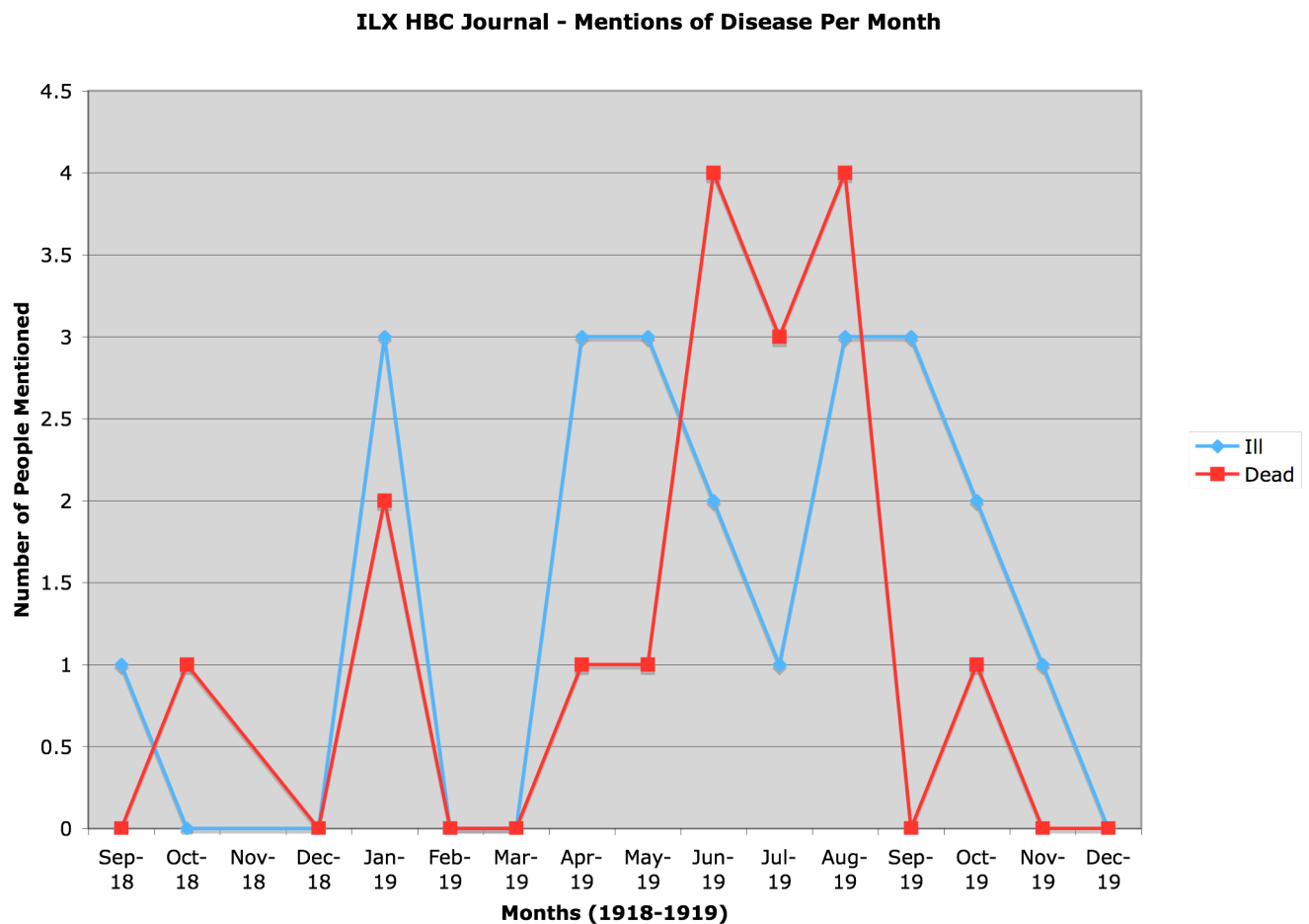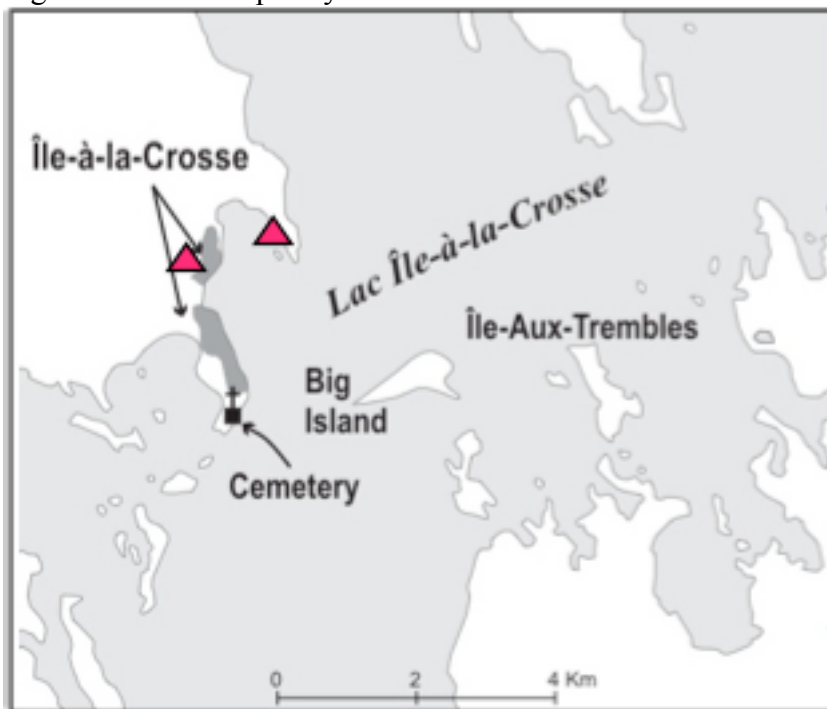
ILX HBC Journal - Mentions of Disease Per Month

Figure 2.6- Contemporary Burial sites in ILX

Figure 3.1 The SHX Cemetery.
Photographed by Kevin Gambell, June 12, 2008.

Figure 3.2 The SHX Hanging Tree
Photographed by Kevin Gambell, June 12, 2008.

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Hudson's Bay Company Archives (Winnipeg, Manitoba) HBC.

Stó:lõ Research and Resource Management Centre (Chilliwack, British Columbia) SRRMC.

The Saskatchewan Archives Board (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK) SAB.

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