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experienced ministers. At the insistence of their communicants and in response to these conditions, the two main Protestant denominations, the Methodists and the Presbyterians, merged to form the United Church. Clearly, the absence of established churches and "entrenched interests" on the frontier facilitated this merger. The new interdenominational church avoided controversial theological issues and stressed a bland, Christian universalism, hardly reminiscent of the fiery, evangelical Protestantism so often associated with rural communities. In fact, attendance, even in the newly formed United Church, rarely exceeded 50% of the membership, a figure which reinforces Voisey's conclusion that religion played a minor role in the lives of Vulcan's settlers.

Vulcan showed none of the disparities in wealth often associated with maturing agricultural regions. It remained a community dominated by settlers of middling origin, a characteristic enhanced by the increasing suitability of the family farm for wheat production after 1920. The strength of the petite bourgeoisie also undercut the development of a local élite. With key business establishments decentralized to meet the demands of this dispersed population, no private sector institutions existed to serve as the basis for an economic élite. At the same time, inexpensive land and the homestead program ensured widespread ownership of the one key natural resource.

In his analysis of social relations Voisey stresses the absence of ethnic, class, or occupational conflict so common in more densely settled agricultural areas and metropolitan centres. Canadian and American settlers with similar backgrounds and values dominated Vulcan's population; while the small and well assimilated ethnic minorities posed no challenge to its cultural hegemony. The widespread participation in Vulcan's numerous institutions promoted cooperation. At the same time, informal

exchange networks, which enabled the farmers to share labour and machines, involved a strict social code that reduced conflict and even lessened the personal feuds that emerged as the main form of tension, according to Voisey.

Voisey's seminal work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the 20th-century frontier society. In particular, his analysis of the metropolitan influence places the community in the broader national context and underscores the interdependence of locale and the larger society. Voisey's work complements the growing body of research in the American context that stresses the impact of large-scale organizations, nationally-based pressure groups, and new consumer goods in shaping the life of the twentieth-century community. Like their counterparts in American communities, Vulcan residents looked to the metropolis for urban styles, new products, and leisure activities. According to Voisey, Vulcan's settlers embraced goods and services, such as automobiles and movies, offered by the new twentieth-century, metropolitan economy. Voisey suggests the tension generated by the new consumerism when he comments that farmers often chose homegrown foodstuffs over store-bought goods. As he points out, this decision reflected their 19th century, agricultural traditions. Yet, Voisey largely passes over the conflict between the new consumerism and the older producer ideology, which has sparked considerable attention from scholars of mass consumer society and, no doubt, played a part in the growing secularism of Vulcan's residents.

Unfortunately, Voisey's comments on the impact of ethnicity on Vulcan's population lack the originality that distinguishes most of his analysis. Vulcan's population consisted chiefly of Anglo-Protestants and a small minority of assimilated German, Dutch, and Scandinavian residents who posed no challenge to the dominant culture. Given these conditions, the absence of ethnic

conflict is hardly surprising. Still Vulcan's settlers reacted vigorously when confronted by ethnically very different Eastern European immigrants brought in by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Catholicity of these workers (presumed, since their religious ties are not identified) may have contributed to this hostile attitude. Yet, Vulcan's Protestant congregations had already accommodated a tiny Catholic population of western European or Canadian origin. Events such as the arrival of these immigrants could spark the ethnic sensibilities. Voisey concludes that ethnicity must be combined with other characteristics such as race, class, and culture. This recommendation is hardly novel since political, labour, and immigration historians have long recognized the inadequacy of ethnicity alone. As a result, they have integrated culture, class, and race into their studies of social conflict.

These minor criticisms aside, Voisey's work is impressive for its care, thoroughness, and originality. His work should be read by all interested in community and, no doubt, will serve as a guide to future scholars who venture into this research field.

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Winnipeg's metropolitan growth and influence until the 1920s and reduced status since are reasonably well-known aspects of Canadian urban history. These two studies of Winnipeg economic institutions, the Grain Exchange and Gendis Inc., add depth to our

knowledge about the city's metropolitan rise and relative decline.

Allan Levine's scholarly work, *The Exchange*, studies the role of a pivotal institution, focusing on the era of the open market grain trade, when Winnipeg was the economic centre of the Prairies. Levine sets out, first, to correct what he sees as a historical myth about the Winnipeg Grain Exchange as an exploitative institution and, second, to explain how the Exchange contributed to the economic growth of Winnipeg and the Prairies.

He approaches his first task by carefully examining the formation and development of the Grain Exchange. Organized in 1887, the Exchange quickly became central to the marketing of prairie grain. Two characteristics of the Exchange almost as quickly involved it in conflict with prairie grain growers. The Exchange, typical of business organizations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, claimed exclusive right to regulate itself. There were also close ties between grain elevator operations and exchange traders through overlapping ownership. The results were that, from the organization of the Grain Growers Grain Co. in 1906, through the creation of wheat pools co-operatives in 1923, to the agitation for a compulsory government-run Wheat Board in the thirties and forties, farmers saw the Exchange as an exclusive body either limiting competition and services or manipulating the market to the detriment of the producer.

Levine's narrative both explains what the Exchange did and refutes the farmers' charges against it, especially their hostility to futures trading organized in 1904. Levine's explanation of Exchange operations is cogent and generally convincing. His refutation of the farmers soon becomes repetitive. Conflict between producers and traders, after all, is endemic in agricultural history. Previous studies of grain marketing make clear that the farmers' suspicion was not only the result of naivete or ideology, but

also a reaction against a market economy that did not necessarily benefit them and an exchange that granted them no favours. Royal commissions exonerated the Exchange from charges of futures-price manipulation, but their studies also found evidence of gouging at country elevators from time to time and unregulated futures markets are prone to manipulation. The analysis of the critical inter-war era is much more balanced than that of the pre-war period in dealing with the Exchange's relations with producers and governments. The Winnipeg grain companies' hold on country elevators was broken in the twenties and there was close investigation of the Exchange and considered discussion about the merits of government or market pricing.

There is a broader issue that Levine raises but does not assess. The links between exchange traders and the elevator companies and their insistence on self-regulation led the farmers to claim that private business was not immune to public scrutiny or government regulation. Yet immunity was sought by the Exchange and at least partly supported by courts and politicians virtually until displaced by the Canadian Wheat Board. Since then there has been a remarkably long-standing agreement that a mixture of open and closed marketing under the scrutiny of government regulators meets the interests of all. Levine does not in my view devote enough attention to the basis of post-1945 grain policy.

Levine's other goal, examining the impact of the Exchange on Winnipeg and prairie development, is done through biographical sketches of prominent traders and summaries of business organizations. The first chapter contains very interesting material on the traders and members and the last two chapters look at the diversification of the Exchange into a broad range of commodity trading and briefly at the shift of a few grain companies into other activities. But there is not enough of this and the book only suggests the possibilities of examining how

much money was made and where it went. The winners emerge as comfortable burghers, but how typical were they? Did only a handful of firms and families survive and diversify into the late 20th century. Levine shows that grain merchants were seldom adverse to public defence of their activity, however resistant they were to public control. They were of course happy to support government inspection of grains and transportation. There is no cumulative portrait of a group of capitalists with an economic or political vision for Winnipeg or prairie development different from the rhetoric of central and eastern businessmen examined by Michael Bliss. The sheer unity and persistence into the fifties of the "free market" outlook Levine documents suggests exactly the "house of closed shutters" E. A. Partridge railed against.

In sum, while the Winnipeg grain merchants captured at least part of the wheat boom and assisted it by their marketing, they do not emerge as modern counterparts to, say, Donald Creighton's Montreal merchants. Since Levine aims at myth-breaking rather than myth-making, this reduction of the merchants is not surprising and convincing. On the other hand, focusing on the Exchange's great men and recounting their virtues detract from an otherwise serious treatment. I do not think prairie economic historical writing has been as critical of the grain merchants as Levine. His attention to fierce conflict about grain marketing does make it clear that the regional unity often attributed to the wheat economy era of the prairies has been much too readily accepted by political and cultural historians.

Albert Cohen's business memoir, *The Entrepreneurs*, examines one of the characteristic institutions of metropolitan Winnipeg, the wholesaler-retailer. Gendis is the publicly traded holding company for several retail stores (Saan, Metropolitan, Greenberg) and the Canadian Sony electronics distributorship. It originated in a family distribution business begun during the

thirties in Calgary, where the Cohens had moved after various economic disasters in Winnipeg. Cohen explains how the old-time drummers operated, selling small products to prairie stores, constantly seeking novelties or lines to sell. The combined income and labour of six brothers and their parents sustained the small business and as they scattered from Vancouver to Montreal, they established a small network to acquire and distribute products like kitchenware and jewellery. While the original Saan store was opened (Albert Cohen's brother Samuel is credited with developing the chain) to retail war surplus, the focus remained wholesaling. The account of the wholesale trade, especially scouting out imported and domestic goods, is fascinating for the thirties, forties and fifties.

In the fifties, Gendis was transformed. Without attributing success to virtue or brilliance, Cohen explains the marketing effectiveness Gendis developed and the two key products it sold. Cohen deftly summarizes the technological and commercial environments that led to the break-throughs of Papermate as an effective ball-point pen and Sony as a superb transistor radio. He also explains the problems and strategies Gendis used to distribute and to strengthen its distribution once the products became huge sellers. The efforts to maintain exclusive national distribution were crucial in both cases. Indeed, Gendis is the only remaining joint-venture Sony has in the world and that was only preserved in the seventies after Cohen fought off expansionist pressure from Sony USA. Earnings from the distributorships led to expansion into retailing in the sixties and seventies and Gendis now operates three chains with more than four hundred stores.

There is a refreshing modesty and clear exposition in the Gendis story, although Cohen's style of reconstructing conversations is unsettling to the historian. Cohen reflects on the main negotiations that led to key company acquisitions and

expansion. But the volume is not a comprehensive corporate history replete with vast financial details. Most interesting to the history of Winnipeg and Canadian cities is the pattern of development from consumer-goods distributor serving local markets to a nation-wide operation diversifying from wholesale to retail trade with a great deal of real estate assembled on the way. Winnipeg became the centre for Gendis only because Albert, the key acquirer of Papermate and Sony, had returned there after World War II. There are no particular locational advantages to Winnipeg. Sony once urged Gendis to relocate to Toronto as the focus of the retail stores in Ontario and Quebec. Cohen is quick to emphasize his reliance on Winnipeg financial and legal talent. Key moves in the expansion of Gendis as a major retailer and a public company were assisted by one organization derived from the grain trade. The Richardson financial organization provided crucial advice and service. (Ironically, Richardson Securities, like another pivotal Winnipeg business institution, the Hudson's Bay Company, recently transferred its main operations to Toronto.) Taken together, the two books provide urban historians with close studies of Winnipeg as a commercial centre. Levine's book is one of the very few studies of the history of Canadian exchanges. Urban scholars will find it interesting for its portrait of the grain trade and urban-rural commercial tension even if they will still rely on Artibise and Bellan for the context of Winnipeg's commercial roles. Cohen's memoir explains the typical Winnipeg economic institution, the commercial agency. Together the books portray key sources of Winnipeg's development and to help to suggest why that development has been rather stately since the 1920s.

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Kimbley, Laurel, comp. and Canning-Dew, Jo-Ann, ed. *Hastings and Main: Stories from an Inner City Neighbourhood*. Vancouver: New Star, 1987. Pp. 158. Illustrations. \$9.95.

As a child in the 1950s, I had to make frequent visits to an orthodontist in downtown Vancouver. The only prospect of pleasure in these trips was the opportunity to ride the interurban from my home in New Westminster. Alas, my mother insisted that unless she or another adult accompanied me, I had to travel on the bus. Her reason was simple. The tram depot at Hastings and Carrall was so close to Hastings and Main that it was not a proper place for a young girl on her own. Thus, Hastings and Main had an image of mystery and dubious respectability. Indeed, Hastings and Main, Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood, was and is Skid Road.

This collection of twenty oral histories began in 1980 as a seniors' project at the Carnegie Centre, the community centre in what had been the Carnegie Public Library. It includes one reminiscence of the 1890s, but it also offers the memories of two individuals born in the 1940s! For those who grew up in the area in the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th, there were plenty of opportunities to swim in Burrard Inlet, to play soccer at Larwill park, or to watch adults playing organized baseball. Even young people, however, were aware of the presence of bawdy houses and "the dope scene." The most extensive and vivid recollections, however, are of the relief camps and demonstrations of the unemployed in the 1930s. Significantly, the only individual repeatedly mentioned is "Gerry" McGeer, the mayor who read the Riot Act in 1935.

In selecting the recollections for publication, Jo-Ann Cannington-Dew, the editor, sought to "reflect the profile of the neighbourhood" (p. 15). Thus, eighty per cent of the individuals represented are men. Many worked in the resource industries and