Aviation, Colonialism, and Indigenous Histories in Manitoba's North

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In the north-central Manitoba city of Thompson, a restored 1946 Norseman Mark IV bush plane sits beside the road to the municipal airport. The refurbished plane is the centrepiece of a historical monument titled *Tribute to Northern Aviation*, installed in 2008 to mark the 100th anniversary of flight in Canada. Painted "Lamb Air red to commemorate the first float plane operator based in Thompson," the plane seems to take flight, positioned to invoke the feeling that it is taking off from the Burntwood River.[1] The plane is a tribute to the pilots who "opened the North" and "northern aviation and its role in opening up Manitoba's north for economic development."[2]

Indigenous residents of and visitors to Thompson, however, read different meanings in *Tribute to Northern Aviation*. Bush planes like the Norseman and the people who flew them were integral to enacting Canadian colonialism in northern Manitoba. Air travel facilitated mass evacuations of Indigenous peoples from northern communities to Indian residential schools (IRS) and other educational institutions and to Indian hospitals, tuberculosis (TB) sanatoriums, and other health-care facilities. Some IRS survivors and their families want the monument removed or relocated. IRS survivor Caroline Ouskan explained that:

> When they put up that bush plane, it reminded me of stories that were told to me by former students of the residential schools. Mostly the bush plane would be the thing that triggers most people when they come to Thompson from the outlying communities. That's not a good feeling to have, when you see this plane right in the middle where you're coming through to Thompson or, you know, when you're travelling from outlying communities, the other communities that surround the region of Thompson…Just seeing that plane floods your memory about many things, not only the fact about how you travelled from your home community. It floods the memory about many things that happened as a former student of these residential schools.[3]

Ouskan's reaction to the installation reflects the deep connections between aviation, Indigenous peoples, and colonialism in northern Manitoba. The aviation industry, and bush planes specifically, facilitated government and capitalist intrusion into Canada's provincial and territorial norths and the primarily Indigenous communities in those regions. This, in turn, intensified removals of Indigenous residents from their homes.

Tribute to Northern Aviation. This 1946 Norseman bush plane was mounted on a pedestal on Mystery Lake Road in Thompson to commemorate northern aviation and its role in opening up Manitoba's north for economic development. A monument near the plane acknowledges that bush planes were also used to transport Indigenous children to residential schools. Gordon Goldsborough

The perspectives represented in *Tribute to Northern Aviation* reflect the predominant themes in historical writing about aviation history, including a focus on northern regions, situating primarily white male pilots as heroic 'saviours' of northern communities, and aviation's role in northern economic development. The dominant narrative of aviation historiography has been celebratory and centred around aviation's contributions to nation building. The connections between aviation, colonialism, and Indigenous histories in the north—and particularly the provincial norths—have been largely ignored. A plethora of publications commemorating the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) 100th anniversary in 2024 does little to shift this imbalance.[4] Aviation history, however, shows promise for expanding our understandings of Indigenous and northern histories within the larger context of Canadian nation building in the 20th century.

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The geographical focus of this article is Manitoba's provincial north, or part of what Ken Coates and William Morrison deemed Canada's "forgotten norths" more than thirty years ago.[5] The 'North' in Manitoba stretches much farther south than in either Saskatchewan or Alberta, meaning that 'northern histories' of Manitoba reflect a much larger geographic region in comparison to the other two prairie provinces. I will leave theorizing about the meaning and definition of 'north' to others who have done careful work in that area.[6] When Manitobans refer to our 'North' we are gesturing to those regions north of 'the Interlake', comprising roughly the southern third of Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba in central and eastern Manitoba, or areas north of Dauphin in western Manitoba. The artificiality of provincial boundaries in terms of how people live in those spaces, however, means that areas of northwestern Ontario come into conversation here, as does the eastern Arctic through Churchill's role as a service centre to that region. Although 'North' means something slightly different in each western Canadian province, these spaces are all inhabited by primarily Indigenous peoples and, since the advent of commercial air travel in the 1920s, aviation has had a significant impact on these Indigenous communities.

This article is about aviation history, but I preface this research with the acknowledgement that I am not an aviation historian; I am grateful to the aviation and military history scholars who supported this research. I am, in fact, a historian of that other nation-building capitalist enterprise, the fur trade, and 20th-century Indigenous histories in western Canada. Fur trade scholars Arthur Ray, Sylvia Van Kirk, and Jennifer Brown re-envisioned fur trade history in the 1970s and 1980s by putting Indigenous men, women, and children at the centre of their analyses, and in doing so fundamentally changed how we understand North American history. Aviation history has not yet made a similar shift toward more expansive analytical concerns. Here I apply perspectives and research methodologies from fur trade and Indigenous historiographies to situate bush planes and the people who operated them at the intersection of histories of aviation, colonialism, Indigenous peoples, and Canada's north. This article is not a thorough investigation of any of these topics but is intended to highlight how expanded understandings of what constitutes aviation history could contribute to larger themes in Canadian historiography.

First, I explore Indigenous contributions to the aviation industry in the 1920s through the post-Second World War period, demonstrating that Indigenous peoples helped to keep an unstable aviation industry in the air both as customers and skilled labourers. Then I assess Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) treaty annuity payment parties as a case study to explore how and why air travel facilitated increases in the size of treaty annuity parties from the 1920s through to the late 1940s. Larger treaty parties meant additional 'outsider' contacts with and surveillance of remote northern Manitoba Indigenous communities by government agencies. This increased surveillance, combined with the relative ease of air travel, accelerated the removal of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit from northern Manitoba and the eastern Arctic to educational and health-care facilities in various parts of Manitoba. Aviation survived its tenuous early years as an industry in part due to Indigenous patronage and skilled labour, only to be

deployed to implement Canada's colonial project in Manitoba's north and in the eastern Arctic. Indigenous responses to *Tribute to Northern Aviation*, like that of Caroline Ouskan, are rooted in these complex histories of aviation in northern Manitoba.

Canada's Early Aviation Industry and Indigenous Peoples in Northern Manitoba

Commercial air travel arrived in western Canada in the late 1920s during a significant moment of change on the prairies. The homesteading era on the southern prairies, characterized in part by the dispersal of Indigenous lands to primarily white men under the 1872 *Dominion Lands Act,* came to an end around 1930.[7] In the provincial and Arctic norths, missionaries, traders, teachers, miners, and loggers had been situating themselves in Indigenous communities for at least two hundred years or so, and northern resource exploitation via the fur trade, mining, forestry, and commercial fishing was already on-going. But on the whole, the distance and rough travel involved deterred an influx of non-Indigenous people to Canada's northern regions. Air travel changed this by providing relatively quick and easy travel to remote areas, thereby facilitating 'outsider' access to local communities.

Métis scholar Jennifer Adese argues that aviation "intensified the pace of colonization as a whole." Aviation, like railways, she contends, was a key aspect of nation building, which relied on the same tropes of Indigenous peoples as uncivilized, un-modern, and incapable of land management that underpinned *terra nullius* and the Doctrine of Discovery. Adese argues that Maurice Charland's theory of technological nationalism, or "the binding of space technologically to create a nation," is rooted in this erasure of Indigenous peoples and was a key component of Canada's colonization of Indigenous lands and peoples.[8] Railways' role in "technological colonization," as Adese reframes it, has received much attention from scholars but Canadian aviation's interrelationships with colonialism and Indigenous peoples have been left relatively uninterrogated.

The adaptability and resilience of Indigenous peoples is a thread of continuity through Indigenous histories in western Canada, but so are the constraints imposed by the arrival of new diseases, technologies, and peoples from across the globe. Many Indigenous people in northern Manitoba adapted quickly to the arrival of planes in the early 1920s, but the choices available to them were limited by the impacts of more than 200 years of French, British, and Canadian attempts to extract resources and assert sovereignty in the region.[9] This context informs, but should not detract from, the contributions of Indigenous peoples to the aviation industry. Their labour and their patronage of the aviation industry as customers contributed to the long-term stability of the aviation industry prior to and through the Second World War. The success of the Canadian aviation industry in its first two decades was not assured, and the fledgling industry's hold on profitability and long-term stability was tenuous. According to aviation historian Frank H. Ellis, "in those lean days, when every cent counted, [any] additional money earned often meant getting out of the red side of the ledger."[10] The aviation industry in western Canada in this period was dominated by bush planes, small commercial flying companies, flown on north-south flight routes in remote areas populated by predominantly Indigenous peoples.[11] A list of the RCAF sub-bases and detachments in Manitoba in 1929 reflects this northern-focused expansion of military aviation infrastructure.[12] Six of the seven RCAF establishments were situated in the provincial north.[13] Commercial and military aviation in this period, moreover, were so intertwined that the these bases reflected the orientation of the commercial aviation industry as well.[14] Mining, forestry, mail service, and provincial and federal governments were all regular customers of both commercial operators and the RCAF.[15]

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The fur trade industry and Indigenous trappers, as the primary providers of furs, were also core customers of the aviation industry. The fur trade continued to be big business until after the Second World War, and both trappers and outfits like the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) quickly recognized the benefits of transporting furs by plane from northern regions to southern fur auctions and railways.[16] One of the first commercial flights

in western Canada carried a fur buyer and his load of furs from The Pas to auction in Winnipeg in 1920.[17] The *Winnipeg Free Press* reported in 1929 that a shipment of furs, which sold at a Winnipeg auction for $75,000, had been flown from Fort Good Hope in northern Alberta to Winnipeg in a mere four days. Previously, the load would have been transported by dog sled over several months. Reflecting on the "changing conditions of the industry brought about by airplane," the reporter noted that the pilot had "called at many important posts in the north to pick up its valuable cargo" en route to Winnipeg.[18]

Trappers and their families also hired aviation companies to fly them to their traplines. More research is needed to determine when this practice began, what percentage of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous trappers hired planes, how this varied by community, and if companies like the HBC were facilitating air travel for trappers.[19] But by at least the 1950s primarily non-Indigenous bush plane pilots were regularly flying Indigenous trappers to their traplines. Alan Nelson, who flew in northern Manitoba in the 1950s and 1960s, took Shamattawa trappers to their traplines in the fall. "They'd trap right through till Christmas, and I'd go out and pick them up at Christmas, bring them and their furs," he recounted. "The father, he'd be out there trapping every day and bring the furs home, the kids and the wife would skin them, stretch the furs, and it was a good system."[20] Aviation companies even advertised to recruit trappers as customers and their fur as cargo through to at least the 1930s, placing ads in publications like the *Canadian Airways Bulletin* to solicit business. At a time when Indigenous men and women were at least informally barred from training and working as pilots, the labour of Indigenous men and women underwrote the profits accrued to the aviation industry via the fur trade.

***Canadian Airways Bulletin*, 15 November 1933**.
Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada (RAMWC)

The predominance of north-south flight routes prior to the Second World War also meant that the aviation industry relied on skilled Indigenous labour in the North to stay in the air. Indigenous men and boys fuelled and repaired bush planes in northern and remote destinations. Given what other scholars have documented about the marginalization of Indigenous labour in western Canadian history, it is unsurprising that Indigenous labour in the early aviation industry has been understudied.[21] An example of this marginalization of Indigenous labour shows up in how aviation histories have addressed the fuel caches required to keep northern bush planes in the air. Fuel caches, composed of aviation fuel stored in 45-gallon steel drums or five-gallon cans, were created in remote and northern regions to allow bush plane pilots to refuel far from major or even minor communities.[22] The RCAF and other aviators created fuel caches in northern Manitoba beginning in the early 1920s. Sometimes the fuel was flown to the caches, but fuel had to be shipped in cans via canoe brigades staffed by Indigenous paddlers. In 1922, Tom Lamb, who in 1935 founded Lamb Air out of The Pas and Thompson, led a fuel cache transport of eleven canoe-loads of fuel from The Pas to South Reindeer Lake in northeastern Saskatchewan. He hired twenty-two Indigenous paddlers from The Pas and surrounding areas, "all canoe men with strong backs for portaging."[23] Three years later, an "Indian crew" transported 5,000 gallons of gasoline from Grand Rapids, MB to Little Grand Rapids, near the Ontario border. It took five trips to move all of the fuel inland from Lake Winnipeg to Berens River, including portaging over fifty-three rapids and falls each time, and followed by the crew proceeding up-river by motorboat to Little Grand Rapids.[24] The importance of fuel caches to early aviation is well documented, but the Indigenous labour required to create and maintain those caches is almost wholly absent from aviation historiography

Lunch break while repairing Felixstowe F.3 G-CYBT at Pikangikum, Ontario, circa 1922. Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada, 81-83-034.[96]

beyond personal memoirs.[25] Aviation historians are sometimes engaging with the primary sources that illustrate these histories, but are not interpreting the sources through the lenses of colonialism and Indigenous history.[26]

Transporting the fuel to the caches was only one step in the fuel management system required to keep bush planes in the air. Once the fuel drums arrived at their destinations, someone had to be in charge of monitoring the fuel cache, restocking the fuel, and refuelling the planes. In some areas, managers of the local HBC stores were put in charge of the fuel, but more often local Indigenous men were hired to help manage the cache.[27] Many of these same local men repaired the planes as well. A series of photos held by the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada depicts the repair of a Felixstowe flying boat that crashed along the shore near Pikangikum First Nation in northwestern Ontario around 1922. Pikangikum men and boys cut logs and hauled them by canoe to create a tripod that hoisted the plane out of the water and then helped repair the plane with the pilot and engineer.[28] Pilot memoirs and other archival records indicate that this was not an isolated incident.

Echoes of these histories of Indigenous labour and aviation surfaced in the 1990s in the hit CBC drama *North of 60*. The character Willy Tsa Che, depicted by actor Rick Belcourt, is a modern version of the local First Nations cache-keeper and airplane mechanic. In charge of the airstrip at the fictional Lynx River, NWT, Willy wielded quiet but significant power over who got to leave the fly-in community and when; airplane repairs could mysteriously take much longer than expected if Willy had a reason to delay takeoff. Willy's depiction in *North of 60* highlights the continuities of Indigenous labour in aviation throughout the 20th century.

Indigenous labour was key to the aviation industry in other ways as well. Fire ranger Harold E. Wells, who was stationed at Thicket Portage in the 1920s and flew regularly as a fire-spotter during the interwar period, relied on an interpreter that he identified as 'Yukon'. According to Wells, Yukon was an "Indian interpreter, famous interpreter, interpreted for Indian Affairs and did all my interpreting, all over, all my meetings." Local Indigenous men and women also provided on-the-ground support for pilots and their crew when planes crashed or were otherwise disabled. Locals camped near Wells' Thicket Portage cabin used both canoe and trails to reach a plane that crashed soon after take-off and rescue the pilot from the burning wreckage.[29]

Indigenous knowledge of the land was drawn on regularly to support pilots and surveyors who did not have local experience. Johnny Moar of Little Grand Rapids provided in-flight navigation services in 1924 for a pilot who could not find the community of Deer Lake in northwestern Ontario.[30] Other pilots seem to have

been accompanied regularly by Indigenous crew members. Keith Olson noted that 'helpers' served as flight crew and aides.[31] Although Olson does not specifically identify his crew members as Indigenous, this was likely the case given the context of his assignments and locations.

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This smattering of examples of Indigenous labour in the aviation industry does not adequately address a vast territory that comprises northern Manitoba, the eastern Arctic, and some parts of northwestern Ontario over a span of forty years. More research is required to better understand Indigenous labour in the aviation industry, including Indigenous women's labour, the regional specificities of Indigenous labour, and how it changed (or did not change) over the decades spanning the mid-20th century.[32]

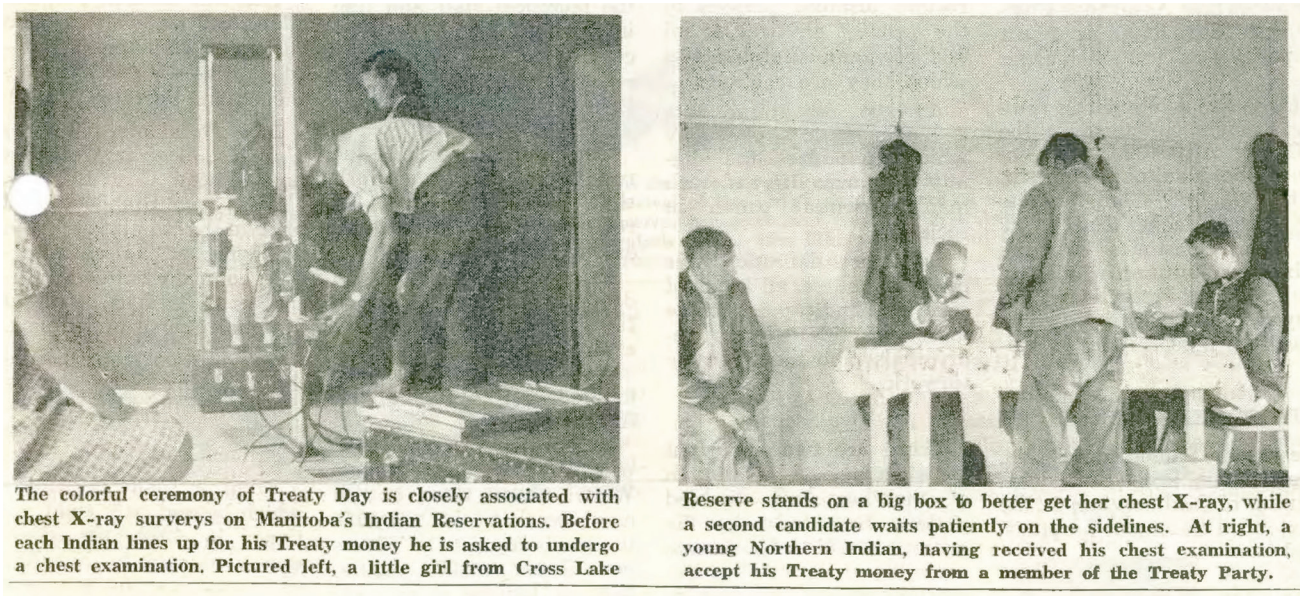
Treaty Parties

Although aviation "offered a potent mechanism" for reaching areas that had previously been inaccessible to exploration and industry, the success of aviation in the interwar period was, as discussed above, tenuous at best.[33] The federal government had concerns about Canadian sovereignty in both Canadian air space and in the Canadian North, which were exacerbated by Arctic fly-overs by foreign agents.[34] Potential American takeovers of Canadian commercial aviation outfits were similarly considered a threat to Canadian sovereignty. These concerns were addressed in part by the 1937 launch of the government-owned Trans-Canada Airlines (later Air Canada), but both prior to and after 1937 the Canadian federal government also subsidized the aviation industry through patronage. In addition to the fur trade, mining, and forestry industries, the Canadian federal and provincial governments were key customers of the early aviation industry.[35] In Manitoba, treaty parties whose flight costs were paid by the Department of Indian Affairs, were some of the earliest customers of both the RCAF and commercial operators.

Treaty parties were comprised of federal government officials who represented government interests at annual gatherings with First Nations communities that had signed treaties with the federal government. By the early-20th century, treaty parties consisted of, at minimum, the local Indian agent, a medical officer, and an RCMP officer. During these ideally annual visits, the Indian agent distributed annuity payments, updated annuity payment lists, surveyed homes, visited schools, and identified children to be enrolled in day schools or sent away to residential schools. Medical officers surveyed the health of band members and provided baseline medical care including vaccinations. The RCMP member represented the authority of the state, including coercive policies implemented via the Indian Act that sanctioned the forcible removal of First Nations children and adults from their communities and promised potential jail time for those who refused to comply. The number of people comprising the treaty party expanded through the period under study here, at least in part due to easier travel facilitated by aviation. This, in turn, intensified government and outsider surveillance of and intrusion into Indigenous communities.

The RCAF began flying treaty parties to northern Manitoba communities in the early 1920s. A 1922 report for the Department of National Defence argued that in peacetime the air force should "encourage flying which will materially assist many civil operations."[36] The DIA was one of these 'civil operations' that the RCAF was keen to support, with payment of course. A case study of The Pas Indian Agency between 1920 and the 1940s

Treaty party at an unidentified location, 1940.
Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada, 10-181-036.



The colorful ceremony of Treaty Day is closely associated with chest X-ray surverys on Manitoba's Indian Reservations. Before each Indian lines up for his Treaty money he is asked to undergo a chest examination. Pictured left, a little girl from Cross Lake Reserve stands on a big box to better get her chest X-ray, while a second candidate waits patiently on the sidelines. At right, a young Northern Indian, having received his chest examination, accept his Treaty money from a member of the Treaty Party.

"The colorful ceremony of Treaty Day". Note the RCMP officer in red serge seated on the far right of the right photo.
Sanatorium Board of Manitoba, News Bulletin, June 1959.[97]

shows that the RCAF actively solicited the DIA to hire its planes throughout the 1920s.[37] Indian Agent J. Waddy reported in 1929 that the RCAF was "very anxious that we use their services."[38] A survey of available reports and correspondence bears out his claim. Plans were already in motion by 1922 for the RCAF to fly Waddy and other members of that year's treaty party to some Treaty 5 communities, but the air travel was sidelined when the plane scheduled to carry the group crashed that spring.[39] Flights in subsequent years were more successful, with the RCAF flying Waddy and the treaty party to Nelson House and Split Lake in 1923 and 1925.[40] The Norway House Indian Agency was also an early adopter of air transport, transporting the 1922 treaty party presumably via RCAF aircraft.[41]

Plane travel to and within northern Manitoba was quicker and less onerous than alternative ground and water transportation. A 1920s flight from Little Grand Rapids to Winnipeg, for example, took "a few hours" rather than a week by canoe and lake steamer.[42] That did not mean that it was necessarily more efficient or convenient in the early days of aviation, when infrastructure was still developing. Only some Agency communities could be reached by plane due to a lack of fuel caches or landing sites, and hiring canoes and men at the last minute if a plane was not able to fly was challenging. Even when treaty parties travelled by plane, issues arose. Waddy and his successors were sometimes stuck waiting for days at a time for return transportation from the RCAF Cormorant Lake air base, located approximately 75 kilometres from The Pas.[43]

Treaty parties continued to travel by canoes, boats, and trains into the mid-20th century. Parties heading to York Factory, for example, continued to sail aboard an HBC sloop till at least the 1930s, and there are no records of agency flights to Fort Churchill in the 1920s or 1930s. But the Department of Indian Affairs annual reports document the increasing use of air travel to transport treaty parties from the 1920s onwards. As fuel caches multiplied, pilots could fly into more communities and the expansion of commercial aviation meant additional flight options were available. In 1939, for example, the DIA contracted Wings Limited of Winnipeg, to fly the Norway House treaty party to its destination.[44]

The speed and ease of travel by air meant that more people were willing to make the trip to remote communities along with the core treaty party members. This, in turn, increased surveillance of and intrusion into northern and remote Indigenous communities. In northern Manitoba, treaty parties in the 1920s through to the 1940s variously included Indian affairs clerks, nurses, dentists, a newspaper reporter, a census-taker, and even an artist. Sometime after 1934 the Sanatorium Board of Manitoba TB survey teams also leveraged Treaty Day gatherings to assess First Nations bands for TB.[45] The TB survey teams travelled at first by ground and water,

but soon joined treaty party flights. In 1949, the northern Manitoba treaty party included DIA staff members, a dentist, an RCMP officer, and a TB Survey team with a portable chest x-ray machine. Plane travel also allowed the treaty parties to combine what had previously been separate trips into one northern tour that, in 1949, stopped at The Pas, Gillam, Ilford, Shamattawa, York Factory, and Churchill.[46] By 1959, the northern treaty party and its reach had expanded even farther. That year the group consisted of "two [x-ray] technicians, a doctor and public health nurse from the Indian and Northern Health Services Division, a member of the RCMP, the Indian Superintendent and a clerk," and visited twenty reserves between the northern point of Lake Winnipeg and Churchill.[47]

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The aerial transportation of larger treaty parties helped enable treaty days as sites of coercion. Indian agents, missionaries, and medical professionals had the law behind them, both figuratively in terms of the *Indian Act,* and literally in terms of the RCMP officers who accompanied the treaty parties. Indian agents threatened to withhold annuity payments, and later their family allowance cheques, as a common coercive tactic to force individuals to submit to TB surveys, vaccinations, the removal of children to residential schools, and the removal of adults and children to health-care facilities.[48] Similar tactics were engaged amongst the Inuit in the eastern Arctic, although outside the context of treaty days.[49] In both cases, increased colonial intervention in northern Manitoba had what were often BC devastating impacts on Indigenous families and communities.

Education

Aviation companies, the RCAF, and the people who operated their planes were complicit in the removal of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students to educational facilities outside their communities.

Noorduyn Norseman VI, CF-LSS, Cross Lake Air Service, floats at dock, circa 1960s. The contextual clues here indicate that these are residential school students waiting to board the plane to school. An unidentified priest and pilot stand next to the plane, while two crew members are helping individuals exit the plane. Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada, 10-315-007.

Educational removal of First Nations children in northern Manitoba contravened the terms of Treaty 5, which committed the federal government to maintaining on-reserve schools. Removing students from their homes under the auspices of education, however, served assimilationist and genocidal policies enacted by both provincial and federal governments in Manitoba. Indigenous students were already being sent to Indian residential schools before the introduction of aviation, but planes began to fly into northern communities just as changes to the Indian Act were implemented in 1920. These new provisions, which mandated compulsory schooling for First Nations children between the ages of seven and fifteen, provided the legal justification to transfer children from their communities to residential schools and other institutions. Moreover, the ease and relatively low cost of air travel was used by various levels of government to justify the under-investing in adequate educational (and health-care) facilities in northern Manitoba. Bunibonibee Cree Nation, for example, received funding to build a high school only after a devastating 1972 plane crash killed eight Bunibonibee high school students who were returning home for summer holidays from schools in Portage la Prairie and Stonewall.[50]

Air travel made possible the large-scale removal of children from northern communities under the guise of education. Compared to the cost of building and operating schools in northern communities, removing children from their communities by air was inexpensive and efficient. Children were flown to Indian residential schools, boarding residences, half-way houses, and public schools in southern communities. I was unable to identify a specific date for northern Manitoba, but IRS students were being removed from the western Arctic by plane at least by the mid-1930s. Given the early collaboration between the Department of Indian Affairs, the RCAF, and commercial aviation companies in northern Manitoba, it is reasonable to presume that First Nations children were also being flown to residential schools from northern Manitoba by at least the mid-1930s, and likely earlier. Inuit students from the eastern Arctic were similarly transported by plane to educational facilities, including the Duke of Edinburgh School and Churchill Vocational School in Churchill.[51] Children were also removed to foster care homes or boarding residences under the child welfare system, or enrolled in the Indian Placement and Relocation Program, which placed First Nations youth in jobs in urban areas.[52]

After the Second World War the Department of Northern Affairs began chartering planes specifically to fly Indigenous children to school in the Arctic and other northern areas; planes were, in fact, the primary mode of transport for Inuit children attending residential schools and northern hostels.[53] Research for this paper identified planes owned by individual missionaries and missionary orders, the RCAF, the RCMP, and commercial aviation companies including LambAir, TransAir, Wings Limited, Canadian Airways, Cross Lake Air Service, and Pacific Western Airlines that flew Indigenous children from northern Manitoba and the eastern Arctic to Manitoba residential schools, hostels, and boarding residences. It is unlikely that this is an exhaustive list.

By 1951, planes were so integrated into the residential school system in the territorial north that L. G. P. Waller, the regional inspector for Indian Affairs in the Northwest Territories, commented that "the children who are enrolled are those available when the boat or aeroplane arrives to pick them up."[54] Once children arrived at the plane pick-up site, teachers, missionaries, the pilot and crew, and police worked together to load children on board. One unidentified Mountie described his role in flying Inuit children to northern hostels in the 1960s:

> I did … I got a picture of me picking kids. They used airplane [sic] to pick up kids between 1960 and 1963 … I accompanied them … when they picked up the kids you will be helping pack their gear … I didn't travel on the plane I made sure they would be on the plane … just something that you do … we would just be there … if something is happening … was easier … Nobody ever put pressure on me or my people to make sure the kids got on the plane to collect the kids … we were not directed by anybody … It would be quite the opposite sometimes … I would say.[55]

"Air travel made possible the large-scale removal of children from northern communities under the guise of education.

Waller's comments above, that the children who went to school were 'those available' when the boat or plane arrived, align with the many reports from IRS survivors and family members of children being kidnapped from their communities by missionaries and

police. What is striking about the accounts of survivors and community members is how the tales echo each other, and particularly in relation to the use of planes as the 'getaway vehicle' to abduct children without adult consent or knowledge. Consistent in many narratives is that a bush plane landed, usually at the dock in the community; men descended from the plane, scooped up children playing nearby and loaded them onto the plane, and then left without notifying parents or guardians. Dorothy Hart of Nelson House was six years old when a plane landed along the lakeshore where she and a friend were playing. Hart recalled in her testimony to the TRC that "my friend took off first...and this guy just grabbed me and put me on the plane. And there were other kids in the plane already. And this was how I ended up in Norway House. Not even saying, I didn't even see my grandparents."[56] Smaller bush planes that picked up children in remote and northern communities, like the one that transported Dorothy Hart, usually made stops in several communities, adding children to the plane along the way.[57] From these smaller planes, children were then often consolidated into groups at more central locations and travelled onwards in a larger plane, by train, or by boat. York Landing students flew by plane to Ilford, where they would "stop to camp and wait for the train to come along."[58]

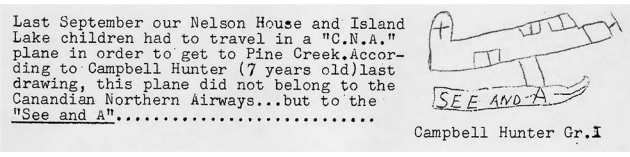
The promise of a plane ride was undoubtedly met with a mixture of anticipation and anxiety by some children, but the TRC noted that often "the arrival of a government-chartered airplane was the prelude to a traumatic scene in which intimidated parents bid farewell to frightened children, who were flown away to school."[59] Leaving aboard the 'flying school bus' was scary and potentially traumatic for children. The churches labelled the children as 'freight' to save money and children were treated like cargo with little attention paid to them as children, or even as humans.[60] Seats were often removed from the planes to fit more people, requiring children to sit on floors that were just plain dirty or covered in animal waste after transporting fish or other commodities.[61] Planes could also be overcrowded, to the point of standing-room only for the duration of the flight.[62] Survivors remember there was sometimes nothing to eat or drink, nor washroom facilities onboard. Children who were scared and often did not speak the pilot's language did not know how to ask for water or a washroom stop.[63] Planes that *were* better equipped were not necessarily more of a comfort to scared children. Students en route to residential school in Inuvik, flying aboard a Pacific Western Airlines DC-4 in the 1960s, cried and vomited throughout the flight, to the point that the flight attendants ran out of sick bags.[64]

Planes were only the machines; pilots and crew operated and staffed these flights and police, missionaries, and teachers rode in and supervised the loading and unloading of the planes. First-hand accounts by these men and women are scant. Given the extent to which planes were transporting residential school students, plane travel is underrepresented in the TRC *Final Report*. Niigaan Sinclair explains that the TRC:

> had a difficult time finding pilots, flight attendants, and other airline workers to participate in hearings. The commissioners also had difficulty obtaining flight manifests, passenger lists, and purchase agreements between churches and airlines because of privacy and jurisdictional arguments. In some cases, owners and employees died, documents were lost, and airlines had gone out of business. As a result, there's an incomplete picture of the involvement of one of Canada's most important industries and everyone in it.[65]

Existing memoirs and interviews with pilots and other flight personnel tend to focus on the Arctic. Testimonies related to northern Manitoba are fewer, but interviews with former bush pilots conducted by the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada provide some insight. Pilot Keith Olson flew children to several residential schools and federal hostels:

> Yeah, the one I flew mostly into, there was one at Chesterfield Inlet [Nunavut]. Now, Chesterfield is about 360 miles up the [Hudson Bay] coast. It's on the coast, and Baker Lake is to the west. Anyway, the Roman Catholic people had a large boarding school there from before I was there, and so we would fly kids into there. I did a little bit of that into The Pas, but mainly up there. And in those days nobody talked about boarding schools; not bad, they were just what went on. And it was always a poignant time.


Last September our Nelson House and Island Lake children had to travel in a "C.N.A." plane in order to get to Pine Creek. According to Campbell Hunter (7 years old) last drawing, this plane did not belong to the Canandian Northern Airways...but to the "See and A".....

SEE AND A

Campbell Hunter Gr.I

Pine Creek Indian Residential School Newsletter, March 1958. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

> We picked up people from the strangest locations, and most of the kids were going out to this school. And they were that age, eh? And so we picked the people up before freeze-up, like, say, in late August, and fly them into the school there, Chesterfield Inlet, from wherever, and then they would take them back before the ice went out in the spring. So they were away for eight or nine months, depending on how they had it all worked out.

Olson reflected later in the interview that:

> I mean, here I was hauling kids into this, not knowing what I was doing. I thought about that a lot afterwards. I mean, I was there, I'd go into this big place, we stayed in the same building…And all these kids are there, they're having fun, and this went on for years. And then I find out what was really going on. It was a shocker, I'll tell you.[66]

A rare peek into an Indigenous child's perspective on the planes is offered in a 1958 newsletter from the Pine Creek Indian Residential School in Camperville, MB. A hand-drawn image of a plane by Grade 1 student Campbell Hunter shows a bush plane, complete with floats and a propeller. Written on the pontoon is "See and A." The typewritten note beside the drawing, presumably added by a staff member, reads, "Last September our Nelson House and Island Lake children had to travel in a 'C.N.A.' plane in order to get to Pine Creek. According to Campbell Hunter['s] (7 years old) last drawing, this plane did not belong to the Canandian [sic] Northern Airway but to the 'See and A.'"[67] While this is presented as an amusing anecdote by the staff who compiled the newsletter, Campbell Hunter's drawing, captured in an Indian residential school newsletter, highlights the interrelationship between the aviation industry and the Indian residential school system.

Health

The role of aviation in Indigenous health-care history is more difficult to assess. There have been fewer studies of Indigenous health history in Canada, fewer archived oral histories with former patients and staff, and—perhaps most important—no large-scale investigation of segregated Indigenous health care in Canada on par with that of the TRC for Indigenous education. Moreover, for Manitoba specifically, access to records about Indigenous health histories is inequitable compared to other provinces.[68] What is clear, however, is that aviation expanded the opportunities for contact between Indigenous communities in northern Manitoba and medical officers. Fred Beardy of York Factory, born around the turn of the 20th century, recalled that doctors visited more frequently after planes began landing at York Factory. Prior to the mid-1920s, according to Beardy, "the minister was the doctor."[69] Before planes arrived in the community, Archelaus Beardy recounted, "they never took anyone out of York Factory." Afterwards, however, "the plane would come in and fly out patients."[70]

Scholars have elsewhere outlined the intersections of colonialism and Indigenous health history in Canada; so, I will not repeat the details here.[71] Mary Jane Logan McCallum and Maureen Lux argue, however, that "over the course of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century, the state's provision of medical care, at first sporadic and grudging, became increasingly comprehensive."[72] Through to at least the 1920s, people in remote and northern Indigenous communities in western Canada accessed health care primarily via traditional community practitioners, like midwives.[73] On-reserve 'medicine chests' were provided by the DIA and administered by the Indian agent, missionary, missionary's wife, or the HBC agent, offering only rudimentary health care.[74] Northern residents also encountered DIA medical officers, and sometimes dentists, in residential schools and at treaty days.

In line with McCallum and Lux's assessment, First Nations in Manitoba were increasingly admitted to a variety of health-care facilities from the early-20th century. Anglican missionaries opened the Dynevor Indian Hospital at Selkirk in 1896, and First Nations patients were being treated at municipal hospitals in Winnipeg, Brandon, and Portage la Prairie prior to 1902.[75] On-reserve tent hospitals were established at Waywayseecappo First Nation, near Birtle, by 1907 and at Norway House Cree Nation by 1909; the Norway House Indian hospital, adjacent to the residential school, was replaced by a permanent structure in 1924.[76] The DIA also partially funded municipal hospitals in The Pas and Winnipegosis in the 1930s, the latter on the condition that the new hospital include an 'Indian ward'.[77] Perhaps it is not surprising that, given the high rates of TB in Indian residential schools identified by DIA Chief Medical Officer Dr. Peter Bryce in 1907 and

echoed in SBM annual reports through to at least the 1950s, all of these hospitals were located near Indian residential schools.[78]

The DIA expanded its investments in Manitoba health-care facilities in the 1930s by opening small hospitals at Peguis First Nation and Fort Alexander and taking over the Dynevor Indian Hospital in 1939.[79] Métis health care in the first half of the 20th century is more difficult to track due to the nature of the archival record and restrictions on health-care record access in Manitoba, but both First Nations and Métis patients were admitted to non-segregated provincial sanatoria in Winnipeg (the St. Boniface Sanatorium) and Pelican Lake (the Manitoba or Ninette Sanatorium). Two additional federal Indian hospitals—the Brandon Indian Sanatorium and the Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital (near The Pas)—opened in the 1940s. The Fort Churchill Military Hospital, operated by the Department of National Defence, opened in 1949 and was only one of two Canadian military hospitals that treated both civilian and military patients.[80] The numerous facilities treating Indigenous patients in Manitoba in the 1920s and 1930s should not be taken to indicate that Indigenous patients received equitable health-care access or treatment; this certainly was not the case. Peguis First Nation elders, for example, primarily recalled the absence of medical care through the 1930s.[81] But the hospital infrastructure was in place and First Nation and Métis patients were already being treated in Manitoba hospitals by the 1920s, just as aviation access in northern and remote communities expanded. The relationship between the expansion of federal investments in Manitoba medical facilities in the 1930s and the increased use of air travel to northern and remote communities requires more attention, but the outcome was initiating mass medical removals by plane of First Nations and Métis from northern Manitoba and Inuit from the eastern Arctic to Manitoba for medical treatment.

While aviation provided the 'how' for mass medical removal, the 'why' in Manitoba and the eastern Arctic was primarily rooted in TB Surveys conducted by the Sanatorium Board of Manitoba. TB Survey teams operated in some non-reserve Indigenous communities beginning in 1927, and eventually expanded into reserves and the eastern Arctic.[82] These surveys identified larger numbers of Indigenous patients potentially infected with TB and recommended patient removal to health-care centres for further screening and/or treatment. By the late 1940s, Indigenous patients from Manitoba, the eastern Arctic, Saskatchewan, and northwestern Ontario were being treated at Manitoba Indian hospitals, TB sanatoriums, municipal hospitals, and Fort Churchill Military Hospital. Patients reached these health-care facilities by wagon, canoe, automobile, boat, train, and plane, where they were treated for a variety of medical conditions including TB, polio, cancer, injuries resulting from accidents, and various other illnesses. They generally received sub-par medical care compared to that of non-Indigenous patients, were subjected to assimilationist tactics, and spent longer periods hospitalized than non-Indigenous patients, keeping them away from their homes for sometimes years at a time.[83] Many patients never returned home; children were often sent from hospitals to residential schools or into the child-welfare system, while older teens and young adults were streamed into work-placement programs in order to keep them from returning home.[84] Others died and were buried far from home, often without their loved ones being notified of their death or their place of burial.[85]

Planes were central to relocating Indigenous patients to Manitoba hospitals from northern Manitoba and the eastern Arctic to Manitoba hospitals. RCMP planes carried patients both to and from Chesterfield Inlet to Manitoba for treatment, including five patients who travelled to the Fort Churchill Military Hospital in 1955 and a child who returned from Winnipeg in 1957 after "medical examination".[86] Southern Manitoba newspapers regularly reported on First Nations and Inuit patients receiving medical treatment in Winnipeg, Brandon, and Selkirk, including the 'mercy flights' that carried the patients. One mass evacuation of Inuit patients to Manitoba in particular drew significant coverage. In the summer of 1955 the Sanatorium Board conducted extensive TB surveys in the eastern Arctic, resulting in at least seventy Inuit being evacuated from Churchill to Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital near The Pas.[87] From there, some thirty patients continued by train to Winnipeg and Brandon. Of the seventeen patients who were sent to Dynevor Indian Hospital, only one tested positive for TB, but all seventeen were forced to stay the winter at the hospital until they could travel home. To these Inuit, who one reporter noted were "quite accustomed to airplanes," planes represented the possibility of home. The *Free Press* reported in February

Four Inuit children flying out of The Pas Airport from the Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital, 1959. This image was published in the June 1959 Sanatorium Board of Manitoba *News Bulletin*. Manitoba Lung Association via Manitoba Indigenous Tuberculosis History Project (MITHP), Photo database, MBLung-09-04-001.

1956 that "when one small plane landed on the river in front of the hospital one day, [the Inuit] became very excited thinking that the plane had come to take them home. But such was not the case. They must wait at least until April for a plane home, or if they can't get back by plane it will mean waiting until August for passage by ship."[88]

These Dynevor patients were not alone in finding their journey home long and complex. Patients often had to wait until specific times of year to be able to return home by plane or ship. Some patients, like the Inuit at Dynevor, stayed in hospitals. Others were relocated to local accommodations, or were sent by air or rail to an intermediate point like Churchill where they remained until transportation was available. In some cases, healthy patients who were trying to get home contracted further illnesses while waiting for transportation. In January 1955, the RCMP at Churchill flew ten Inuit, including two babies and a young girl, from Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital to Churchill, presumably after receiving medical treatment and being cleared to return home. While waiting for good weather to fly from Churchill to Baker Lake and Chesterfield Inlet, the Inuit were housed at the Fort Churchill Military Hospital for over a week; six of the ten Inuit fell ill during their stay.[89] Their return home was likely delayed as a result.

Children who were evacuated for medical care generally travelled without an adult family member in attendance, except when both a parent and their child were identified for medical removal. The June 1959 issue of the Sanatorium Board *News Bulletin* features a picture of four Inuit children dressed in warm clothing and lined up in front of an RCMP Otter plane. The unnamed children were part of a group of thirteen Inuit patients at Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital who were returning to their homes in the eastern Arctic. One of the thirteen, a six-year-old boy named Keewyoualle, was leaving his mother, Marlee, behind at the hospital to continue her own TB treatment. The caption accompanying the photo explains that:

> Eskimo and Northern Indian patients are admitted into hospital during the spring and summer, and are usually discharged the following spring. On discharge, they are transferred by RCMP plane to a community center in Fort Churchill. They stay there briefly until transportation to their respective homes is arranged by the Department of Northern Affairs. Pictured here a group of Eskimo children, tagged and warmly clad, wait to board an RCMP Otter plane which will start them off on the long trek home.[90]

The tags listed the children's names and home communities in an effort to help return the children to their correct families and communities.

Planes were also used to transfer child patients and IRS students between hospitals and residential schools, often without their parents' knowledge or consent. The Office of the Special Interlocutor argues that, "across Canada, many of the Indian Residential School deaths that occurred after 1940 happened, not in the Indian Residential Schools themselves but, rather, in an Indian Hospital or Indian Sanatorium." Students were "forcibly transferred between institutions. Decisions were made on behalf of the children with little regard to protecting their human rights and dignity." Moreover, "the 'coldness, indifference, and neglect,' bordering on criminality, that officials showed towards Indigenous children in their care is also evident

"Children who were evacuated for medical care generally travelled without an adult family member in attendance, except when both a parent and their child were identified for medical removal.

Community members greeting the TB Survey Team, Tadoule Lake, 1976.
Jones McMorran Photo, Manitoba Indigenous Tuberculosis History Project, Photo Database, AJJM-10-01-058.

in their failure to ensure that the children were properly documented in the institutional records, effectively disappearing the children."[91] M. Anne Lindsay's study of three boys admitted to Sturgeon Landing Indian Residential School on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border around 1940 illustrates these connections. Elie Caribou of Pukatawagan, one of the three boys, was admitted to Sturgeon Landing IRS in August 1940. By October 1942, Elie was ill. He was flown first to St. Anthony's Hospital at The Pas and was then transferred to Dynevor Indian Hospital, farther away from his home and family. He remained there until he died in April 1943. Eli is one of the children who was 'disappeared' by improper documentation. In spite of deep and careful archival research by Lindsay, Caribou's burial place remains unidentified.[92]

Medical removal in and to Manitoba did not end with the closure of most of the province's federal Indian hospitals in the 1960s and the provincial TB sanatoriums in 1973. As TB rates dropped and the polio vaccine effectively ended polio outbreaks, there was a shift away from long-term hospitalizations for Indigenous patients in the cities. Northern nursing stations and health-care centres became more common, reducing the need for patients to fly to larger centres for basic health care. TB, however, continued to be disproportionately high in remote and northern communities and public health officials conducted TB surveys in northern Manitoba communities through the late-20th century. The teams arrived by bush plane and unloaded their equipment onto the dock, sometimes even taking x-rays right on the beach. Patients with suspected or confirmed TB or other complex health-care conditions were flown to Winnipeg to receive care at the Central Tuberculosis Clinic, the Winnipeg Children's Hospital, or other municipal hospitals. New drug regimens meant a shorter hospital stay—six weeks to two months instead of months or years—but a TB diagnosis continued to mean removal by plane to the city for treatment.[93]

Conclusion

In 2019, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, the First Nations governance organization for northern Manitoba, and the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy led the installation of a plaque alongside *Tribute to Northern Aviation*. The plaque, which is "dedicated to the Indigenous children who were put on bush planes to attend residential schools," invites readers to reflect on the history of bush planes. "As you stand in this space," the plaque reads, "we ask you to remember that although they are a symbol of economic opportunity, they are also a painful reminder of the residential school's legacy."[94] After the May 2021 announcement by Tkemlúps te Secwépemc First Nation that 215 unmarked burials had been identified in the cemetery adjacent to the Kamloops Indian Residential School, *Tribute to Northern Aviation* also became a focal point for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to pay tribute to IRS students.[95]

The multiple layers of meaning attributed to the bush plane as memorialized in *Tribute to Northern Aviation* speaks to the complex interrelationship between planes and Indigenous communities in northern regions of Canada. This article provides a handful of examples of the intersections between aviation history, Indigenous peoples, and colonialism in one provincial north, but in doing so demonstrates that bush planes and the people who owned and operated them facilitated the historical and ongoing systemic removal of Indigenous peoples from their communities. Indigenous children were, of course, sent to residential schools before the advent of air travel and both Indigenous adults and children continued to be removed by other modes of transportation after the introduction of planes. But air travel is what made the mass removal of students and patients from northern Manitoba and from the eastern Arctic

to Manitoba possible. Neither the aviation industry nor aviation historians have reckoned with aviation's role in the coercive mass removal of Indigenous peoples under the auspices of education and health care. Moreover, Indigenous peoples have been marginalized as contributors to the aviation industry. Historians of western Canada, the RCAF, the aviation industry, environmental history, and Indigenous histories need to consider the stories that are being left untold by failing to explore and acknowledge aviation's role in "technological colonialism" in western and northern Canada. ■

Notes

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2. Spirit Way Inc., "History of The Tribute to Northern Aviation," October 2020; Leonard Monkman, "Bush plane monument in Thompson, Man., a painful reminder for residential school survivors," *CBC News*, 20 June 2021.
3. Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, *Honouring our Ancestors: Remembering the Legacy of the Residential School System in Northern Manitoba*, first edition (October 2021), 17.
4. A recent historiographical survey of the RCAF literature, for example, makes no mention of Indigenous peoples or the role of the RCAF in colonialism and nation-building. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Johnson, "RCAF Historiography: Some Highlights from a Survey of the Field," *Canadian Aviation Historical Society Journal*, Special Issue: RCAF Centennial 1924–2024, 58 no. 2 (2024), 25–33.
5. Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada's Provincial Norths,* Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1992.
6. Bill Waiser, "A Very Long Journey: Distance and Northern History," *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History* (2001); P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (2014); Matthew S. Wiseman, *Frontier Science: Northern Canada, Military Research, and the Cold War, 1945–1970* (2024).
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8. Jennifer Adese, *Aboriginal™: The Cultural and Economic Politics of Recognition,* Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 142–146.
9. For studies that address colonialism and Indigenous peoples in western Canada's provincial norths, see David Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (2007); Liza Piper, *The Industrial Transformation of the Subarctic Canada* (2010); Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930* (2014); Merle Massie, *Forest Prairie Edge* (2014); Allyson D. Stevenson, *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship* (2021); Peter Fortna, "Wahkotowin, Keemooch, and Home: A History of the Conklin Métis Community, 1886–2020," *Prairie History* 8 (Summer 2022), 55–71.
10. Frank H. Ellis, "Early Northern Air Mail," *The Beaver* (Winter 1954), reposted by *Canada's History* 17 September 2014.
11. "Bush Flying in Canada," *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, published February 06, 2006; last edited 7 February 2020.
12. In this paper, I use the term Royal Canadian Air Force for simplicity, with the acknowledgement that terminology referring to the Canada's military aviation branch changes between 1919 to 1924. David. J. Bercuson, *Canada's Air Force: The Royal Canadian Air Force at 100* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2024), Chapter 1.
13. Four RCAF sub-bases were located at Lac du Bonnet, Norway House, Ladder Lake, and Cormorant Lake, with detachments at Winnipegosis, Berens River, Thicket Portage, and Lac la Ronge. Tracey Turner, "Replicating the Canadian Vickers Vedette Flying Boat," *Prairie History* 15 (Fall 2024), 11.
14. W. A. B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, vol. 2, Part I: Between the Wars (University of Toronto Press and the Department of National Defence, 1986).
15. Hedley Auld provides an account of the use of RCAF planes in Manitoba fire patrols and aerial surveying/mapping in the 1920s in "Flying Start from Victoria Beach," *Prairie History* 15 (Fall 2024), 25–29.
16. Arthur J. Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, xv.

17. Barbara K. Adamski and Richard Fisher, "Aviation," *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, published 24 September 2009; last edited 4 March 2015.
18. "Auctioneer Sells $75,000 worth of fur in 1½ hrs," *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1929.
19. Ray discusses the HBC's relatively slow adoption of aviation and the role of bush planes in importing white trappers to northern communities in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age*.
20. Alan Lee Nelson, interview by Davide Montebruno, 30 January 2014, transcript #AFT079, RAMWC.
21. See for example Sarah Carter, "Erasing and Replacing: Property and Homestead Rights of First Nations of the Northwest, 1870s–1920s," in *Place and Replace: Essays on Western Canada*, eds. Adele Perry, Esyllt Jones, and Leah Morton, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013, 14–39; David Burley, "Rooster Town: Winnipeg's Lost Métis Suburb, 1900–1960," *Urban History Review* 42 no. 1 (Fall 2013), 3–25; Andrew Parnaby on Indigenous longshoremen in *Citizen Docker: Making a New Deal on the Vancouver Waterfront, 1919–1939,* University of Toronto Press, 2008.
22. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force*, 101–111.
23. Tom Lamb, unpublished memoir, 22 November 1961, https://lambair.com/resources/7-Bar-L-Ranch.pdf
24. G. Malaher, *The North I Love,* Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1984, 37.
25. An exhibit at the new RAMWC highlights the role of Indigenous labour in relation to fuel caches, based on unpublished historical research by Dr. David Riach and Davide Montebruno.
26. For example, Auld draws on the same primary sources that I use here that fuel was transported by a canoe brigade, but does not address Indigenous labourers who comprised the canoe brigade. "Flying Start from Victoria Beach," 29.
27. Keith David Olson (pilot), interview by Davide Montebruno, 13 March 2018, Part I, transcript #AFT176, RAMWC.
28. Personal communication, Wayne Adams, RAMWC Archives, 21 August 2024.
29. Harold E. Wells, interview by Gordon Emberley, 1972, transcript #AFT029, RAMWC.
30. G. Malaher, 1984, 35.
31. Keith Olson interview, RAMWC.
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36 R. A. Logan, *Report of Investigations on Aviation in the Arctic Archipelago carried out during the summer of 1922*, as cited in Kenneth C. Eyre, *Custos Borealis: The Military in the Canadian North,* ed. Whitney Lackenbauer (Peterborough: Trent University, 202), 44.
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