

William G. 'Reindeer' Walton and the Face of Adversity in Canada's North,
1892-1928

by
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Introduction

In 1892, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) decided that a void needed to be filled in the Ungava district of the northwestern side of Quebec to teach the Cree¹ and Inuit² people the skills more often associated with European society. At the age of twenty-three, Anglican missionary William Gladstone Walton left his home of Birmingham, England to enter the eastern James Bay and Hudson Bay regions. Walton spent thirty-two years working with the Indigenous people teaching English, spreading the Gospel and aiding them in their dire living conditions. Being placed in such a northern climate was a great challenge for Walton, however, he soon gathered supporters, including his Métis wife Daisy Spencer, father-in-law Miles Spencer, other clergymen, and members of his Indigenous congregations. Walton's missionary career in Canada had an impact on the lives of over one thousand Indigenous people and his work received national attention. This essay argues that Walton resisted the increasingly assimilationist goals of federal Indigenous policy in the early-twentieth century. To this extent, he represented an earlier style of a missionary from the nineteenth century. Rather than seeing his role as an agent of assimilation for the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA)³, Walton identified with older fur trade society and CMS traditions of the nineteenth century and regarded himself as a mediator, attempting to lessen the impact of white settlement in northern Canada.

Before turning to Walton and his missionary work, it is important to discuss what led to the arrival of these missionary men and, eventually, women in Canada to work with Indigenous groups. As a powerful driving force, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) maintained itself as a

¹ In choosing to say "Cree" I am doing so in recognition of current proper terminology for the Aboriginal people of Fort George. Within Walton's writings, he referred to these people in the southern part of the Ungava district as "Indians".

² In choosing to say "Inuit" I am doing so in recognition of current proper terminology for the Aboriginal people of Great Whale River. Within Walton's writings, he referred to these people in the northern part of the Ungava district as "Eskimos".

³ The Department of Indian Affairs is presently referred to as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

leader in Canada's economy during the nineteenth century. After amalgamating with the Northwest Company (NWC) in 1821, the HBC experienced growth and promised opportunities for many European traders who journeyed to Canada to obtain a slice of the profit that was to be made. Some of the company's main dependents were the Indigenous communities surrounding the trading posts. These people represented a variety of cultures and languages, each with their own skills and experiences. The Indigenous people had lived in their territories for generations. Since the eighteenth century, the HBC had been capitalizing on Indigenous skills in hunting, trapping, sewing and other abilities to create products to be sold in the mass market. Working with the groups did provide challenges for the Europeans, and language was a key barrier. Also, disconnect existed between European society and that of the Indigenous people. The HBC sought outside counsel in the form of missionaries to teach their Indigenous business partners how to speak English, worship their religion of Christianity and live stylistically like that of Europeans.⁴

Prior to the appearance of Roman Catholic missionaries Sir George Simpson, Governor of the HBC, welcomed Anglican missionaries. However, Simpson remained unsettled by the arrival of all missionaries to his trading posts as he, "feared that the clergy would become a competing political force in the northwest, outside control of the HBC."⁵ Simpson was not able to show bias towards a specific denomination, and therefore allowed missionaries from several Churches to work with the Indigenous people. Also, he was apprehensive about their time-consuming involvement with the Indigenous people. While the goal for missionaries was to assist them in becoming more representative of the incoming European model, Simpson feared that teachings would take time away from work related to the HBC. Like other missionaries from England Walton, who would not arrive until closer to the end of the nineteenth century, was

⁴ Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 115-16.

⁵ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 116.

under the management of the CMS. Established in 1799 and originally referred to as the Society of Missions to Africa and East, the organization's title was later changed to the CMS in 1812.⁶ In its early years the CMS placed its missionaries in the continents of Africa and Asia. The task of these missionaries was to, "spread the Gospel not only through evangelistic work but also through education and medical care."⁷ Henry Venn, an honourable secretary and influential member of the CMS, assisted in giving the society a greater vision it was lacking in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸ Venn believed "missionaries were to seek to create not Anglican but ultimately native churches."⁹ It was these ideas of creating self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagative native churches that set the CMS apart from other missionary groups such as the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. The Church of England recognized the achievement of these foreign missions once communities were becoming baptized by the missionaries.

Walton conquered many obstacles during his time as a missionary. He became skilled in multiple languages, and published and edited books in the Cree language to spread the Gospel on a wider scale. His wife became not only his companion, but also a teacher and partner in his missionary work. Walton's work resulted in absence from his family for up to six months of the year, living in a climate and in conditions that were less than ideal. In the later part of Walton's career, he became recognized for his fifteen-year campaign to import reindeer from Alaska into the Ungava district to offer relief for the ailing Cree and Inuit. His challenge consisted of

⁶ "Section I: East Asia Missions. Part 1 Japan, 1869-1934, Original Papers: Letters and Papers of Individual Missionaries, Catechists and Others, 1917-1930," in *Church Missionary Society Archive. Section V: Missions to the Americas. Part 3: North-West Canada, 1822-1930*. London: Church Missionary Society, 2000 (microfilm).

⁷ CMS, *Missions to the Americas*, (microfilm).

⁸ John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime, Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 104.

⁹ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 131.

rebelling against the standards the Federal Government in Ottawa who often ignored the needs of Indigenous communities, especially in Canada's north.



F1. Source: Laurentian University Archives
Portrait of William G. Walton dressed in seal skin.

Walton's individual career as an Anglican missionary could not be studied without the extensive use of the 'William G. (Reindeer) Walton Collection'. This collection was donated to the Laurentian University Archives in March 2015 by Walton's grandson William (Bill) Holmes. Holmes held his grandparents' personal correspondence and other letters and documents relating to his grandfather's missionary work. Holmes had also searched for additional documents regarding the life of his grandparents from the Anglican General Synod Archives. This collection provides rich material for an analysis of Walton, his wife Daisy Spencer, and their missionary achievements. This collection alone, serves as fragmented evidence. While this source serves as

the primary data, there is potential for bias within the argument.¹⁰ There are challenges when writing the history of Walton and his missionary work. This paper is not an attempt to analyze the perspectives of the Indigenous communities he worked with. It is an analysis of Walton's work in a time of change and from the point of view of the missionary.

“Chapter 1: Historiography” provides the reader with an overview of the work of historians who have written about missionaries, and highlights in particular three main themes: the northern missionary experience, the role of Indigenous and Métis women in the fur trade, and the position of the Federal Government on mission projects and the future of Indigenous people in Canada. “Chapter Two: William G. Walton: An English Missionary in Canada's North” explores Walton's experiences as a missionary adjusting to the northern climate and his initial attempts to connect with the people. This chapter briefly introduces the reader to the Spencers, Walton's in-laws, and their impact on him as an Anglican missionary. There is great detail about some of Walton's notable achievements, including his work in creating the *'Eskimo-English' Dictionary*. Also, this chapter displays the shift in the missionary approach in Canada during the early-twentieth century and how this affected the outcome of mission work. “Chapter Three: Daisy and William, a Team Effort” makes extensive use of the correspondence the couple maintained while apart from each other. Daisy was a Métis woman who grew up in the fur trade and spoke Cree. Her skills and life experience proved to be a valuable asset to Walton as he became better trained to work with the Cree and Inuit during his mission work. In letters from the CMS and articles from *The Globe*, Daisy is said to deserve equal credit to Walton for the work in Fort George and Great Whale River. Lastly, “Chapter Four: The Reindeer Project,” is dedicated to Walton's last great triumph as a missionary: his recognition of the starving and

¹⁰ Miles Fairburn, *Social History: Problems, Strategies and Methods* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1999), 39-40.

dying Inuit in Great Whale River and further north. He believed their only salvation would be the domestication of reindeer to make the communities sustainable as they had previously been. This endeavour was the result of almost fifteen years of work with moments of victory as well as disappointment. Walton spread his message across not only Canada, but also across the ocean to his homeland in hopes to rally support and the attention for this grand plan to save hundreds of Indigenous people in Canada. By exploring these three aspects of Walton's career: his mission work, his collaboration with Daisy, and his reindeer campaign; this essay maintains that he represented an earlier approach to missionary work that relied on mediation rather than assimilation, and was out of harmony with the agenda of the Department of Indian Affairs in the early-twentieth century.

Chapter One: Historiography

For over thirty years, historians have addressed the topic of the missionary experience and Indigenous relations in Canada from the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. Within this literature, there are three themes of relevance to Walton's work: the missionary experience in Canada's north, the role of Indigenous and Métis women in the fur trade, and the Federal Government's influence on the treatment and future of Indigenous communities.

The first theme within the existing literature is the missionary experience in Canada's north and how this location required additional knowledge and the ability to live and exist amongst Indigenous people. In the 1980s, John Webster Grant was the first historian to address missionary encounters with Indigenous people in Canada. In the 1990s, a growing number of other historians emerged to discuss this theme, including Kenneth Coates and J.R. Miller. A more recent study, published in 2002 by Myra Rutherdale, addressed both the northern experience of missionaries and female involvement of the English wives of the missionaries. The second theme that captures the essence of Walton's missionary work is the involvement of women in the fur trade. His wife Daisy (née Spencer) grew up in the environment of the HBC and her skills became a great asset to Walton's work. In 1980, both Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown expanded on the role of Indigenous women in the HBC before and after its merger with the NWC in 1821. Over the course of the nineteenth century, many generations of Métis families resulted from the relationships between European fur traders and Indigenous women, and both the acceptance of these marriages transformed over time. In the 1990s, Kerry Abel and Martha McCarthy added their contribution to the scholarship regarding Indigenous women and relationships that formed with European traders and missionaries. A third theme regards the Federal Government and its interference with Indigenous life in Canada, which motivated

Walton to pursue such extraordinary efforts as to domesticate reindeer in a deprived Indigenous region. Scholarly works in the past ten years by authors such as John S. Long and James Daschuk have raised this theme of the exploitation and unfair treatment of Indigenous groups. These authors examine the policies introduced by the Government that ultimately had damaging consequences for the Indigenous people. They argue that the Government's ongoing strategies offered as little aid as possible.

The writing of Indigenous history gained momentum in the 1990s. Prior to the late-twentieth century, there were a limited number of sources published in the area of Indigenous history. As historians Carlson, Jetté, and Matsui noted in 2001, "Before the late 1960s, what little Native history existed was largely a subcomponent of fur trade studies concerned with documenting Canadian economic and political impact."¹¹ Indigenous content was referred to as a subtopic of other major themes and rarely stood on its own in academic writing. The field also lacked the perspective of Indigenous people themselves, and there were only a limited number of Indigenous historians before the 1990s, in spite of the interest of First Nations groups who encouraged the writings of their people.¹² Since the 1990s, however, there has been a transformation in the depth and scope of scholarship in Indigenous history. A common area of research has had to do with 'Indian-white' relations and over time this discussion has expanded "to include social, institutional, and even spiritual matters in addition to political and economic issues."¹³

Known as the 'grandfather of missionary academic writing', John Webster Grant wrote about the history of missionaries and their encounters with the Indigenous people of Canada in

¹¹ Keith Carlson, Melinda Jetté and Kenichi Matsui, "An Annotated Bibliography of Major Writings in Aboriginal History, 1990-1999," *The Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (March: 2001): 123.

¹² Carlson, Jetté and Matsui, "Aboriginal History, 1990-1999", 124.

¹³ Carlson, Jetté and Matsui, "Aboriginal History, 1990-1999", 124.

Moon of Wintertime, Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534. Written in 1984, this narrative journeys through 450 years dealing with the encounter of Christianity and the Indigenous people. Grant's approach presents patterns of missionary activity that emerged throughout the years and the consequences of contact between differing cultures. His discussions of the CMS and the encounters missionaries had with the Indigenous people provide sufficient background evidence to the argument of Walton's work and the shift in missionary approach which emerged in the twentieth century.

Grant comments on the British government's 1820 realization that Indigenous people were causing a welfare problem, while the white population was greatly increasing throughout Upper and Lower Canada.¹⁴ The fur trade had heightened interest in Europe and people were migrating west across the ocean to these British colonies for the many economic possibilities. Indigenous allies were a great asset to trading companies such as the HBC for their skills in trapping and their ability to create treasured products from the materials they gathered. Although they worked closely with the European traders, Indigenous people did not assimilate into the Euro-Canadian ideal worshipping Christianity and speaking only English at the time, and they maintained their own Indigenous languages, dress, and living conditions.

Grant was one of the first scholars to identify the resistance of Indigenous people to assimilation by both traders and missionaries, and this has become a dominant theme in subsequent historiography. Following Grant's work, there was a growing interest among historians in the impact of Government policies on Indigenous communities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1799 the CMS was founded to allow Anglican evangelicals to propagate Christianity abroad.¹⁵ Missionaries from London, England were sent to

¹⁴ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 81-2.

¹⁵ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 82.

Canada in the mid-nineteenth century to promote Christianity among the Indigenous communities. The missionaries received varying levels of acceptance across the country. Grant comments that CMS missionaries overall were, “calling for fair treatment of the Indians”¹⁶ and they saw themselves as mediators when Indigenous people encountered pressure from political figures. The missionaries became natural advocates after spending time in the communities and becoming immersed in the Indigenous culture.¹⁷ Supporting Indigenous populations and striving to create Indigenous missions were part of the CMS culture. This was especially true with the Cree, with whom Walton worked closely. By the 1890s, when Walton began his missionary work in Fort George, four leading denominations had missionaries placed wherever reserves provided concentrated populations.¹⁸ Anglican missionaries such as Walton were funded by the CMS until 1902, after which the Missionary Society of the Canadian Church (MSCC) gradually replaced it.¹⁹

In *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973*, published in 1991, Kenneth Coates applied Grant’s interpretation to the relations between missionaries and Indigenous people of the Yukon. The main goal of the CMS was to have its missionaries baptize Indigenous people in Christianity in the hope that once converted, they would continue promoting the religion in their area, allowing for the missionaries to move on to a new region.²⁰ With multiple denominations and other missionary groups in pursuit of the same goal, it became a competition to establish the most churches and religious communities with the specific Church. Coates suggests the Anglican missionaries’ approach to working with

¹⁶ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 141.

¹⁷ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 154.

¹⁸ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 161.

¹⁹ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 192.

²⁰ Kenneth Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-white Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1991), 115.

Indigenous people lessened the cultural clash. Under the direction of the CMS, missionaries were advised to be respectful of Indigenous societies.²¹ This allowed for relationships to form and created a level of dignity in the interactions between the missionaries and Indigenous people.

J.R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*, published in 1996 explores the history of residential schools. Of relevance to Walton's career, Miller discusses how missionaries were used as educators in the Indigenous communities. Walton and his wife Daisy did not work in a residential school, but taught in the community where they followed a more traditional Indigenous learning structure and not one of forced assimilation. In the nineteenth century, CMS missionaries were encouraged by the society to learn the indigenous language of the community in which they were placed. This created better relationships and the missionaries could still fulfill their goal of Christianizing Indigenous people. This tolerance was permitted until the turn of the twentieth century. For CMS missionaries such as Walton, "the process of shifting to an English-only approach coincided with the transfer of responsibility for missions from a base in England to a thoroughly Canadian operation."²² Once this financial sponsorship shifted to become the responsibility of the DIA, there were stricter standards about funding.

Missionaries from England, such as Walton, could remain working in Canada, but only under the authority of the MSCC. With a firmer approach to teaching English, converting to Christianity, and promoting a Euro-Canadian lifestyle, the MSCC work was very different from what Indigenous people had come to expect from CMS missionaries. Miller importantly notes, how in the north, this harsh policy often was not followed firmly, "Catholic and Anglican missionaries in more remote regions, such as the north, continued to harbour many of the older,

²¹ Coates, *Best Left as Indians*, 124.

²² J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 415.

vocationally oriented attitudes towards their efforts.”²³ Walton was one of these missionaries who remained a friendly mediator within the Cree and Inuit communities where he worked. The permanent relations he made alerted him to the importance of not changing his manner as a missionary and so he continued to approach communities with a sense of openness to both their languages and culture.

In 2002, Myra Rutherdale supported Miller’s interpretation about the variation of the missionary approach, particularly in northern Ontario. *Women and the White Man’s God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* explores the role of missionaries in northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories during the late-nineteenth century. Rutherdale’s narrative examines women who came from Europe to join their husbands in missionary work and how they had to conform to the new landscape and people. To be a successful missionary in the north, she claims, not only did missionaries need to have an evangelical background, but they also had to be optimistic and willing to adapt to a new space.²⁴ Having enthusiasm for visiting a new land and new people was a large part of the itinerant outreach.

Rutherdale also agreed with Miller’s approach, claiming relationships between missionaries and Indigenous people were unique in the north.²⁵ Missionaries gained appreciation and understanding of Indigenous culture, despite the expectations of the MSCC. In Walton’s writings, he noted the poverty and need for resources among the Inuit and it is evident he befriended them during his mission trips and went to great lengths to support their culture.

²³ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 416.

²⁴ Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man’s God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 7.

²⁵ Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man’s God*, 42-43.

The second theme of this research considers women in the fur trade and is of relevance to Walton's wife, Daisy Spencer. Both Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown observe the relations Indigenous women had with European men during the fur trade period in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1980, Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties: Women in the Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* reviewed two hundred years of how acceptance of Indigenous women by the European fur traders took place in the context of the fur trade companies. When Protestant missionaries first arrived at the fur trade posts, it was expected they would alleviate the companies of the duty to educate Indigenous people by assisting with instruction in English and Christianity.²⁶

Van Kirk claims that, "marrying an acculturated mixed-blood girl was looked upon with favour by the European men who recognized that white women were unable to adapt to fur trade life."²⁷ Daisy Spencer Walton was a second generation Métis woman whose father was half Cree. Her paternal grandfather was a white trader from Britain who married a Cree woman. As generations of women who were Indigenous and European grew throughout the century, the daughters were considered to be most desirable as marriage partners. Mixed-blood women were in vogue as symbols of the fusion of the two cultures and it was believed such women could better cope with fur trade society compared to women directly from Europe.²⁸ In 1980, Brown's book *Strangers in Blood*, agreed with Van Kirk that mixed marriages between missionaries and Indigenous women occurred in the nineteenth century, and allowed further economic opportunities for European men in the HBC.²⁹ In the case of Walton and Daisy Spencer, he had to receive permission from the CMS to marry Daisy. He was able to gain significant influence

²⁶ Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 145.

²⁷ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 210.

²⁸ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 109.

²⁹ Jennifer S. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 123-130.

with the HBC through the connections with the Spencer family; his father-in-law was a factor in Fort George.

In 1993, Kerry Abel responded to Van Kirk and Brown's earlier works in *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*. This narrative looks at the Dene, an Indigenous group based in western Canada, and how their cultural distinctiveness faced pressures from missionaries, fur traders, and the Federal Government. The Dene had good relations with the HBC in the mid-nineteenth century regarding business and the skills the Dene brought to the European traders. Not following a church-based religion, missionaries were sent in to educate the people in both English and Christianity.³⁰ Within different Indigenous communities, there were spiritual leaders and shamans who were responsible for the teachings of stories which provided the virtues and traditions. Gaining the acceptance of Indigenous people was crucial for missionaries, as it was a rivalry between the denominations to baptize the most people in their Church. Through connections the missionaries made with Indigenous people, mixed marriages often resulted. Abel asserts that these marriages, often between male missionaries and local women, were an indication that the missionary, and ultimately the Church, fully committed to the community.³¹ These marriages were usually formed out of affection; however they led to gains for both parties. Walton's partnership with his Métis wife Daisy benefitted his missionary work and his relations with the people with the HBC.

Abel also suggests that in northern Canada there was a lack of funds from the CMS to allow missionaries to succeed in their work in the early-twentieth century.³² The demand for assistance was very high in these more remote regions in the north. This led to missionaries, such as Walton, writing constantly to Ottawa pleading for aid to help the desperate families who had

³⁰ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 113.

³¹ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 141.

³² Abel, *Drum Songs*, 120.

to suffer through the harsh winters in the north, including James Bay and Great Whale River. Two years following Abel's work, in 1995, Martha McCarthy responded to Abel in *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921*. She disagreed with Abel, claiming Christian missions did have a profound impact on the Dene, who were not as independent in religion as Abel writes.³³ McCarthy also analyzes the Dene in the same regions Abel mentions, but from their interaction with Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Her narrative highlights the rivalry between missionaries from competing denominations. The idea was that the most successful church converted the most Indigenous people. The HBC became involved in this competition when the Roman Catholic Church arrived in the early 1840s, after the Protestants had already established themselves.³⁴ They found it impossible to deny approval of Roman Catholic missionaries when the company had approved those of the CMS.³⁵ Overall, both Abel and McCarthy provide well-researched case studies and related examples of what missionaries such as Walton were facing in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. While their opinions on the impact of missionaries differ, their works allow for the investigation of this narrative to continue. In 1995 a small case study, *Ellen Smallboy: Glimpses of a Cree Woman's Life*, written by Regina Flannery and based on a series of oral interviews, explored one Cree woman's life experiences living in Moose Factory during the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶ Ellen's life exemplifies the pattern expected of Indigenous women in the mid to late-nineteenth century in the James Bay region. Also, it offers the reader a true example of a Cree family

³³ Martha McCarthy, *From the Great Whale River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1995), xxi.

³⁴ McCarthy, *From the Great Whale River*, 31-2.

³⁵ McCarthy, *From the Great Whale River*, 33.

³⁶ Regina Flannery, *Ellen Smallboy: Glimpses of a Cree Woman's Life* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

growing up in the environment of an Anglican mission. Baptized by the Anglican Church, Ellen remained a practicing believer in the faith.

In addressing the final theme relating to Walton's missionary work, namely Indigeneity and Government policy, twenty-first century historians have added to the scholarship. In 2010, John S. Long wrote about areas in northern Ontario that held mutual agreements of use and care by the Federal Government and the Indigenous communities who signed Treaty No. 9 in 1905. He provides the hidden story of how politicians took advantage of the Indigenous people by taking away both land and rights that had belonged to them for many generations. In the late-nineteenth century, expectations were outlined by the Canadian Government in treaties which implied the Cree and Ojibwe would be accepted as partners in the fur trade business and as allies.³⁷ Long claims these agreements were not sustained and the Cree and Ojibwe people were eventually marginalized. Instead, the Government pressured them into a neo-colonial relationship by assimilating them into 'White' culture.³⁸ In the early-twentieth century, living in these far northern regions often resulted in, "starvation, disease and other disruptions and incursions."³⁹ While these hardships were extreme, Indigenous people did have the means of coping with the struggles and did not believe their only option for survival was to assimilate into English speaking and Christian Euro-Canadian society.

James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* compliments Long's narrative concerning the Governmental policies which resulted in the deaths of many Indigenous people. Daschuk's work, published in 2013, reflects the urgent need Walton recognized when he attempted to bring reindeer from Alaska into James

³⁷ John S. Long, *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 23.

³⁸ Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 23.

³⁹ Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 398.

Bay as a means of survival and sustainability for the Inuit. Walton knew that white assimilation would not be successful and ultimately forced the Cree people to stray from the culture and traditions they had grown up with and upon which they relied. Daschuk recognized, “the shift of the dominant economic paradigm from the fur trade to agriculture and industrial capitalism displaced the Indigenous from their once lucrative position on the periphery of the global economy.”⁴⁰

According to Daschuk, the Federal Government believed that Indigenous people were inherently prone to disease due to their unsustainable lifestyle, and therefore they would gradually dwindle in numbers. Federal policy was predicated on the assumption that Indigenous people would assimilate or die out. For the north, being deemed “hard to fix” and lacking in Euro-Canadian society, it was difficult for Walton to gain Ottawa’s support for investing in this region to fund his reindeer project. The HBC had held control over the fur-trade region for many years and upon the Federal Government becoming responsible for the land in 1869-1870, it was also claiming responsibility for the many Indigenous groups as well. The Government did not show as much consideration when it came to treatment of Indigenous people. Government officials recognized the decline in the resources that the Cree depended on, but little was done to remedy their situation and or curb the diseases that were rapidly spreading.⁴¹

Two authors have written specifically about the Cree in eastern James Bay, Walton, Daisy and the Spencer family in Fort George. In 2002, Toby Morantz wrote *The White Man’s Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenge to the Crees in Quebec* as an analysis of the Cree in eastern James Bay who were threatened by Canadian colonialism during the twentieth century. Morantz speaks to the scarcity of caribou and disease epidemics communities were facing at the

⁴⁰ James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), xi.

⁴¹ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 101.

turn of the twentieth century. He refers to Walton and Daisy as case studies of how missionaries were sent to these northern communities in an attempt to assist them with white colonization, and the harsh realities they were facing as sickness and lack of resources were leading to death. Morantz specifically quotes some of Walton's correspondence as a first-hand account regarding the trouble the Cree and Inuit were experiencing. As well, he applauds Walton for his language skills, work with Daisy and their achievements during their time in Fort George and Great Whale River. In 2007, Virginia Barter wrote "Searching for the Silver Fox: Fur-Trade Family History". She tells of the Métis connection she discovered within her family, specifically her relation to her great-grandfather Miles Spencer. Barter wrote of the Cree and intermarriages which were common in the fur trade, especially to Scots like Miles' wife Edith McLaren. This family history of the Spencers assists in shaping Daisy's identity and how her role with Walton carried much weight in their missionary work. Barter also pays attention to Walton himself and the impact he had on Indigenous communities, referring to his work on the *'Eskimo to English' Dictionary* and both his and Daisy's overall commitment during their thirty-two years of service. Both Morantz and Barter offer recent constructions of the Spencers and Waltons which fits into this argument of the nineteenth century fur trade system and CMS structure they supported into the twentieth century.

There is a large body of literature written about Canadian Indigenous history and it continues to develop as more aspects of the many Indigenous communities are investigated. This historiography reflects trends that have existed in Indigenous writing over the past thirty years. It is important for readers to remember that they cannot categorize all Indigenous people into one group but must acknowledge differences in language, cultural traditions and most importantly varied histories. A similar situation applies to missionaries and how the methods of how they

worked. The authors presented in this chapter have discussed the three themes relative to William Walton's missionary work in Canada's north. Walton fits into the narrative as having arrived in northern Canada in the late-nineteenth century as a missionary who could complete his evangelistic work while creating relations and learning from the Indigenous people at the same time. He also gained valuable insights into the languages, cultures, and traditions by associating with the HBC through his wife Daisy, who proved to be a valuable asset because of her life experiences and education as a Métis woman in the fur trade. As Walton's work in the north progressed over a couple of decades, he was able to recognize the abandonment felt by the Inuit, and the responsibility of the DIA for the suffering within many Indigenous communities throughout Canada. Walton's work ultimately was a means to combat Government policies as he believed there were other options, beyond forced assimilation, to prolong the life of the Indigenous communities.

Chapter Two: William G. Walton: An English Missionary in Canada's North

By the time Walton made his way from Birmingham, England to Fort George, Canada in the summer of 1892 the idea of missionaries working with Indigenous communities was not a new concept. Anglican missionaries had been welcomed to work with Indigenous people since the mid-nineteenth century. Brought over by the European traders to make converts, missionaries encouraged the teaching of English and Christianity. They also saw as a priority, lifestyle changes that were in greater accordance with the increased volume of transatlantic traders arriving into Canada. Upon Walton's arrival in Fort George⁴², he soon realized the challenges that he faced before he could truly perform God's work. Living in a northern climate where his first language, English, was not the standard for many communities, he relied on the assistance of the Métis to adapt to the region. As Walton's missionary career progressed, he was faced with greater challenges brought on by a new missionary society joined by the Federal Government, which impeded his independence to perform his work.

The CMS decided where to send the newly graduated Anglican missionary. Walton completed his training at Islington Theology College run by the CMS as well as medical and clinical training at Birmingham hospitals by 1891.⁴³ The first stop in Canada for this deacon was at the CMS headquarters in Moose Fort⁴⁴ in August 1892.⁴⁵ Walton only remained here for a month and it is likely he spent this short period with the Bishop for some additional training before making his way to Fort George on the eastern shore of James Bay. The CMS began experiencing difficulties in the 1860s finding ministers for locations⁴⁶ including Moose Fort,

⁴² Fort George is presently known as Chisasibi.

⁴³ Tim Walton, "Reindeer Walton (1869-1948)," *Carl Chinn's Brummagem* 158 (May 2014): 16.

⁴⁴ Moose Fort is presently known as Moose Factory.

⁴⁵ Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 16.

⁴⁶ Toby Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenge to the Crees in Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 74.

Lower Whale River and Great Whale River⁴⁷ where Walton would spend the majority of his time.



F2.

Source: Google Maps

Map depicting where William Walton was known to frequent as an Anglican missionary.

As an Anglican missionary for the Church of England, Walton was required to follow its policy regarding working with Indigenous communities. J.R. Miller writes, “Anglican evangelicals were instructed in the nineteenth century to work hard to create not just a general belief in Christianity among the populace, but also a cadre of Native missionaries who could take over the operation of the missions and converted communities.”⁴⁸ Ideally, the objective was to create ‘Native churches’ run by the Indigenous communities themselves, allowing the missionaries to move on in their work.⁴⁹ In regards to Walton’s missionary assignment, he was left with the task of first immersing himself into the Cree and Inuit communities. He would be

⁴⁷ Great Whale River is presently known as Kuujjuarapik.

⁴⁸ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 415.

⁴⁹ Alan Lauffer Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 30.

unable to be successful in evangelizing people if he could not communicate with them or relate to their way of life. The CMS already was responsible for placing missionaries across the world in regions that had very little similarity in lifestyle to that of the Church of England and its people. As a member of the CMS, Walton gained from his education English values from England and was expected to spread this ideal to the Indigenous people of the Ungava district.

Located at an HBC trading post, Fort George was home to Métis families who worked for the trading company. The Métis of this region traced their family lines to Cree and European partnerships. Soon after having arrived in Fort George, Walton became acquainted with Miles Spencer, a Jr. Chief Trader for the HBC.⁵⁰ Employed by the company since 1857, Spencer had grown up in Fort George and was fluent in both English and Cree. To assist Walton to communicate with the Cree, Spencer became a sort of mentor to him. As Chapter Four explains, Spencer's life experience in the north became a testimony for Walton when he pursued his reindeer project. Upon working with Walton, Spencer introduced the missionary to his daughter Daisy Alice Spencer. Daisy, like her father, was bilingual in Cree and English and she knew the realities of Indigenous communities in the north lacking resources. Through coaching Walton in the languages, customs, and traditions of the Indigenous people in the area, Daisy and her student quickly formed a romantic relationship. By spring 1893, the CMS directed Walton to journey to Great Whale River, over two hundred kilometres north by canoe. Great Whale River became the primary location for Walton's missionary work for next thirty-two years. Walton and Daisy kept in constant correspondence with each other while apart and their letters reveal circumstances and

⁵⁰ "Biographical Sheet – Spencer, Miles," Hudson's Bay Company Archives, accessed November 30, 2015, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/s/spencer_miles.pdf.

stories about Walton's work. It was a common system for missionaries to record their new experiences in diaries and letters.⁵¹

In an even cooler climate than Fort George, Great Whale River offered initial challenges for Walton. No longer working with the Cree, he was now in the territory of the Inuit. The Cree were believed to be naturally spiritual people, therefore the engaging with a religious individual would not have been overly difficult to understand.⁵² Another reason why the Cree and other Indigenous communities felt they could relate to missionaries was the similarities they shared with shamans who provided spiritual guidance and often methods of healing to their people.⁵³ Walton was also challenged with presenting a level of authority and power within Great Whale River. Standing at five foot, two inches tall, Walton had to still project the messages of God and His teachings to large congregations.⁵⁴ It is said Walton was nicknamed the 'Little Minister' for his small stature. Walton was not alone in Great Whale River; he travelled with missionary Donald Gilles and his wife. Mrs. Gilles was Daisy's aunt on her mother's side⁵⁵ and the couple had been working in the region for some time before Walton arrived. Within Daisy and Walton's correspondence, she was kept updated on how both Walton and her Aunt were doing in Great Whale River.⁵⁶ The Gilles were a great help to Walton in supervising his mission in Great Whale River during his early years as a missionary.

As a missionary in the north, Walton was faced with hardships he would not have experienced in England. Planting gardens was not possible in this climate and options for food

⁵¹ Rutherford, *Women and the White Man's God*, 73.

⁵² Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 87.

⁵³ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 121.

⁵⁴ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 85.

⁵⁵ Virginia (Parker) Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur-Trade Family History." in *The Long Journey of a Forgotten People: Métis Identities and Family Histories*, ed. Ute Lischke and David T. McNab (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), 269.

⁵⁶ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 10, April 1893, P205- William G (Reindeer) Walton Collection (hereafter WGWC), Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, Laurentian University Archives (hereafter LUA).

were often limited to only fish or meat. Walton could not solely rely on the Indigenous people to gather food for him as this would create distance within the relationship. However, he did rely on them to learn how to hunt and trap for meat himself. Quite often missionaries in the north found themselves extensively depending on Indigenous people for food and other provisions.⁵⁷ In early April 1893, Walton spent some time with Gilles and a few of the Inuit learning how to hunt and trap for himself. As soon as Walton felt prepared to attempt hunting he did and at the end of the day he wrote about his experience to Daisy, “I have been on my first hunt today with Mr. G and an Eskimo.”⁵⁸ It was not only good for Walton to be hunting, it exhibited to the Inuit around him that he was willing to immerse himself into their customs. Aside from hunting for his food, there was only so much Walton could do to defend himself from the freezing weather, even in the spring. “Another day’s rest is over and the weather is still keeping exceptionally cold. My water for washing was frozen though I put it near to the stove to prevent it doing so.”⁵⁹ To keep him warm and protect his skin from the harsh winds, Walton became accustomed to wearing seal skin boots and coat. His willingness to trek through the bush and canoe the waters just as the Inuit did and in the same clothing as they wore was appreciated.⁶⁰

As previously mentioned, learning the Indigenous languages was one of the first tasks missionaries faced. While Walton spent time in Fort George learning Indigenous languages from Daisy, it was still an ongoing process for him in Great Whale River. There were often times when he feared he would lose the skill and not be able to speak fluently to his congregation.⁶¹

Aside from speaking the language, it was also common for priests and ministers to create

⁵⁷ Rutherford, *Women and the White Man’s God*, 83.

⁵⁸ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 7, April 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

⁵⁹ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 24, April 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

⁶⁰ Morantz, *The White Man’s Gonna Getcha*, 85.

⁶¹ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 20, March 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

translations of hymns, prayers, and the Bible in the Indigenous languages.⁶² This also proved helpful in the long term as these documents would ideally last beyond the missionary's time in the community. As he continued to master languages and customs it, "gave him an influence and command that most of the missionaries of the Bay lacked."⁶³ It was very much a trait of Protestant ministers to use words to win over their congregations and not objects or concepts such as confessional. The message of God proved to be one of Walton's key tools that brought him success in baptizing the Cree and Inuit as Anglicans.⁶⁴

In 1894, after two years as a deacon, Walton was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Moosonee.⁶⁵ Still in Great Whale River, when not back in Fort George on break, most of Walton's days were spent preaching in the community's church during 'Eskimo service'.⁶⁶ His congregation looked favourably upon him and were eager to hear him speak. "Reverend Walton preached that everyone should love each other, no matter who they were."⁶⁷ He was able to share parts of himself that were of his English culture as well as embrace his congregation's Indigenous teaching. This became one of the traits he was most admired for by the Cree and Inuit. Walton was able to communicate in English with some of the Inuit who had already learned some vocabulary from other missionaries such as the Gilles. Part of the openness exhibited by Walton led to personal friendships with the people of Great Whale River and the other communities he visited in the Ungava district. Walton stood against preconceived notions about forming relationships with Indigenous people who were thought by some to be heathens

⁶² Abel, *Drum Songs*, 117.

⁶³ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 85.

⁶⁴ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 88.

⁶⁵ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 84.

⁶⁶ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 24, April 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

⁶⁷ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 84.

and savages.⁶⁸ He wrote to Daisy, “I love to play with the children here for their love is so real and unaffected and I often think that other people’s friendship is not so real as it appears.”⁶⁹

Walton made a lifelong commitment to the communities of the Indigenous people. On February 21, 1896 he married Daisy Spencer. Alliances with the Métis families of the fur trade were not uncommon for CMS missionaries and were held in great esteem.⁷⁰ This marriage allowed Daisy to perform missionary work, although she still remained in Fort George. She rarely made the journey to Great Whale River and simply waited the several months it took before Walton came home. Chapter Three provides greater detail regarding Daisy’s role in their partnership. Walton also took on the role of mentor to some members of his congregation who desired to preach in the church as he did. Two individuals he often referred to were Nero Flaherty and Moses. This was part of Walton’s role to create a ‘Native church’ run by the Indigenous people themselves. In Walton’s earlier years he had Moses work with him at Great Whale River to interpret, especially during service.⁷¹ Nero for years studied the Bible and made efforts to preach in the church, often alleviating the pressure on Walton.⁷²

While studying at Islington College, Walton had received medical training. This proved to be necessary for the communities to which he travelled. Shortly after arriving at Great Whale River in 1893, he was given the task of extracting a tooth from a young girl. He also did simpler medical tasks such as bandaging someone’s swollen knee.⁷³ While he possessed some medical training he was unable to defeat epidemics of illness. In March 1901 Walton notified Daisy that

⁶⁸ Rutherford, *Women and the White Man’s God*, 29.

⁶⁹ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 20, March 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

⁷⁰ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 141.

⁷¹ William Walton to Daisy Walton, 16, April 1897, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

⁷² William Walton to Daisy Walton, 21, April 1903, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 3/, LUA.

⁷³ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 24, March 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

people in Great Whale River were, “suffering from an epidemic of both eyes and stomach and two or three children are succumbed to the latter.”⁷⁴ The following year, in 1902, proved to be challenging for the people of Fort George. A measles epidemic spread through the community and for five weeks Walton and Daisy worked together tending to the ill.⁷⁵ The Waltons helped to save many lives and from the epidemic, there was only one casualty. Sadly, it was their five year old daughter Grace, who passed on October 28, 1902.⁷⁶ This did not prevent Walton or his wife from continuing their missionary work; they both had to overcome this personal tragedy and so they did. Walton was recognized for showing multiple acts of selflessness when it came to the ill. He sometimes received messages about someone’s ill health and injury who had no access to medical aid. If Walton was able he would make special trips to assist them.⁷⁷

At the turn of the twentieth century, Walton and other CMS missionaries were to be part of a great period of change for missionaries working in Canada. In 1902, due to financial restraints, the London-based society announced its withdrawal from Canada.⁷⁸ This organization had been funding Canadian missions for years and felt Canada now had the resources to sustain itself and its missionaries. Some foreign missionaries would be granted approval to continue working if approved by the MSCC, the successor of the CMS. Also formed in 1902, the MSCC was to take charge of where to place missionaries for Canadian operations. The change was gradual over a twenty year period and saw a shift in how missionaries were to work, especially amongst Indigenous communities. Miller claims, “The shift meant an end to the reliance on the personnel and methods of the Church Missionary Society, whose Native church policy embraced

⁷⁴ William Walton to Daisy Walton, 25, March 1901, WGW, Box 1, From William 01, LUA.

⁷⁵ Walton, “Reindeer Walton,” 18.

⁷⁶ Walton, “Reindeer Walton,” 18.

⁷⁷ Morantz, *The While Man’s Gonna Getcha*, 73.

⁷⁸ Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 191.

Native languages.”⁷⁹ As previously discussed, in the case of Walton and other missionaries in Canada’s north, they relied on local languages and the knowledge of Indigenous people, for survival skills and cultural customs. The MSCC no longer encouraged this behaviour and purely supported an English-only approach to how the missionary worked.

Another change resulting from the CMS abandoning Canada and the MSCC taking over had to do with the funding of missions. Alan Lauffer Hayes states, “As the CMS withdrew from its Canadian work between 1903 and 1920, most English funding evaporated.”⁸⁰ It had been expected that when bishops and missionaries journeyed home to Europe on furlough they would raise money to support them once they returned to Canada. During the period of the CMS retreating from Canada, grants were reduced and firm decisions had to be made when delegating funding to mission projects. For missions deemed too costly by the MSCC, funding was to be distributed through the Federal Government’s DIA. Based in Ottawa, the decision makers of any funding were not familiar with the circumstances missionaries were facing. Walton became reliant on the Government’s partnership and aid to save the Inuit people.

During the period of gradually pulling CMS missionaries from Canada, Walton risked being forced to leave Great Whale River and return to England. He had firmly established himself within the community, marrying a Métis woman and having children, dedicating himself to learning the languages, and forming relations with his congregation who had great admiration for their ‘Little Minister’. In October 1912 John G. Anderson, Bishop of Moosonee, wrote a letter to the MSCC validating Walton’s work thus far, commending his missionary efforts. In his letter he notes Walton, “has done splendid work in that field during the last twenty years, bringing the Indians and Eskimo to a standard of Christianity, which has been a surprise to

⁷⁹ Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 415.

⁸⁰ Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*, 30.

prospectors and others, who have visited that district and who have given unsolicited testimony to the good results obtained.”⁸¹ Anderson hoped to retain Walton in the Ungava district, but the CMS lacked the ability financially to support Walton continuing his work. Anderson recognized Walton’s “thorough knowledge of the language and customs of the people make him indispensable to the mission.”⁸² Anderson also noted that Daisy was making invaluable contributions to Walton’s work. The Walton family spent a year in Birmingham on leave during 1912-1913 to raise money so that they could return to Fort George and Great Whale River. The official takeover of the MSCC did not occur until January 1, 1921, however, and until then, some missionaries remained unsure of their future. A general letter was sent out in July 1920 by the CMS to all it of its missionaries. The letter stated that missionaries from the Home Connexion [sic] would continue to have their stipends, furlough expenses and retirement funded by the CMS if they continued to be placed in Canada.⁸³ Missions in Canada’s north took the longest to sort and decide their fate. It took a long time for the CMS and MSCC authorities to come to a complete understanding and this left missionaries with a feeling of uncertainty.

Fortunately, Walton and his family were able to return to Fort George and continue their mission work under the MSCC. As the transition was in full effect in 1921, the Indigenous communities were not benefitting from the shift. Hayes writes, “CMS missionaries typically spent decades in Indian ministry, learned the languages, came to appreciate the cultures, shared the hardships, and were part of the communities.”⁸⁴ Under the policies of the MSCC, missionary tenures in Indigenous ministries became much shorter. One of the MSCC’s schemes was the Indian residential school system. These schools were run by Anglicans prior to the MSCC but

⁸¹ John G. Anderson to MSCC, 16, October 1912, WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: MSCC, LUA.

⁸² John G. Anderson to MSCC, 16, October 1912, WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: MSCC, LUA.

⁸³ F. Baylis to ‘all CMS missionaries’, 19, July 1920, WGW, Box 1, Missionary Correspondence, LUA.

⁸⁴ Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*, 30.

done in a more casual setting than Roman Catholic schools and other institutions that formed later on. “The schools began, it has been said, when missionaries and their families brought Indian orphans into their homes, or when they cared for children whose parents were away hunting or taught those whose parents wanted them to have a Euro-Canadian education.”⁸⁵ Before the Waltons had any children of their own, they had adopted a thirteen year old Inuit orphan named Lucy. She was deaf and the Waltons learned to communicate with her through sign language. Aside from teaching at church, this was the extent of Walton’s involvement in any form of education for Indigenous children, and he had no contact with the residential school system.

Despite being under the supervision of the MSCC, Walton continued his mission work as before without altering his methods. He continued to be a supporter of Indigenous languages while teaching English to the Cree and Inuit. One of the Walton’s greatest achievements in Canada’s north after the MSCC takeover was completing the *‘Eskimo to English’ Dictionary* in 1924. Walton and Daisy previously had experience translating and publishing prayer and hymn books in the local languages since 1913. He felt overwhelmed by all he had to accomplish during his visits to Great Whale River, and was inspired “to print a large number of hymn books and almanacs.”⁸⁶ He took note in his early years as a missionary that both the people at Fort George and Great Whale River did not possess books written in their own dialect. The books he and Daisy published were printed in multiple editions and praised for their popularity. Returning to the *‘Eskimo to English’ Dictionary*, Walton was considered to be, “instrumental in adapting the syllabic system of writing to the eastern James Bay Cree dialect.”⁸⁷ Working alongside another CMS missionary, Edmund James Peck, the two created the dictionary and it was published in

⁸⁵ Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*, 30.

⁸⁶ Morantz, *The While Man’s Gonna Getcha*, 73.

⁸⁷ Barter, “The Long Journey of a Forgotten People,” 268.

1924. Peck's interest in the project came from working with the Inuit in Hudson Bay and the time he spent learning Inuktitut for his missions.⁸⁸ As a model for the dictionary, Walton and Peck compiled data from *Erdman's 'Eskimo to German' Dictionary* from 1864.⁸⁹ The dictionary sold for six dollars and became widely popular and sought after.

Walton was aware of not only of the value this dictionary provided; he maintained a level of respect for the Inuktitut language. He wrote to his eldest daughter Violet, "The Eskimo language is the speck of a primitive untutored folk, yet its vocabulary is very large, its grammar complete, methodical and perfect, and its construction capable of expressing subtleties and combinations by inflection, unlike those of any tongue, springing from the well-known stories of human speech."⁹⁰ This publication had the potential to be taken advantage of by those who did not view Inuktitut in the same manner. Roman Catholic missionaries maintained a level of competition with the Anglicans for years regarding which church could baptize the most Indigenous people. With competing manners of luring in the most Indigenous people, the key to forming relations with them was through language. It was common for Anglicans to be in support of Christian literature and the concept of spreading God's message through words. Roman Catholics gained followers through the concept of the confessional and religious objects because the Indigenous responded enthusiastically to Roman Catholic crucifixes, rosaries, medals and pictures.⁹¹ Catholic priests made specific attempts with the Cree at Fort George while the Walton family was away from the area. As soon as he was notified of the Catholic presence in his mission region, Walton hastened back.⁹² The MSCC, sponsor of the publication, decided to

⁸⁸ Frédéric Laugrand, "Peck, Edmund James," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, accessed November 1, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/peck_edmund_james_15E.html.

⁸⁹ "Classifieds," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 1925, n.p., WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: Eskimo Dictionary, LUA.

⁹⁰ William Walton to Violet Walton, n.d., WGW, Box 3, General to be sorted, LUA.

⁹¹ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 133.

⁹² Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 151.

take special care not to publish a large number of dictionaries at least within its first edition. There was potential for copies to, “fall into the hands of the Roman Catholics, and facilitate their work to the undoing of our own.”⁹³ Copies were kept and issued by the MSCC head office to their own workers.

Upon Walton’s entry into Canada in 1892, he encountered new languages, manners of living and traditional customs that had been relied upon for generations. He did not enter his mission work desiring to erase what had been accomplished. He had great admiration for the people and made commitments to the Cree community by marrying Daisy Spencer. He spent years learning and adapting to the languages, and for the dedication he showed, he was respected by the people of Fort George and Great Whale River. Attendance at his services was high and often, people traveled from afar to witness him preach. During the period of change, he held his ground that his work in Canada’s north was not complete and was able to pursue his work under new management. Walton did not shift his perspective or methods to accommodate the MSCC but did his best to work with them and DIA. Chapter Four discusses more of Walton’s work with the Federal Government for the benefit of Indigenous people.

⁹³ C.E. Whittaker to Rev. J.G. Anderson, 15, November 1924, WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: Eskimo Dictionary, LUA.

Chapter Three: Daisy and William, a Team Effort

The Spencer family were some of the first Métis people Walton encountered when he arrived in Fort George in September 1892. The family offered him guidance and provided him with the tools he needed to adapt to their northern environment. The Spencers' Métis genealogy and years spent working in the fur trade for the HBC proved to be valuable assets for Walton. Daisy Spencer, daughter of HBC factor Miles Spencer, was considered a desirable partner in the late-nineteenth century. A third generation Métis woman, she was fluent in English and Cree, possessed European manners, and she had the ability to produce products for the fur trade. Walton witnessed Daisy's talents shortly after arriving to Fort George and soon fell in love with her. Shortly after, he was sent to Great Whale River where he would spend almost six months of each year for the next three decades. The couple's written correspondence was constant and most of their letters to each other survive, offering a look into the world of these lovers and how they coped with their separation. Walton and Daisy soon became a missionary duo working together preaching in churches, teaching English, and caring for both the Cree and Inuit in the Ungava district.

Since the late-eighteenth century, Indigenous women had been highly valued in the fur trade. Alliances between Indigenous women and fur traders at the trading posts were a central aspect of the fur trade's progress across Canada.⁹⁴ European men did not travel to Canada with their wives since it was believed European women could not cope in the environment. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it became accepted for European traders to marry Indigenous women; even if they had wives and children back in Europe. Not only was this a sign of affection between two individuals but, as Sylvia Van Kirk notes, "through marriage, the

⁹⁴ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 4.

trader was drawn into the Indian's kinship circle."⁹⁵ The women could perform tasks which the British or French had not yet mastered, such as sewing moccasins or making snowshoes, giving the traders more flexibility about where and when they could hunt.⁹⁶ With the marriage of the two parties, children were born forming a new culture called 'Métis'. Aside from being a blending of Indigenous and French heritage, Métis are also known to have English and Scottish backgrounds. Daisy's mother was born in Quebec and had Scottish ancestry. From the perspective of some Indigenous people, the mixed-race children were regarded, "as having superior physical attributes which made them better hunters and bolder warriors."⁹⁷ European traders believed their mixed-blood children would obtain English and Indigenous characteristics. These features would be present in the forms of habits of trade, language skills and behaviour more accustomed to English traditions.

Born at Fort George on August 30, 1873, Daisy Alice Spencer was one of ten children her parents Miles Spencer and Edith McLaren had together.⁹⁸ Miles was the son of Ann Sinclair and her husband John Hodges Spencer, a Chief Trader for the HBC.⁹⁹ An HBC family, Miles grew up in the fur trader at Fort George with his parents and gained momentum within his positions at the company from a clerk to a Jr. Chief Trader. His wife Edith was a Scot and her family the McLarens were prominent in Chicoutimi, Quebec for their role in politics and developing the forest industry.¹⁰⁰ European fur trade fathers sometimes sent their Métis children to Montreal and sometimes as far as England to be educated.¹⁰¹ Daisy's father did not pursue this option, and instead, Daisy grew up under the instruction of both her parents receiving a balanced

⁹⁵ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 29.

⁹⁶ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 54.

⁹⁷ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 46.

⁹⁸ Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur-Trade Family History," 250.

⁹⁹ "Biographical Sheet – Spencer, John Hodges," Hudson's Bay Company Archives, accessed July 10, 2016, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/s/spencer_john-hodges.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox," *Métis Voyageur* (Winter 2007): 7.

¹⁰¹ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 87.

education in both Cree and English languages and customs. When Daisy was nineteen years old, she met twenty-three year old Walton and was nudged by her father to get to know him and help him learn Cree and the customs of the region. She was also able to assist Walton in understanding the fur trade and how the economy functioned. She instructed him on how to attain the resources he would need to survive in Great Whale River.



F3.

Source: William (Bill) Holmes

The Spencer Family in 1899 in Fort George, James Bay. Note that Lucy, the Walton's adopted daughter, is not in the photograph. She may have been excluded due to no being related to the Spencers by blood or marriage.

Back row: Walter John, Edna, Stella, William Walton, Winnie.
 Front row: Chrissie, Lillian, Miles Spencer (holding Grace Walton),
 Cameron, Edith (née McLaren) Spencer, Daisy Alice (née Spencer)
 Walton, (holding John Walton).

After spending half a year in Fort George, Walton was assigned to Great Whale River and had to be apart from Daisy. The two were already in the process of courting each other, and while they were apart, their many letters to each other recorded the trials and tribulations each of them faced. These letters were important to the couple and very few are believed to have been destroyed. Many of their letters have survived suggesting, as historian Françoise Noël explains,

that, “they were precious and kept for future reference, not just thrown away after receipt.”¹⁰² While Noël’s reference of letters dates to a period decades before Walton and Daisy meeting, this treatment of letters and writing correspondence remained present in remote locations such as Canada’s north. While in Great Whale River, Walton performed multiple services in Inuktitut and English. He continued to strengthen his skills at understanding and writing in both Cree and Inuktitut. Despite the demands he faced, he took great care in writing to Daisy; sometimes several times in a single day. Fortunately for Walton, although he constantly wrote he seemed to have possibly greater access to paper at times displaying that it was possible for materials to be sent this far. This was likely with assistance from Daisy since he would ask her to send more supplies. He often wrote only single-sided, whereas Daisy wrote double-sided in her letters to him. In Walton’s absence, Daisy continued to strengthen her religion and connection to God; hoping that one day she would be able to work with Walton in his mission work. He wrote to her, “I am proud of you in your activity in God’s work and doubly proud because you will learn to be a help to me.”¹⁰³ He hoped that in his absence Daisy would, “Be a brave girl and wait patiently on God for he never will leave you nor will I be ever forsake you.”¹⁰⁴ This was to assure Daisy that while Walton was far away and for a long period of time, he would continue to think of Daisy. Walton placed God quite often in his letters to Daisy, quoting lines from the Bible as headers. In the nineteenth century, it was correspondence like this that was known to play a key role in maintaining a couple’s relationship when apart.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Françoise Noël, *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780-1870* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 260.

¹⁰³ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 10, April 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹⁰⁴ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 10, April 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹⁰⁵ Noël, *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada*, 15.

A theme that was constant within their correspondence was their mutual feeling of loneliness. Walton often wrote about how he felt being in such barren land. “I feel it so hard when this separation from you darling and I know you must feel it very much too.”¹⁰⁶ Daisy also expressed moments when she was growing impatient that Walton had been away so long.¹⁰⁷ Along with mentioning how lonely they felt, often there were lines of very personal and romantic gestures to each other. In a letter to Walton, Daisy wrote, “I could go on telling you how much I love you. Oh so very very dearly. I do want to kiss you and love you so much.”¹⁰⁸ Walton often reciprocated Daisy’s feelings in his letters to her. “My mouth waters at the thought of you being near again. What I need very much here love is a small house and a pretty little wife like my sweet little Dollie, and then you could show them the practical part my love.”¹⁰⁹ ‘Dollie’ was the nickname Walton had for her and Daisy referred to Walton as ‘Willie’ in their correspondence. Before their marriage in February 1896, Walton wanted to offer Daisy the chance to abandon the idea of them being together. This was not due to dislike for her; he was concerned about her having to live out his missionary work and lifestyle. “You have chosen a very hard life, my love, and I want you to consider it well now, so that you will not be disappointed afterwards.”¹¹⁰ Daisy did not end her relationship with Walton due to the potential hardships she would have to face and the repeated periods of separation.

Walton had to be granted permission to marry by the Church of England. Feeling overwhelmed by all he had to accomplish in Great Whale River and the demands of Fort George,

¹⁰⁶ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 21, August 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹⁰⁷ Daisy Walton to William Walton, 18, April 1898, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹⁰⁸ Daisy Spencer to William Walton, 5, March 1894, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹⁰⁹ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 26, March 1894, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹¹⁰ William Walton to Daisy Spencer, 7, September 1893, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

he made the request in September 1894. It was not until February 21, 1896 and the arrival of Reverend E. Richards at Fort George that the marriage was approved and performed.¹¹¹ Once Walton and Daisy were married, she was allowed formally to take on the role of a missionary at Fort George in Walton's absence. She had spent a great deal of time at church, in Bible class, and singing in the choir. Being fluent in English and Cree, she was able to conduct both English and Cree services in the community. Daisy acted as a double for Walton at Fort George in his absence.

Daisy was not the first female missionary for the Anglican Church in Canada. Many women in Europe were envious of the men who were allowed to be missionaries. They longed to do the type of work they did in foreign lands. The CMS had, until the 1880s, been able to resist the demands of women but could no longer ignore their pleas.¹¹² To earn a role as a missionary, women would marry missionaries so they could be granted permission to participate in the work.¹¹³ If not through marriage then women could enter missionary work with a father, brother or son. The training of these women before entering Canada took up to two years. It was a small community of Anglican missionary women who worked in the north.¹¹⁴ Once they arrived in Canada's north, many of these women did not instantly take to the isolation, climate, and living conditions. By contrast, Daisy was already living in Fort George and was well versed in the region and its people.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Waltons adopted thirteen year old Lucy shortly after they were married. Together they had six other children: Grace, John, Violet, William, Olive and

¹¹¹ Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 17.

¹¹² Rutherforddale, *Women and the White Man's God*, 4.

¹¹³ Rutherforddale, *Women and the White Man's God*, xii.

¹¹⁴ Rutherforddale, *Women and the White Man's God*, 64.

Robert.¹¹⁵ Walton detested the periods of time he was away at Great Whale River, leaving Daisy to tend to the children on her own and do work for the church. In Walton's absence, Daisy wrote to Walton about their children, informing him about their activities and behaviour. Shortly after Grace's birth, Daisy wrote to Walton, "As soon as I am better I shall begin to make out little girlie's clothes so that she will be dressed like a civilized baby when her daddy comes."¹¹⁶ Daisy often struggled with toothaches and having some medical training, Walton may have inquired to be kept alert to her situation in the event he could offer assistance. Another highlight Daisy informed Walton about was when Grace was learning sign language so she would be able to communicate with Lucy.¹¹⁷ Some highlights for the Waltons were when the entire family was granted leave for a year by the CMS. The family spent their two periods of leave in Birmingham, England from 1899 to 1900 and from 1912 to 1913. The Great War prevented them from making additional visits within the decade.¹¹⁸

Daisy also had to be tolerant through periods of Walton being absent from the country. Daisy's father Miles retired from the HBC in 1899, and "embarked the family on a journey of nearly sixteen hundred kilometres to settle in Southampton, a small town on the shores of Lake Huron in southern Ontario."¹¹⁹ Southampton and the Saugeen River area along Lake Huron were known to be a common retreat for Métis families of the HBC upon retirement.¹²⁰ Both the McLarens and Spencers were especially prominent in the area. In November 1906, Walton travelled with their son John to England where they remained for several months; John attending

¹¹⁵ Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 18.

¹¹⁶ Daisy Walton to William Walton, 26, March 1897, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹¹⁷ Daisy Walton to William Walton, 18, April 1898, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 2/, LUA.

¹¹⁸ Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 18.

¹¹⁹ Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur-Trade Family History," 249.

¹²⁰ Patsy Lou Wilson McArthur, "'Where the White Dove Flew Up': The Saguingue Métis Community and the Fur Trade at Southampton on Lake Huron." in *The Long Journey of a Forgotten People: Métis Identities and Family Histories*, ed. Ute Lischke and David T. McNab (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), 329-34.

school and Walton preaching all over England. During Walton's time in England and other extensive journeys, far beyond Great Whale River, Daisy and the children made their way to Southampton, Ontario to live with the Spencers. It was also while Walton was away in England that Daisy gave birth to their third child Violet on January 12, 1901.¹²¹ Unfortunately, the Waltons became victims of loss as well in their family. Lucy, Grace, Olive and William all passed by 1916 due to forms of illness and disease; aside from their son William whose cause of death was unknown.¹²²

Despite the hardships, the deaths of four of their seven children, and their time apart from each other, Walton and Daisy were still "the perfect team" working with the Cree and Inuit.¹²³ As mentioned in Chapter Two, Daisy and Walton were responsible for the translation of hymn and prayer books into the Cree language. This was an example of how they promoted Christianity, but did not limit the Cree when it came to language. They continued to teach English, however, by having these books available in Cree it allowed for a wider audience and greater success. Also, they expected to profit from the publishing and selling of their books. Walton waited patiently for compensation from the publishing company in London so he could send the money home to Daisy.¹²⁴ One of their books was *Peep of the Day*, published in 1901, and, due to its popularity it went through multiple printings. *Peep of the Day* consisted of Christian sermons translated into Cree allowing for wider access to the religion in the communities that were not fluent in English. Having learned Cree himself, Walton was able to read from this prayer book during Indigenous services. Of the many books Walton and Daisy together completed, she received acknowledgment for each on all title pages. For Daisy to have

¹²¹ Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 18.

¹²² Walton, "Reindeer Walton," 18.

¹²³ Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur-Trade Family History," 268.

¹²⁴ William Walton to Daisy Walton, 1, January 1901, WGW, Box 1, From William 01, LUA.

received such recognition is significant to how vital she was to the projects and without her, it is unlikely Walton would have been able to complete them. Their Christian hymns and scriptures are still used today.¹²⁵

Walton and Daisy were indeed the perfect missionary pair in Canada's north. Walton was fortunate to have met the Spencer family upon his arrival to Fort George in 1892. As a mentor, Miles Spencer offered Walton great insight into the area, especially regarding the decrease in caribou, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. Also, that Spencer would have a young and charming daughter who had personal experience and knowledge of not only the fur trade, but also the local languages proved to be a great asset to Walton. The couple exchanged romantic feelings almost instantly, but were soon forced to be apart for several months of the year. For both of them, the act of constantly writing letters to each other had many purposes. For themselves it was to alleviate feelings of loneliness, especially in Walton's case since he was in a more isolated setting. The letters also offered a sense of normality; for Walton to hear about his children growing or Daisy preaching and singing in church it made the distance not feel so far. Their marriage gave Daisy greater ability and authority to lead the community and congregation in the work of God. By the time Walton retired from Fort George and Great Whale River as a missionary in 1924, together he and Daisy had baptized 1,754 Indigenous people and published five books.¹²⁶ This grand record of accomplishment and overall success of Walton's Anglican mission was due to the equal dedication from his wife Daisy.

¹²⁵ Barter, "Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur-Trade Family History," 268.

¹²⁶ "Indian and Eskimo People are Suffering Starvation, says Anglican Missionary," *The Globe*, February 11, 1928, 15.

Chapter Four: The Reindeer Project

When Walton was sent to the Ungava district, he understood his mission to involve teaching English, baptizing the Cree and Inuit in the Church of England, and offering some medical assistance to the people. It was not long before he recognized the predicament which the Inuit and Cree were facing. For much of the nineteenth century, the people of Fort George, Great Whale River and other communities in the district had depended on caribou herds that frequented the area each year. These herds of caribou disappeared in the early 1880s, forcing people to depend on seal and smaller game which were limited as well. As the main source of food, clothing and bedding, caribou allowed communities to be self-sufficient. The loss of the caribou led to desperation as the years continued and many families starved to death in the process. Alerted to and witnessing these conditions, Walton began making strides in 1913 to find a solution to this growing problem. Through discussions with the locals and research, he believed the only way to save the Inuit and Cree of the region was to introduce reindeer from Alaska into Ungava. Over a course of almost fifteen years, along with performing his other missionary duties, Walton attempted to counter the Federal Government's claim that Inuit and Cree could not be saved. Walton faced great challenges in this endeavour, but did not end his efforts upon rejection, and strove to gain national attention to find a permanent form of relief for these Indigenous communities who he referred to as 'his people'. The Reindeer Project was a natural extension of his CMS-styled mission work. By domesticating the reindeer, the Inuit communities would be able to create a self-sustainable economy for themselves, much like during the nineteenth century fur trade period.

The introduction of European settlement led to bonds with Indigenous groups as they sought after the materials and skills the Indigenous possessed. The creation of agreements and

partnerships began with an understanding of cooperation and collaboration, but over time led to disagreement and misunderstanding. Arthur J. Ray states that initially, European traders recognized the Indigenous had the skills and experience to act as their guides and provisioners in the early stages of their arrival to Canada.¹²⁷ In return for their expertise, Indigenous groups received access to some of the materials the Europeans possessed such as weapons and other tools. Eventually, business relations between the two parties grew as many Indigenous men became paid employees of the NWC and HBC. Women married into the trading families forming kinship ties with companies.¹²⁸ In the mid-1810s, a shift started to form in how the two parties worked together. The growth of the trading companies led to Canada's expansion and communities of settlers formed across the country. Wildlife resources and land began to dwindle for Indigenous groups as it was overtaken by the white communities.¹²⁹ Indigenous communities had no legal entitlement to the land or its resources. In 1821 the newly merged HBC monopoly created programs which prohibited regions for hunting and trapping as well as specific seasons of the year when these dependent activities could not be conducted.¹³⁰

Indigenous groups were also shocked by what Europeans brought with them to Canada, diseases. Epidemics of illness including smallpox and measles and strands of influenza, "came as unintentional but inexorable parts of the exchange between previously separated ecosystems."¹³¹ Not having encountered these European infections before, the immune systems of Indigenous people suffered as a consequence. Identified by the HBC in the early-nineteenth century to be a problem that was killing off their Indigenous partners in the fur trade, "the company worked to

¹²⁷ Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1996), 70-1.

¹²⁸ Ray, *I Have Lived Here*, 88.

¹²⁹ Ray, *I Have Lived Here*, 109-11.

¹³⁰ Ray, *I Have Lived Here*, 162.

¹³¹ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, xii.

prevent contagious diseases” through the use of distribution of vaccines.¹³² When missionaries first arrived in the 1830s they were able to assist in this effort as well by distributing vaccines and aiding the ill as best they could. Unfortunately, the HBC’s hold on Canada began to erode in the 1850s and in 1869 the Dominion of Canada purchased Rupert’s Land; taking over the largest region HBC had controlled for two hundred years.¹³³

The Dominion of Canada became the ruling party of the land and in turn, responsible for the Indigenous people throughout the country. Dubbed as ‘wards of the state’, the needs of the Indigenous were to be provided by the Federal Government. The management of this was controlled by the *Indian Act*, created in 1876. Prior to the Act, some Indigenous groups had already formed treaties as means of protection of land and guaranteed rights hunt and trap.¹³⁴ This piece of legislation “afforded the Government sweeping powers with regards to First Nations identity, political structures, governance, cultural practices and education.”¹³⁵ Canadian authorities were left with the obligation of controlling epidemics still affecting Indigenous people. Their approach was lackluster compared to the HBC and were not prepared to handle the scale of the crises at present and to come.¹³⁶ Left unprotected by any Treaty, the eastern side of James Bay and Hudson Bay was not regulated by the Government. Without an agreement, aid or relief was limited to this region as Walton notes throughout his time as a missionary.

Long-time employee of the HBC, Miles Spencer was one of the first to educate Walton about how Fort George and surrounding area had been altered over the course of his life. He was able to recall specifically the year 1883 when, “there were a number of great fires along the East

¹³² Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 59.

¹³³ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 79.

¹³⁴ William B. Henderson, “Indian Act,” The Canadian Encyclopedia, accessed July 10, 2016, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act/>.

¹³⁵ Henderson, “Indian Act.”

¹³⁶ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 88-9.

Coast of James' Bay to Moose Factory in the South, and it was after this that we noticed the disappearance of these Caribou."¹³⁷ Typically, caribou would still return to the region that had burned over to feed on the new growth, but this herd did not return. Spencer and other area hunters believed that when they left due to fires, wolves followed them and either killed them off or warned them not to return.¹³⁸ This scarcity of caribou had lasting impacts on the people who found it more difficult to obtain sources for survival. The HBC trading posts did have stores where goods could be purchased, but high prices often prevented Cree and Inuit especially from acquiring the food and skins they desired. There was also a greater lack of trust between the HBC and Inuit, compared to the Cree. The HBC limited the days that the Inuit could enter the trading post and its stores.¹³⁹

After 1883, signs of decline for the Cree and Inuit were evident. From 1889 to 1891, twenty percent of the Cree at Rupert's House died from starvation.¹⁴⁰ As well, from 1892 to 1893, one hundred and fifty Cree starved to death south of Fort Chimo; at the northeastern point of the Ungava district.¹⁴¹ Disease and starvation went hand in hand for the Cree and Inuit. If they were starving, then they remained unable to maintain their strength and fight off diseases. If they were ill, then they were too weak to hunt for the limited amount of small game and fish that were present. As mentioned in Chapter Two, a measles epidemic inflicted the people of Fort George from 1901 to 1902, and as a result Daisy and Walton lost their daughter Grace who succumbed

¹³⁷ "Miles Spencer to William Walton, 2, September 1918, Original Papers: Letters and Papers of Individual Missionaries, Catechists and Others, 1917-1930," in *Church Missionary Society Archive. Section V: Missions to the Americas. Part 3: North-West Canada, 1822-1930*. London: Church Missionary Society, 2000, (microfilm).

¹³⁸ William Walton to Daisy Walton, 17, February 1928, WGW, Box 1, Personal Correspondence Daisy and W.G 3/, LUA.

¹³⁹ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha*, 45.

¹⁴¹ William Walton to Charles Stewart, 16, April 1925, WGW, Box 1, William 02, LUA.

to the disease. Walton “described it as a cruel time when there was not a tent where they were not mourning; he estimated one hundred had died at Great Whale River and Fort George.”¹⁴²

In the mid-1910s, Walton began addressing the poor living conditions experienced by the Cree, and Inuit in particular, to the DIA in Ottawa. Hoping to capture the attention of parliamentary officials, he could speak on behalf of Cree and Inuit and inquire about receiving additional relief until a permanent solution could be found. He wrote, “The Eskimos are deplorably destitute,” and forced to dress in duck and seal skins; as well as those of their dogs who had died.¹⁴³ Since no Indian Agent was supervising this region, Walton had to be the voice but he did attempt to rally support from others who had witnessed the tragedy of the region. American filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty spent six years in the Inuit territory, also visiting the Belcher islands east of Great Whale River. During his time exploring the region, he claimed Walton’s people of Fort George and Great Whale River were, “the cleanest living in every way and the most honest outfit of the ‘bay’.”¹⁴⁴ Flaherty’s comment regarding the cleanliness speaks to the circumstances that Indigenous people were not all heathens or savages, as had been portrayed in stories and reports by visitors. He felt they were deserving of additional aid which could only improve their situation. Impressed by Walton’s work thus far, Flaherty agreed about the desperate need for medical officers and equipment and hoped Walton would be able to convince the Government to provide adequate aid.

Having gained an understanding about the important role caribou had in the region, Walton pursued his own investigation to find a resolution. In 1892 Reverend Sheldon Jackson,

¹⁴² Morantz, *The White Man’s Gonna Getcha*, 44.

¹⁴³ William Walton to Department of Indian Affairs, 15, June 1913, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁴⁴ “Robert J. Flaherty to William Walton, 3, December 1917, Original Papers: Letters and Papers of Individual Missionaries, Catechists and Others, 1917-1930,” in *Church Missionary Society Archive. Section V: Missions to the Americas. Part 3: North-West Canada, 1822-1930*. London: Church Missionary Society, 2000, (microfilm).

an American missionary, was responsible for planning the importation of 1,280 reindeer from Siberia into Alaska.¹⁴⁵ Placed with Alaskan Inuit on mission, Jackson was an immense supporter of education and making it accessible. Like the eastern shores of James Bay and Hudson Bay, caribou were no longer present in Alaska as they once had been. Scientists determined this loss was due to hunting, overkilling and shift in migratory route in the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ Research led Jackson to Siberia, an area with large breeding grounds for reindeer. First cousins of caribou, reindeer were made up of the same genus and would be able to adapt to the Alaskan region. Through donations and support from Congress, Jackson completed the agreement to establish a Reindeer Station for them to live and grow. The 1,280 reindeer arrived to Alaska by 1902 and boomed to a population of 70,243 by 1915.¹⁴⁷ These reindeer were grouped into farms by Inuit families, owned by companies and used for sledding and sold for their meat and skins. This American plan had been well executed and supported by Congress. Walton hoped to gain the same support from Ottawa.

Walton continued to gather data to support the feasibility of his plan to domesticate reindeer in the eastern James Bay and Hudson Bay region. He contacted Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, a medical missionary, who was responsible for importing 250 reindeer from Norway to Newfoundland in January 1908.¹⁴⁸ Within four years' time, Grenfell's herd grew to over 1,200. After explaining his plan and the motive for the idea, Grenfell encouraged Walton in his plan and

¹⁴⁵ William Walton to Unknown "Reindeer for Hudson Bay. A Short Statement as to the Need William Walton to Department of Indian Affairs," 25, March 1925, P205- WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁴⁶ John Taliaferro, *In a Far Country: The True Story of a Mission, a Marriage, a Murder, and the Remarkable Reindeer Rescue of 1898* (New York: Perseus Book Group, 2006), 6.

¹⁴⁷ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, n.d., WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, article re: food, life conditions, dictionary), LUA.

¹⁴⁸ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, *Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1922,) 60.

warned him of the sort of environment reindeer would not thrive in.¹⁴⁹ He suggested barren lands in the north deemed valueless for agriculture had still proven to be suitable for domesticated deer who persisted to find food to survive. The similar situation in Alaska proved successful when Jackson's reindeer were able to grow and thrive in a region deemed unsuitable for human agriculture.

Remarkably, Walton was able to gather the attention of Ottawa for his reindeer scheme in late 1918, however, there were many logistics involved before the plan could be executed. The eastern side of James Bay and Hudson Bay was in the province of Quebec; therefore Walton's negotiations were with the Federal Government and the provincial government of Quebec. Agreements needed to be made to provide property for a reindeer station and grazing for the animals. Arrangements for the purchasing of reindeer were being coordinated with the North American Reindeer Company of South Bend, Indiana. The initial agreement made was to purchase 300 reindeer from the company at \$50 per animal and the herd would be of equal gender.¹⁵⁰ Walton's 300 hundred reindeer were to be part of a larger herd consisting of 1,500; the remaining 1,200 reindeer were to reside on the western side of Hudson Bay. The North American Reindeer Company secured grazing rights for 1,200 reindeer allowing the herd to breed and eventually develop into a commercial enterprise to supply the meat market of Canada and the United States.¹⁵¹ After making the 3,500 mile long journey to the west coast of James Bay with guidance from Lapland herders, it would be up to Walton to plan for the final stretch of

¹⁴⁹ Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell to Harry Ford, 8, August 1916, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵⁰ F.S. Lawrence to William Walton, 21, December 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵¹ "William Walton to Lomer Gouin, 12, September 1918, Original Papers: Letters and Papers of Individual Missionaries, Catechists and Others, 1917-1930," in *Church Missionary Society Archive. Section V: Missions to the Americas. Part 3: North-West Canada, 1822-1930*. London: Church Missionary Society, 2000, (microfilm).

the journey to the east coast of James Bay for his 300 reindeer.¹⁵² Walton was able to arrange the use of a steamship to ferry the reindeer herd to the other side of the Bay upon their estimated arrival in spring 1920. Aside from transportation, the Federal Government also refused to pay the \$15,000 bill to purchase the 300 reindeer. The first payment of \$5,000 was to be due January 1, 1919. Walton was given the task of raising the money on his own. Technically, if Walton was to supervise this purchase and handle the money, the reindeer would belong to him and he could disperse them how he pleased. Walton asked for the Government to pay for an additional ten reindeer, “to offset against any possible loss on route.”¹⁵³

Eventually, Minister of the Interior Arthur Meighen assumed the obligation of this cost on behalf of the Government.¹⁵⁴ Walton did receive an initial shock while corresponding with Meighen and F.S. Lawrence, the general manager of the North American Reindeer Company. After viewing the contract, it stated only 100 reindeer were being purchased.¹⁵⁵ Walton soon learned that the intention was to provide Walton with the 300 reindeer over a three year period; 100 reindeer each year.¹⁵⁶ These reindeer were coming from the larger herd on the west coast of James Bay. Walton also was responsible for ensuring ferry transportation for each herd of 100 reindeer. Walton had a few questions for Meighen and additional requests of relief for the Cree and Inuit. He asked for reassurance, since the Government would be making the purchase, that

¹⁵² William Walton to Arthur Meighen, n.d., WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, articles re: food, life conditions, dictionary, LUA.

¹⁵³ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, n.d., WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, articles re: food, life conditions, dictionary, LUA.

¹⁵⁴ Duncan Campbell Scott to William Walton, 8, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵⁵ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, 20, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵⁶ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, 20, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

they would be delegating a Superintendent to organize and administer the scheme.¹⁵⁷ Also, Walton wanted assurance that there would be, “two families of trained Lapland herders to inaugurate the enterprise which would seem to me to be an essential element in the undertaking.”¹⁵⁸ Walton had limited control at this point in the arrangements and only hoped for positive results. Knowing that this project was set to happen, he did not stop fighting for the Cree and Inuit. He continued to inquire of Meighen regarding temporary relief, Treaty rights, a medical officer, hospitals, industrial training, and education.¹⁵⁹ The arrival of reindeer would not eliminate all the problems Walton’s people were facing, but their tenacity encouraged him to continue advocating for them.

The scheme to purchase 300 reindeer from the North American Reindeer Company had been planned, but it did not proceed. Before making such an investment, the Government wanted to conduct its own investigation. This was to ensure the reindeer could make the long journey and that the environment in eastern James Bay and Hudson Bay region up to northern Quebec would satisfy the animals’ needs. Walton was discouraged that the 1918 plan did not occur, however, while the Government conducted their investigation he travelled, published and continued to alert people in Canada and beyond that reindeer were a solution to the ailing 1,000 Cree and 800 Inuit of his mission community.

In summer 1919, Walton travelled north again to Great Whale River to conduct his own investigation for the Department of the Interior, as well as the government of Quebec. His findings were published in *The Globe*. In his search, Walton looked for, “possibilities for fish

¹⁵⁷ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, 20, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵⁸ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, 20, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁵⁹ William Walton to Arthur Meighen, 20, November 1918, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

and game and also to locate a reindeer station for domestic reindeer.”¹⁶⁰ The reindeer station would serve as the centre where the reindeer would be kept, unless already delegated to Cree and Inuit families. Working with a dozen Inuit people during his search, Walton was able to come to the conclusion that, “there are no fish in any quantity.”¹⁶¹ Also, the winter season which had just passed, resulted in the worst harvest for game in the people’s history. Seven people died from starvation in Great Whale River during the winter season. Had a greater quality and quantity of relief been provided by the Government, the deaths might have been avoided. Walton proved to be an appropriate reviewer of the situation, since by 1920 he had spent twenty-eight years living among the Cree and Inuit of Fort George and Great Whale River. He understood the realities of their lifestyle having shared in it.

Walton’s writing campaign on the subject of saving the lives of the Cree and Inuit with the domestication of reindeer remained ongoing for almost a decade. He did not linger or refuse to share with the public some of the more horrific and shocking stories. Some of the material he shared included how it was, “not an uncommon thing for these people to have to resort to mice, roots and berries for many days at a stretch to avoid starvation.”¹⁶² He wanted both the Government and public to understand the people were Canadians just like them, however, they were not experiencing anywhere near a similar lifestyle. L.G. Maver, HBC Post Manager for Great Whale River recognized, “hunters are unable to supply proper food and materials for their families with the conditions being so much against them.”¹⁶³ Walton repeatedly told stories of the people’s desperation in his speeches, letters, and articles. To *The Globe* Walton wrote. “It is

¹⁶⁰ “Saving Indians from Starvation,” *The Globe*, October 17, 1919, 9.

¹⁶¹ “Saving Indians from Starvation,” October 17, 1919, 9.

¹⁶² William Walton to Department of Indian Affairs, 1920, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, article re: food, life conditions, dictionary), LUA.

¹⁶³ William Walton to Department of Indian Affairs, 1920, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, article re: food, life conditions, dictionary), LUA.

customary for these suffering people to cut the moss off the rocks and boil it till it forms a jelly.”¹⁶⁴ This was accompanied by the boiling of bones from any remains that could be devoured, often from bones and carcasses of dogs that had died from diseases. One instance occurred in 1912 when an Inuit widow lived off the flesh of her two daughters, then eventually starved to death herself.¹⁶⁵ Acts of cannibalism were rare, but also evidence to how few food sources were available.

Although it had cancelled the 1918 reindeer scheme, the Federal Government remained interested in the idea of domesticating herds of large game in Canada’s Arctic and sub-Arctic. It was not their intent to establish a small herd of a few hundred for Walton’s people, but to potentially to create a commercial game industry in northern Canada. Miners and scientists believed there to be, “great unknown probabilities of mineral wealth in this region. There are large iron deposits in the Belcher Islands and the Nastapokas, but it is difficult to attract prospectors to a foodless country.”¹⁶⁶ The domestication of large game would potentially create a stable market and attract people from the south into the northern region to work and create sustainable living. Preliminary investigations, including Walton’s findings, led to the establishment of a Royal Commission in May 1919.¹⁶⁷ The “Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada” was a two year endeavour examining two different species of large game which could potentially be domesticated and thrive in Canada’s north.

¹⁶⁴ “Earnest Appeal is Made for the Indians and Eskimos Starving in North Country,” *The Globe*, February 11, 1928, 17.

¹⁶⁵ William Walton to Charles Stewart, 16, April 1925, WGW, Box 2, From William 02, LUA.

¹⁶⁶ William Walton to Unknown, 25, March 1925, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, article re: food, life conditions, dictionary), LUA.

¹⁶⁷ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 7.

Scientists and explorers were able to provide evidence and first-hand accounts regarding the probability of domesticating reindeer and musk-ox with prosperous results. The two species of large game were compared for the resources their bodies provided, the type of environment they flourished in, recommended herd sizes and potential threats of each animal. Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson stated, “The development of a large reindeer and musk-ox herd in Northern Canada will represent a very important addition to the meat production of the Dominion.”¹⁶⁸ Meighen claimed, “There is no reasonable doubt as to the possibility of reindeer being able to live and thrive in most parts of northern Canada.”¹⁶⁹ Remarks in the Royal Commission Report explained how the Cree and Inuit would be involved in establishing potential herds. It was apparent, “The creation and development of such herds will provide reliable and commercial food and clothing supplies for the natives, both Esquimaux and Indians.”¹⁷⁰ An area of concern regarding the Inuit was if they would prove to be capable herders of large game, specifically reindeer. In the report, Walton was given the opportunity to provide testimony regarding what reindeer would do for his people. He made it clear, despite others’ allegations the Indigenous would overkill large game, “he had no hesitation in stating that any tame reindeer located there would be quite safe from attack by either Indians or Esquimaux.”¹⁷¹

The Royal Commission Report surveyed several locations for potential reindeer station facilities for the production of the meat and skins. Walton’s Ungava district was determined to be

¹⁶⁸ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 18.

¹⁷⁰ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 21.

¹⁷¹ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 26.

well suited for reindeer with an ample supply of vegetation for them.¹⁷² The Royal Commission noted the only roadblock to Ungava was that because the district, “forms part of the province of Quebec, the co-operation of the provincial authorities would be necessary in arranging for the establishment of experimental herds on that peninsula.”¹⁷³ After the Royal Commission was completed in 1921, one of its recommendations called for, “small experimental REINDEER herds be established in a number of such localities as may, after searching Departmental investigation, be found most desirable in points of vegetation and otherwise.”¹⁷⁴ Walton was granted the approval to receive a herd of reindeer from Alaska for the Ungava district. Walton and his close followers in the reindeer plan believed the agreement and process would take effect immediately in 1921. Soon, it was realized, “The reindeer may not be ready for shipment this year but Mr. Walton was assured that he would get them as soon as possible.”¹⁷⁵ In the meantime, all Walton could do was to continue advocating and voicing the pleas of the Cree and Inuit who were continuing to starve.

Walton retired from the MSCC in 1924, due to health problems, and the family moved to Toronto, Ontario. Despite retiring as a missionary, Walton continued to be the strongest supporter of the Cree and Inuit in the hopes of reindeer being domesticated in Ungava. In 1925, Walton noted that the change of Government in 1921, after the report on the Royal Commission was released, caused an interruption in carrying out the policy.¹⁷⁶ He was unsure if the new Government, under William Lyon Mackenzie King, would be as inclined as its predecessor to

¹⁷² Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 25.

¹⁷³ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 26.

¹⁷⁴ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Possibilities of the Reindeer and Musk-ox Industries in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Regions of Canada, 36.

¹⁷⁵ “Natives Starve in the Frozen North,” *The Globe*, March 21, 1921, 6.

¹⁷⁶ William Walton to Unknown, 25, March 1925, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence – reports, article re: food, life conditions, dictionary), LUA.

follow through with the project. Walton anticipated that the amount of the reindeer would be more than his original goal of 300, due to the plan for a full commercial industry to be developed. He believed that the expense of importing the reindeer was causing a nervous hesitancy for the Government, stalling them from taking action.¹⁷⁷ The Cree and Inuit especially continued to have limited resources while the Government delayed the reindeer plan. Walton requested to have reindeer skins from Alaska sent to the east coast of Hudson Bay for relief.¹⁷⁸ Due to costs, a counter measure was made to provide tanned buffalo hides and Walton agreed. Walton continued to investigate and gather the opinions of professionals regarding the possibility of importing a herd of reindeer into Ungava. He did receive some negative concerns from Maver about the idea including worries about the length of time it would take to drive the reindeer over 3,000 miles. Fears also included the likelihood of the herd becoming scattered once they were to cross the Mackenzie River and the difficulty of finding food for so many animals during the winter.¹⁷⁹ It was such a long driver for the reindeer, the possibility of casualties from the herd seemed highly probable.

In 1928 the Federal Government decided that a reindeer station would be suitable at the northern point of the Mackenzie Delta in the Northwest Territories. Still hoping for a similar plan in Ungava, Walton showed greater energy in newspaper articles regarding the dire need of help in the north. Likely referring to Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent for the DIA, Walton stated, “the latest news from the district is that the amount allowed by his department is only sufficient to assist the widows and cripples whereas all are in dire need of help.”¹⁸⁰ Walton wanted readers of the newspaper to imagine the Cree and Inuit as not that different and to

¹⁷⁷ William Walton to L.G. Maver, 1, May 1925, WGW, Box 2, (reindeer?) HBC Correspondence, LUA.

¹⁷⁸ O.S. Finnie to William Walton, 2, June 1925, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence (account purchases) 1921-1924, LUA.

¹⁷⁹ William Walton to L.G. Maver, 1, May 1925, WGW, Box 2, (reindeer?) HBC Correspondence, LUA.

¹⁸⁰ “Starving Canadians,” *The Globe*, February 11, 1928, 4.

envision such poor treatment towards their fellow Canadians. During Walton's thirty-two years as a missionary living among the Cree and Inuit in Ungava, 357 of them had died from starvation or sickness.¹⁸¹ Additionally, he wrote, "We white people, who boast of the enormous wealth of Canada – a land taken from the natives – owe it to them that they are not left to perish through the lack of necessities of life. It is the only great district in the Dominion where there is not a resident doctor, Indian Agent, hospital, or representative of the R.C.M.P."¹⁸²

On June 10, 1929, Walton finally received news from the Minister of the Interior, Charles Stewart, with whom he had kept in constant communication over the years regarding any updates on the reindeer plan.¹⁸³ Stewart informed Walton of the results returned by an Arctic botanist and an Arctic biologist, hired by the Government to study the potential of reindeer domestication. "They were sent to Alaska where they spent some time studying reindeer farming as practiced in that country and they then trekked across the northern part of the continent to the Mackenzie Delta in the vicinity of which they selected an area which is thought to be suitable for reindeer."¹⁸⁴ As a result of their findings, a contract had been signed with the Lomen Reindeer Company to purchase a herd of 3,000 reindeer.¹⁸⁵ At a cost of \$75 per reindeer, the total bill was \$225,000.¹⁸⁶ It was anticipated it would take over a year to transport the herd the 1,800 miles to the new Reindeer Station. This did not provide immediate relief to Walton's Cree and Inuit people. Upon the herd's arrival at Reindeer Station, it was anticipated that herds would grow and

¹⁸¹ "Earnest Appeal is Made for Indians and Eskimos Starving in North Country, February 23, 1928, 17.

¹⁸² "Earnest Appeal is Made for Indians and Eskimos Starving in North Country, February 23, 1928, 17.

¹⁸³ Charles Stewart to William Walton, 10, June 1929, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁸⁴ Charles Stewart to William Walton, 10, June 1929, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁸⁵ Charles Stewart to William Walton, 10, June 1929, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁸⁶ Stephen R. Bown, "The Great Canadian Reindeer Project," *Canada's History*, December 18, 2014, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.canadashistory.ca/Magazine/Online-Extension/Articles/The-Great-Canadian-Reindeer-Project>.

both herders and scientists would study the animals and become experts. Stewart expressed to Walton his hope for similar investigations in the Canadian North. It would still be some time before a similar project would benefit the Ungava district. Much to Walton's dismay, Stewart informed him, "the present arrangement of distributing relief through the Trading Companies seems to be the only feasible one."¹⁸⁷

Walton was left with few options after being informed Ungava would not gain a Reindeer Station. Having retired five years earlier, all he could do was hope for the success of the Mackenzie Reindeer Station experiment. The plan was executed. However, multiple obstacles arose. Departing from Naboktoolik, Alaska the journey was expected to take eighteen months; instead it took five and half years.¹⁸⁸ The small band of herders struggled to keep the large herd together and with extremely low temperatures and high winds, which reindeer preferred to walk against, the herd travelled an average of only two kilometres per day. Throughout the expedition, Walton inquired about updates regarding the herd's location, hopeful of a positive outcome.¹⁸⁹ The herd experienced great loss over its years of travel. "After three years on the trail, only two thousand reindeer were still with the herd. Hundreds had frozen to death, hundreds more bolted and were never recovered, and countless others were weakened by insects and devoured by wolves."¹⁹⁰ Ultimately, the Mackenzie River offered the largest roadblock to the herd towards the end of the drive. Ready to cross it in June 1934, a stampede drove the reindeer away and it took months for the herders to rally the group back together. On February 15, 1935 the herd was finally able to cross the Mackenzie River and arrived to the Reindeer Station on March 6,

¹⁸⁷ Charles Stewart to William Walton, 10, June 1929, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁸⁸ Bown, "The Great Canadian Reindeer Project."

¹⁸⁹ R.M. Anderson to William Walton, 9, November 1931, WGW, Box 2, Correspondence 1913-1936 (re: reindeer), LUA.

¹⁹⁰ Bown, "The Great Canadian Reindeer Project."

1935.¹⁹¹ The five-plus-year drive resulted in having almost the entire original herd die or separate from each other too far to return. Due to the thousands of fawns born on route, however, a total of 2,370 reindeer arrived to Reindeer Station.¹⁹² Having taken triple the length of time that was expected to arrive, finally the training of Inuit herders of the western Arctic could begin.

This drive of 3,000 reindeer from 1929 to 1935 has become known as The Great Canadian Reindeer Project. There is little record regarding the future of the Cree and Inuit in Ungava after the reindeer scheme for the Mackenzie Delta. According to the Census of 1929, a total of 830 Indigenous people lived in the eastern district of Hudson Bay, where Walton had lived as a missionary.¹⁹³ During Walton's missionary career, from 1892 to 1924, he claimed that there were up to 1,800 Cree and Inuit combined who lived in the district. The census also lacked additional information that could have been provided, including gender, ages, and religious affiliation. This is likely because there was no Indian Agent assigned to the district, and possibly, missionaries were likely responsible for reporting population totals to the Government. The lack of additional information may not have been included for a number of reasons, including the counter was new to the area and did not have the time or they may not have been able to verbally communicate with the Indigenous people to gather the information and therefore only counted bodies. The region of eastern James Bay and Hudson Bay went without a Treaty agreement and a standard of relief was never guaranteed to the people. They also had no guarantee of protection from having their area taken over by white settlement or commercialization.

While The Great Canadian Reindeer Project was an exciting challenge for the Canadian Government to have taken on, it did not achieve the desires of Walton, who had been fighting for

¹⁹¹ Bown, "The Great Canadian Reindeer Project."

¹⁹² Bown, "The Great Canadian Reindeer Project."

¹⁹³ Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1929* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1930), 65.

reindeer in Ungava since 1913. Walton's name is left out of the narrative of this history. His name deserves wider recognition due to the fifteen year campaign for the importation of reindeer to replace the caribou that had become scarce in the Ungava district. His scheme did not occur, although there were moments close to triumph. However, he did achieve the goal of gaining the attention of the Federal Government to the potential of importing reindeer herds into northern Canada. Continuously advocating for the Cree and Inuit, about the dire circumstances they were facing, even during his retirement, he gained recognition in Canada and in England. If any of the reindeer that made it to Mackenzie Reindeer Station saved even one Indigenous person or family, Walton deserves credit for that success. Walton's dedication to bring reindeer to Ungava took great time and effort in addition to his routine missionary work. Even though he is not recognized for his association with The Great Canadian Reindeer Project, his constant determination to bring reindeer to the people left him with the new title: 'Reindeer Walton'.

Conclusion

William G. Walton's Anglican missionary career in the Ungava district had a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of Cree and Inuit. He remained a vigorous defender of their rights, languages, and customs. He showed great resistance towards the Federal Government and their policies of assimilation in the early-twentieth century. Throughout his thirty-two year missionary career and beyond, Walton continued to uphold the ethics of a CMS missionary from the nineteenth century. He did not believe his role to be an agent of assimilation for the DIA. Walton acknowledged the nineteenth century Métis fur trade society and their values within his work. Lastly, he remained a constant advocate of the Cree and Inuit, attempting to lessen the impact of white settlement in northern Canada.

When he arrived to Fort George in 1892 at such a young age, Walton was optimistic that he would be able to adapt to a place so different from his home in England. He embraced the languages, lifestyle, and traditional customs of the Cree. With guidance provided by Miles Spencer, Walton was better able to grasp the circumstances and issues the Indigenous communities in the Ungava district were facing. The introduction of Spencer's daughter Daisy led to a lifelong partnership between her and Walton. Her intelligence and skills as a Métis woman prepared Walton better to be able to gain respect and form relations with the Cree and Inuit in his congregations. Upon Walton's retirement, Maver wrote to him, "Mrs. Walton has been an excellent helpmate to you, in your work among the natives," and "due, I am sure, to Mrs. Walton's level headed and common sense methods of getting the work done."¹⁹⁴ Many letters like this were glimpses of the Inuit response and how both the Waltons impacted their communities. Separated from each other up to six months of the year, every year; their constant correspondence kept their relationship together. While in Great Whale River amongst the Inuit,

¹⁹⁴ L.G. Maver to William Walton, 7, July 1924, WGW, Box 2, (reindeer?) HBC Correspondence, LUA.

Walton concentrated on adapting to Inuktitut and surviving in the cold climate like members of the community did. One of Walton's greatest attributes as a missionary was his dedication to the Indigenous languages. Projects with Daisy and collaboration with Edmund Peck led to the publishing of a variety of books to benefit the Cree and Inuit. Hymn and prayer books in Cree would have long-lasting results after the Waltons retired. The *Eskimo to English Dictionary* was a radical scheme to be a part of and would assist both Inuktitut and English speakers in understanding one another.

One of Walton's largest tasks was finding a way to bring back sustainability for the Ungava district. As the caribou migrated from the region, so did the main food and clothing source for the Inuit. Living in the north and in an area unprotected by Treaty, the Indigenous communities of Ungava were at greater risk for disease and starvation than other parts of Canada. To create a self-sufficient means for their survival and growth, Walton carried out a fifteen year campaign to import reindeer from Alaska into Ungava. Through years of research, government correspondence, a Royal Commission, and attempts to attract the public to the issue, Walton advocated for the Cree and Inuit because no one else would. His plan did not prove successful, although there were brief moments of victory. He did, however, spark a conversation about establishing large game herds in northern Canada for the purposes of sustaining Indigenous communities and creating commercial industries that would attract southerners to the north.

During retirement, Walton received letters asking about his experiences in the north. Over twenty years after his departure from Great Whale River, a fellow missionary wrote to tell him that his memory was still highly esteemed by the Inuit community.¹⁹⁵ Walton's successors to the area did not believe it to be the same after he left and the older people, with whom he

¹⁹⁵ W.E. Senior to William Walton, 9, November 1946, WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: MSCC, LUA.

worked, had “a far deeper and truer concept of Christianity than have the younger ones.”¹⁹⁶ After spending a few years of retirement in Toronto, the Waltons moved to London, Ontario and lived with their eldest daughter, Violet. Daisy passed away from a stroke on April 21, 1948 at the age of 74. Only three weeks later, William passed on May 25, 1948 at the age of 79.¹⁹⁷ The Waltons left a lasting legacy in the communities they helped, and in the many books they published.

Together they showed understanding and tenacious commitment to Indigenous communities in their region and beyond. Ultimately, they did not alter their views and way of life to the changing circumstances across Canada. They remained traditional in their approach to missionary work, and loyal to the conviction that Indigenous communities in Canada could remain sustainable in the face of devastating change.

¹⁹⁶ W.E. Senior to William Walton, 9, November 1946, WGW, Box 3, Correspondence: MSCC, LUA.

¹⁹⁷ “Obituaries: Rev. W. Walton Served As Arctic Missionary,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1948, 8.

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