THE FLUIDITY OF WOMEN'S ROLES ON THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS 1890-1950

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ABSTRACT

The relative infancy of the Northern Great Plains social environment compared to the well-established social systems of the United States east of the Mississippi fostered growth and allowed the redefinition of women's gender roles. Without the strict social policing of women's roles within the frontier society, women could redefine their gender roles. Women not only redefined their gender roles but made independent decisions based on their current situations and navigated within the already assigned societal gender roles. In this instance, women, often oppressed and constrained by societal expectations and obligations, simultaneously possessed the choice to navigate and make decisions within the established framework of their gendered society. Defined gender roles in the Northern Great Plains do not exist. Instead, gender roles on the Northern Great Plains have been and are ever-evolving and fluid.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in part to my parents, Lyle and Patricia Aulner, thank you for believing in me and always knowing I could do it, love you. And to Dr. Frank Varney, my undergraduate advisor, for seeing the potential in me before I could see it in myself. None of this would have been possible without your encouragement and support.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Interstate 94 etches into the sprawling plains, badlands, timber, and crop county of the Upper Midwest and Northern Great Plains for over fifteen hundred miles. The prehistoric painted layered sediment plateaus and buttes give way to rolling grasslands and sagebrush. On the last two hundred and thirty miles stretch of I- 94 lies the small town of Terry, Montana. Just a half a mile before Exit 176, Terry proudly exhibits a billboard that boasts, "The Home of Evelyn Cameron and the Evelyn Cameron Gallery."[1] One turn to the north and another west leads travelers to the Prairie Country Museum and the Evelyn Cameron Heritage Center. Hidden within these buildings are remnants of the lives of Northern Great Plains women, stuffed away in old bank vaults that now serve the purpose of makeshift archival storage, or tucked away under stacks of natural history material, bison skulls, and small-town relics. The contents of these buildings and places illustrates women redefining their gender roles on Northern Great Plains. [2]

Abundant primary source material illustrates the migration of white Anglo-American women westward onto the Northern Great Plains. Some women left behind books, diaries, and letters as evidence of their western journey, and experiences. With all the information left behind, surprisingly women have seldom been the focus of much research in Western American History specifically in the Northern Great Plains. In general, women are typecast into specific identities that fit more prominent stereotypes such as the helpless damsel in distress, or hardy reproducing rabbit-oxen women. All these stereotypes fall well within the early twentieth century women's roles of the hearth, home, purity, and reproduction. If a woman dared to fall outside these well-structured roles, she was considered an oddity. Her story of independence and

[1] Glenda Ueland (Main curator, Evelyn Cameron Heritage Inc.) in discussion of Terry Montana, July 2021

strength equates to an exception to the rule. Some historians consider the story she left behind to be uncommon.[3] While Northern Great Plains women consider themselves sufficient, contributing, or sole managers of farms, ranches, or homesteads, history has reduced their position to helpmates. Previous generations of Western Women Historians have drawn progressively closer to understanding gender on the Northern Great Plains using defined gender roles, but defined gender roles do not exist on the Northern Great Plains. Gender roles on the Northern Great Plains have been and are ever-evolving and fluid.[4]

Women on the Northern Great Plains should not be studied using generalized conceptions or identities. Rather situations and persons are an individual and require to be examined that way. Gender roles are a social construct imposed on individuals by society. As gender roles are a social construct, an individual can deconstruct imposed gender roles and present themselves differently to society. Dominant gender roles for women in early twentieth century society were restricted to the reproductive and private spheres of society. Men were classified into the public or productive sphere. The public sphere consisted of politics, public institutions, paid employment, and leisure time. The governance of the public sphere was by shared norms and values. While the private sphere included the domestic realm, family relations, children, and morality. The private sphere contains intimacy, personal identity, and free will. This description means that a person's acceptable outward appearance, behavior, and employment needed to fall within the two divided spheres based on their gender.[5]

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[3] Riley, Glenda. *The Female Frontier.* Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988. 2-3,

[4] Riley, Glenda. *The Female Frontier*, 2-3,63; Jeffery, Julie Roy. *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1979. 26

[5] Baggett, Ashley. *Intimate Partner Violence in New Orleans: Gender, Race, and Reform, 1840-1900* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press , 2017) 154,;.Ana Kari, "Gender and Health," World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2022), https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1.; Vigoya, Mara Viveros, "Sex/Gender," *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory,* ed. Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 853-860.

The Northern Great Plains geographical location region consists of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming. The relative infancy of the Northern Great Plains social environment in comparison to the well-established social systems of the United States east of the Mississippi fostered growth and redefinition of women's gender roles. Without the consent social policing of women's roles within the frontier society women were able to redefine their gender roles. However, no singular theory takes full credit for the metamorphosis of gender roles on the Northern Great Plains. The change to gender roles occurred over time, with multiple exterior and interior forces acting upon them.

One theory contributing to the shift in gender roles on the Northern Great Plains is the gendered division of labor. The artificial separation of essential life activities into gendered domains in Victorian society placed women into the reproductive or private sphere and men into the public or production sphere. When people settled on the Northern Great Plains in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the division of labor between the two sexes could not be maintained in its original form. Instead, either out of wanting, lack of strict social order or simple necessity, the gendered division of labor for women on the Northern Great Plains absorbed labor and characteristics housed in the public sphere. [6]

An internal event afflicting change on women's gender roles on the Northern Great Plains evolved out of necessity. The human instinct for survival, found some women breaking from their domestic gender roles and taking up more assumed masculine ones. Life on the Northern Great Plains for frontier women was labor intensive, dangerous, and often financially uncertain. A woman could not sit idly by while herself or her family starved because gender

[6] Mills, Mary Beth, "Gendered Division of Labor," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, ed. Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 283-285.

roles dictated that it was unbecoming of a woman to take up the reins of the plow or wear a split skirt to ride a horse astride to roundup calves for weaning. Some women abandoned their domestic gender roles, and momentarily embodied their male counterpart's gender roles. However, once the necessity cycle completed and the threat of starvation, danger, or financial ruin had subsided, balance would return to the gendered society, and women would retreat to their familiar domestic roles. While there is a degree of accuracy to this claim, a century or more later, many women on the Northern Great Plains have yet to return to what was originally defined as domestic roles because rigidly defined gender roles do not exist on the Northern Great Plains.[7]

Gender roles transforming out of necessity is another theory contributing to the redefinition of gender roles on the Northern Great Plains. This theory is the process of gender socialization. The process of gender socialization takes place within society, families, or home life. This theory states that individuals develop, refine, and learn to do gender through taught gender norms and roles as they interact with agents of socialization. The agents of socialization defined by this theory include social networks, institutions, and most importantly family. When women on the Northern Great Plains embodied assumed masculine roles, they not only did it for survival but intentionally or unintentionally their actions taught their female next of kin to do gender differently. These women transformed the way women on the Northern Great Plains did gender. The women that resided on the Northern Great Plains from 1890-1950 were the next generation that learned this process. Either as children of immigrants, or immigrants themselves

[7] Jeffery, Julie Roy. *Frontier Women*, 11; Riley, Glenda. *The Female Frontier*,197.

to the Northern Great Plains, these women seemed to hold no reservations to redefining gender roles.[8]

Developing simultaneously with the individual paths forged by women for their futures and rooted within the confines of social order grew generations of women on the Northern Great Plains who created their futures outside or alongside twentieth-century society. The private sphere included free will. However, free will in this case is not defined as complete and total freedom without limitations. Free will in this case is defined by the process of women making independent decisions based on their current situations and navigating within the already assigned societal gender roles. The implication of this free will in this instance is that women often oppressed and constrained by societal expectations and obligations simultaneously possessed choice to navigate and make decisions within the established framework of their gendered society. With that in mind it is not surprising that women on the Northern Great Plains redefined what a women's role was in their society.[9]

An examination of secondary work contributing to Women's history since 1975 to 2017 presents a pattern of redefining gender roles in Northern Great Plains society. Early works like Julie Roy Jeffery's book *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880*, published in 1979, lays the foundation for women in frontier history. Jefferys states that the frontier experience produced a new democratic woman who contributed to female suffrage victories and

[8] Michael Carter, "Gender Socialization and Identity Theory," *Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (December 2014): pp. 242-263, https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci3020242.; John A. Neetu et al., "Gender Socialization during Adolescence in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Conceptualization, Influences and Outcomes" (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, 2017), pp. 1-6.; Herbert, Rachel. *Ranching Women: In Southern Alberta* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017), 63.

[9] Baker, Paula. "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (June. 1984): 620-647. https://www/jstor.org/stable/1856119.; Chandler, Daniel., and Rod Munday. "Public and Private Spheres" in *A Dictionary of Media and Communications*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 345.; Ana Kari, "Gender and Health," World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2022), https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1.

created new ideas and expectations about gender roles defining women as keepers of civilization and morals. Jeffery's states that she had hoped that Pioneer women used the Frontier to liberate Victorian gendered stereotypes, which were constricting and sexist. However, states that she discovered that the Pioneer life forced women into what Victorian standards considered "unfeminine" activities and created a new concept of womanhood. She cites that the established culture, standards, and morals of the women emigrating to the Great Plains from the Eastern and Southern United States put women in a conflict with the environment of the Frontier, while gender division of work generally remained. Jeffery work upholds the Victorian conception that women are fragile pillars of morality and purity and claims that The West molded women into robust, hardy creatures. Unfortunately, there are silences within Jeffery's work as she does not consider any immigrant women or their children. Nor does her work acknowledge that women's roles in the West are permanently altered by this process in the frontier experience. Instead, Jeffery states that women returned to their domestic roles. She does not make mention of women that did not return to domestic roles or women that kept their external roles in addition to their domestic ones. This foundational works is a pivotal starting point in understanding the development of Women, Gender, and Agricultural history because it was one of the first books to focus on women in the region even though it was limited in its conception of womanhood as often happened during the beginning of the field of women's history. [10]

Within the same school of thought but establishing clear identities for women, Sandra L. Myres builds and redefines a women's place on the Frontier in her book, published in 1982. Her work, *Westering Women: And the Frontier Experience 1800-1915,* constructs three identities for frontier women. The first image is the "Common women." This woman is a tearful being. Torn

[10] Jeffery, Julie Roy. *Frontier Women,* xv,xii-xiii,4,12,19,20,23,42

from her home, dragged into the wilds of the West. She is condemned to a life of loneliness and terror. The second image is the "Gentle Tamer." The gentle tamer is a sturdy helpmate fighting off Native attacks, tending to house duties, and protecting livestock from threats all before suppertime. The third image is the "Bad Woman." She is depicted as a soiled dove or female outlaw. She was a masculine, tough-as-nails, no-nonsense woman with a heart of gold. These identities assigned to women were developed within the nineteenth century's strictly defined Victorian gender spheres. Myres suggests that the evidence left behind by women on Frontier cannot be viewed through this singular perception. Instead, frontier women need to be viewed through a multi-faceted perception that depicts women as individuals. However, like other works in its field it focus on the frontier at large and does not devote much attention to the women on the Northern Great Plains. Myers furthers Frontiers women's identity by comparing assumed male roles to assumed women's roles. Myers work does not explicitly state that gender is fluid in part because gender was understood as more rigid and limited to male or female during the early 1980s, but she does lay the groundwork for understanding gender on the frontier.[11]

Furthering the understanding of women's roles and beginning to emerge with the concept of fluid gender roles on the Great Plains Glenda Riley's book *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains,* published in 1988, takes a more significant leap into the gender roles of women on the Great Plains. Riley states that women built the Frontier by embracing their established domestic gender sphere. Women do this by bringing with them home, family, culture, and community. Riley argues that on the Frontier, women did not "step outside" their assigned gender roles but reconfigured them momentarily out of necessity to adapt to their environment. Once a community, home, and culture were established

[11] Myres, Sandra L. *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 2-5,6,

in the West, women quickly retreated to the domestic sphere. She does recognize that a few women did not retreat but claims them to be oddities and the exception to the rule. Riley's work is pivotal as it examines the fluidity of gender roles. [12]

Utilizing current gender theory, Rachel Herbert's book *Ranching Women in Southern Alberta*, published in 2017, identifies women actively redefining their gender roles. Herbert's work is unique because it crosses the borderlands, but it acknowledges woman on the Northern Great Plains. She recognizes that the Frontier environment fostered women's resourcefulness and independence. Ranching women's relationship with their environment and the absence of social policing allowed women to redefine their gender roles. Herbert redefines a women's place on the Frontier by placing them not into the supportive or helpmate role but by placing women into the leading role on the Southern Alberta Frontier. She states that this depiction changes a once thought to only be masculine cattle Frontier into a feminine one. By empowering women, Herbert attests those women transcended their restrictive gender roles. While Herbert's study focuses on Southern Alberta, her research includes portions of northern Montana. However, this portion is minimal and not enough to support a strong argument for the United States portion of the Northern Great Plains. [13]

Looking specifically at the Northern Great Plains, identifying gender roles as fluid, and recognizing the decisions that women made within the established framework of their gendered society are the works of Barbara Handy-Marchello and H. Elaine Lindgren. The earlier work, *Land in her Own name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota* published in 1991, written by H. Elaine Lindgren specifically explores the different ways women operated within the confines of the established social framework to become homesteaders and land holders. While Lindgren

[12] Riley, Glenda. *The Female Frontier,54,106,147.*
[13] Herbert, Rachel. *Ranching Women,*12-13,42,49,58,141-142.

work is a Sociological study and not a historical study, it contributes to this field of women and gender history on the Northern Great Plains by providing a wealth of information from North Dakota women in the early 1900's. Her research includes extensive land record data, personal accounts, and interviews of homesteading women. Unfortunately, her work does not devote much time to the concept of gender or gender roles themselves. However, her work provides a holistic picture of the number of women homesteaders and landowners within the state of North Dakota.[14]

Barbara Handy-Marchello work *Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier 1870-1930,* published in 2005, focuses specifically on the Northern Great Plains and extensively examines the fluidity of gender roles for women within this region. Marchello relieves women from the helpmate rolls in her work and places contributing members of the household and society. Her work presents women on the Northern Great Plains that are both redefining their gender roles and making independent decisions based on their current situations to navigate within the established gender society. These secondary works are presented to show the progressive path used to strengthen the understanding of women on the Northern Great Plains. With only a few secondary sources available this thesis will stand as additional evidence that there is more work that needs to be done in this area and field of study.[15]

The parameters of this study are the regions of the Northern Great Plain which include Eastern Montana, Western Nebraska, and select countries in North Dakota. The population classification of women presented in this study are women that resided in rural areas. The labor

[14] Lindgren, H. Elaine. *Land in Her Own Name.* Fargo: North Dakota Institute of Regional Studies, 1991.iii,v,240-277.
[15] Handy-Marchello, Barbara. *Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier.* St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005. 48,54,154.

classification of these women is within the agricultural industry. The racial classification of the women in this study is white Anglo-American women. It was hoped by the researcher that the evidence would find woman identifying as other than white to fall within the parameters of this study. Unfortunately, this was not what the evidence presented. Explanations for the lack of information on indigenous women or women of color include the minimal size of this study. Census, land, and county records from two counties within each region from 1900-1940 did show that indigenous women and women of color where present within these regions during that time. However, the occupations listed for these women fell outside of the labor field parameters of agricultural for this study and fell within the of fields of service work e.i., laundress, servant, cook, maid, and hotel worker.[16]

Lack of evidence for Indigenous persons or more specifically Indigenous women during the time studied would be that Indigenous persons were not classified as American citizens until and after 1920. If Indigenous people were counted in the census records, before 1920 they would have been listed racially as white. An example of this discrepancy is in the 1910 Census for Custer County Montana a Henry N Kempton is listed. His race is classified with the abbreviation "W" for white and an occupation listed as Rancher. In the 1920 census for Custer County Montana the same Henry N Kempton is again listed with the occupation as Farmer/Rancher, however, his race is not classified with the abbreviations of "W" but is listed as "Ind" for Indian (Native American). These discrepancies make it difficult for the researcher to determine actual racial classification. By cross examining the census records with local histories from Custer and Prairie County resident Evelyn Cameron there is mention of a Maria (Gerry) Kempton who is

[16] 1900 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/65364381:7602?tid=&pid=&queryId=5c0d3258ad1282215926b755d128a878&_phsrc=lDM504&_phstart=successSource; (19 May 2022).

descried as a half Sioux Indian woman. Unfortunately for this researcher aside from the few mentions of Maria in the local histories and her name listed on a census record again, indicating a race of white, no other information or data could be found to produce a definitive account of her life or race. It is only with great speculation, based on the few descriptions of Maria Kempton in Evelyn Cameron's diaries, and the community history books that she could have engaged in redefining her gender roles. Therefore, she was not included in this study due to lack of conclusive evidence [17]

For people of color the census records again produce discrepancies for classification of race. In the 1900 Custer County Montana Census record a Joe Monroy is listed as a boared in a hotel. His race is listed with the abbreviation of "B" for black, however, his linage indicates that his parental origin from Mexico and his birth from California this would not specifically indicate a racial classification of black as it might not fit Joe Monroy's ethnic background. Additionally in the 1920 Custer County census record persons of parental and self-identification as Bulgarian were also listed with the racial abbreviation of "B" for black. This evidence indicates a great discrepancy between actual racial classification and racial classification identified by the record taker. [18] The lack of preservation for the gender roles and expectations place upon these women

[17] 1910 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/15199043:7884?tid=&pid=&queryId=a6367d5876835e679f0d04d79f1c8443&_phsrc=lDM506&_phstart=successSource; (25 February 2021);1920 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/45811436:6061?tid=&pid=&queryId=a6367d5876835e679f0d04d79f1c8443&_phsrc=lDM507&_phstart=successSource; (25 February 2021); Kempton, James. "J.B. Kempton" A Range Riders Museum Story. In *Custer County Area History: As We Recall*, 366. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1990.; Kempton, Cora. "Kempton History" Essay. In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*,176-177. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974

[18] 1900 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/76544104:7602?tid=&pid=&queryId=30936954f8afe9963f162471420b4df2&_phsrc=lDM532&_phstart=successSource; (25 January 2022); 1910 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-

examined include both societal and familial. Insufficient record taking, and preservation contributed to the minimal size of this study.

Women on the Northern Great Plains, either by their actions or by operating within the confines of the social systems redefied their gender roles. By examining these women's lives and actions, this thesis presents evidence that proves that gender roles in the Northern Great Plains have been and are evolving and fluid. This thesis is only a small section of a larger body of work still being written.

content/view/15196661:7884?tid=&pid=&queryId=34a7943be3bf899b5d68dc60c99cba81&_phsrc=lDM523&_phstart=successSource; (25 January 2022).

CHAPTER TWO EASTERN MONTANA: PHOTOS, COLTS, AND SPLIT SKIRTS

Women from diverse backgrounds migrated to the Northern Great Plains in the early twentieth century. Where they came from or how much money their families had did not matter a great deal on Northern Great Plains. The Plains environment became the great economic and social equalizer. The same argument applies to the gender roles in the Northern Great Plains, specifically in the eastern Montana Badlands. Here, evidence shows that women remodeled their gender roles momentarily and permanently. Thus defining their roles as ever-evolving and fluid, Evelyn Cameron, Myrtle, and May, Mable Buckley, and Susan Haughian exemplified the fluidity of gender.

Evelyn Jephson Flower (Cameron) was born south of London, England, at her family's country estate, Furze Down Park, near Streatham, on August 26, 1868. She was the youngest of five children born to East Indian Merchant Philip William Flower and Elizabeth Jephson Flower. Evelyn's social class at birth entitled her to a life of English wealth, and high society. Based on Evelyn's social standing in English society, one can assume that Evelyn's mother and German-born governess taught her the domestic gender roles that matched her social class. [19]

During the late ninetieth and early twentieth century, the gender roles for women in England upheld the Victorian ideal of a gentlewoman. They fully embraced the separate spheres, women in private and men in public. The division of men and women into the two separate spheres relied on the theory that women were physically weaker but morally superior to men by nature. The sphere theory made women ideal for inhabiting the domestic sphere, where they could combat the immorality of the public sphere surrounding them and educate their children to do the same. A woman's place in British society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

[19]Lucey, Donna M. *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.12-13.; Milne, Lorna. *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company: 2017.

century was to marry in her early to mid-twenties, have children, and serve her husband. The support for separating men and women into segregated gender spheres increased when Queen Victoria proclaimed, "Let women be what God intended, a helpmate for man, but with totally different duties and vocations."[20] Many women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century British society found themselves stuck in unhappy or volatile marriages that they could not leave. British social and legal order kept women reliant on their husbands for financial security. The stigma surrounding divorced women kept them from gaining or retaining employment and outcasted them from society. [21]

Evelyn Flower's gender roles match those of British society and her family. She understood that her place was to marry within her social class, produce heirs, and run a respectable household. Not much is known of Evelyn's childhood or upbringing outside of the understanding of generalized gender socialization practices for her social class. The minimal accounts of young Evelyn depict a refined young lady who had no qualms about pushing the gendered boundaries in English society, often preferring to be out riding horses and hunting to performing any domestic duties. Evelyn's fierce independence and yearning for adventure led her on a life journey that defied her family. She redefined one gendered role after another in the rugged landscape of eastern Montana, some 4,300 miles away from Evelyn's family's English countryside estate. [22]

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[20]C N Trueman, "Women in 1900," History Learning Site, March 17, 2015, https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/the-role-of-british-women-in-the-twentieth-century/women-in-1900/#:~:text=If%20married%2C%20they%20stayed%20at,get%20married%20and%20have%20children.
[21]Trueman, "Women in 1900,"; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928,* 1991, 13-14.; Kathryn Hughes, "Gender Roles in the 19th Century," British Library, May 15, 2014, https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century.
[22]Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928,*12-14.; Milne, Lorna. *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company: 2017.; Hughes, "Gender Roles in the 19th Century," British Library,; Trueman, "Women in 1900,";

Young Evelyn may have committed many acts of defiance. Fortunately for her and unfortunately for the researcher, there are no records to affirm this as fact. However, the records show that at twenty years old, Evelyn committed her first act of pushing the gendered, social, and familial boundaries. Evelyn's act of defiance was her intent to wed Ewen Cameron, an eccentric poor ornithologist thirteen years her senior.

Ewen Somerled Cameron the first and oldest child of Reverend Allen Gordon Cameron and Mary Cameron, was born December 19, 1854, in Staffordshire, England. Ewen grew up in a 16th-century castle with landholding consisting of 2,000 acres. The Cameron family's social position relied on their landholdings, as the family money had long since gone. Thus, Ewen was not a good social match for Evelyn. Her family saw Ewen as inappropriate for Evelyn and her social position. Ewen's lifestyle choices further compounded the Flower family's disapproval. Ewen lived a solitary lifestyle studying sea birds on the virtually uninhabited remote island of Eynhallow, one of the Orkney Islands, off Scotland's northern coast. In addition to his eccentric lifestyle and poverty, Ewen was soon to be divorced. Evelyn's mother, Mary, might have overlooked one count of impropriety. However, the combination of Ewen's shortcomings made Mary disapprove of Evelyn's relationship with the poor ornithologist from Scotland, and a marriage to him was out of the question. Ultimately, neither Evelyn's family's disapproval nor society's standard would keep her from choosing to travel to the United States and create a life with Ewen in the Eastern Montana badlands. [23]

According to self-declaration and secondhand accounts, Evelyn Flower married Ewen Cameron in a small ceremony in Scotland before they departed from Liverpool, England, and

[23] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 10.; Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.*1-2.

arrived in the United States, New York, on September 12, 1889. Ship records confirm an Evelyn Flower was listed as a passenger on the ocean liner *Teutonic* bound for the United States. It is peculiar that an Evelyn Flower was listed as sharing a cabin with a Madame Valda. Interestingly Madame Valda was the stage name of Ewen's first wife, opera singer Julia Wheelock. Ewen is not listed as a passenger on the *Teutonic*, perhaps Madame Valda could have been Ewen. In addition to this confusion, the validity of Evelyn and Ewen's marriage was questionable. Legally Ewen would not have been divorced from Julia Wheelock until October 17, 1889, two months after Ewen and Evelyn arrived in the United States. It is also worth noting that no marriage records have been found in the United States, United Kingdom, or Canada of an Evelyn Flower to a Ewen Cameron in 1889 or subsequent years before or after. Additionally, early letters and correspondence between Evelyn and her family in England address her as Evelyn Flower, not Cameron.

Regardless of the mystery surrounding the legality of their union, Evelyn and Ewen presented themselves as husband and wife. Evelyn's decision to go against her family's wishes, commit to Ewen, and leave for a new life in Montana redefined her assigned gender roles and expectations. Evelyn and Ewens traveled in the fall of 1889 to the Badlands of Eastern Montana. On November 1, 1889, the Cameron's began their "honeymoon" and the first annual fall hunting trips in the Powder River Valley east of Miles City. [24]

[24] Milne, Lorna. *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company: 2017. 2-3.; Teutonic ship records.; Glenda Ueland (Main curator, Evelyn Cameron Heritage Inc.) in discussion of Terry Montana, July 2021.; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.13-14.;* Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.2-3*; 1820-1957 U.S. *New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island)*; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/7488/images/NYM237_538-0307?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=9ccf170a52203a4c3384b27139c8c4c6&usePUB=true&_phsrc=lDM557&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&_gl=1*158zeoq*_ga*MTc4OTcyMjg4MC4xNjM0MTcyNTY5*_ga_4QT8FMEX30*MTY1MzM0NTIzOS44LjEuMTY1MzM0NTI1Ny4w&pId=7356915; (4 April 2022);

The Fall hunting trip of 1889, Evelyn titled their honeymoon, proved to be the foundation for Evelyn and Ewen's union and a pivotal moment in Evelyn's life. At this time, Evelyn recalled that she fell in love with the rugged beauty of the Montana badlands and saw the economic opportunity the abundant open free grasslands offered. Evelyn and Ewen decided that this place would be their home and a prime location to start a ranch and business venture to raise Polo ponies and export them back to the United Kingdom. [25]

When Evelyn and Ewen immigrated to the United States, they brought with them some possessions from their lives back in England, Evelyn's brother Alec Flower, and their assigned gender roles and. Ewen did not leave behind much information about his views on women, their gender roles, or what these should be. The contributions he left behind focus primarily on his abundant research and publications on the birds and wildlife in Eastern Montana. Based on Ewen's actions, secondary accounts, and Evelyn's depiction of him, it can be concluded that while he held onto the belief that a woman's primary place was in the home fulfilling domestic duties. Ewen took no issue with Evelyn working outside the home or doing the daily operations of their ranch.

In contrast, Evelyn's contributions to society are an invaluable primary source gold mine. Evelyn left behind thirty-five years' worth of her personal daily diaries. Within these diaries, Evelyn meticulously tracked the weather, her chores, the comings and goings of the household, the area gossip, her and Ewen's spending, income, meals, and the day-to-day activities of their lives. Paper was a rare and valuable commodity on the Northern Great Plains during the early twentieth century. Evelyn covered every square inch of the paper with writings, newspaper

[25] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 10.; Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.*3-4.; Milne, Lorna. *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company: 2017.14.; Glenda Ueland (Main curator, Evelyn Cameron Heritage Inc.) in discussion of Terry Montana, July 2021.;

clippings, sketches, and account ledgers. While Evelyn is thorough in her daily analysis, she leaves out personal information or conversations such as the validity of her union to Ewen, certain family matters, personal conversation, and interactions. Missing information aside, Evelyns' attitude, spirit, and opinions overwhelmingly shine through in her words, painting a complete picture of who she was and her views and beliefs on many aspects of life, including her redefinition of gender roles.

In September 1891, Evelyn and Ewen settled on the Northern Great Plains. They rented the 4 – 4 Ranch nestled in the pine-covered hills along the Powder River east of Miles City, Montana. This location was ideal for them as British expatriates like themselves inhabited the area. It was thought that settling in this area would be valuable to them for community building and acquisitions of potential investors into the Cameron's polo pony business. However, its geographical location placed it far from any town. Not much is known about Evelyn's life from 1891 to 1893, as Evelyn's diaries from those years have been lost or were not written. What is known is that the Camerons stayed on the 4 – 4 ranch for two years. According to the records they spent this time trying to make a go of their equestrian ventures and ranching. The Cameron's ultimately decided to move in the winter of 1893 to the first of two Eve Ranches 30 miles from the 4 – 4.

Evelyn's dairies begin in January of 1893 as they are settling into their new home. The Eve ranch, named after Evelyn, was more practical for breeding and training polo horses as it was only 6 miles from the town of Terry and the Northern Pacific Railroad depot. The geographical proximity of Eve ranch to the railroad depot made it ideal for shipping horses to the Atlantic coast, where they would be transported to England aboard a steamer ship. [26]

[26] Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* 15.; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 17.

Once settled on the Eve Ranch, Evelyn's primary responsibility was the ranch's day-to-day operations in conjunction with all domestic duties. Evelyn's brother Alec did help Evelyn on the ranch, but as she recalled, he "was fearfully lazy and so terribly slow."[27] Ewen had failing health and was a scientist and academic by trade. He devoted his life to studying the birds and wildlife of eastern Montana and writing articles and scholarly works for journals and magazines on the east coast and abroad. Ewen did not have time or energy to operate or run the ranch aside from the legal aspect of the business. Unfortunately for the Camerons, Ewen had a habit of making disastrous business decisions. Ewens's poor business decisions, the stress of lengthy travel on the horses from Montana to England, and the strain of finances led the Camerons to dissolve their dream of raising polo ponies. The second Eve Ranch would not be their final ranch location. In the Fall of 1907, the Camerons would move the Eve ranch for a third and final time, permanently settling along the South side of Yellowstone River near Fallon Flat. [28]

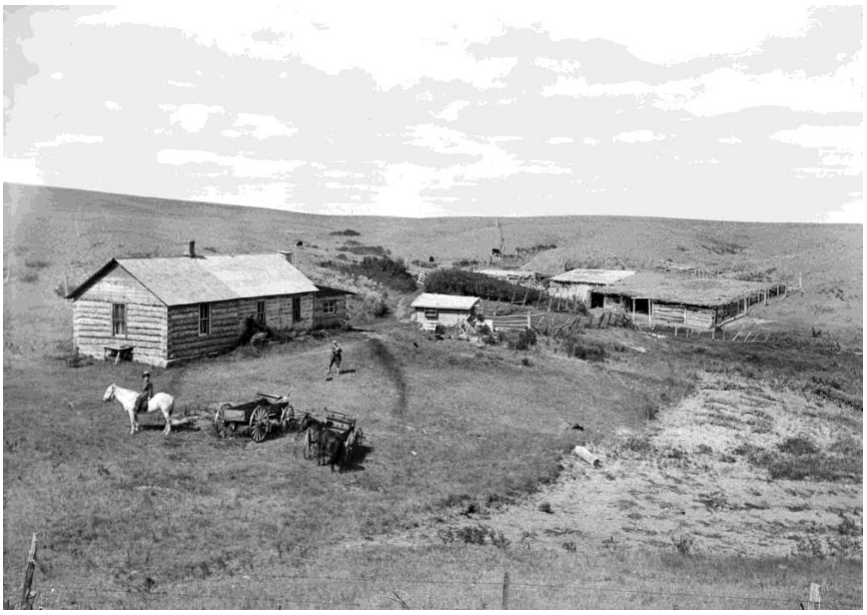


Figure 1. Eve Ranch 1910.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical society.

[27] Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* 16.;
[28] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 20-21.;

Unfortunately, the Camerons polo pony business seemed doomed from the start. As the Camerons settled into their new ranch, the financial Panic of 1893, started by the collapse of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in February, created a chain reaction that placed the United States in the worst depression the nation had ever experienced. The Camerons were not spared this hardship. In August 1893, hundreds of banks failed, including the National Stock Growers Bank in Miles City, taking all the Camerons money. During this crisis, Evelyn wrote, "Ewen said he gave up managing money, would turn the purse over to me. Discussed plans if have to give up this place."[29] In September, Evelyn wrote to her mother that most of the people they knew were ruined or in great financial straits. Facing ruin, Ewen advocated that they salvage what little they had left, pack up and return to England. On August 20, 1893, Evelyn wrote,

> Ewen, in a great state about our situation, thinks to break up and fly home is our best purgative. I think it would cause congestion of our finances again and no ultimate good attained. Out here this is some chance of money making even if we kept quiet, saved, bought, and sold horses.[30]

Evelyn was not so easily defeated. For weeks the couple debated whether they should stay in Montana or return to the United Kingdom. Evelyn recalled in her diary that at breakfast one morning, she and Ewen "Sat debating future courses…stay here till spring, go back and live in Orkney. I photograph, Ewen writes books. I would rather stay out here, I don't care about home now, feel as tho' I would like to never hear nor go near it."[31] Ultimately, Evelyn produced a new plan that would allow them to maintain their independence and stay in Montana. Evelyn wrote the details of their new plan to her mother in January of 1894: "We have been so hard pressed lately that we have tried the plan of taking pupils, and one young man arrived from Ireland a

[29] Cameron, Evelyn. 1893 Diary "August 4, 1893."
[30] Cameron, Evelyn. 1893 Diary "August 20, 1893."
[31] Cameron, Evelyn, 1893 Diary "September 15, 1893"

short time ago. It is probable that he will put some money into this concern."[32] This account illustrates Evelyn's plan to stay in Montana and help alleviate some of their financial strain. Evelyn hoped that if they invited wealthy boarders to the Eve ranch and had them stay for a short time, the boarders would see all the beauty and potential the Eve ranch had to offer. Once the border saw the economic potential, they would want to invest in the operations and future of Eve Ranch. This plan would not only bring the Camerons additional income in the form of room and board payments, but it would increase their chances for success by bringing additional investors to the Eve Ranch.[33]

The Camerons border-to-investor program did not go according to plan. The first of many boarders to the Eve Ranch was Mr. Adams, the Irish man Evelyn wrote about in her diary. Mr. Adams offered the Camerons little more than the unfulfilled promise of investing in the Eve Ranch and a few board payments. The ever-practical and resourceful Evelyn would not allow their financial straits to strip her of her independence or force her from their new Montana home. In addition to the borders, Evelyn reduced the ranch's expenses by growing and producing most of their food. Evelyn planted and harvested vast gardens. Her extensive gardens ranged from as small as a half-acre to four or more acres. Evelyn's crops included but were not limited to corn, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, watermelon, peas, beans, carrots, assorted gourds and squashes, onions, and turnips.

[32] Cameron, Evelyn, 1894 Diary "January 15, 1894"
[33] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 25.

Figure 2. Alec Flower cabbage harvest 1898.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Figure 3. Evelyn Cameron Harvest 1906.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Figure 4. Janet Williams and Evelyn Cameron turnips and beet Harvest 1910
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Once Evelyn stocked Eve Ranch storehouses with all her harvest, and with no help from Ewen and very little from brother Alec, Evelyn loaded hundreds of pounds of her domestic and wild wares into a wagon. She would travel many miles to remote ranches, railroad station houses, range cook wagons, and saloons selling her excess yields for profit. In September 1894, Evelyn recorded that she earned $5.10 in one trip. [34]

Along with her planted garden, Evelyn foraged for wild berries, cherries, and plums. Evelyn had a large flock of brooding and roasting chickens. In February of 1907, Evelyn recorded having butchered 66 chickens and collected 561 eggs. She attributed the high yields to the production of her homemade bone meal. Evelyn scavenged the prairies collecting horse and cattle skeletons that she would then pound by hand into bone meal to feed to the chickens.

In addition to Evelyn's sustainability and financial contributions to the Eve Ranch, she assumed the position of head of Eve Ranch operations. This position was not in replacement for

[34] Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.*16-17.; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 32.

her domestic duties but in addition to those responsibilities. Within Evelyn's diaries, she describes a life of early mornings, long and labor-intensive chores, including mowing and baling hay, feeding, moving, branding, managing, and training their cattle, sheep, and horses. The chores are followed by descriptions of meal preparation, cooking, milking, gathering eggs, butchering, gardening, cleaning, and laundry. An account of Evelyn's daily life:

> Tuesday, July 9, 1895,
> Arose at 7:10. Breakfast on. Bull is courting Topsy. I put him in corral last night. Milked. Breakfast 9:30. Washed up. Went out a foot with bag, halters, and Jan. The horses were down near Laundre's fence. Caught old George directly, but Frank would not be caught. He kept close to the 2 bronco fillies. So I rode George home bareback, saddled him, rode him back, got onto Dolly and drove the whole lot into the corral. Caught and harnessed team turned others out. Lunch 1:30. Ewen and I put the team in the wagon. I started cutting grass from the side of spring pathway. Asked Mr. C to finish it, which he did. Down to Terry… supper at 8:30 about- Ham, minced, poached eggs, cornstarch pudding, serviceberries, evaporated milk, coffee, tea. Cleared up. Churned- got only ¾ pound, but more to come, but wont form into big lumps. Will give it another try tomorrow. Read letter from Mrs. C. Bed 11:00.[35]

This excerpt from Evelyn's diary shows the ease with which she diffused from the private gender sphere in her domestic work to the public sphere outside the home and redefined her gender roles. Evelyn's ability and willingness to engage in assumed male-dominated tasks such as gathering and harnessing horses for field work and transition back to domestic work preparing a meal and churning butter proved the theory that without definitive social policing of women's roles, woman would often engage in assumed masculine work roles either out of necessity or choosing to operate within the already established gender system. Evelyn proves that women on the Northern Great Plains continually defined and redefined their gender roles and found safety and familiarity within either gendered sphere. [36]

[35] Camron, Evelyn. 1895 Diary "July 9, 1895"
[36] Riley, Glenda. *The Female Frontier*. 63

Figure 5. Evelyn Cameron and Janet Williams branding a calf 1907
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

The above photo taken in 1907 depicts twenty-four-year-old Janet Williams, one of Evelyn's closest and dearest companions, and thirty-nine-year-old Evelyn branding a calf with the Eve Ranch brand.[37] A task like this would have been designated outside of the domestic sphere.[38]

[37] Evelyn J Cameron, *Branding*, photograph (Helena, n.d.), Montana Historical Society.
[38] Evelyn J Cameron, *Kitchen Self Portrait*, photograph (Helena, n.d.), Montana Historical Society.

Figure 6. Evelyn Cameron self-portrait in her kitchen 1895.
Evelyn Cameron, Montana Historical Society.

In comparison the photograph above dated 1895 shows Evelyn fulfilling domestic duties in her pristine kitchen, preparing bread. This photo is an example of the qualifying tasked located within the domestic sphere.

Evelyn redefied society's gender standards publicly in many ways. One well-documented example describes how she wore her custom-made split riding skirt on the streets of Miles City, Montana, in 1905. Her appearance caused quite a ruckus. Evelyn recalled that evening in her diary "My divided skirt attracted much attention." She later described the event in greater detail in an article she wrote for the British magazine *Country Life.*

> Although my costume was so full as to look like an ordinary walking dress, it created a small sensation. So great at first was the prejudice against any divided garment in Montana that a warning was given to me to abstain from riding on the streets of Miles City lest I might be arrested![39]

The repurposing of the skirt from a solid piece into one with two legs or even wearing a pair of Ewens old trousers served Evelyns' purpose well. She did not adopt this attire purely out of defiance and comfort, although one can conclude that these were enjoyable consequences for Evelyn. The primary purpose of her split skirt was for safety and practicality when riding horses in the fashion that she did. It was forty-two miles to Miles City from Eve Ranch, and while working on the Ranch, Evelyn had to navigate over the rugged eastern Montana terrain and the Badlands. It was neither safe nor feasible for Evelyn to wear a traditional riding skirt and ride side saddle.[40]

Evelyn's redefinition of gender roles places her contributions to Northern Great Plains history not only as a contributor to agricultural and rural history but also as an artist. Evelyn Cameron produced and developed over 5000 glass plate negatives from 1894 until 1928, earning her the titles of Eastern Montana's Photographer and Photographer of the Frontier. Her journey as a photographer, like many things in her new Montana life, developed out of her necessity. When the Camerons accepted their first border, Mr. Adams, from Ireland, they learned that he was familiar with the cameras and taking photographs. Ewen declared that they needed to get a camera to illustrate his scientific articles and findings. The Camerons ordered the first camera in July 1894, and three weeks later, when they received word that it had arrived at the depot, Mr. Adams retrieved the camera and brought it to Eve Ranch. Mr. Adams taught Evelyn how to change the glass-plate negatives and operate the camera. Their second border, Mr. Colley,

[39] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 204
[40] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 204

collaborated on a series of experimental staged photo shoots. Evelyn taught herself the art of photography through these collaborations and many late nights of reading, studying, and practicing exposure, timing, and printmaking. [41]

Not long after the camera arrived, requests from neighbors to take their photos came flooding in. Evelyn photographed all aspects of the Eastern Montan frontier. Her favorite subjects to photograph were action shots, specifically cattle, horse, and sheep brandings, roping, driving, working, and shearing. Evelyn took extensive photographs of the natural landscape, wildlife, and geographical oddities. Her extensive photograph collection is, to date, the most well-illustrated collection of an Eastern Montana community.

Figure 7. Evelyn on favorite horse Trinket going to a photo session 1912.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Evelyn's photographs were more than a hobby or interest. They became a reliable form of income for Eve Ranch. When Evelyn was commissioned to do a photoshoot, she would go to her subjects, as she did not have a studio. Often Evelyn would ride horseback 20-30 miles round trip

[41] Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.* 27; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 124,

carrying her nine-pound Kodak No 5. Kodet camera and a leather gun scabbard containing her tripod to photograph her subject. She was not paid for her time traveled, or the time it took to develop and print the photographs. Evelyn was only paid for the number of prints her subjects wanted. If a print did not turn out, or her clients did not like their photographs, Evelyn had to return and continue to return to redo them until they were satisfied. It was a costly venture at the start. On August 4, 1899, Evelyn wrote, "Made $31. Spent $35.92." Slowly, as Evelyn's skills developed and her photographing techniques became better, she started to turn a profit with her photographs. Evelyn placed a sign at the Terry post office for her photography business advertising "$3.00 per dozen, $1.75 half dozen, .25 each not exceeding four." She also created premade photo albums of two dozen photographs and sold them for $5.00 each, along with mounted prints for .25 each. Her advertisements brought up some business, but Evelyn was often commissioned to take photographs on distant ranches and railroad camps, where she would sell the albums and prints to the subject. Evelyn and her Graflex 3-A camera made by Folmer & Schwing, affectionately nicknamed "Lexie," would be credited for photographing the expansion, development, people, natural landscape, wildlife, and culture of the Eastern Montana frontier. [42]

Evelyn continued to photograph and ranch in Eastern Montana for the rest of her life. She accomplished this solo for thirteen years. Ewen died in 1915, and Evelyn was left on her own. According to her diaries aside from her feelings of loneliness, not much had changed for Evelyn regarding her responsibilities. As Evelyn repeatedly states, Ewen was not very helpful or active in their ranch operations. Analysis of her diaries from 1915 until her death in 1928, an interesting pattern emerges. Without Ewen, her daily demands of domestic duties decreased, but her outside ranch work increased. Before Ewen's death, Evelyn would spend hours preparing elaborate

[42] Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 124,131,156-157, 179,;

meals. Following his demise, Evelyn's meals consisted of a can of beans, crackers, or Grape Nuts with little to no preparation. Likewise, her dairies show the usual time taken to fulfill domestic duties before Ewen's death; Evelyn now chose to reassign that time to the outside chorus and ranch work. Her purposeful process of replacing domestic duties with outside duties is clear evidence that when not pressured by marital obligations, she chose not to engage in demoestic roles and instead fully immersed herself into assumed masculine roles. This pattern is consistent not only with Evelyn but with many women across the Northern Great Plains.

Figure 8. Evelyn Cameron repairing her fence line 1916.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Figure 9. Evelyn Cameron squaring timber 1916.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

It is also interesting to note that along with her redefend gender roles, Evelyn redefined her daily attire. The two photographs above dated 1916 illustrate Evelyn's redefinition of gender roles. She abandoned her split skirts and work dresses and opted for Ewen's old trousers or bloomers for much of her daily attire, except for the occasional special trips or visits with friends. Evelyn was not alone in this reassignment and diffusion process. The subjects of many

of her photographs, Janet Williams and neighbors Susannah, May, Myrtle, and Mable Buckley, also redefined the gendered boundaries and diffused across the gendered spheres. [43]

The Buckley family arrived in Eastern Montana in the fall of 1897. The Buckley family consisted of parents Frank G. Buckley and Susannah Margert Buckley (Byer) and their four children: three daughters, May, Myrtle, Mabel, and one son, Mark. They claimed a 160-acre ranch southeast of Terry, Montana, near Cabin Creek before squatting on land half a mile up on Hay Creek in 1900.

Figure 10. Buckley Ranch 1914.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

In 1908 Frank Buckley moved the ranch buildings to the former location. The Buckleys homesteaded and developed an excellent horse and cattle ranch. Frank Buckley moved his family from Ellendale, North Dakota, to Prairie county, Montana, in the fall of 1897. However, he did not reside there full-time. Frank Buckley spent much of his time off the eastern Montana

[43] Milne, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie.*112-113.; Lucey, *Photographing Montana 1894-1928.* 225,235; Handy-Marchello, Barbara. *Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier.*55-58; Evelyn, Cameron. 1918 Diary, "July 10, 1918."

Buckley ranch. He operated the farm they kept in Ellendale and participated in the political arena. He was a Montana state representative, the first for Prairie County, Montana, in 1915. Frank Buckley does not completely shoulder the credit for the Buckley ranch's success. Instead, the daily running, management, and operations of the Buckley ranch were the responsibility of Susannah Buckley, or "Mother Buckley," as the locals called her, and her three daughters, May, Myrtle, and Mable.[44]

Figure 11. Mabel, May, and Mrytle Buckley December 22, 1913.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Eleanor May Buckley was born May 12, 1889, in Dicky County, North Dakota. She was the oldest of the three Buckley sisters. Second in the sibling lineup was Myrtle Irene Buckley (Fisher, Straugh), born May 6, 1891, in Ellendale. The youngest of the three sisters was Mabel Pearl Buckley (Gile), born May 26, 1893, in Ellendale. The young Buckley sisters, May, age 8, Myrtle, age 6, and Mabel, age 4, moved to the badlands of eastern Montana in the fall of 1897.

[44] Sue Hansen, "'Serious Cow People' Tracking down the Three Montana Sisters Captured by Evelyn Cameron's Camera and Admired by Teddy Roosevelt," *True West Magazine* (True West Magazine, April 15, 2013), https://truewestmagazine.com/serious-cow-people/.; Mark Buckley and Pete Buckley, "Buckley Family," in *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie* (Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974), pp. 70-71.

Not much is known about their childhood or upbringing. There is little information pertaining to their young adult lives, marriages, and deaths, and a collection of photographs as evidence of their tasks, skills, and diffusion across gendered boundaries. Using the generalized gender roles and generalized understanding of family gender socialization, one can conclude that the Buckley sisters were taught the gender roles and expectations of frontier society. However, whether it was the remoteness of eastern Montana, the need for survival, or just necessity, the three Buckley sisters, along with their mother reassigned their gender roles within their family and on their ranch.[45]

The Buckleys were neighbors to the Eve Ranch and Evelyn Cameron. Evelyn first wrote of the Buckley family in her dairies in the fall of 1905. She wrote about the Buckley family 174 times throughout the thirty-five-year diary collection. Along with the diary entries, Evelyn took many photographs and did several photoshoots with the Buckley sisters. If it had not been for Evelyn's photographs of the Buckley sisters, their story and ranch might have been lost to time like many other women on the Northern Great Plains. Luckily this was not the case.[46]

[45] Sue Hansen, “Serious Cow People.”; Buckley, Mark, and Pete, "Buckley Family," 66; “Social Security Death Index,” s.v. “Mable Pearl Gile” (1935-2014), *Ancestry.com*.; “Montana. US, State Deaths, 1907-2018” s.v. “Myrtle I. Straugh” (born May 6, 1891), *Ancestry.com* “Montana, US. State Deaths, 1907-2018” s.v. “Eleanor May Buckley” (born May 12, 1889), *Ancestry.com.*

[46] Sue Hansen “Serious Cow People”;

Figure 12. May Buckley chasing down calves to rope 1913.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

Figure 13. Buckley sister working cattle in their pasture 1913.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

The Buckley sisters and their mother Susanah operated and ran the Buckley ranch while their father Frank Buckley was absent round-up May to July and at the farm in Ellendale the rest of the fall. All three Buckley girls took on new roles and expectations when their familial environment changed. Photographs and descriptions of the Buckley sisters show them engaging

in assumed masculine roles such as branding, roping, driving cattle, and breaking horses. A 1914 article, written and illustrated with photographs by Evelyn Cameron, in the British magazine "Country Life," describes the talents and abilities of the young Buckley sisters. "All three sisters may be said to have been born in the saddle'" writes Cameron, "and are accomplished in the incidental work of branding cattle, breaking a horse, and throwing the lasso." The article describes how each sister worked with some of their ornery cattle and survived dangerous situations when riding a young or half-tame horse. Additional entries in Evelyn's diaries explain a working day for the Buckley sisters. On December 22, 1913, Evelyn described how the Buckley sisters roped and saddled their horses, rounded up 12 head of cattle, and began roping and stretching the cattle out to immobilize them to check the cattle over for their brands and any injury. Checking the cattle in this manner is a standard practice in animal husbandry. This will ensure that the cattle being fed and cared for on the ranch belong to the ranch by identifying the brand. This process also allows the owner to get a closer look and the cattle to make sure that they are good health and condition. The Buckley sisters' roping, branding, riding, and bronc-breaking, and riding skills were so incredible that they earned the nickname "Red Yearlings" from their male Montana Cowboy counter parts. The red in red yearling was due to their strawberry blonde hair. They were well known throughout eastern Montana, and Evelyn Cameron's article earned them national and international notoriety. The local Terry legend states that because of their impressive horsemanship skills and abilities, the Buckley sisters were invitation to perform at the White House from President Theodore Roosevelt. The Buckley sisters turned down this invitation. Evelyn's article very well could have brought such attention to the Buckley sisters in their remote location of Terry, Montana. However, the researcher found

no concrete evidence to support these claims as fact aside from local stories and lore. However, it is important to mention here as it is evidence to the Buckley sisters skills. [47]

Figure 14. The Buckley sister roping horses 1909.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

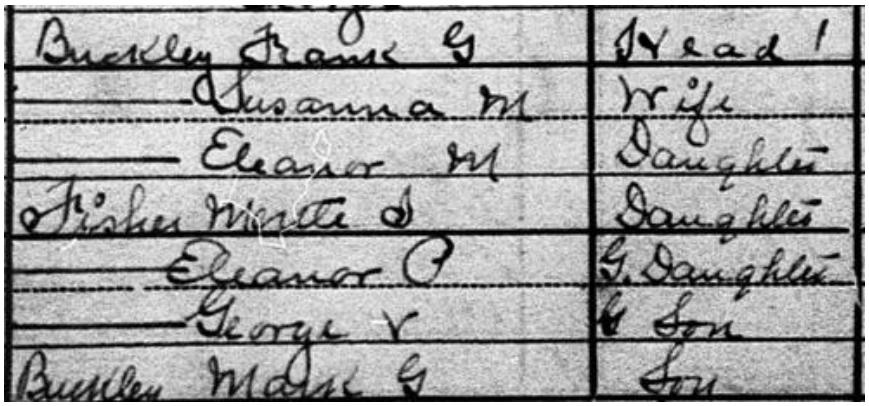
[47] Cameron, Evelyn J. "The 'Cowgirl' In Montana." *Country Life* 35, no.09, June 6, 1914. 830. Sue Hansen "Serious Cow People"; Glenda Ueland (Main curator, Evelyn Cameron Heritage Inc.) in discussion of Terry Montana and Evelyn Cameron, July 2021.

Figure 15. Mabel Buckley roping cow in pasture 1908.
Evelyn Cameron photograph, Montana Historical Society.

From their young to their adult lives, the Buckley sisters continued redefine gender expectations within the confines of the social system. Upon examination of Evelyn Cameron's October 25, 1915, diary entry, it is noted that "Myrtle Buckley ran away and married a hired man named David Fisher."[48] The entry is quite a scandal and was most likely the talk of the small town for some time. Secondary family and community accounts recall that Myrtle Buckley did marry David Fisher, and they raised two children together. They later divorced, and Myrtle remarried a man named George Straugh, combined her ranch with his, and relocated to Broadus, Montana. It cannot be confirmed that Mrytle had a ranch to combine with George Straugh, as Mark Buckley, her younger brother, inherited the Buckley land. The question of where Myrtle's Ranch was or what land belonged to her to is unclear. However, what is clear is that there is a marriage record showing a Myrtle Buckley married David Fisher in 1915. Intriguingly a 1920 Prairie County census lists Myrtle Fisher, one daughter, Eleanor, and one son, George, under the

[48] Camron, Evelyn. 1915 Diary "October 25, 1915"

household of Frank and Susanna Buckley, with no record of David Fisher in the household. Additionally, the 1930 Powder River County census shows Myrtle Fisher, Eleanor, and George living in George Straugh's household.[49]



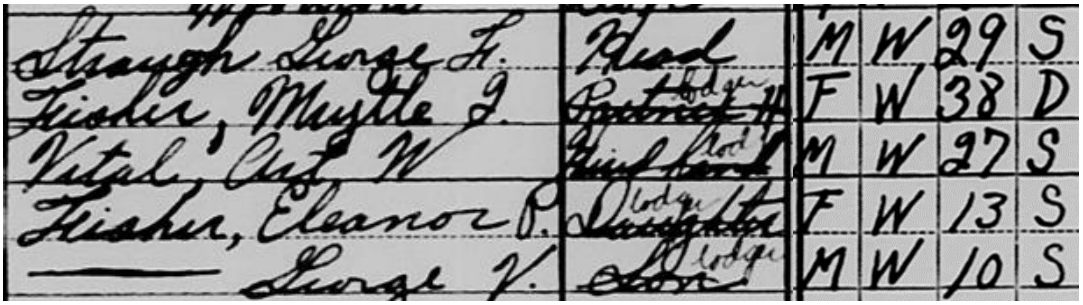
Buckley Frank G	Head
Susanna M	Wife
Eleanor M	Daughter
Fisher Myrtle D	Daughter
Eleanor C	G. Daughter
George V	G Son
Buckley Mark G	Son

Figure 16. 1920 Prairie County census.
1920 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/45813300:6061?tid=&pid=&queryId=5bc96939f895baf8d70c1a8350a84603&_phsrc=XHI16&_phstart=successSource; (March 4, 2021)

Upon closer examination of the 1930 census record, under the relationship column next to Myrtle's name, someone crossed out the original relationship of "partner" and rewrote "lodger." The same correction was made to Eleanor, and George, who were first listed as "daughter and son," marked out and relisted as "lodger." Myrtle's marital status is listed with a "D" for divorce, while George is listed as "S" for single. This record indicated that at the time of the census, Mrytle was not married to George Straugh, as family accounts recall, but was

[49] 1920 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/45813300:6061?tid=&pid=&queryId=5bc96939f895baf8d70c1a8350a84603&_phsrc=XHI16&_phstart=successSource; (March 4, 2021); "Montana, US, County Marriages,"s.v. "David Fisher" (1865-1987), https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/90292656:61578?tid=&pid=&queryId=92866b7d06dff22f5a3247e69250ced8&_phsrc=XHI173&_phstart=successSource

residing in his household. By self-declaration of Myrtle and George, they were not married but domestic partners.[50]



Straugh George F.	Head	M	W	29	S
Fisher, Myrtle J.	Partner	F	W	38	D
Vital, Cut W	Hired hand	M	W	27	S
Fisher, Eleanor P.	Daughter	F	W	13	S
——— George V.	Son	M	W	10	S

Figure 17. 1930 Power River County census.
1930 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/106341410:6224?tid=&pid=&queryId=f864ed8f37b4bf02daab7ab80de89ffd&_phsrc=XHI31&_phstart=successSource; (March 4, 2021).

Their living situation would have been unconventional given the assigned societal gender norms of the early twentieth century. Myrtle's situation would have been further compounded by the social stigma surrounding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Myrtle's cohabitation did not last long. A Powder River County marriage record confirms that George Straugh and Myrtle Fisher married on April 7, 1932. After 1932 there is little to no information about Myrtle's life after her remarriage to George Straugh. One secondary family account recalls that Myrtle lived on the Ranch in Broadus, Montana, on Baking Powder Creek, where she and George built the ranch up to 5,978.64 acres. On March 23, 1962, they sold the ranch and moved into the nearby town of Miles City. Myrtle resided in Miles City until her death on January 27, 1964. Myrtle's story is evidence that while women on the Northern Great Plains understood their gender roles, women made their own choices within the confines of the established societal systems and

[50] 1930 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/106341410:6224?tid=&pid=&queryId=f864ed8f37b4bf02daab7ab80de89ffd&_phsrc=XHI31&_phstart=successSource; (March 4, 2021).; Buckley, Mark and Pete, "Buckley Family," 66.

redefined the gender expectations that were taught. They reconfigured their roles and made them what they needed to be to advance their lives, even if it was only for a short time. [51]

In contrast to her sister Myrtle, Mable Buckley chose the most assumed path for women in her adult life. While Mables early and young adult life was filled with redefining gender roles within the Buckley household and Prairie County society in 1915, the same year Myrtle eloped with David Fisher, Mable married Milton J. Gale on December 20th. Little is known about Mable's life after she married.[52]

Secondary family accounts recall that Mable and Milton ran and operated their ranch just ten miles northeast of Mable's childhood Buckley ranch. On this land, they raised their two children Dorothy and Selman (Buzz). Mable and Milton farmed and ranched in the Prairie County area for approximately twenty years before moving to Seattle in 1938. Milton worked as a welder in the Seattle shipyards during World War Two. Later they purchased a tavern in Hamilton, Washington. Mable and Milton operated the tavern for ten years until Milton's death in November of 1955. Following his death, Mable resided in Seattle before moving to Cape Canaveral, Florida, to be closer to her daughter Dorothy. Mable lived the remainder of her life in Florida. Mable Pearl Buckley Gile died on April 2, 1989. There are not numerus records recounting her talents in her early life. Only one secondary family account, a few diary entries by Evelyn Cameron, a *Country Life* article, and a handful of black and white glass plate

[51] Handy-Marchello, Barbara. *Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier*. 46.; Buckley, Mark, and Pete, "Buckley Family," 66.; "Montana, US, County Marriages,"s.v. "George F Straugh" (1865-1987), https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/438821:61578?tid=&pid=&queryId=6078683fe437949e68dbecc773b2187a&_phsrc=XHI30&_phstart=successSource.; Straugh, George. "George Straugh" A Range Riders Museum Story. In *Custer County Area History: As We Recall*, 495. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1990.

[52] "Montana, US, County Marriages,"s.v. "Milton John Gile" (1910-1916), https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/292708:61578?tid=&pid=&queryId=bb44e3421daf1e1d685d6992c8925b6c&_phsrc=XHI55&_phstart=successSource.;

photographs remain that show what and who Mable Buckley was and the contributions she made to redefining gender roles on the Northern Great Plains. [53]

Like her younger sisters, May Buckley left behind little information about her adult life. May forged a path that diverged from her sisters. May's young life on the Buckley ranch is well documented in Evelyn Cameron's diaries and photographs. May is the most mentioned Buckley sisters in Evelyn's diaries. May grew up on the Buckley ranch much the same way as her sisters. She attended a one-room schoolhouse. After graduating, family accounts recall that May went to business college at Mankato, Minnesota. It is unclear whether May graduated or finished college, but she returned to eastern Montana and the town of Terry to live and work on the Buckley Ranch. May supported her mother Susanna and father Frank in all aspects of farming and ranching. May even traveled and assisted her father and brother on their threshing outfit through the late twenties and early thirties. In 1926 Susanna Buckley suffered a stroke and May became the primary caretaker of her mother until she died in 1932. Frank Buckley died in December of 1935. After the passing of her parents, May continued to live on the Buckley ranch and transitioned from working for her parent to helping her brother Mark and his wife Petrena Dragseth with the daily operations and chores around the ranch. Petrina recalled that May was a great help to them while Petrena worked as a schoolteacher in the rural schools. Eleanor May Buckley died from breast cancer on August 18, 1938. May, Myrtle, and Mable left a legacy that

[53] Buckley, Mark and Pete, "Buckley Family," 66.; "Social Security Death Index," s.v. "Mable Pearl Gile" (1935-2014), https://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=3693&h=22193465&tid=&pid=&queryId=315e6de0b3d1600af12bc2c0a4b3e43f&usePUB=true&_phsrc=XHI66&_phstart=successSource&_gl=1*1usm6js*_ga*MTA1NDE2MDYyNC4xNjU0NjMzMjc2*_ga_4QT8FMEX30*MTY1NzExNzQ1OC44LjEuMTY1NzExODg1Ni4w.;

proves that women on the Northern Great Plains redefined their gender roles not only out of necessity but out of choice. [54]

The three Buckley sisters not only redefined their gender roles but they did so at different times to accommodate their lifestyle and needs thus proving that their gender roles were fluid. Evelyn Cameron and the three Buckley sisters are not the only women in eastern Montana's Prairie County to adapt these attributes. Susan Haughian embraced the redefinition process and forged her own path, making her the most extensive landholding woman in Montana state history.[55]

Susan Quinn Haughian was born December 10, 1886, to Susan Fitzpatrick and Henry Quinn in Kilkeel, Ireland. She was one of sixteen children. Susan states that she had a privileged. She recalled that her family was well off. She grew up on a small acreage with her family raising sheep and farming in the Irish countryside. The Quinn family had a maid for washing and ironing, and her mother and aunt did the cooking, leaving Susan to go to school. She remembered that she learned to do little hand crafts like needlework and sewing but confirmed that her upbringing did not prepare her for the life and responsibilities she would face in Montana. Susan met and married Daniel Haughian in 1905.

[54] Buckley, Mark and Pete, "Buckley Family," 66.; Buckley, Mark and Pete, "Mark Buckley and Petrena Dragseth Interview" by Laurie, Mercier. *Voices of Labor,* Montana Historical Society, and Research Center. October 17, 1983.;
[55] Huntington, Smith. "Montana's Favorite Redhead." *Collier's,* August 2, 1952, 19.

Figure 18. Wedding Picture, Dan and Susan Haughian 1905.
Ashley, Susan. *Wedding Picture*. Photograph. *Wheels across Montana's Prairie*. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithography, 1974. Prairie County Museum.

Born October 28, 1876, in Breckney, Ireland, Daniel Haughian was an adventurer. After receiving his common school education, Daniel went to South Africa to work in the diamond mines. In the late 1890s, he migrated to the United States and worked as a sheep herder in Yakima, Washington, until 1900, when he made his way to Montana and bought a 40-acre land script with one spring and a two-room cabin for three dollars an acre. Daniel spent four years in the Little Sheep Mountain area of Montana before returning to Ireland to retrieve a young lady he had been courting. Upon returning to Ireland, Daniel discovered that that young lady had no intention of marrying him. Fortunately for Daniel, her younger sister, Susan Quinn, found him to be whom she was looking for. At seventeen, Susan Quinn decided to marry Daniel Haughian in the summer of 1905. This decision to marry the wide-eyed adventure and move to an unknown world outside of her homeland of Ireland was the first decision of many that Susan made within

the confines of the social system that paved her own path. On October 15, 1905, the newly married Susan Haughian arrived in Miles City, Montana. [56]

Susan and Daniel started their life in eastern Montana on the 40-acrces. They had ten children together. Raising a large family on the eastern Montana frontier was not an easy task. Besides the labor-intensive daily operations and responsibilities, childbirth was a dangerous and often deadly process. Susan's daughter Susan Evelyn, the seventh child of Daniel and Susan Haughian, recalls that "mother always went Miles City about a month before her babies were born. I guess that I was in a hurry to come so arrived earlier than they expected me, mother was still at home and told dad to go get Mrs. Bill Devlin."[57] While Daniel was getting help, Susan gathered her six children into a separate bedroom. She instructed them not to come out of the room until after the new baby was born. Susan went into her bedroom and gave birth to her child alone. Susan later stated that she did everything right and never felt any birth pains. She wrapped her new baby girl in a blanket and cleaned and tidied the room. It was not until after everything was straightened that Susan began to shake. Once Daniel and Mrs. Devlin arrived, they found all was fine with Susan and their new baby Susan Evelyn. Susan's solo child birthing experience is one example of her strength.[58]

In 1914 Susan and Daniel moved their family from the small log cabin to their newly built ten-room home with all the modern conveniences of the time and a big barn. They slowly increased their land and livestock, specifically sheep, but they also had cattle and horses. Susan

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[56] Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 201-203. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974.; Haughian, Family. "Susan (Quinn) Haughian" A Range Rider Museum Story. In *Custer County Area History: As We Recall*, 324. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1990.; Haughian, Family. "Dan Haughian" A Range Rider Museum Story. In *Custer County Area History: As We Recall*, 323. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1990.

[57] Ashley, Susan. "Ira Richard and Susan Ashley" Essay. In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 12-13. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974

[58] A section of land equals 640acres.

recalled that when they first arrived in eastern Montana, she was not good at domestic duties. She had to learn to cook and do laundry out of necessity, but her favorite time while living on their ranch was when she and the children got to leave the ranch and trail the sheep to the public shearing pens. Susan recalled, "this was a real treat for me to get away from the ranch and see a new part of the country."[59] By 1920 Susan and Daniel had collected a few sections and a few hundred head of livestock. Unfortunately, the winter of 1919-1920 was hard and caused most of their cattle to die, and the spring rains killed shorn sheep and lambs. Their daughter Susan stated that by the fall, all was gone. The family had to sell everything and move away from the big house and barn to a new place a few miles away. Undeterred by their hardships and hard lessons, Susan and Daniel rebuilt what they had lost. They were eventually able to buy back their home, barn, and land.[60]

Figure 19. The Haughian Ranch 1917. [61]
Ashley, Susan. *Haughian Ranch*. Photograph. *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithography, 1974. Prairie County Museum

[59] Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" in *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie,* 201-203.;
[60] Dent, Susan E. "Dan and Susan Haughian" A Range Rider Museum Story. In *Custer County Area History: As We Recall*, 323-324. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1990
[61] *Haughian Ranch*, photograph, *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie* (Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithography, 1974), pp. 202-202, Prairie County Museum.

In 1931 Daniel Haughian died of cancer, leaving Susan with ten children, the oldest child twenty-three and the youngest aged ten, a few sections of land, and a band of sheep. Family accounts relate that Daniel Haughian had each of his sons raise a band of sheep. Following Daniel's death, their oldest son Dan decided that all the Haughian sons should combine their livestock with Susans. The merger would form the Susan Haughian and Sons Co, which would later become the Haughian Livestock Company. Susan was head of the Haughian Livestock Company from 1932 until she retired in 1960. The most significant part of the Haughian family's success was Susan. Neighbor Newman Ayres recalled that after Daniel Haughian died, his father Frank Ayres mentioned Daniel's death as a hardship for Susan. She said, "I miss him, but he left me well fixed. We are wealthy. He left me two bands of sheep and all these boys. I feel that makes me wealthy."[62]

The Haughians always worked together for the greater good of the family. However, after Daniel Haughian died and Susan and her son's merged interests, the group had to outlast the Great Depression, the drought of 1934, and the grasshoppers of the 1930s. They did this by diversifying their livestock and adopting family economics and migration grazing patterns for their herds. They started buying scrub heifers or anything that could raise a calf; this slowly built their cattle herd. Susan's daughters took over domestic and barnyard duties, so Susan could be away for months at a time living in a sheep wagon with her sons moving their livestock from in search of grass and water. While her sons trailed the livestock from place to place, Susan rode into town, sent off lease payments, and correspondence to landowners and banks, procured leases, grazing, and water rights from one section of ground to the next. Throughout the 1930s,

[62]Ayers, Newman "Frank Ayers Family" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 15. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974.;

Susan continued to buy land around water sources for cents on the dollar by buying out land from homesteaders and families leaving the area. [63]

Figure 20. Susan Haughian and her sons riding on their Ranch 1952.
Ashley, Susan. *Riding the Range*. Photograph. *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974. Prairie County Museum.

By 1960 Haughian Livestock Company owned and controlled approximately 150,000 acres, 3,000 cattle, and 2,000 sheep. Under Susan, The Haughian Livestock Company became one of the largest operations and is rated the largest women-owned sheep and cattle operation in Montana history. In 1952 Susan was the first woman in Montana to be issued a $100,000 "key man" life insurance policy. The amount represented an estimate of her value to the Haughian Livestock Company. Even after she retired from the presidency, no decisions were made without first consulting Susan.[64]

While researching the story of the Haughian family's success, when it came to the legacy and life of Susan Haughian after her husband's death it became difficult to distinguish between what is fact, fiction, or local legend. It is relevant to dispel the myths and present the facts as the researcher found them, starting with a secondary account written by Bill Kiley about Susan

[63] Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" in *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie, 201-20.;*
[64] Huntington, Smith. "Montana's Favorite Redhead." *Collier's,* August 2, 1952, 19-21.;

Haughian in the Spring 2006 issue of *Range Magazine* titled "Montana's Red-Headed Legend: Susan Haughian's Irish Empire." In this article, the author states that he intends to convey the importance of Susan Haughian's contributions to eastern Montana and to describe the annual celebration the Haughian family holds during the 4th of July holiday. Kiley states that Susan locked herself in her bedroom for almost a year and refused to talk to anyone. When Susan finally decided to come out, she was ready to take on the world. This article also calls into question Daniel and Susan Haughian's immigration status, implying that they were illegal immigrants to the United States and slipped into the country. Ship records from the passenger ship *Parisian* list Daniel and Susan Haughian as arriving at Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on October 21, 1905, listing them as bound for the United States. Furthermore, what is stated many times across multiple sources is that after Daniel died, Susan said she chose to continue ranching. The idea that because Susan was a woman and gender roles dictated that she should not put herself in such a position as head of ranch operations does not seem to have been a deciding factor for her. Susan instead decided to capitalize on their operation and invested in herself and her family by redefining her gender roles.[65]

Additionally, a 1952 *Collier's Magazine* article titled "Montana's Favorite Redhead" implies that Susan was less ladylike because she chose to take on the less assumed gender roles as head of the Haughian family instead of remarrying. Both articles make extensive mention that Susan was always a lady because she was an exceptional square dancer and refused to wear pants. These statements are presented as evidence to convince the readers that what Susan did

[65] Huntington, Smith. "Montana's Favorite Redhead." *Collier's,* August 2, 1952, 22.; Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 201-203. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974.; Kiley, Bill. "Montana's Red-Headed Legend." *Range Magazine*, Spring 2006. 64-65;1865-1935 Canada *Incoming Passenger Lists*; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/5729960:1263?_phsrc=XHI83&_phstart=successSource&gsfn=Susan&gsln=Haughian&ml_rpos=1&queryId=85627492e034a7915d593010796a13b9 (May 5, 2022);

and was doing had to be codified into a classification of what was expected of a woman to be acceptable. However romantic and poetic these statements might be, there is no evidence to lay truth to all these claims. Susan Haughian stated that she thoroughly enjoyed dancing and was a great square dancer. She also stated that she would not wear pants and enjoyed her dress and stockings, but she would make concessions for ranch working attire with a split skirt and boots.[66]

After the Colliers article ran, it is said that the writers of the 1954 film "Cattle Queen of Montana" were inspired by Susan. After close examination of the movie, the only similarity drawn between Susan and the movie plot, or the female main character Sierra Nevada Jones is that they both are determined woman with red hair. This is where the similarities stop. The story line is written in such a way as to reflect twentieth-century societies view of women in 1954. The character Sierra Nevada starts off strong and independent but only to a certain degree, she with stands great hardships but only until the they become too difficult, and she can no longer do it on her own. Sierra Nevada requires Ronald Reagan's strong male character, Farrell, to swoop in and save the day. Susan Haughian did not require such assistance. She had the help and support of her sons to be sure, but Susan built her empire on her own. Susan's choice to continue ranching could have been out of necessity or making the best of a bad situation but as she stated she chose to continue ranching because she wanted to.[67]

Susan did not mention what gender roles and expectations she learned through familial gender socialization. One can conclude using generalized gender roles and what information Susan left behind that she used a degree of separation between the sphere of men and women.

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[66] Huntington, Smith. "Montana's Favorite Redhead." *Collier's,* August 2, 1952, 22.; Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 201-203. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974.; Kiley, Bill. "Montana's Red-Headed Legend." *Range Magazine*, Spring 2006. 64-65;

[67] Dawn, Allen. "Cattle Queen of Montana, *"RKO Radio Pictures,* May 25, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfqdfEhyZ3A&t=5073s; Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 201-203. Racine, WI.

Aside from that assumption the only indication of Susan's personal views of a women's place or gender roles can be drawn from her actions in life and a statement she made in an interview. When Susan was asked what her secret was to getting along with men, Susan responded in her thick Irish brogue, "Make them think they're the boss." [68]

This chapter looks at the precipitating factors to why Evelyn Cameron, the Buckley sisters, and Susan Haughian created their paths and how they went about completing them. In answering the question of why Evelyn Cameron, the Buckley sisters, and Susan Haughian all exhibited agency within their lives, and redefined their gender roles within the confines of the established social structures. The study of these women provides Women and Gender studies additional evidence of support that gender roles are fluid and are constantly being defined and redefined.

The lives of Evelyn, May, Mable, Myrtle, and Susan are evidence that women on the Great Plains need to be seen not only as keepers of memory but as creators of it. These women were active participants in the writing of their history and the building of their communities. They should not be equated to the positions of bystanders or footnotes. They were contributors of more than manual labor, reproduction, or morality in the settlements of the Northern Great Plains. Great Plains women's memories and contributions deserve to be studied and given their proper acknowledgments.

[68] Huntington, Smith. "Montana's Favorite Redhead." *Collier's,* August 2, 1952, 22.; Haughian, Susan Quinn "Dan and Susan Haughian" In *Wheels Across Montana's Prairie*, 201-203. Racine, WI: Western Printing and Lithograph, 1974.;

CHAPTER THREE NEBRASKA SANDHILLS: THE LEGACY OF THE SANDOZ SISTERS

Society influences women's gender roles and expectations. However, family and community influence these roles and expectations as well. It is not uncommon to find women fulfilling the roles and expectations their families set forth to achieve. Equally, some women operated within the confines of their obligations to family or community and redefined their gender roles opposite of what they were taught. The three Sandoz sisters from the Nebraska Sandhills, in Sheridan County exemplify this.

The Sandoz family comprised of six children: Mary (Marie/ Mari), Susette (Macumber), Julius "Jules" Alexander, James Frederic, Fritz Theodore, Flora Rose, and Caroline (Pifer) Sandoz. All six children were born to Jules Ami Sandoz and Mary Elizabeth (Fehr) Sandoz. The children worked and grew up on the Sandoz family land. Mary, their mother, was the primary operator and contributor to their family farm. Both Mary and Jules were Swiss immigrants. When they immigrated to the United States, they brought the roles and expectations of gender both from their home country of Switzerland and from their families.[69]

Gender roles and expectations for women in twentieth-century Swiss society held onto portions of the Victorian ideal of true womanhood and distinctively separated men and women's roles. Unlike the separate spheres, women's roles were more inclusive. In an agricultural family it was not uncommon for women to work outside of the home. However, Swiss society had a

[69] 1920 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/6061/images/4313294-01082?pId=18470551; (25 February 2021)

higher degree of patriarchal order. The gender roles for women in Swiss society were that a women's place was to produce and tend to children, be obedient, and server her husband.[70]

Mary Elizabeth (Fehr) Sandoz was raised to fulfill the gender roles and expectations set before her by Swiss society and her family. Mary was born to Jacob Fehr and Mary E. Fehr on March 20, 1867, in Schaffhausen Switzerland. She was the oldest of two daughters. Not much is known about Mary's childhood or upbringing. Based on secondary accounts, one can conclude that she grew up in a working-class family. Her father was a butcher, but the records do not mention her mother's occupation. By all accounts, her home life looks to be ordinary. There is one mention of her father Jacob dying of bladder and liver cancer caused by excessive drinking, but the record does not indicate a turbulent home life. The only mention of the atmosphere Mary grew up in are a few references made by her daughter Mari Sandoz in her book "Old Jules," a biography about her father, Jules Ami Sandoz. In this work, Mari describes her grandmother Mary E. Fehr as "a quiet and man-subordinated little woman."[71] With this description of Mary's mother Mary E one can assume that she taught her daughter Mary the same male subordinating practices. Mary immigrated to the United States in 1891. Before making her way to Nebraska, she resided in Arkansas and Saint Louis, Missouri.[72]

Mary's meeting with Jules Sandoz was a planned affair, but their marriage was an unintentional consequence. Jules Sandoz was a land locator for many people looking to settle in the Nebraska Sandhills. He was at the train station in Hay Springs to pick up a German-Swiss man and his sister who would stay with him for six months to establish residency on the claims

[70] Duc-Quang Nguyen, "How Work Has Evolved for Switzerland's Women and Men," SWI swissinfo.ch (swissinfo.ch, May 7, 2018), https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/gender-roles-since-1970_how-work-has-evolved-for-switzerland-s-men-and-women/43953426.
[71] Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules*, (New York: Hastings House, 1965) 183.,
[72] Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules*, (New York: Hastings House, 1965) 183.; Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982) 19.

they were planning to take up. When Mary arrived in Hay Springs, she arrived alone. Her brother Jacob had made all the arrangements with Jules. Jacob was to accompany Mary to Hay Springs, but he did not make it on the train. Mary's circumstances were such that she was stranded in Hay Springs, Nebraska, a new and strange place. With little money and her belongings lost, Mary decided to take a ride from the Grayson postmaster Jules Sandoz to his home and post office. The specifics of their encounter once they arrived at his home are not completely clear. Whatever the circumstance (whether for safety, security, or desperation) Mary married Jules Ami Sandoz in Hot Springs, South Dakota, in 1895. It is important to note that the researcher found no marriage records for Jules Ami Sandoz marrying a Mary Elizabeth Fehr in South Dakota or Nebraska. The only marriage records of Jules Sandoz found are of his previous wives.[73]

Jules Ami Sandoz was born April 21, 1857, in Neuchâtel, Switzerland to Ami Frederic Sandoz and Henrietta Ida Sandoz. Being the eldest son of nine children, Jules's family placed high expectations on him. He attended medical school until a dispute over his demand for an increase in allowance and his desire to marry a young woman named Rosalie, a match his family did not see as fit for him, led to a falling out between Jules and his family. To make a point, prove his father wrong, and take advantage of the advertised free land in the United States. Jules immigrated to the United States in 1881. By 1884 Jules settled in the western Nebraska sandhills in an area he named Mirage Flats. Family disagreements might have led Jules Sandoz to the sandhills, but the prospect of settlement and land ownership held him there. Regardless of the reasons for Jules and Mary's immigration to the United States, like many immigrants, they

[73] Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules,* 189,216,182,187., 1900 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/7602/images/4120380_00545?pId=65365532; (25 February 2021), Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) 21., Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982) 20.,

brought with them to the Sandhills more than the prospects of land ownership, security, and new beginnings. They brought along their assigned gender roles and expectations influenced by Swiss society and their families. [74]

The gender roles and expectations within the Jules and Mary Sandoz home parallel what they were taught to believe and expect. However, like any human with the power of free will, they both had their interpretation of how these gender roles and expectations should look. Jules Sandoz had a violent temperament and a strong belief that a women's place was to produce, care for the children, and serving her husband. By all accounts, Jules Sandoz believed that a woman was to be subordinate and subservient to her husband. His actions indicated his beliefs that a women's path in life was to be obedient to her parents until she could be married. Following the marriage, she was a good wife, serving her husband and producing children. Jules believed that a man was the head of his wife and family, and it was his responsibility to keep them in line by whatever means he deemed necessary. The work, *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr: Son of Old Jules*, written and edited by Jules's son and daughter, Jules Sandoz Jr and Caroline Sandoz Pifer, describes a tumultuous relationship and what actions Jules would take to keep his wife Mary inline:

> One day I heard a ruckus in the house and ran down from the barn to look. Papa had Mama by the throat up against the wall, choking her. She was blue in the face and shaking, limp like a rag doll. I screamed as loud as I could that he was killing my Mama, and it got his attention… he let go, and Mama crumpled to the floor in a heap. He went out the back door, and I got my mother to her feet.[75]

Jules Jr. described that he found out through the family that Jules was upset with Mary when she refused to sign the deed to their land. Jules Sr. wanted to sell it and move to Canada in

[74] 1900 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/7488/images/NYM237_436-0263?pId=11418808; (25 February 2021), Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules*, 4-5.,

[75] Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules,* 82.,

one of his "damn the government" frenzies. Following the altercation, Jules Sr. avoided his son and ultimately expelled the 16-year-old Jules Jr from the property, citing him with suspected purposeful damage to Jules Sr.'s prized pear tree. This account shows the volatility of Jules Sr's temper and that there was no limit to his demand for obedience from his wife or children. It also shows that Mary was not voiceless in her compliance. While still operating within the confines of her situation she made decisions that did not align with what Jules wanted.[76]

For Jules Sandoz, there was no room in a women's life for schooling above basic communications. Reading and especially writing were frivolous activities for his children and a waste of time beyond necessity. In her book *Old Jules*, Mari Sandoz remembered a line written to her from Jules upon his discovery that Mari had been writing and received an honorable mention in the Harper Intercollegiate Short Story contest. Jules wrote, “You know I consider writers and artists the maggots of society.”[77] In her book *Mari Sandoz Making of an Author*, daughter Caroline states that when Mari returned from school in Lincoln to visit home, Jules announced that now "she should stay home, find herself a man, and get married like every woman should." [78] These accounts show that Jules's beliefs for women and his wife and daughters were that the value of education for women was only as good as the service it would provide to her husband. Anything beyond that was impractical and unnecessary.

Mary Elizabeth (Fehr) Sandoz did not leave behind much information about herself or her beliefs about women's gender roles and expectations. When examining accounts of Mary's actions from her children, one can conclude that Mary prioritized a child's obedience to their

[76] Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules,* 83-84.,
[77] Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules,* viii,
[78] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I,* (Gordon, NE: Sheridan County Publishing: 2004) 21., Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules,* 5.,

parents like many mothers in the twentieth century. Secondly, Mary instilled the value of familial cooperation to raise the family and continue farming. Mary's actions show that she followed the expectation of being subservient when dealing with her husband. However, Mari was not voiceless in all decisions. She made her opinions known and would not always follow through with what Jules demanded. Mary's daughter Caroline recalls an instance when Jules had a disagreement with the hired man over politics and fired him at the breakfast table "this meant that Mama had to go out and do the hired man's work" while her older sister Flora helped with the cattle when not away teaching in a schoolroom.[79] Mary Elizabeth (Fehr) Sandoz was a strong, independent, and courageous woman who intentionally or unintentionally taught her daughters the value of these attributes. The three Sandoz sisters redefined their gender roles and used their position within the established social systems to forage their own path in life.[80]

"Mari" Marie/Mary Susette was born on May 11, 1896, at the Sandoz home and Post office on Mirage Flats, Running Water Precinct, Sheridan County, Nebraska. She was the oldest of the six Sandoz children. Mari's childhood was full of hard labor and child-rearing. As the oldest daughter, Mari's responsibilities were to look after her younger siblings and help her mother and father around the farm. As a young child, Mari recalled that her imagination and yearning for escape led her to hide within herself, retreating into a world of fantasy from the time she could walk. It may have been that her artistic talents as a writer and storyteller took shape within this fantasy world. However, her creativity took shape; Mari carried the gender roles and expectations assigned to her by her father and mother at birth. From her father, Jules Sr., Mari learned that she should be obedient to her parents, work hard, get married, produce children, and

[79] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I,* 83.
[80] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *A Kinkaider's Child.* (Gordon, NE: Ad Pad, 1995) 35,14., Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules,*14,12,16,28.

obey and serve her husband. Education and writing were not part of Jules's path laid out for her. Mari knew that her father disapproved of her schooling, but neither his disapproval nor her irregular attendance could curb Mari's enthusiasm for education and learning. Mari took full advantage of it when given a chance to learn, as her brother Jules Jr. recounts.

> This was all very easy for Mari, and she soon passed ahead of me in school. In fact, she was so anxious to get to school each day that she would not wait for me…With all her studying at school and staying in at recess to learn more, Mari still had an overflow of enthusiasm for school. By the time I would get home, she would have gone ahead and arranged the chairs in a row, somewhat like seats at school. She would have James and Fritz, the baby, seated in line for teaching.[81]

This account demonstrates Mari's enthusiasm for learning and her desire to pass on the information she obtained to others. [82] At the age of sixteen, Mari graduated the 8th grade and, in 1913, took the rural teachers' exams and passed. With her teaching license, Mari could teach at the Sandoz School District 163. The experience greatly boasted Mari's confidence, and the addition of a teaching salary helped keep the Sandoz family fed and the farm afloat. The following year in 1914, her teaching license expired, and Mari wanted to renew it at the Teacher's Institute at Chadron, but she would need some of the wages she had earned teaching at the Sandoz school. Unfortunately, Jules Sr. had already spent her wages and refused to give her any additional funds as she was under eighteen, and Jules Sr. believed that the money was his. A young Irish man named Wray Macumber proposed to Mari about this time. Her brother Jules Jr recalls with uncertainty whether Mari saw the proposal as a way out or thought she was really in love. Mari went to Rushville and married on May 27, 1914. They would later divorce in 1919. Mari's sister Coraline recalls "that no one suspected Mari was unhappy, least of all her friends."

[81] Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules,*15,17.
[82] Chadron State College - CSC, "Biography of Mari Sandoz," Mari Sandoz high plains heritage center, 2018, http://www.sandozcenter.com/clubs/biography.csc., Sandoz, Mari. *Old Jules,* 216.,

[83] However, in a brief autobiography years later, Mari wrote that she knew it was a mistake two weeks after the marriage and began dreaming of a divorce and writing. Mari fulfilled the expectations taught to her by her family and got married. However, she broke free from those expectations and filed for divorce, citing Wary Macumber with extreme mental cruelty. As unorthodox as divorce was, it pioneered Mari's alternate path to persevere towards her dreams to continue her schooling.[84]

In 1919 Mari moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, and briefly attended Lincoln Business College. After finishing at the business college, Mari set her sights on the University of Nebraska, a school she felt would give her the education she needed to make her dream of becoming a writer a reality. Mari soon discovered that this would not be easy as she lacked the required high school transcript necessary to register for classes. Lacking educational credentials was a challenge that many women in Mari's situation faced. Gender roles and expectations limited Mari's access to education. These expectations limited Mari's education, and her parents embodied the gender norms that restricted her from continuing her schooling beyond the 8th grade.[85]

Despite lacking the necessary credentials, Mari pursued admission to the University of Nebraska. Mari's persistence landed her at Dean William E. Sealock's office. Mari waited to see Dean Sealock for days before being permitted to meet with him to plead her case. Her persistence paid off. Mari recalled her gratitude to Dean Sealock in a letter to Marie Dugan in 1955: "The debt I owe to Dean Sealock for letting me into the University without high school

[83] Sandoz, Caroline. *A Kinkaider's Child.*5.
[84] Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules*,66,77-78,105-16., Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains*,37,38.
[85] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I,* 11, Leckie, Shirley A. "Angie Debo: From the Old to the New Western History." In *Their Own Frontier: Women Intellectuals Re-Visioning the American West,* edited by Shirley A. Leckie, Nancy J. Parezo. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2008) 70.,

credits when no one else would. I suppose I should have worn down the resistance of someone else, sooner or later, I was getting pretty discouraged."[86] After examining her college transcripts, Mari's sister Coraline recalled that there must have been excellent fabrication on behalf of the registrar or Mari. It showed that Mari attended two years at a Sheridan County High school that did not exist and two years at Chadron Normal School, where she never attended. Mari enrolled in classes at the University of Nebraska in 1922. Mari spent most of her time in Lincoln in abject poverty, continuing to go to classes when she could, working low-wage jobs to get by, but most importantly, writing as she wished without criticism from editors or publishers. Mari later recalled that her time in Lincoln was the happiest in her life. During this time, Mari's struggle to become a prolific author unfolded.[87]

Mari sent out hundreds of short stories and received as many rejections letters. She was not deterred. Mari continued working and writing. In 1928 Mari received word that her father, Jules, was dying in the Alliance hospital. She went to his bedside and sat with Jules. Mari described his dying request:

> He asked me the most dreadful question, was I still writing? I hesitated, remembering the long conflict this had been, from the confinement in the cellar, his grief upon mother about it, and his roaring temper. He would die in it as weak as he was, and I would kill my father. But he never lied to me, evaded the truth, yes but never lied outright. So I said, Yes I am still writing and as though this had never been contention between us, he said, "Why don't you write my life sometime?"[88]

This dying request accelerated Mari's writing career and opened the headgates to her journey of becoming a nationally recognized author and female contributor to literary non-

[86] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I*, 12.
[87] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I*, 12,26,48,107-108., Chadron State College - CSC, "Biography of Mari Sandoz," Mari Sandoz high plains heritage center, 2018 http://www.sandozcenter.com/clubs/biography.csc., Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains*,44.
[88] Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I*, 113.

fiction. Her first book and national publication was the story of her father titled *Old Jules*. This book and Mari's additional twenty-two published books, numerous short stories, and essays, including a Great Plains series, transformed Mari from a struggling writer in Lincoln, Nebraska, to a nationally recognized author. Her contributions to literary non-fiction, to regional history, and as a keeper of narrative earned her the title of the story catcher.

Becoming a writer was not a typically assumed path for Mari to take based on the gender roles and expectations set before and taught to her both by her parent and society. This path that Mari forged for herself was no less important or impactful because it did not fit the marginalized model of what a women's role should be. However, it made Mari Sandoz a critical figure from a literary and historical perspective for regional and women's history and gender studies. Mari's influence reached far beyond the borders of literary non-fiction and historical worlds. Mari instilled in her sisters through the pattern of taught and learned behavior that redefining ones gender roles and making their own path in life was acceptable and necessary. [89]

The older of Mari's two younger sisters was Flora Rose Sandoz. She was born on May 12, 1907. Flora was the fifth child and second daughter of Jules and Mary Sandoz. She was given the name Flora Rose by Mari who was charged with naming the new Sandoz baby. Flora was said to be Mari's favorite by their siblings. Mari showed favoritism to Flora because their connection was more maternal than sibling. Mari and Flora's connection strengthened because Flora's birth occurred one day after Mari's 11th birthday. Mari cared for and influenced Flora more than anyone else did. It is tricky to collect and create a complete picture of Flora's life. Little is known about Flora's personal life. She enjoyed living alone, in solitude, and

[89] Wunder, John R. "Mari Sandoz: Historian of the Great Plains." In *Their Own Frontier: Women Intellectuals Re-Visioning the American West,* edited by Shirley A. Leckie, Nancy J. Parezo. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2008.) 99, 125-127., Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Letters of Mari Sandoz.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.) xxxiii., Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains.* (University of Nebraska Press, 1982.)9.

independently running the Sandoz orchard and ranch. The personal accounts and interviews she gave and evidence she left behind focus primarily on Mari or Jules Sr. Combining excerpts of the facts one can conclude that Flora was raised in the same environment and taught the same gender roles and expectations as her sisters. However, like her older sister Mari, Flora redefined her gender roles and expectations and forged her own path. [90]

Flora spent her childhood working on the Sandoz family land. Flora was familiar with hard labor like her siblings. She was expected to work and contribute to the operations, running, and care of the family land. When Flora was old enough to attend school, Mari taught her in her formative years. For the Sandoz children, education beyond grade school was not a priority. However, for Flora, it was imperative. She had dreams of high school and college, and if she wanted to get there, she would have to work and pay for it on her own. Jules jr. remembered that in the summer of 1922, Flora staked and bundled 300 acres of rye for him and their brother Fritz to earn money for high school. Flora's efforts paid off, and in 1924 she graduated high school and began her teachers' training at Chardon Normal School. Flora completed her teachers training in 1925 and started teaching north of Ellsworth, Nebraska. What small salary she made that did not go to her father, Jules, she kept for herself and saved for college. [91]

Following Jules Sr.'s death, Flora attended the University of Nebraska. She stayed with her sister Mari in Lincoln. Little is known about Flora's time in Lincoln, but her time there was short-lived, staying only a year. In 1930 Flora left Nebraska to attend the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Flora intended to earn a degree in agriculture. However, with the

[90] Stauffer, Helen Winter. Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains. 23, Sandoz, Caroline. A Kinkaider's Child.1,
[91] James Joyce, "Flora Sandoz, Sister of 'Old Jules' Author, Dies," The Lincoln Star, May 3, 1995, p. 33.,Sandoz, Jules Jr., and Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. Memoirs of Jules Sandoz Jr. Son of Old Jules, 111., C L Myers, "Rushville School Notes," Sheridan County Star, September 24, 1924., C L Myers, "Alumni Notes," Sheridan County Star, October 23, 1925.

restrictions placed on women in higher education, agricultural degrees were not awarded to women. Flora did not let this obstacle deter her from earning a degree in her chosen field. She pursued a degree in Botany and graduated in 1933. [92]

Following graduation, Flora returned to the Sandoz family land to care for and help her mother Mary continue their agricultural legacy. Flora is most notably known for continuing her father, Jules Sr.'s, experimental planting of fruit trees in the Sandhills of Nebraska. Jules Sr. may have started the orchards, but credit for keeping the orchard alive and making it prosperous goes to Mary and Flora. Flora's work may not seem like a massive undertaking if one does not know the climate of the Sandhills. The Sandhills climate receives minimal rainfall and has white sandy soil. Growing fruit trees in the Sandhills can be almost impossible. However, through trial, error, and determination, Flora and her family accomplished this. Flora experimented with grafting and importing different plants to see what breeds would survive and thrive in the Sandhills. Among these varieties of fruit plants were apples, crabs, pears, plums, grapes, raspberries, currents, juneberries, strawberries, and apricots. Flora continued caring for the Sandoz fruit orchard and running the ranch after her mother's death in 1938.[93]

Flora married musician Boris Kicken in 1934. Together they purchased the Sandoz homestead in 1937. Together Boris and Flora lived and worked on the Sandoz family ranch and orchard. However, their marriage was a turbulent one and ended in divorce. After her divorce, Flora continued her passion for botany and ran the Sandoz orchard and ranch on her own until she died in 1995. Flora's education in Botany and determination made her the most qualified

[92] Stauffer, Helen Winter. *Mari Sandoz: Story Catcher of the Plains.* 69, Ben J Sallows, "Ellsworth," *Alliance Times and Herald*, September 26, 1930, p. 9., James Joyce, "Flora Sandoz, Sister of 'Old Jules' Author, Dies," *The Lincoln Star*, May 3, 1995, p. 33., Isern, Thomas D. "Discussion of the Sandoz sisters," Interview by Stefanie Aulner. August 16, 2021.

[93] Chadron State College - CSC, "Flora Sandoz, The Wild Flowers of Nebraska," Mari Sandoz high plains heritage center, 2018, http://www.sandozcenter.com/exhibits/sandoz.csc., Schmidt, Helen, "Old Jules' Sandhills Orchard Nurtured, Expanded by his Daughter," *The Lincoln State,* June 10, 1951, p. 37.,

Sandoz child to continue Jules Sr's legacy. Flora's experiments with varieties of fruit trees and accurate record-keeping of both harvest yields and annual rainfalls on the Sandoz land afford significate contributions to horticulture and plant development in the Nebraska Sandhills. Flora pioneered a path that allowed plants to flourish in an unconventional environment. Flora's life reflects this process. She redefined her gender roles and expectations laid out for her and flourished in her own way. She proved that making one's own path through what were thought to be unconventional means is not as uncommon as once believed. Following a pattern through learned behavior, the youngest Sandoz child, Caroline, learned from Mari, Flora, and their mother how to redefine her gender roles to make her own path. [94]

Caroline Sandoz (Pifer), the third daughter and youngest child of Jules A. and Mary Sandoz, was born on May 21, 1910. Mari recalled that no one in the Sandoz household welcomed the new baby. It meant another mouth to feed for Mary and for Mari it meant another child to raise. Caroline remembered that she felt like an only child. Mari was already away teaching school, and Flora was four years old when she was born. Caroline also remarked that she did not have the same childhood as her older siblings because Jules Sr. had lost his bite by the time she was born. Her relationship with him was different from his relationships with the other children. Caroline's childhood was still filled with hard labor, but education came sooner to Caroline than it did to her older siblings. When Caroline was four, Mari was assigned the teaching post at the Sandoz School District held in the Sandoz's barn. Education was not a top priority for Jules Sr and Mary, but it was for Mari. It was Mari's early intervention that Caroline

[94] Berndt, Sybil Malmberg. "Caroline Sandoz Pifer: Her Sister's Keeper." *the Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.3., Kathleen Norris, "Sandhills Fruit Culture Continued by Jules' Daughter," *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star,* July 27, 1941, p. D-3., Chadron State College - CSC, "Flora Sandoz, The Wild Flowers of Nebraska," Mari Sandoz high plains heritage center, 2018, http://www.sandozcenter.com/exhibits/sandoz.csc., Christine Maloney Ambrose., Schmidt, Helen, "Old Jules' Sandhills Orchard Nurtured, Expanded by his Daughter," *The Lincoln State,* June 10, 1951, p. 37.

credits for her and Flora's drive and determination to complete high school and go to college. Mari taught her sisters that delaying marriage and focusing on their education was a priority. When she and Flora started teaching and saving their salaries, Caroline recalled that "We were both saving our salaries to go to college. Mari never let us think there was any other possibility for a moment, and I never looked for one."[95]

Caroline graduated from Gordon High School in 1927. She earned her teaching license from Chadron Normal school in 1929 and began teaching in rural schools. She saved for college with what salary she did not give to her mother to help with the Sandoz farm. Caroline attended Chardon State College from 1929 to 1933. However, she did not complete her degree until 1981.[96]

Caroline's delayed completion in college is attributed to two factors. The first factor was that there was no money to send the Sandoz children to college. If they wanted to go, they had to earn money themselves. Caroline recalled that Flora even sold some of her cattle to their mother, Mary, to finance her college in Minnesota. Caroline stated that it was out of the question to think that their mother could help one of them without being able to help the others. The second factor was Caroline's marriage to Robert Pifer in 1935. Unlike Flora and Mari's, her marriage was a good one and did not end in divorce. Mari never approved of Robert Pifer, but as Caroline recalled, that did not stop her from marrying the handsome Spade Ranch cowboy with cold blue eyes.[97]

[95] Sandoz, Caroline. *A Kinkaider's Child.*46.
[96] Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center, "Finding Aid For the Caroline Sandoz Pifer Collection Of Mari Sandoz Papers," *Finding Aid For the Caroline Sandoz Pifer Collection Of Mari Sandoz Papers* (2011).
[97] Sandoz, Caroline. *A Kinkaider's Child.*62., Berndt, Sybil Malmberg. "Caroline Sandoz Pifer: Her Sister's Keeper." *the Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.3.,

When Caroline married Robert Pifer, she married into a ranching life. Her upbringing in the Sandoz family made her familiar with hard work. During their marriage, Caroline was busy being a ranch wife and mother. However, past accounts have attributed Caroline's contributions to their ranch as only helping in the ranch operations, which is not completely accurate. Instead, Caroline needs to be granted the agency of doing, not only helping. Caroline recalls that after Mari's death, she returned from New York just in time to work with her husband Bob to do evening calf chores and that for the next two months, they were so busy calving out 300 cows that there was no time to even think of handling Mari's affairs back in New York. By all accounts, Caroline is only awarded the position of helpmate, not a doer, even of her own accord.[98]

Caroline's contributions extend far beyond her position as a rancher and encompass the literary spheres like Mari. Following Mari's death, Caroline was named caretaker and executor of her sister's affairs. This appointment put Caroline in charge of carrying out Mari's last will. Caroline became the principal proprietor of not only Mari's possessions but also her memories. Caroline spent the remainder of her life dedicated to preserving Mari's memories and educating the world on who Mari Sandoz was. She authored several books about Mari, gave countless interviews, and spent numerous hours with her sister Flora leading Old Jules trail tours around the Sandoz family orchard. Caroline, along with her siblings, created the Mari Sandoz Corporation to keep the memory of the Sandoz Family alive for generations to come. [99]

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[98] Berndt, Sybil Malmberg. "Caroline Sandoz Pifer: Her Sister's Keeper." *the Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.3., Jones, Stephen R. "The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal." *The Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.4., Manning, Richard. "America's Implacable High Plains." *the Story Catcher*, Spring 2009. p.5., Sandoz, Caroline. *A Kinkaider's Child.*62.,

[99] Leckie, Shirley A. "Mari Sandoz: Historian of the Great Plains." In *Their Own Frontier: Women Intellectuals Re-Visioning the American West,* edited by Shirley A. Leckie, Nancy J. Parezo. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2008) 126., Pifer Sandoz, Caroline. *Marie Sandoz: Making of an Author Volume I,* (Gordon, NE: Sheridan County Publishing: 2004) 334., Berndt, Sybil Malmberg. "Caroline Sandoz Pifer: Her Sister's Keeper." *the Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.3., Christine Maloney Ambrose.,

Mary Sandoz instilled in her daughters the attributes of courage, bravery, and conviction. Consequently because of Mary's influence, the three Sandoz sisters left their mark on History in a different way. Through her writing, Mari left her influence on Great Plains. Her works on the Euro-American and Native American experience created a new approach to viewing western American history. Caroline and Flora were the sustainers of Mari's legacy, and without them, Mari Sandoz's contributions may have been lost to time. Flora's scrupulous record keeping of her orchard in the Nebraska Sandhills is an invaluable resource for horticulturalist and played a vital role in the development of the Sandhills. Caroline carried out Mari's wish and created "a repository on the vast Great Plains to hold her life's work for posterity and so the world might benefit."[100] All three Sandoz sisters provide proof and evidence to how gender roles can be interpreted on the Northern Great Plains. Their actions exemplified how women on the Northern Great Plains redefined their gender roles and used their positions within the established societal system to their benefit.

[100] Berndt, Sybil Malmberg. "Caroline Sandoz Pifer: Her Sister's Keeper." *the Story Catcher,* Spring 2009, p.3.,

CHAPTER FOUR NORTH DAKOTA: COOK CARS AND THRESHING CREWS

Twentieth-century Northern Great Plains women redefined their gender roles and expectations within their agricultural communities. Women on Northern Great Plains sought financial freedom and economic advancement for themselves, their families, and their future. They achieved these goals through property ownership and economic independence. Across the Great Plains, many young women participated in a practice called “working out." To work out, young women would seek outside employment away from their family and home to earn extra income either to secure their future or to supplement their family’s income. Rural agricultural families would commonly send their daughters, or women would choose to leave the farm to work in the homes of more affluent families in urban areas. The young women working out would either earn additional income to help supplement the family’s income, save their earnings for future use or work for their room and board in town so they could attend school and advance their education. Being sent to work out was often a young woman’s first introduction to independence and freedom away from their families and rural communities. Many young women returned from the urban towns back to their rural communities.[101]

In rural North Dakota, young unmarried women and married women often sought outside domestic employment as a cook in cars on threshing crews. The domestic duties of cooking and housework fall safely within early twentieth-century society's private gender sphere for women. However, by seeking employment for these domestic duties outside the home, these women redefined their gender roles and expectations within the private gender sphere. They incorporated wage-earning income. These women thereby redefined their employment as fluidity within

[101] Handy-Marchello, Barbara. Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005. 154

gender roles and expectations. The income earned from working out by these women advanced their economic position in society and afforded them control of their futures.[102]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century across the Northern Great Plains, one of the largest agricultural economic practices was growing, harvesting, and threshing wheat. The wheat would be harvested and collected into bundles, stacks, or shocks. This process would allow the grain to dry out before being threshed. Threshing removes the grain kernel from the wheat straw and chaff. The grain was then collected and stored to be sold for profit at the grain elevators. Threshing on the Northern Great Plains developed in stages over time parallel to the development of agricultural technology. The practice of threshing in its early stage on the Northern Great Plains was a small operation. It consisted of horse-drawn equipment owned by a single owner or cooperation and shared amongst neighbors in a rural community. Early threshing crews were made up of unpaid exchange labor. Neighboring farmers and their families exchanged their labor at threshing time for compensation labor used at another time or in another aspect of farming or ranching, such as working cattle or putting up hay. The farmer's wives whose field was being threshed were expected to provide meals to all the laborers. The threshing operations started within their locality, began with the equipment owner, and moved to the next neighboring farm until all wheat farms were threshed. By the turn of the twentieth century, as technology advanced, populations boomed, and small farmsteads gave way to larger farms on the Northern Great Plains; large-scale custom threshing crews emerged. There are many hybrid structural models of custom threshing operations, but in their purest form, custom threshing

[102] Handy-Marchello, Barbara. *Women on the Northern Great Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier*. 77,156.; Lindgren, Elaine H., *Land in Her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota.* Fargo: The North Dakota Institute 1991. 113,119;

outfits provide all the labor and machinery. The farmers' only responsibility was to collect and haul away the grain once it fell from the separator.[103]

The labor structure on a threshing crew was as customary as the threshing itself. Different forms of gathering bundles, stacks, stocks, or types of fuel needed to provide the fire for the steam engine required different labor positions. The many tasks needed on threshing crews dictated the job titles, and responsibilities depend on the type of threshing. To simplify the complex labor structures within a threshing crew, it is important to know that custom threshing crews consisted of an engineer, separator man, tank man, fireman, cooks, drivers, pitchers, band cutters, feeders, and many variations of the forgoing positions. The skill required to be an engineer or separator man became a specialized trade. All other positions were often taught in the field or given out to unskilled workers- except cooks.[104]

A pure custom threshing operation provided its crew with meals and board. A threshing operation needed to hire a cook and have a mobile cooking station called a cook car to provide food service to its crew. In a different variation of a threshing operation where meals were not provided, farm wives would be tasked with cooking and feeding the hungry crew. One could argue that a cook could be an unskilled person. However, it was not wise for a threshing outfit to keep a lousy cook during the threshing season. A good cook was the heart of the morale of the threshing crew's performance. Annebelle Litchfield Richter recalls in her book, *The Olden Days*, an autobiographical memoir of her life growing up on a farm in Sargent county North Dakota, how shortly before threshing time, they would butcher a lamb and chickens, use vegetables from their garden. Her mother would make bread and pastries to feed the threshing crew. Annabelle

[103] Isern, Thomas D. *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs: Harvesting and Threshing on the North American Plains.* Lawrance: University of Kansas Press, 1990. 2,74-78,
[104] Isern, Thomas D. *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs*, 81-93.

remembered how good of a cook her mother was for men who did not like mutton devoured her mother's lamb chops thinking it was pork or veal, stating, "Well, they are really good- I'd never have thought it was mutton."[105] Annebelle's mother's good cooking kept the threshing crew fed and their morale up.[106]

Not all farmwives that fed threshing crews were good cooks. Mark Buckley of Montana tells a story of his father, Frank Buckley, who ran a threshing outfit through North and South Dakota, of a farm wife feeding the crew rancid prunes. Mark Buckley comically recalled that at one farm, they set out a big bowl of prunes on the table in the hot Autumn heat. When people would look in the bowl, there were flies in with the prunes. The men would not touch any of it, and neither would Frank. The next time the crew came to the dinner table, the prunes were served in individual little saucers. Remembering the first bowl of prunes, no one took any. The threshing crew was at the farm for a while and soon forgot about the prunes until they were served prune pie a few days later. Frank and the separator man had been around a while. They did not touch any of it. Their experience had taught them the origin of the prunes. The rest of the crew filled up on the prune pie. After they had eaten, Mark jovially recounted that one of the ladies said, "I knew I would get you to eat those prunes after all." The men did not get away from the table fast enough. Mark remembered that there were places that would skim flies back from food or liquids and serve it to the crew; some of the places were, in his words, "pretty damned dirty, but the people seemed healthy."[107] Serving rancid or distasteful food was more than just inconvenient for a threshing crew. Food poisoning caused widespread illness among the workers. A sick crew could cause production delays, costing the farmer and threshing outfit

[105] Litchfield Richter, Annebelle. *The Olden Days,* Printed in the U.S.A, 1987. 17;
[106] Isern, Thomas D. *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs,* 99.; Litchfield Richter, Annebelle. *The Olden Days.*17.
[107] Buckley, Mark and Pete, "Mark Buckley and Petrena Dragseth Interview" by Laurie, Mercier. *Voices of Labor,* Montana Historical Society and Research Center. October 17, 1983; 21:49-24:35.

valuable time and money. Threshing outfits would advertise in local papers and agricultural magazines, hiring cooks to save time and money and sustain production. Likewise, women would place position-wanted notices in the exact locations for cooks and cooking positions in the cook cars.

A closer analysis of newspapers from across the state of North Dakota from 1900 to 1920 produces many findings of threshing outfit notices for work and women seeking positions. Notices reading “WANTED EXPERIENCED WOMAN cook for cook car through harvest and threshing. Will pay fair wages right through,” from a threshing outfit by John J. Sanders ran daily for weeks in 1919 in the *Grand Forks Herald*. In 1918 the *Grand Forks Herald* produced a notice from a threshing outfit announcing “WANTED FOR COOK – FIRST class cook and helper. State experience. $5.00 per day. Close to city.” The notices looking to hire cooks did not specify a marital status, although some ads would specify if they were looking for a husband-and-wife team. Women, in general, seemed to be the targeted ad base audience for threshing outfit notices. However, some men worked as cooks. Position wanted notices like the one found in *the Oakes Times,* in 1906, from Oakes, North Dakota, reads "WANTED- Position as cook and threshing cook car. Mrs. Emily Wilson Oakes." This posting signifies with the title of Mrs. that married women were accepted by society to work in the cook cars for threshing crews. The agricultural societies in North Dakota did not seem to take offense when married women worked outside their homes and farmsteads. Another article from *the Oakes Times* in August of 1915 proudly proclaims, "Quite a few of the married women near here have caught the craze and are going in cook cars for the threshing season.” Additional analysis of position wanted notices posted in *the Oakes Times* indicates that a woman's nationality might have been a deciding factor in threshing crews extending an offer of employment. One position-wanted notice states in the

first line that the woman seeking employment is an "American Lady with a school-aged girl." It can be speculated that this wording determines to the reader that she is of good upbringing and provides herself and a helper. A two-for-one deal, as they say. The two-for-one deal could have been appealing to larger threshing outfits looking for multiple cooks or cooks that would bring their helpers. [108]

Upon further investigation, in addition to notices and position-wanted notices, the community columns in the local papers produced numerous reports of both unmarried and married women leaving their homes and communities to work in cook cars within or across state lines. In the 1916 *Bottineau Courant* paper, the local news column reads, "Miss Sanna Wekseth is helping Miss Hilda Berge in the cook car this week, taking the place of Mrs. John Listoe, who left for her home in Montana Tuesday." Under the Gardena community news column in the Bottineau paper in 1919, an update reads, "Misses Ruth Hoff and Bollinger came home from Cando, where they were working on a cook car." In the Carbury correspondence column in the fall of 1911, a passage reads, "Mrs. Teo. Gran and Miss Rinda Torson will cook for the Aug. Wall & Company threshing cook car, while Misses Kerstie Holden and Bina Moen will undertake the same duty for the Dravland and Gorder rig." The newspaper articles demonstrate that women were redefining their gender roles and engaging in wage-earning income alongside men on the threshing crews of the Northern Great Plains.[109]

[108] Sander, John J. "Wanted Experienced Women." *Grand Forks Herald.* August 14, 1919.; Unknown. "Wanted For Cook." *Grand Forks Herald.* August 17, 1918.; Wilson Oakes. Emily. "Wanted." *The Oakes Times.* August 9, 1906.; Wright, Alex R. "Threshing Craze." *The Oakes Times,* August 26, 1915.; Unknown. "Wanted." *The Oakes Times,* July 3, 1919.

[109] Arveson, Nels. "Local News." *The Bottineau Courant,* October 12, 1916.; Unknown. "Gardena News." *The Bottineau Courant,* September 25, 1919.; Unknown. "Carbury Correspondence." *The Bottineau Courant,* September 01, 191.

Working on threshing crews in cook cars presented women with many challenges and opportunities. The day in the life of a cook on a threshing crew was long and labor intensive. The beginning of the threshing season depended on the spring and summer weather conditions. If there were not enough moisture, too much moisture, too hot, or too cold, the threshing season would be delayed or advanced, but in general, the threshing season started sometime in August. A threshing outfit's daily schedule in good weather and well-running equipment rarely deviated from its assigned route. Weather and breakdowns impacted its production; otherwise, a threshing crew ran like clockwork with some variation to the time schedule. The threshing day started at 4:00 am with the engineer firing the steam engine to life. At 5:30 am, the engineer would blow the whistle waking the crew from their sleep and rosing them out of their beds. The crews' beds were anywhere they could find a place to lie down. Some of the larger threshing outfits supplied bunk houses for their crew members, while others made it the farmer's responsibility to supply sleeping quaters to the threshing crew. Beds were often made hay mows, barns, or barn lofts. The cooks would have had breakfast ready by 6:00 am to have the day's labors start at 7:00 am. By midmorning, lunch was brought to the field, and at noon dinner was served either at the cook car or in the field. A mid-afternoon lunch was offered, and supper was served as soon as the last whistle signaled the end of the working day. However, while the rest of the crew ended their day with supper, the cook's day was not nearly finished. The engineers' whistle may have signaled how the threshing crew operated, but this was not for the cooks in the cook cars.[110]

The day in the life of a cook on a threshing crew was long and labor intensive. These women operated almost around the clock, preparing meals for fifteen people or more at any

[110] Isern, Thomas D. *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs*, 99.; Litchfield Richter, Annebelle. *The Olden Days.*17.; Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993).13-18.;

given time, not including all the prep work and clean-up that accompanied cooking and eating. Threshing crews existed across all the Great Plains, and in North Dakota, they seemed to follow a physical location model. Many threshing operations stayed within the same areas of the state and only ventured to neighbor counties, others traveled the whole of the state, even less traveled interstate and lesser so, like the one Annie Oien worked on in 1909, only operated on designated farms. This designation was characteristic of Bonanza Farms. The vast quantities of wheat acres to be threshed required Bonanza Farms to have their own custom threshing crews.[111]

Anna Oien arrived in the United States in 1907 from Norway. She lived with her uncle until her seventeenth birthday when she was hired to work for a well-to-do Norwegian farmer. Unfortunately for Anna, the farmer and his family took advantage of her naivete to the new country and had her work longer days and more hours than usual in the United States. Anna's cousin Ragna discovered that she was being taken advantage of and promptly removed her from the situation. In 1909 Anna began work on a Bonanza farm near Halstad, North Dakota. Anna worked at Grandin Bonanza Farm #4. Grandin #4 was operated by John Wyman, who also operated Grandin #3. During the threshing season, Anna left farm #4 and worked as an assistant to the cook in the cook car at farm #3 under cook Gretie Onstadt. Anna recalled that the cook car she worked in was like a long trailer. A side door with entry steps led to a counter that ran the length of the car's interior and a table that was equally as long and could seat thirty to forty men. The cook stove and cooking area were in the front of the cook car. The demands of working as a cook in a cook car for a threshing crew dictated that Anna's morning schedule started at 4:30 am to have breakfast on the table by six. The hundreds of men ate in shifts. Anna had the dishes

[111] Drache, Hiram M. The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of North. (Fargo: North Dakota Institute of Regional Studies, 1964)109.

done by 8:00 am and began dinner preparations to be promptly served at noon. Baking was an all-day affair lasting through the afternoon and into supper preparations. The threshing crew, as Anna recalls, was made up mostly of transient men. Some were good clean men and were not to be feared. Others, however, would be let go for drinking, being tough, or messing about with the cook car girls. Anna stated that the crew foreman slept near the cook car so the girls would not have night fears.[112]

Anna's cook car on the Grandin Bonanza farm #3 was a safe and reliable threshing operation. Ultimately, not all threshing outfits and cook cars were safe and stable arrangements. A 1906 article in the Dickinson Press recounts a shooting on a threshing crew near Forman, North Dakota. A Hayes Lewis shot and killed Charles Christman in supposed self-defense after being unmercifully harassed by Christman and the whole threshing crew for writing a love letter to a young girl employed on the farm. It was noted that when the altercation began, Christman was only holding a leth. Lewis went on the run after the shooting, stating that he feared the crew would kill him as Christman was not a transient like the rest of the crew, and they tended to stick together and would side against him. Whether Lewis's fears were legitimate is irrelevant, but the relevancy of this article is to illustrate that transient workers made up the majority of workmen on threshing crews.

An article from *the Bottineau Courant,* dated September 04, 1919, in the Pickering Township community column recounts that "The Misses Borgfeld Mork and Cara Crogen secured a job with Mr. Say's cook car at rock lake Tuesday. In the evening of the same day, Mr. Crogen took them there in his car. They worked for four days and had things fairly straightened up, when unbeknown to the cooks, the company quite threshing and the cooks, greatly

[112] Isern, Thomas D. "Breakfast at Six," *Plains Folk,* March 8, 2022.

discouraged, arrived home Tuesday." This article demonstrates the instability of threshing crews. The work revolved around two unpredictable factors money and weather. Sudden stops in work became a problem for women committing to working for threshing crews only put in the work, not receive their wages owed, and be forced to return home wiser from the life lesson.[113]

The unpredictability of threshing work coincided with the weather patterns. A threshing outfit relied on good weather to operate. The threshing season made threshing outfits susceptible to severe weather incidents. The remote locations of the farms made it difficult to seek medical attention should severe weather or an accident cause bodily injury. For these reasons working in a cook car in a threshing outfit could be dangerous. In the fall of 1912, *the Bottineau Courant* reports that near Devils Lake, North Dakota, a wild storm uprooted a cook car 120 feet and overturned it four times. The cook car contained thirteen people eating their supper. Thankfully no one was seriously injured. An account reported in the late summer of 1916 that a Mrs. Wright of Orrin, North Dakota, and her children were in a cook car on their farm during threshing when a storm came up and overturned the cook car. Mrs. Wright was severely burned, her daughter's foot was severed entirely, she sustained several broken ribs, and her son was pinned under debris and died from his injuries. In Langdon, North Dakota, the fall of 1905, Mrs. C. F. Erickson suffered life-threatening and severe burns when a kerosene can exploded in the cook car she was working in on her husband's threshing outfit. Mrs. Erickson was ironing clothes in the cook car when the explosion occurred. She would not have been burned so severely had she not tried to protect her young daughter in the cook car with her.[114]

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[113] Unknown. "Pickering Township." *The Bottineau Courant,* September 4, 1919; Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*15.;
[114] Haskett, John F. "Flickertail Facts and Fancies." *The Bottineau Courant,* September 20, 1912; Unknown. "Additional Local News." *Courier Democrat,* August 17, 1905.; Unknown. "Boy Killed in Storm at Orrin." *The Bottineau Courant,* August 10, 1916

There had to be a benefit to voluntarily undertaking such a strenuous line of work. Considering all the dangers and uncertainty associated with working in a cook car. The research indicates that women on threshing crews in North Dakota sought out occupations as cooks to advance their lives and achieve personal growth and financial assets. The wages they earned belonged to them, and for many women, the decision of what to do with their wages was utterly their own. Some women, like Norwegian immigrant Carrine Gafkjen of Williams County, North Dakota, used their wages to invest in additional land holdings.[115]

Carrine Gafkjen was born in the Hallingdal valley of Norway on February 1, 1879, to Stener Gafkjen and Carrie Qui Gafkjen. The Gafkjen family immigrated to the United States in 1883. They settled on a farm around the Norway Lake area in south-central Minnesota. In her early years in Minnesota, Carrine attended a one-room rural schoolhouse on and off for several years. However, her formal education was incomplete when the demands of the family farm outweighed her parents' commitment to Carine's formal education; they withdrew her completely from school to help work on the farm. Carrine did not finish her education, but coming from a strict Norwegian Lutheran home, she was taught to read Norwegian to study catechism and confirmation. In 1894, at fifteen, Carrine was sent to work out at a house in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, approximately forty miles from her family's farmstead. Carrine worked in Sauk Centre for a short time before moving to Minneapolis to work as a cook and housekeeper for a large, affluent family. Secondary accounts of Carine's life dictate that it was her life's goal to be a landowner. While working as a domestic, Carrine saved all her wages minus living expenses to invest in a homestead. The records and evidence are unclear on how long Carrine worked in Minneapolis or when she moved to North Dakota. In a biographical work about

[115] Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*14.; Litchfield Richter, Annebelle. *The Olden Days.*16.

Carrine, her daughter Carrie Young states that Carrine spent the next ten years in Minneapolis working and saving money to homestead before moving to North Dakota in 1904. However, a 1900 United States Census lists Carrine Gafkjen under the household of Ernest C. Eddy as a boarder in Fargo, North Dakota. It is possible that Carrine spent time in Fargo, North Dakota, continuing to work, as her occupation on the census is listed as a servant, before settling in western North Dakota, Williams County, in 1904.[116]

Carine's daughter Carrie recalled that in the spring of 1904, Carrine boarded a train bound for Williston, North Dakota, in search of the land she would claim as her homestead. Upon arrival in Williston, Carrine rented a horse and buckboard wagon, drove thirty miles north of town, and staked out her 160-acre homestead. Carrine had a small one-room cabin built on the land, hired a man with a breaking plow to turn over the required number of virgin acres, and lived there for the required six months alone. She lived on a diet of potatoes and salt. Carine's closes water source was five miles away. She would walk the five miles weekly to collect water for drinking and washing her clothes in Little Muddy Creek. Carrie stated that her mother would bar the door of her tiny cabin at night to keep the coyotes out. Carine's cabin furnishings consisted of a table, chair, shakedown bed, and a pot belly stove with a surface only large enough to boil water. In the Autumn of 1904, Carrine made the thirty-mile trip to the federal land office in Williston and submitted proof that she had fulfilled all requirements of the Homestead Act and paid $1.25 an acre to be awarded her homestead. Federal land records confirm that on September

[116] Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay: My Pioneer Mother*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991) 2.; 1900 U.S. Census Bureau; Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; generated by Ancestry.com; using Ancestry.com; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/97592792:6061?tid=&pid=&queryId=adf9743ebd5ddc56d120a95e0a356354&_phsrc=XHI112&_phstart=successSource; (05 March 2022).

26, 1905, Carrine Gafkjen received her land patent for the 160 acres in Williams County, North Dakota.[117]

After claiming her homestead, Carrine rented out her 160 acres on crop shares to a neighbor and traveled back to eastern North Dakota to work in the home of an affluent farm family in Fargo. For the next eight years, Carrine spent her winters working as a domestic in Fargo and her summers as a cook on a threshing crew in Williams County. From 1905 until 1912, Carrine worked as a cook in a cook car every threshing season. She worked almost around the clock, cooking for two to three dozen men. Carrie's experience and background working as a demotic for a large family in the city more than prepared her for the task of cooking for such a large group. Customarily larger threshing outfits employed at least two cooks. However, as Carine's daughter recalls, she preferred to work alone. Preference aside, there was a strategy in Carine's practice of working alone. She was paid one and half times the going rate, which in her last year as a cook in 1912 was an unprecedented four dollars a day. [118]

The cook car that Carrine worked in was long and narrow. It was comparable to a Pullman kitchen. The roof of the cook car was covered in tin to prevent a fire. Inside the cook car, a coal-burning stove sat near the door with the coal buckets. The water barrel sat in another corner of the cook car. Carrine remembered that the water barrel and coal buckets were filled daily when the water haulers and a gofer boy brought water and coal for the steam engine. Against one wall, there was a worktable with a built-in metal rolling board. Attached to a different wall was a hanging drop-down bed to sleep in, although Carrine recalled that if the

[117] Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay: My Pioneer Mother*. 4.; Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, *General Land Office Records* (http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch: accessed 28 June 2022), Carrine Gafkjen (Williams County, North Dakota), homestead patent no. 682905.
[118] Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay: My Pioneer Mother*. 4.; Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*14.

stove was not drawing and she had to bake bread, she would not be getting any sleep that night and did not bother to lower the bed off the wall. Against the opposite wall stood a long narrow table with benches behind it where eight to ten crewmen could eat at one time. Carine's cook car was equipped with a metal safe set off to one side to store perishables like milk, eggs, meat, and butter. She stated that abundant essential cooking supplies were stored in the rear of the cook car, items like sugar, flour, lard, coffee, and potatoes.[119]

Adaptability was an imperative skill to possess when working in the cramped quarters of a cook car. Carine's daughter stated that her mother would have half a dozen things going at one time. Bread-making was an all-day venture. At any given time, Carrine would have a dozen loaves of bread in all stages of development, either setting, rising, or baking. In addition to the dozens of loaves of bread, Carrine always kept a big kettle of lard on the stove, ready to fry the hundreds of doughnuts she made daily. Like other cooks in cook cars on threshing crews across the Northern Great Plains, Carine's began long before the engineer awoke to start the engine. At three in the morning she awoke, that is, if she got any sleep the night before, to stir the fire and get it hot enough to boil water, to make a couple of gallons of coffee.

Once the coffee started, Carrine started on breakfast, making enough pancakes to cover two holes on the stove. She always made sure to have a stockpile of hotcakes in the warming oven before the men got up for breakfast, or they would eat them faster than she could make them. The crew ate in waves. First to eat were the water haulers and firemen, followed by the bunder teams, and by sunrise, the whole crew was fed and out in the fields. Carrine timed her work by the sound of the whistle. When the first whistle blasted, she knew it was time to start frying doughnuts for morning lunch. By nine in the morning, a large dishpan of doughnuts and

[119] Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*14.

sandwiches was ready to go out to the field. Carrine, with the help of a gopher, brought the dishpans full of lunch foods, a large granite coffee pot, and tin cups to the field near the threshing ring to serve the midmorning meal. After the crew was fed, Carrine returned to the cook car, and it was time to prepare the noon dinner. Sometimes the whole threshing crew would shut down and come in from the fields for the noon meal. However, all too often, Carrine would have to bring the noon meal out to the crew in the fields so the crew could continue working to ensure the wheat was in on time. [120]

The noon meal was the largest meal of the day. Carrine often prepared for a field noon dinner by making a big pot of beef stew filled with onions, potatoes, and carrots. She stated that she favored pies over other deserts because they carried well, were filling, and were easy to serve. She would take four to five whole pies out to the field and return with empty pie plates. Carrine remembered that the men loved her pies, especially the lemon meringue. Her daughter Carrie recalled the secret to Carine's delectable pies was in her pie crusts. Carrine could take any shortening, lard, or butter and create an incredibly flaky pastry crust every time. After the noon meal, if the dinner was taken in the field, Carrine would return to the cook car and start the afternoon lunch. Again, she would return to the kettle of lard on the stove to fry doughnuts, make another couple gallons of coffee, and pack stacks of sandwiches into dishpans to be taken out to the fields by four for afternoon lunch.[121]

When the steam engine shut down at sundown, it signaled the start of supper. Carrine prepared the last meal of the day upon her return from the fields following afternoon lunch. Her supper utilized all the leftovers from the day's meals. Carrine would combine leftover beef, pork,

[120] Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*15-16.
[121] Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*18.

or steaks ground with vegetables and potatoes in a dishpan, moisten it with water and bake it into a hash. Alongside the hash, she served biscuits and a loaf cake for dessert. After the last crew members left the cook car and strolled to their bed to end their day, Carrine's day continued. She washed all the dishes that had accumulated from the day. She started the next day's breakfast by sifting flour for pancakes, slicing bacon, cleaning the coffee pot, and grinding fresh coffee. Lastly, she continued baking bread for the next day. If the threshing rig was moving to a new location in the morning, the additional tasks of packing away anything breakable was added to her nighttime routine. Carrine's daughter Carrie stated that her mother, exhausted from the days' labors, would stand in the doorway of her cook car and gaze out "breathing the fresh night air and looking at the dazzling North Dakota sky, where the stars met the horizon… She went back in and took the last loaves of bread out of the oven. She pulled her bed down from the wall, wondering if it was worth the effort to undress when she would be getting up in three hours to rekindle the fire in the stove. She put a couple of pieces of coal in and hoped she would still have a few embers in the morning."[122]

Every fall for eight years, Carrine continued her rigorous schedule by collecting and saving her wages through the threshing season. In a few years, she staked out and paid for another quarter section of land, making her total land holding in 1912 320 acres free and clear before her marriage. Working in cook cars provided women an opportunity to gain income. In addition to their wages earned for the work they did as cooks, women used their position in cook cars to take account of land available and available men with land. Like Carrine, many women met their husbands on a threshing crew. However, not all women were or became landowners. Carine's title of landowner was not uncommon for women in North Dakota in the early twentieth

[122] Young, Carrie., and Felicia Young. *Prairie Cooks: Glorified Rice, Three-Day Buns, and Other Reminiscences.*18-19.

century. A study of nine North Dakota country land records after 1900 shows that at the turn of the century, women owned significant portions of land in the state. Williams County, where Carrine homesteaded, held the second highest percentage of woman landowners at 18%, while the neighboring county of McKenzie, at 20%, held the highest percentage of women-owned land. It is important to consider the unbalanced gender ratio in North Dakota. In 1900 there were 125.4 men to every 100 women in North Dakota. The total average land owned by women across the nine counties studied was 12%. This percentage placed North Dakota on par with the surrounding states women-owned land. This evidence indicates that women holding the title of landowner was not uncommon.[123]

Threshing outfits in North Dakota supplied married, unmarried, and widowed women with employment opportunities. Women working in cook cars were the "hidden figures" within the threshing world. Working in cook cars changed the way society saw women in agricultural occupations. By society's standards, a woman working alone, miles away from her town, family, and community, and surrounded by unfamiliar men would have been nonproprietary. However, the women that worked in cook cars forged a gateway into agriculture, positioning themselves in an occupation that fit within the confines of the established social order. Women working on cook cars in North Dakota in the early twentieth century redefined their gender roles and gained financial independence and land ownership, and in their words, just did what needed to be done.[124]

[123] Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay: My Pioneer Mother*. 4; Lindgren, Elaine H., *Land in Her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota.* 37-38, 51-55.; William B Bailey, "Some Recent Changes in the Composition of the Population of the United States," *Publications of the American Statistical Association* 13, no. 101 (March 1913): pp. 379-392.
[124] Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay: My Pioneer Mother*. 35;

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Twentieth-century women on the Northern Great Plains redefined their gender roles and expectations within Northern Great Plains society. This work is only a small section of an even larger body of work yet to be explored. This thesis is evidence of the defining and redefining of women's gender roles on the Northern Great Plains. Through analysis of the women in this thesis the evidence shows that women made their gender roles ever evolving and fluid. Women would migrate between both gender spheres either momentarily, permanently, or both.

In a pre-pandemic world, the original intent of this thesis was to collect oral interviews of individual and family histories from rural women who had or currently were working in farming and ranching. The purpose of this observational work was to discover women's roles in coordinating and executing cattle branding events on the Northern Great Plains. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down this process. While researching remotely and visiting a few local and county museums and archives that would allow visitors, this researcher noticed that many of these establishments are run by women. After working with some of these women, they began talking about their family history. They all had a story about impressive grandmothers, mothers, sisters, aunts, great aunts, or cousins that did things a little different or outside of assumed gender social norms. All these women redefined their gender roles momentarily and permanently for economic, familial, and personal advancement. Their actions exemplified the process of gender fluidity. They engaged in assumed masculine roles and then effortlessly embodied assumed feminine roles. Gender fluidity on the Northern Great Plains is a circular continuum. Women would not settle solely in one gender sphere or the other but could reside simultaneously in both.

The evidence cited throughout this study consisted of primary and secondary sources from various materials. The primary sources are mainly diaries, biographies, recorded or oral interviews, newspapers, photographs, census records, marriage and death records, and community histories. The secondary sources used include scholarly works from recent to past works. The significant period creates a path to follow to see what women's roles on the Northern Great Plains were thought to be and provides an example of the redefinition and gender fluidity of women's roles on the Northern Great Plains.

Throughout this research, the evidence shows through primary sources that there are many more women that exemplify gender fluidity than what is presented in this work. However, aside from a singular mention of these women on a census record or within a photograph, no further evidence could be obtained to shed light on their lives. The lack of evidence is a consequence of the time with society not placing a high priority on women’s voices. Regrettably, contributing to the lack of evidence is that many of these women did not believe that what they were doing was extraordinary or worthy of remembering. Therefore, they did not leave much information behind. In their own words, they just did what needed to be done; it was nothing special. In addition, this work relied on census records to determine the time period, geographical location, and race of the women in this study. Discrepancies in census data caused inconsistencies in determining the subjects qualifying for the specific parameters of this study. For those reasons, a good number of women were excluded from this study.

The secondary source material initially used focused more on women in the American West as there is a larger body of work in that area than specifically in the Northern Great Plains. Carol Fairbanks and Sara Brooks Sundberg's book *Farm Women on the Prairie Frontier: A Sourcebook for Canada and the United States* as one of the older works published in 1983 begins

to set the parameters for redefining what is feminine and what is not on the North American Prairies. This work is great starting point for analysis of the roles of women in the Northern Great Plains. This work is in-depth in its presentation of the grasslands environment and most importantly it includes women in the establishment of the frontier. Analysis of this work inspired the question of why women must decide on one gendered role or another and re-affirms that gender roles are constantly being redefined.[125]

Another work by Deborah Fink, *Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska 1880-1940,* published in 1992 presents an interesting argument for redefining women's roles in a rural agricultural society. Fink argues that agricultural society further solidified the divided gender spheres and emphasized that a woman's place is in the home. Her argument is based on the theory that the domestic sphere absorbs portions of the private sphere. This absorption made women's lives more challenging and more labor intense. It is within this work that gender fluidity begins to emerge within rural agricultural history, although it is not called this the context is present.

Both works hold great value in academia as a way of looking back and tracking the development of understanding women's roles and gender on the Northern Great Plains. These works also inspire further research into the subject of gender in rural agricultural studies. Consequently, the sources utilized in this thesis are not perfect. Imperfection is to be expected. The historian's job is to separate fact from fiction, improve perspective, and present an unbiased opinion based on the evidence discovered to create a solid argument. By taking what already exists and examining previous works, this thesis builds upon a large body of evidence to present

[125] Fairbanks, Carol., and Sara Brooks Sundberg. *Farm Women on the Prairie Frontier*. Metuchen NJ: The Scarecrow Press Inc, 1983.71-74.

an argument to further the understanding of the gender roles of women in the Northern Great Plains. This thesis is not in competition with other scholars' work on women in the Northern Great Plains. However, it complements previous works by contributing to the overall understanding of white women within twentieth-century agricultural societies and promotes the examination of gender fluidity and the redefining of gender roles. It is with confidence that that this argument adequately examines the benefits and shortcomings of all the sources to present a final study worthy of discussion.

The introduction lays the foundation for this study. It begins by presenting the need for re-examining gender and women on the Northern Great Plains and traces the epistemology of previous scholarly works related to this topic by the content or geographical location. In the epistemology, the foundational works on women's history in the American West are closely examined. These works are a great beginning to placing women in the history of the American West and strengthening our understanding of the lives of frontier women. The presentation of these works are citied as a progressive process of the growth in understanding gender roles on the Northern Great Plains and points out the missing perspective these works that are yet to be explored. This process sets the importance of this thesis. The additional parameters of this study explain the gender theories that this study operates within. Those theories are gender division of labor and gendered family socialization. The geographical parameters for this study are explained and set as Eastern Montana, the Sandhills of Nebraska, and North Dakota. The race classification for the women presented in this study is white. Regrettably, women identifying as other than white either lacked sufficient records for evidence or their field of work fell outside the agriculture industry.

Chapters 1 through 3 showcase women in each geographical location that redefied their gender roles and expectations either momentarily or permanently. Each chapter focuses on how each women redefined her gender roles and their lives are evidence to the larger argument. Each chapter is written to stand alone as an individual study; however, all the chapters connect with an overarching pattern. The running pattern throughout is that women on the Northern Great Plains operated by their own rules within the already established social systems and exemplified how fluid gender is. The evidence examined within this study does not show that geographical location, social class, economic class, race, or societal standers had a great effect on how these women operated within the social systems or redefined their gender roles. All the women in this study redefined their gender roles and expectations to either change or recreate their futures.

For the scholarly community, this study is essential to expanding our understanding of women's roles in the Northern Great Plains. While there are works at present about women on the Northern Great Plains there is still so much more to be written. This thesis seeks to contribute to a larger body of work yet to be written. This study examines women on an individual basis. Through individual study, a distinctive pattern of generational gender fluidity emerges. This pattern is important because it deepens our understanding of women's roles on the frontier in the twentieth century. This study will also help to elevate historical perceptions of women by no longer placing women into the helpmate role but instead places them into the leading operational role that the evidence shows these women already occupied.

A memory group that would benefit from this evidence and research is agricultural communities. The women presented in this thesis would help enhance the agricultural community's understanding of women in the twentieth century and recognize the contributions that women made to their communities, society, and history. Women are often present in

agricultural communities' histories but usually only as helpers, background characters, or hidden figures. These women are often hidden behind large families of children or a husband. Their story and contributions are overlooked, forgotten, or added as a footnote to a larger story about her husband. If these women's contributions are mentioned, it is only to the degree of supporting their families. Their contributions are not presented as what they were, acts of redefining gender roles and contributing to women's autonomy.

Finally, for the public as a whole and specific communities on the Northern Great Plains today, academia has only begun to scratch the surface in recognizing the contributions of women on the Great Plains. This study stands to advance the understanding of women on the frontier. The nation can function as a great, more inclusive society by recognizing our past and seeking to improve the future.

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