New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 74 | Number 3 Article 4

7-1-1999

Fine Hands for Sowing: The Homesteading Experiences of Remittance Woman Jessie de Prado MacMillan

Sandra Varney MacMahon

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr

Recommended Citation
MacMahon, Sandra Varney. "Fine Hands for Sowing: The Homesteading Experiences of Remittance Woman Jessie de Prado MacMillan." *New Mexico Historical Review* 74, 3 (1999).
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol74/iss3/4

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Fine Hands for Sowing: The Homesteading Experiences of Remittance Woman Jessie de Prado MacMillan

SANDRA VARNEY MACMAHON

In the third week of May 1902, thirty-year-old Jessie de Prado MacMillan arrived in Alamogordo, New Mexico. She eagerly stepped off the train to begin the adventure she had dreamed about since childhood and for which she had been preparing for nine years: filing a claim for an American homestead. Small, dusty, three-year-old Alamogordo, a railroad town in southeastern New Mexico between the desert and the steep, heavily wooded Sacramento Mountains, provided a stark contrast to her native Scotland and the lush English countryside that she had just left behind. When family and friends could no longer dissuade MacMillan from her long-held plan, they convinced her to learn at least the basics of agriculture before setting out for America. This she had done. Thus, they sent her on her way with good wishes, letters of introduction, a mountain of baggage, and "a variety of formidable looking dirks and knives, ranging from six inches to a foot in length, which they thought would be invaluable in her encounter with the blood thirsty Indians and uncivilized natives thought to infest the mountains and plains of New Mexico."[1]

Hungry for news and impressed by her careful plans, the (Alamogordo) *Otero County Advertiser* interviewed MacMillan upon her arrival, quipping, "Though modest and retiring in manner, Miss MacMillan, from her advanced ideas, would be termed a typical 'new woman' and she has sought the new world because, in her opinion, it offers better opportunities for putting those ideas into practice."[2]

In the early years of the twentieth century, educated young women were expected to choose between marriage or a career. Work combined with marriage usually was not an option. At this point in her life,

Sandra Varney MacMahon is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at the University of New Mexico. Her research includes the U.S. West, early U.S., Native American, and women's history. She would like to thank Dr. Ferenc Szasz for reading this manuscript and for his helpful comments.

MacMillan chose farming. Although she certainly possessed the initiative and confidence implied by the term "New Woman," MacMillan also met the criteria of a uniquely British phenomenon: the "remittance man/woman"—that is, a non-property-inheriting younger sibling. MacMillan's father was wealthy and after his death she did not really have to work for a living. Since she had only one older brother, there was no doubt which child would get the inheritance. Thus, free of family obligations, educated, ambitious, and funded, MacMillan proves to be New Mexico's example of a remittance woman.[3] Furthermore, her successful endeavors in farming and securing title to a mountain homestead correspond with the images of remittance men who emigrated to the United States and settled in the American West.

Remittance men were the younger, occasionally ne'er-do-well sons of the British aristocracy and gentry who were sent to the United States, Canada, and other provinces of the realm to seek new lives for themselves. Denied by primogeniture (inheritance by the eldest son and his issue) from inheriting their ancestral holdings in Britain, they often chose careers at home in the church, the military, law, or medicine. Land, however, consistently remained the benchmark of wealth and social position for the British upper classes. When the western lands of the United States were opened for development in the late nineteenth century, they seemed to beckon with opportunity to these sons who were sustained by regular "remittances," or stipends sent from their families.[4] Not able to inherit, but interested in agriculture and full of ambition, land ownership appealed to MacMillan, too.

The upbringing of even the most earnest of these second and third sons did not prepare them for the lives they would lead in the West. Indulged by parents, pampered by servants, even the sons from financially pinched families were accustomed to a life of relative luxury. With few responsibilities, and more importantly, no land to inherit, a number of younger sons became wastrels, living lavishly, moving from the hunt to parties and balls. Most were educated for public leadership to benefit their social positions, but were not trained for the manual labor and competitive business required by western ranching and farming.[5]

Research has shown funded British sons to be colorful characters who were important participants in every aspect of life in the American West. This type of settler was not only male, though. As a remittance woman, gender, not birth order, prevented MacMillan from inheriting property. However, there has been no parallel research conducted to see whether stipends influenced the lives of young British women. Moreover, the consideration of gender in this essay not only expands the meaning of the phrase "remittance man," it also introduces another category of analysis with which to consider MacMillan's experiences.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, middle- and upper-class British women were regulated by social conventions of be-

havior. They were not expected to be interested in opportunities for homesteading. "Proper" feminine women directed their attentions toward their families' physical, spiritual, and moral welfare. Women were considered to be frail and were restricted in their behavior for the preservation of their own purity because of presumed uncontrollable male sexuality. The status of fathers or husbands defined women's social and legal positions as daughters and wives. If MacMillan's memoir is to be believed, from an early age she had problems with what was considered "feminine" behavior.[6]

Like other remittance persons, MacMillan enjoyed a privileged childhood and youth. Born at Crosshill, in Glasgow, Scotland in 1871, MacMillan had no memories of her mother, who died when Jessie was very young. From childhood she was fond of horses and fascinated with the American West. Her father often read to her as did her brother Eben, who was six years older. He chose sea stories for himself, but MacMillan demanded "cowboy tales." An individualist from an early age, she was asked to leave her first school because she refused to wear gloves and repeatedly threw her sewing thimbles out the window. She happily transferred to her brother's school, located across town, because Eben occasionally tipped the horse-car driver so that she could drive. Because of her precarious health, she spent summers on a friend's farm on the island of Bute. There she surreptitiously learned to milk cows, stealing milk because the housekeeper did not give her enough to eat. During these early years, MacMillan's father also died.[7]

Having outgrown the Glasgow school, MacMillan was sent to boarding school by the Scottish and English executors of the MacMillan estate. She chose one in Ambleside, which was a small, pretty Westmoreland hills village by Lake Windemere in the rolling Lake District of England. There she developed anemia, aggravated by the school's unpalatable and un-nourishing food, and was put under the care of a physician. She noted that the teachers were severe and although they tried to make a lady of her, they had to give up. In one attempt the teachers insisted that she learn to play the violin and piano. In order to improve her fingering, MacMillan was forced to go around with corks between her fingers to stretch them. "They could not acknowledge that my hands, those of a worker, not an artist, were too short and stubby for a violin."[8]

Next, MacMillan's trustees sent her to "Riant Rive," a boarding school for girls in Switzerland on Lake Geneva. It proved to be much better than the English one and she thrived. She took classes in French and German and went with the other international students on trips through Switzerland and France. While she loved the school, MacMillan wrote that she was only waiting for the day that she would turn twenty-one and be free to go to the American West.[9]

Remittance men, once in the West, were often received with amuse-

ment by Americans, who sometimes took advantage of them. Westerners sometimes stereotyped their British acquaintances as self-indulgent and gullible. The very phrase "remittance man" is belittling. Yet there were exaggerated stories of the men as well. If certain of the young British emigrants radiated arrogance and squandered money on liquor, blooded horses, and other finery, they also introduced to the West interest in the science and technology of animal husbandry. One historian credits distance, communication, thinness of the market and premature timing as contributing to remittance men's failures. If they made mistakes in the new cattle ranch business, they were not alone, and the more earnest of these younger sons were accepted by Americans.[10]

Although families hoped their wayward youths would mature and make new lives for themselves, the young men's economic and social ventures in the American West had varied outcomes. Not a homogeneous group, these emigrants had varied backgrounds and intentions, and the situations into which they were thrust were complex. They were playboys and miners, cattle ranch overseers and dilettantes. Most remittance men returned to Britain, but some settled down, married, and went into business, usually in towns or cities. Except for upgrading livestock and spending a lot of money, remittance men's impact on the West generally has been seen as modest. More recent research upon this topic, however, indicates that the story is much more complicated.[11]

Historian Larry McFarlane's investigations have expanded views toward remittance men. In "British Remittance Men as Ranchers: The Case of Coutts Marjoribanks and Edmund Thursby, 1884–1895," he demonstrates that these two young Britons became community leaders in Dakota Territory and assumed important roles in the nascent regional cattlemen's association. They were adaptive and experimented with breeding sheep and cattle. Although they did live the lives of country squires, complete with hunting and parties—Thursby, especially, carried on rather grandly—they did not live more extravagantly than some wealthy American ranchers. Both Britons accepted western egalitarianism and were apparently liked and respected by their neighbors. Like most of their neighbors, they ultimately failed at ranching.[12]

Other new research coincides with McFarlane's arguments against the myths that self-indulgence and incompetence caused the young Britons' problems. Although historian Marjory Harper is less sanguine about Marjoribank's failure in managing a second ranch in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, she does partly attribute his losses "not to laziness or dereliction of duty, but to naivete, bad advice, marketing problems, and the myriad hazards of pioneering a new type of agriculture in an unfamiliar environment." Moreover, Harper argues that Marjoribank's ultimate change to fruit farming influenced the redirection of the Okanagan Valley economy from cattle-ranching to successful commercial fruit farming.[13]

In his assessment of the achievements and failures of Marjoribanks and Thursby, McFarlane equates financial success on the agricultural frontier with:

> rapid adaptation of production techniques appropriate to a new environment, adequate managerial skills, the wise use of credit, the use of accounting skills to balance carefully the needs of capital against operating costs and living expenses, sheer luck, such as arriving during an era of rising commodity prices and enjoying a favorable weather cycle, and the determination or tenacity to survive hard times.[14]

Similar standards can be used to gauge "success" on either thousand-acre ranches or homesteads of 160 acres. The criteria used in this essay to judge personal and agricultural success include farming experience, flexibility, financial discipline, luck, spunk, and common sense. MacMillan's story demonstrates convincingly how well she fulfilled these criteria for agricultural success just as she satisfied the measure of a remittance woman.

In 1892, MacMillan reached her majority, but she was torn between going to nursing school to work with the poor of the London slums or traveling to the "wild and wooly West." Her trustees approved of neither. Her history of poor health made nursing school dangerous and going to the United States was out of the question. Hoping to become a "mother's helper" (nanny) on a western ranch, MacMillan registered for a course at Leaton Colonial Training College in Shropshire, England, an institution for middle-class girls who had chosen to emigrate.[15]

Leaton was the best known of several schools set up by British women's emigration societies to equip women with skills that would make them employable overseas. At this time there was a "surplus" of women in Great Britain and no work for them. Several factors had contributed to the disparity of the sexes in the population: male war casualties from Napoleonic times onward, a lower female infant and child mortality rate, and increased male emigration from 1850–1914. Indeed, by 1861 there were 800,000 women in Great Britain with no work to support themselves.[16]

Genteel middle-class women, in particular, faced the problem of unemployment. Working-class women could find some employment, but there were simply not enough jobs for educated but untrained women. Britons learned to their horror that increasing numbers of young women had turned to prostitution in reaction to their desperate situations. Reforms in education and other social institutions were slowly proceeding, but for many, emigration seemed a logical and even an attractive solution.[17] Societal stresses such as these sometimes allowed a loosening of the bonds of feminine social conventions, only to tighten again

as social conditions eased. This situation did provide an acceptable precedent for some women to travel, sometimes alone, to other British territories. No doubt some of the other Englishwomen who homesteaded came because of these circumstances. Leaton seemed to be a solution for MacMillan.

Unfortunately, she had to quit Leaton after three months because of her health. Her physician recommended that she try to work on an English farm until she became stronger. The farm the college matron recommended was Oldington, a nearby estate with a rambling old brick farmhouse, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Broughall. "I had planned to stay at the Colonial College one year, and I stayed three months. I aimed to stay at Oldington one year and stayed nine," MacMillan wrote in her memoirs.[18]

She became very close to both Broughalls, especially Mrs. Broughall, whom she affectionately called "My Dear." Mrs. Broughall was not well, hardly going out unless driven by her son or a farm boy; but MacMillan undertook with relish the task of driving her about in a pony trap. The Broughalls soon regarded her as a daughter and MacMillan had difficulty convincing them to accept a minimal sum for her board and for that of the horse she quickly acquired. But MacMillan insisted, because she and Mr. Broughall, "the *Pater,*" had so many differences of opinion that MacMillan felt she could not freely disagree unless she had established her independence.[19]

MacMillan put the time she spent at Oldington to good use. First, she became a proficient rider. She made it a point to attend the Richmond Horse Show in the south of England and the annual Military Tournament in London where she expanded her expertise by watching international championship riders compete. In nine years she owned seven horses that she improved and sold for profit. In addition, she broke neighbors' young stock to sidesaddle, because they would command a higher price if they could be ridden by a "lady."[20]

Another aspect of MacMillan's education included attending agricultural shows with Mr. Broughall. There she gathered miscellaneous bits of valuable information about livestock, farm equipment, and crop management. In addition, she assumed control of the farm's butter-making process and learned poultry dressing. Surprisingly, she was allowed to work in the fields with a team of horses, dressed in a below-the-knee skirt and leggings, something most respectable middle- and upper-class women would never consider doing.

MacMillan's daring across-class actions can be seen in the following incident. A friend of Mrs. Broughall saw MacMillan working in the fields, and also heard that she rode with the local hunt club. For an upper-class woman, these were two incongruous activities: one simply did not perform physical labor. Visiting one day, the friend could not conceal her curiosity about MacMillan's social standing. "In what ca-

pacity is that young 'person' [employed]?" she asked. Mrs. Broughall replied, "As a daughter," effectively ending the probe about her status.[21]

This was not the least of young MacMillan's behavior which embarrassed the Broughalls, however. Having accidentally injured her horse by riding sidesaddle too frequently, she decided to learn to ride astride. To hide what she was doing, she made a voluminous skirt, but "Pater" would not be seen with her riding that way. Not content with her made-over outfit, MacMillan convinced a tailor to fashion a divided-skirt riding habit. Anxiously "My Dear" cautioned her to keep to the fields and off public bridle paths. Riding astride was socially damning, indeed.[22]

These examples demonstrate MacMillan's irrepressible nature; however, the situation is more complex. Even as she seemingly committed audacious acts against social restraints, MacMillan was probably actually protected by her class. But if her social position, buttressed by the Broughall's sponsorship, allowed her to get away with much of this behavior, gender restrictions in riding still kept her in the fields even as her conduct elicited an affectionate defense from Mrs. Broughall. Gender and class remained tangled issues in MacMillan's life.

Despite her many activities, MacMillan never forgot her goal of going west and described getting a "fever" of desire every year. The flood of promotional literature to which the British public was exposed no doubt fed her fever. Western railroads and state boards of immigration in the United States not only engaged in paper recruitment, they also sent representatives abroad to entice emigrants to settle the sparsely-populated West. Canada needed settlers, too; concerned by the American efforts, its government launched an expensive campaign of its own.[23] Married or single, women in Canada could purchase land but were not eligible for cheap government land. Propaganda extolling the wonders of the North American West would have been easily available to MacMillan.

MacMillan's favorite aunt, however, extracted a promise that she would remain in England until she turned thirty, thinking her niece would have married by then. Although she had several opportunities, including one suitor who promised to go west with her, she "was not tempted." Coincidentally, as MacMillan approached her thirtieth year, she learned that her sister-in-law's cousin was homesteading in New Mexico's Sacramento Mountains and so she wrote to her. MacMillan's swift departure illustrates the serious nature of her yearning to live in the American West. That very year she crossed the Atlantic on the *Lusitania*, arriving safely in New York, where she had letters of introduction.[24]

MacMillan's experiences in El Paso, Texas, illustrate the benefits of having influential contacts. Because of her letters of introduction, Judge Frank E. Hunter of El Paso not only helped her obtain a letter of credit at the bank and assisted with other business matters, he also introduced

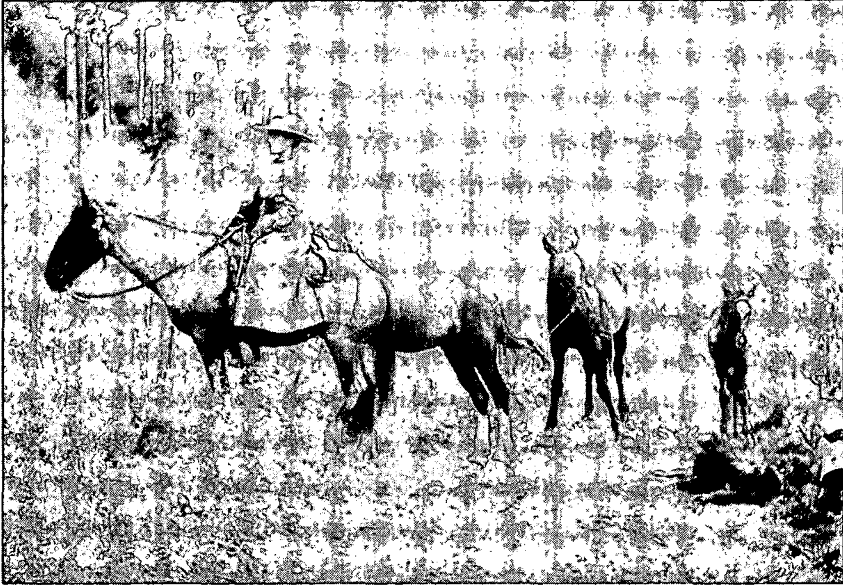
her to his English partner in the West Texas Saddlery, Richard Quincy. To her astonishment, they completely outfitted her—saddle, bridle, quirt, blanket, tie and stake ropes—as a gift. This helpful and generous relationship proved to be a lasting one.[25]

Despite this financial help, MacMillan was sparing with her money. The judge had recommended the best hotel in Alamogordo, since she would arrive in town late at night, but MacMillan transferred to a cheaper boarding house the next day and washed floors to help the proprietor. She had brought bedding and many other useful items from England and purchased only necessities. Her sister-in-law's American relatives, Mary Lindsay Tod Westlake and her granddaughter Lila, trucked her belongings up the steep wagon road from Alamogordo to Cloudcroft, New Mexico, a gain in altitude of some 4,350 feet. Their journey to "Eagle," Lindsay Westlake's homestead on Agua Chiquita Creek, southeast and down the other side of the mountain from Cloudcroft, took three days. Weed, a small village situated near the junction of the eastern plains and the Sacramento Mountains thirteen miles east of Eagle, was the closest and most accessible town.[26]

Through Westlake's contacts, MacMillan heard of a quarter-section homestead for sale, two miles south of "Eagle" on the Agua Chiquita Creek wagon road. Assured by the land office that the transaction was legitimate, she purchased her dream for three hundred dollars and named her spread "Glen-Eben" after her brother. The homestead consisted of an old one-room log cabin in poor condition, partially raised walls for a new cabin, and twenty-odd acres of crops—predominantly oats, wheat, and potatoes. A tumbled-down log barn, several outbuildings, some passable fencing, and an excellent spring completed her holdings. Agua Chiquita Creek meandered between her fences and the wagon track. The original cabin had two windows with sliding wooden shutters (but no glass) on either side of the door. A barrel with some boards over it served as the table and a few kegs and chunks of wood as chairs. Until she could purchase a secondhand cook stove, MacMillan used the fireplace for heat and cooking.[27] Primitive though the farm may sound, she had a good start for fulfilling the requirements to secure title to her land.

In 1862 Congress passed the Homestead Act, which essentially promised one hundred sixty acres of public land to a head of household who would register a claim, farm it for five years, and make certain improvements. Five years later, the Homestead Act was amended to include single women. Prior to this, only widows who were the heads of their families could file a claim. Women are often not thought of as early landowners, but many filed claims on homesteads. Homesteads offered unparalleled chances for women to own land or to use it as a means to an end and sell it as an investment.[28]

Historians generally agree that the Homestead Act was a failure; for various reasons most people who filed claims did not fulfill the require-



MacMillan on "Boy," with two horses she had just acquired through trade. Originally published with Jessie de Prado Farrington's memoirs, "From Rocking Horse to Cow Pony," *New Mexico Historical Review* 30:3 (July 1955), 221–51.

ments within the time indicated. These reasons included unproductive land, water scarcity, and a lack of familiarity with dry farming techniques. Nevertheless, the Homestead Act did offer both men and women opportunities. As late as 1883 little land for homesteading was available in New Mexico, mostly because of corrupt surveyors general and land grabbing by the "Santa Fe Ring" and others. Only after 1900, when grasslands in the eastern region of the state opened and a vigorous campaign was undertaken to entice settlers, did homesteaders come in numbers.[29] MacMillan, then, took possession of her homestead at a propitious time.

One of the first things she did on arrival was to purchase "the wee Mexican pony," which she named Honey Boy, from P. J. Andrews, her friend and neighbor. Andrews homesteaded down the creek with his brother. Small as he was, Boy became a useful pack and saddle horse, a driver and draft animal, as well as a beloved companion.[30] He was the first of the six or more horses that MacMillan came to keep.

Riding astride was as surprising to the Weed community as it had been to the people around the Broughalls' farm in England. MacMillan evidently taught the technique to Mary Westlake and her granddaughter Lila, because "The Three Scottish Women," as they were called, were the first in the area to ride this way, and they started a trend. Women around Weed soon began to take advantage of this more secure method of riding.[31]

Shortly after she arrived, MacMillan hired a work crew to complete the new cabin; it had an eighteen by twenty-four-foot main room with an addition on one side that contained a tiny kitchen and a spare room. At the same time, she had a new barn and a root house erected. No wastrel, MacMillan again showed careful use of her money. In an ingenious plan that benefited everyone, Dave Bunting, owner of one of the general stores in Weed, got neighboring men who owed him money to work for MacMillan and she paid Bunting in cash on an installment plan. At first, the neighbor women were suspicious of the young, single homesteader, but MacMillan squelched rumors by making it a rule that all the crew stop work by 8:00 P.M. and retire en masse to their wagons and tents for the night. Reassured by this gesture that she was trustworthy, the women extended their friendship and supplied her frequently with such treats as layer cakes and home-canned fruit, while the men occasionally brought her haunches of venison.[32] This is one example of MacMillan's acquiescence to societal rules of proper feminine behavior. Had she been less careful, the neighbors might well have ostracized her and the whole outcome of her Glen-Eben years would have been a vastly different story.

This episode is one of several that demonstrates MacMillan was well aware of the dangers of violating social proprieties. She was no longer a teenage girl scandalizing the neighbors from the safe position of a "daughter" in the privileged household of Oldington, but a single woman without family in a rough and rural area. Consequently, MacMillan modified her actions to reassure the neighbors and maintain social conventions.

From the beginning, she demonstrated her knowledge of farming and her adaptation of British agricultural techniques to New Mexico's conditions. She broke Boy to harness and eventually purchased another little horse, Cherry, to make her own team. After plowing and harrowing, she rolled and leveled her fields with a roller fashioned from a large tree trunk and a buggy axle. Her neighbors considered this to be quite an innovation. She had been accustomed to plant seeds with a seed drill in England, but she soon learned to broadcast by hand.[33]

MacMillan continued to grow the crops she found planted on her arrival but she also experimented with new ones. Raymond Buckner, a son of Lila and Will Buckner, and author of articles in the *Otero County Pioneer Family Histories* credited MacMillan with growing the first alfalfa in the Agua Chiquita Creek area. MacMillan not only grew oats for livestock feed, she also fed her cattle chopped turnips and cabbage, a common European and British practice.[34] To this end, for her own winter use and to trade for fruit and other goods in "the lower country," she and Marie, Mrs. Broughall's goddaughter who was visiting from Scotland, planted 1,000 cabbage plants that first summer. To get an early start and protect the seedlings against frosts, neighbors taught MacMillan to grow the cabbage seeds in raised beds covered with bur-

lap bags at night. She stored the harvested cabbage in her root house and in trenches covered with straw and a layer of soil. Later she experimented with timothy, bluegrass, and fruit trees.[35]

MacMillan always maintained a careful balance between her income and the homestead operating expenses. She wrote that she was almost penniless her first Christmas because of all her building expenses and because she had to hire a mower to cut her oat hay. Although MacMillan performed much of her own labor, no doubt she also paid for other help that first year. She purchased necessities on credit at the Bunting store and neighbors helped with such niceties as butter, goat meat, rice, and pies.[36]

MacMillan lived frugally and she was consistently judicious in her handling of funds. For instance, she patronized feed yards where one cared for one's own horse, rather than the more expensive livery stables, where the animal was sheltered and fed by the establishment.[37] If she could not manage things herself, she traded work for services. For example, "as usual," she was "short of cash" to hire the two men she needed to thresh her grain, so MacMillan and Marie Broughall arranged to feed the eleven-man crew in exchange for the men's work at Glen-Eben. MacMillan also performed her share of road maintenance, which meant grading the steep wagon track near her homestead with a heavy, horse-drawn scraper.[38]

To fulfill the cultivation requirements on their land, some women rented land to neighbors or hired men to do the heavy labor. Both men and women enjoyed exchanging field labor for domestic chores. A North Dakota schoolteacher, Lucy Goldthorpe, wrote, "Some of the homesteading women could drive a fence post or plow a cleared area as expertly as a man, but for me it meant swapping services and occasionally paying for heavy work done. Every time I 'helped out' I was really putting in a new section of fence or getting some plowing done, besides enjoying the change of scene that came with the job."[39]

In MacMillan's second year at Glen-Eben, the Broughalls came from England to visit for about seven months. MacMillan and Marie Broughall went by freight wagon to meet them in El Paso. This time, after treating the two women to several sight-seeing trips and dinners at night, Quincy, the English saddler, outfitted both Broughalls with horse equipment, which was extremely beneficial for MacMillan because the tack was for her horses. Quincy actually bought MacMillan many other presents, including a camera and dark room equipment. "We enjoyed the curio stores, but Mr. Quincy would insist on buying us so many things, it rather spoilt it," she wrote.

As if competing for MacMillan's attention through purchases, Mr. Broughall bought "very cheap" a fine second-hand baby grand piano, supposedly for Mrs. Broughall's stay at Glen-Eben. In reality, it was probably for MacMillan's benefit.[40]

It was not "all play and no work" once they reached Glen-Eben. Marie Broughall returned to Scotland shortly after the Broughalls arrived, but MacMillan and "Pater" cut and stacked her winter wood and stored her hay. Throughout the visit, he continued to advise MacMillan and to hone her agricultural skills. Mrs. Broughall assumed the chores of feeding MacMillan's chickens, guinea hens, turkeys, and rabbits, after which she would play the piano in the evening. She, who was driven about the English countryside in her pony cart, learned to ride sidesaddle in New Mexico, and even to cut "the Pater's" hair.[41] Needless to say, it was a sad day when the Broughalls returned to England. They had encouraged MacMillan's ambitions, enriched her life, and advanced the improvements on her New Mexico homestead.

How, then, do MacMillan's experiences compare to those of other women homesteaders? Julie Jones-Eddy interviewed homesteading women in northwestern Colorado (most of whom were married). Her findings suggest that gender roles were more elastic when the land was first being cleared and the homestead was being established. Women worked outside because so much improvement work on the land was necessary to fulfill the Homestead Act requirements. As homesteads matured, women were less likely to do field work.[42]

Elaine Lindgren's study, *Land In Her Own Name*, indicates that most independent women homesteaders in North Dakota were young and unmarried. These women represented many ethnic groups and countries of origin, although the majority were Scandinavian or Anglo Americans. Many moved onto claims near family or friends. They usually held jobs—often teaching positions—because a source of income was necessary to improve their claims. Lindgren illustrates clearly the interdependence of homesteaders and nearby neighbors in their exchange of work and in reliance upon each other for information, recreation, and mutual support.[43] MacMillan's British background, her settlement near "relatives," and her exchanges with neighbors closely mirror Lindgren's findings.

The women Joan Jensen studied demonstrated that the New Mexico experience at the turn of the century differed from other areas. New Mexico, still rural and lightly populated, did not achieve statehood until 1912, at least partly because Congress did not want to admit a state in which the majority of the population was Hispanic and Spanish-speaking. In general, homesteading was highly unsuccessful in New Mexico. Much of the land was arid and water was not readily available. Originally the land served as hunting and grazing grounds for numerous groups of Native Americans. Hispanic settlers also used the land for grazing for years through Mexican land grants, but the U.S. government did not recognize all of these grants and others were seized by corrupt attorneys.

Three of the women whom Jenson interviewed were homesteading in eastern New Mexico around the time MacMillan was improving Glen-

Eben. They lived alone on their farms while their husbands did wage work for someone else in a nearby town. Thus the women ran the homesteads alone from day to day while the husbands worked to get money for improvements. As it became clear that homesteading was not viable for establishing a comfortable living, people became more dependent upon wage work, and a pattern emerged where the homestead barely provided a subsistence living that was supported by low-wage labor. Neither occupation was enough wholly to support the families. Because of drought and poor markets, many homesteaders could not hold on to their land and consequently sold out to large ranchers.[44]

MacMillan's situation, however, provides a contrast. She enjoyed good luck with commodity exchange, arable soil, and weather cycles. Her mountain homestead was situated in a moderate climate located in the midst of a much hotter, drier area. At an altitude of some 7,500 feet, her land was watered by winter snows and there were dependable springs in the region. Further, she used Agua Chiquita Creek, which ran year round, to irrigate her truck garden. The *Alamogordo News*, an unabashed booster of the whole area, said this of the mountain settlements:

> The Sacramento Mountains only need a few Dutch colonies to show what can be done . . . . In the mountains cabbage, beets, carrots, turnips, onions, Irish potatoes and the like do remarkably well and these can be grown most anywhere up there with only the rainfall and by unloading at Cloudcroft where the matter of marketing is an easy job.[45]

Beginning in 1899 the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad operated between Cloudcroft and Alamogordo carrying timber, produce, and passengers out of the Sacramento Mountains.[46]

MacMillan raised enough barley, oats, and wheat to have them machine threshed her second summer. In 1899, farmers in Otero County (where Agua Chiquita Creek Canyon was located) had planted 393 acres of oats, 147 acres of wheat, and fifty-three acres of barley. Although MacMillan's harvests were probably small, their very existence is significant in view of the county's low acreage.[47] In the whole of New Mexico Territory, farms planted an average of only 6.4 acres of wheat and 4.6 acres of barley in 1899.[48]

As late as the first decades of the twentieth century, bartering goods and services was still common in rural areas. MacMillan raised crops she knew would store and trade well. Potatoes, she said, were always in demand and she also grew a surplus of turnips. Thirty-odd years later, she still treasured a handmade quilt that she had received in a trade for potatoes.[49]

The Cloudcroft-Weed area often has killing frosts by October—some years as early as September. Snow falls in November, but the snow cover

begins to recede by February. A south-facing alpine field can be snow-free in March and drying for early plowing, while a north-facing slope may be covered with snow and ice until the end of the month. MacMillan's use of raised beds meant she could start her seedlings early, protect them from frosts, and set them out in her southerly fields when other areas were still wet from snows.

According to the Weather Bureau's Climate and Crop Service reports from 1902 to 1907, parts of New Mexico experienced periods of drought. Cloudcroft, the nearest reporting station to Agua Chiquita Canyon, however, reported normal precipitation measurements of about twenty-five inches (including melting snow) for 1902–1904.[50] For 1905 to 1907, the precipitation was above normal.[51] The long drought in New Mexico associated with the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression had actually been the most serious of intermittent droughts recorded since the 1830s, but MacMillan experienced only one extremely dry year when "the creeks and springs dried up and the range cattle died like flies."[52] Although other areas of Otero County suffered with the drought, Cloudcroft and the Agua Chiquita Creek Canyon usually enjoyed sufficient precipitation.

MacMillan was nothing if not determined to survive any difficulties she might face, considering her well-laid plans and long Oldington "internship." Although she never experienced serious financial difficulties, she participated fully in the rough and sometimes dangerous life of the rural mountain area. By nature resourceful and resolute, she often helped her neighbors, once setting out in a near-blizzard to care for a woman with a newborn, and on another occasion helping prepare a child for burial because another neighbor was close to hysterics.[53]

The snow, the cold, and the steep, rocky trails endangered both people and beasts. In 1905, for instance, Carl Lundgren got caught in a storm on the way from Cloudcroft to Russia, New Mexico, and was found unconscious in the road the next morning. He had to have both feet amputated, a terrible sentence for a man living in a rural area.[54] The weather was only one factor that contributed to the mountain mortality rate. In May of 1907, J. M. DeWeese was killed instantly when his wagon overturned in Cox Canyon, the main wagon road from the Agua Chiquita Creek area to Cloudcroft. One of his mules was injured so badly that it, too, soon died. DeWeese was traveling alone and the next people going to Cloudcroft found him.[55] Responding to a call for help often meant exposure to personal danger.

On the shortcut trail to Alamogordo to secure her claim title, MacMillan fell leading Boy down a particularly steep section of trail. She suffered a concussion and severely injured her left knee, tearing the supporting ligaments. "I realized I was in the wildest parts of my mountains and seriously hurt. I knew someone might come along the trail in twenty four hours or not in twenty four days . . . . [F]or a moment, my

thoughts took the starch out of me, but I'd not come so far to give up without an effort."[56] Unable to bear weight on the leg, she managed to mount Boy.

> When we came to the one narrow draw that leads down through a bluff . . . , poor wee Boy every now and then almost squatted down behind as the stones rolled from under his feet, and he would slither down, forefeet stretched out in front till something solid would hold him up, and then he'd turn his dear wee head around and look at me as though to say, "Well Mackie, aren't you going to get off and walk awhile?" Then I'd say, "No, Son, you've got to pack me in this time," and we'd go on again, a few steps at a time, and another slither with rolling stones.[57]

MacMillan reaped the kindness she sowed. Arriving in Alamogordo many hours later after dark, she was helped by friends and strangers alike. In terrible pain, and unable to walk, MacMillan was grateful when Land Office officials came to her couch in the hotel hall to deliver the deed to her land. When a physician told her that she would never walk again, she sent Boy to Glen-Eben with a stranger while friends rumbled down the wagon road from Cloudcroft to take her home. She arranged for a family to stay with her and run her farm, but months later she still could not walk. In 1907 MacMillan returned to England for surgery, but was back on her homestead in a year, ever after wearing a heavy metal knee-brace.[58]

At some time during her homesteading years, MacMillan visited Mrs. Dyer, a friend from her *Lusitania* voyage, in Kansas. At Dyer's home, she met Loftus Farrington, a cousin of the husband of MacMillan's school friend, "Daisy." Farrington had been sent by his father to farm in the United States. On another of MacMillan's visits with Dyer, Farrington proposed marriage. Finally, realizing that the long distance relationship could not continue indefinitely, she wrote Daisy for advice, since she herself was highly ambivalent. MacMillan truly relished life on her homestead, enjoyed her friends, and loved southern New Mexico. Daisy immediately told her husband about the situation. Their joyful response and her own physical condition eventually nudged MacMillan toward marriage.[59]

Her marriage should not be considered as surrendering hard-won freedom and independence. Some historians claim that homesteading women did not take farming seriously, as they often only did part-time farming because they took other jobs to provide themselves with necessities. It also is claimed that most single women did not remain on their farms as bona fide settlers. However, most single men also failed to remain on their farms and more of them sold their homesteads as investments. Other skeptics suggest that women were seeking land only to

improve their chances to marry, unlike men, who are seen to want to farm, even if they do marry. In reality, homesteading women often postponed marriage in order to work and to prove up their claims. Some chose not to marry, and still others were widows. Women, like men, saw their homesteads as an opportunity for land ownership or as an investment they could turn to capital for other projects. Furthermore, women homesteaders were as likely to receive title to their claims as men.[60]

When one applies the criteria for successful farming discussed earlier, MacMillan fares rather well. A thorough preparation in England for farming made her both knowledgeable and competent. She adapted to local conditions by accepting suggestions from neighbors and she made use of raised beds and irrigation. She lived frugally, but was kind and generous to neighbors, who more than reciprocated her actions. Because her homestead was located in a relatively sheltered canyon with year-round spring and creek water, MacMillan could raise crops to feed herself and her stock and have a surplus to barter. Luckily, the weather and markets remained stable. By 1907, she had successfully undertaken all that she had set out to do, received title to her land, and owned, by her own reckoning, "the most flourishing homestead in the canyon."[61]

This was no idle boast. To own a thriving farm developed from a homestead was a very good investment. The average acreage of farms in the Territory of New Mexico in 1900, three years before MacMillan arrived, was 417 acres; the value per acre was $4.07. By 1910, three years after she had "proved up," the average New Mexico farm was reduced to 316 acres, but those acres had more than doubled in value.[62] Glen-Eben, then, was worth over $1500 for the land alone, without taking any of MacMillan's improvements into consideration.

Why is MacMillan's story unique and how important are class and gender to her experiences? Class and gender, despite her occasional defiance of social conventions, are central to her story. She was "free of family obligations, educated, ambitious, and funded," but she was not in a position exactly like that of younger sons of the British aristocracy because gender, not age, prevented her from inheritance. MacMillan's class origins may have aided her in that she was a woman who had traveled and knew something of the world. And despite her upper-class origins, she seems to have been accepted; if we are to believe her memoir, she certainly had a lot of friends.[63]

Gender is another important issue. After all, the opportunity, as a woman, to obtain a homestead steered MacMillan to the United States, not to Canada. Furthermore, if she had been a son, would MacMillan have remained in Britain for nine years longer than she wished to? Probably not. On the other hand, if a young man were useful, charming, and "earning his keep" as an "adopted" child, much loving pressure might have been applied, by trustees and family alike, to keep him home. Certainly MacMillan acquiesced to other social conventions ascribed to

gender than the few she mentioned. But the point of this essay is not that class and gender did not affect MacMillan as a homesteader—rather it is that as a young Briton of a certain class, background, and wealth, analysis of her farming experiences contributes to the literature and research on a fascinating group of people, up until now primarily young men, who received periodic funding to help them make their fortunes far from their British birthplaces. As highly visible entities in the American West, they are valuable to study to ascertain their successes or failures, as well as their contributions to society.

What does it mean to claim MacMillan as a remittance person? It is not to suggest that hers was a wholly parallel status. What these younger male and female siblings did share was status, education, perhaps a sense of confidence that "old" money sometimes brings, and a periodic allowance. For MacMillan, personally, her remittance meant the opportunity to learn farming well. It meant that she did not have to drive a buggy twenty miles to collect laundry to wash and mend as North Dakotan Kaia Johnson did, or seek wages keeping house for neighbors.[64] Even a small regular infusion of cash was helpful in developing a farm.

Most studies of remittance men have focused upon the United States and Canada. There were remittance men in Australia and other British colonies, however, and more research needs to be done to compare their experiences. Although historians have noted the British origins of homesteading women, none have mentioned whether they might have supported their farming through remittances. Did their upbringing or manners influence how they were accepted? Were they perceived as arrogant or as having an easy time because they did not have to do wage work to finance a well or a barn? Did more or fewer of them (than other homesteading women) receive title to their patents? Did they marry earlier? Considering MacMillan in this light nudges remittance research a little further.

By 1902, when MacMillan arrived in Alamogordo, single women had had the legal right to homestead for thirty-two years. MacMillan followed in their footsteps. Working alone—that is, with no full-time help—in the privacy of her mountain farm, she gave no indication that she focused upon disrupting societal conventions. The "improper-for-a-girl" escapades she noted in her memoirs all occurred in her youth, before she settled down to serious work developing her farm. On the other hand, MacMillan does not apologize for or denigrate her accomplishments, as some British women travel writers did.[65]

As far as her homesteading is concerned, MacMillan worked hard and was cautious with her finances, but not necessarily more so than other homesteaders. Other women homesteaded alone and many obtained their patents. Research shows that a higher percentage of female homesteaders earned titles to their claims than male homesteaders. Homestead neighbors, male and female, often traded labor, truck gardens, and

acts of kindness, so MacMillan's experiences of that sort were also common.[66]

MacMillan's uniqueness, then, lies in her extraordinary long preparation for her agricultural venture and in her stipend. It is as a remittance person that she makes a mark. MacMillan was a remittance woman successful in her farming endeavors. In contrast to the stereotypes, her privileged upbringing did not make her content to seek the comforts of wealth. Research at present indicates that this Scottish remittance woman who prepared herself for homesteading in a most singular manner, who experimented with fruit trees and pasture grasses, who successfully blended British agricultural practices with American techniques, may be New Mexico's only example of a remittance woman. This leaves the questions: who and where are the rest of the remittance women, and did they prosper?

MacMillan's payments from England undeniably provided a buffer of comfort. If her luck had failed—if she had not been able to afford corrective surgery on her knee, for example—she could not have continued western farming. But Jessie MacMillan Farrington does not fit the negative cliché of a bumbling elite who could not succeed on the frontier. By 1909 MacMillan had achieved her goals. She had nothing further to prove to herself or to anyone else.

At the age of thirty-eight, companionship with someone from her own culture (who had long sued for matrimony) seemed desirable. When MacMillan decided to marry Loftus Farrington, she left her beloved homestead ambivalently and reluctantly, but the future promised new and even greater adventures—marriage and a larger farm to manage.[67] This decision, too, seems in keeping with her philosophy—risk carefully.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1: OTERO COUNTY CROP ACREAGE

YEAR	OATS	WHEAT	BARLEY
1899	393	147	53
1910	1,236	179	39

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1935, General Report Statistics by Subjects, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 168-68, 175.

TABLE 2: OTERO COUNTY CROP YIELDS

YEAR	OATS	WHEAT	BARLEY
1899	10,010	2,240	760
1910	36,120	3,158	732

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1935, General Report Statistics by Subjects, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 168-68, 175.

TABLE 3: NEW MEXICO AVERAGE CROP ACREAGE

YEAR	OATS	WHEAT	BARLEY
1899	N/A	6.4	4.6
1909	N/A	5.2	6.3

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1935, General Report Statistics by Subjects, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 321, 327.

TABLE 4: PRECIPITATION IN CLOUDCROFT, NEW MEXICO

YEAR	INCHES
1905	39.10
1906	29.68
1907	31.26

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, New Mexico Section, Climate and Crop Service of the Weather Bureau (Santa Fe: Weather Bureau Office, 1905), 9, (1906), 107, (1907), 105.

NOTES

1. *Otero County Advertiser*, 17 May 1902. Alamogordo was the northern terminal of the El Paso and Northeast Railroad to El Paso, Texas, incorporated by Charles B. Eddy in 1897. The town became the center of ranching, lumbering, and commerce for the surrounding area. See Francis L. Fugate and Roberta B. Fugate, *Roadside History of New Mexico* (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1989), 340–41. Robert Athearn asserts that the British were as fascinated with the presence of Colt revolvers in the American West as with wide-brimmed hats and sheepwool chaps and that many Britons believed weapons necessary for personal safety. See Robert Athearn, *Westward the Briton* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 140–41. It is interesting that the attorney who provided Jessie MacMillan with a letter of introduction also helped her purchase a "beautiful long barreled police colt," which she got, but never had to use, for self-defense. Jessie de Prado Farrington, "Rocking Horse to Cow Pony," 1935, photocopy, 28, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library (hereafter FACHL), Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico. See also Farrington, "Rocking Horse to Cow Pony," *New Mexico Historical Review* (hereafter *NMHR*) 30:2 (April 1955), 115–35; *NMHR* 30:3 (July 1955), 221–51; *NMHR* 30:4 (October 1955), 313–39; *NMHR* 31:1 (January 1956), 38–67. MacMillan had married by the time that she wrote her reminiscences and thus is listed as Jessie de Prado Farrington.

2. *Otero County Advertiser*, 17 May 1902. In 1992 I found a typed manuscript of MacMillan's memoir complete with photos glued to the pages at the FACHL. A year later I discovered that it had been published by the *NMHR*. I realize the problems that it presents as a memoir in comparison to a daily journal, which at least does not bear the burden of passing time. With little access to other information about MacMillan, one must resist the temptation to accept the manuscript at face value. Memories often change over the years and MacMillan may, indeed, have "read her life backward," and employed hindsight to her experiences. She wrote it at the suggestion of her minister, Hunt Balcom, shortly after the sudden death of her husband. Farrington, "Rocking Horse to Cow Pony," 1; Jodie Bennett, telephone interview with author, 27 April 1995. Despite all these issues, I believe that the manuscript sheds light not only on farming in New Mexico at the turn of the century, but also on remittance men and women homesteaders.

3. I label MacMillan a remittance woman despite the fact that she was prevented from inheriting by gender, not birth order.

4. Athearn does not discuss remittance men as such, but many of his westering Englishmen were exactly that; see, for example, *Westward the Briton*, 102–15. For discussions of remittance men, see Lawrence M. Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West: The Era of the Intensely English Cowboy* (New York: The Free Press, 1989); Larry McFarlane, "British Remittance Men as Ranchers: The Case of Coutts Marjoribanks and Edmund Thursby, 1884–1895," *Great Plains Quarterly* 11 (Winter 1991), 53–69; Marjory Harper, "Aristocratic Adventurers: British Gentlemen Emigrants on the North American Frontier, ca. 1880–1920," *Journal of the West* 36:2 (April 1997), 41–51; Orlin Scoville, *Remittance Men, Second Sons, and Other Gentlemen of the West* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Corral, The Westerners, 1990). Scoville includes a brief mention of the American railroad land sales propaganda in Europe and England. See also Lee Olson, *Marmalade and Whiskey: British Remittance Men in the West* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1993). It is clear from her memoir that MacMillan received a modest stipend after the death of her father, but the exact amount is unknown.

5. McFarlane, "British Remittance Men as Ranchers," 53; Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 30–35; Olson, *Marmalade and Whiskey*, 5–6; Harper, "Aris-

tocratic Adventurers," 41. For a view of a successful English rancher in Colorado who nevertheless eventually returned to England to teach at Bath College, see "The Rancher" in Colin Rickards, *Bowler Hats and Stetsons: Stories of Englishmen in the Wild West* (New York; Bonanza Books, 1965); also James A. Mitchner, "Remittance Man," *Saturday Evening Post* 219 (January 1949), 123–26.

6. Sara Mills, *Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routlege, 1991), 94–95. Mills examines the writings of British women travelers who managed exotic and adventuresome trips while still paying tribute to appearances and social conventions. For a comparison, see Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).

7. Farrington, "Rocking Horse to Cow Pony," 1–5.

8. Ibid., 7–8.

9. Ibid., 10–12, 15.

10. Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 186–87.

11. McFarlane, "British Remittance Men as Ranchers," 53–54; Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 186–87; Olson, *Marmalade and Whiskey*, 9–10. Harper, "Aristocratic Adventurers," 50.

12. McFarlane, 59, 63–64. Marjoribanks took part in town affairs and was a member of his local school board; Thursby was involved in local and county politics. Also see Orlin Scoville, *Remittance Men, Second Sons, and Other Gentlemen of the West*, 1–3; Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 3, 6, 189; Olson, 83–88, 153–65.

13. Harper, 46–47, 49.

14. MacFarlane, 65.

15. Farrington, 19.

16. Great Britain Central Statistical Office, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1914; Kraus report, 1966), 61–62:407; quoted in Susan Jackel, ed., *A Flannel Shirt & Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880–1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), xix, xiv.

17. Ibid., xv; xvi–xvii.

18. Farrington, 20. The Broughalls' first names are not available.

19. Ibid., 21. "Pater" was a familiar and affectionate term used for "father" at that time by young English people.

20. Ibid., 21–22; The Richmond Horse Show was and remains very important on the British show circuit. Serious competitors, trainers, and horse breeders were sure to have been in attendance. Before World War II, military officers of cavalry units were among the finest international riders. The Military Tournament in London thus also was a major event in the world of horse training. Gerald Fischer, English horseman and trainer, San Jose, California, telephone interview by author, 10 April 1998. Between 1897 and 1900, an Italian, Federico Caprillo, was developing the modern "forward seat" for show jumping and Jessie MacMillan may well have observed the cutting edge of horse training and riding technique. See Margaret Cabell Self, *Horsemanship: Methods of Training the Horse and the Rider* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1952), 169–71.

21. Farrington, 23.

22. Ibid., 24. See also Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 68. McClintock writes, "Privileged groups can, on occasion, display their privilege precisely by the extravagant displav of their *right to ambiguity*." 68.

23. Marjory Harpe "Introduction to the 1994 Edition," in *Through Canada With a Kodak*, by Ish l Gordon (1893; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), xiii.

24. Farrington, 22, 25, 27. Her description of the week-long train trip to El Paso, Texas, is a story in itself.

25. Ibid., 35. Richard Quincy entertained MacMillan as if she were a favorite daughter, and plied her with gifts on the rare occasions that she went to El Paso.

26. Ibid., 37, 40–41. "Eagle" was the name of Mary Lindsay Tod Westlake's homestead. Weed had been described to MacMillan as "a little old wide place in the road," with two general stores—one containing the post office—and a saloon. It was named after W. H. Weed of White Oaks, who in the early 1880s established a branch store at Weed. T. M. Pearce, ed., *New Mexico Place Names: a Geographical Dictionary* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), 178. According to the 1900 census, Weed was a town of 514 people. About a dozen Anglo families lived in the village proper. Jodie Bennett, interview with author, 7 May 1997. Bennett's grandfather owned one of the general stores in Weed. Apache Indians lived to the north of Cloudcroft and many Hispanics lived around Alamogordo. Both groups worked on area ranches. However, MacMillan's immediate neighbors and the friends she mentions in her memoirs were white. Weed is considerably larger today. Relatively unspoiled by tourism, it continues to serve its inhabitants with the services necessary for rural living.

27. Farrington, 39. A quarter section is 160 acres.

28. H. Elaine Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name: Homesteaders in North Dakota* (Fargo: The North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1991), 49–50, 74. For further information see Paula M. Bauman, "Single Women Homesteaders in Wyoming, 1880–1930," *Annals of Wyoming* 58 (Spring 1986), 32–53, and Sheryll Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," *Frontiers* 1 (Spring 1976), 67–88. For more specific information on homestead laws pertinent to MacMillan, see Paul W. Gates, "The Homestead Act: Free Land Policy in Operation, 1862–1935," in *Land Use Policy and Problems in the United States*, ed. Howard W. Ottoson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963). MacMillan actually purchased a relinquishment, which is a claim someone began to improve but sold before completing the requirements. She then went on with five years of improvement to complete the process. This was a legal transaction, but violated the spirit of the legislation which meant to encourage settlement, not land speculation. See Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name*, 70–71.

29. For a concise discussion of women homesteaders and farm women in New Mexico, see Joan Jensen, "New Mexico Farm Women, 1900–1940," in *Promise to the Land: Essays on Rural Women*, ed. Joan Jensen (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 83–96; and Jensen and Darlis Miller, eds., *New Mexico Women: Intercultural Perspectives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986). For visual reinforcement of the story of New Mexico homesteading, see Jerry L. Williams, ed., *New Mexico in Maps* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986; second edition), especially 126–28, 145–47.

30. Farrington, 43. Boy was indeed small, measuring only 13.2 hands; a "hand" is four inches and any horse under 14 hands is considered a pony. In comparison, many American Quarter, Arabian, and Morgan horses on the smaller end of the horse measurement scale are just over 14 hands. MacMillan wrote that she weighed 140 pounds, quite a load for so small a horse, so she would get off and walk on steep sections of the many treacherous trails around the area.

31. Cordelia Lewis, Weed, New Mexico, telephone interview with author, 9 June 1999. Lewis, who is one hundred years old, remembers seeing MacMillan as a child. Fascinated with MacMillan's Scottish accent, Lewis and her playmates tried to imitate it. Lewis' mother, Lettie Jeffers Lewis, was apparently not offended by MacMillan's outlandish riding technique because it was she who taught MacMillan how to store butter for the winter.

32. Farrington, 55. It was a good thing the women sent her treats, because as well prepared as she was with regard to agriculture, MacMillan did not know how to cook very much. A cowboy neighbor taught her to make sourdough biscuits when he saw the inedible results of her attempt to make scones.

33. Ibid., 73.

34. Raymond C. Buckner, *Otero County Pioneer Family Histories* (Alamogordo: Tularosa Basin Historical Society, 1981–1985), 69.

35. Farrington, 74, 79. Bluegrass is a valuable and nutritious pasture grass.

36. Ibid., 61.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 88–89, 95–96. The neighbors were generally helpful to one another. MacMillan recorded that she fell down many times trying to tip the dirt out. Luckily, her team would stop until she could pick herself up.

39. Lindgren, *Land In Her Own Name*, 120.

40. Ibid., 109–10. Handmade western stock saddles in the 1908 Sears Roebuck catalog varied in price from $13.99 to $30.59. The 1909 Sears catalogue had an even greater range in saddle prices: from $5.98 to $56.30. (In comparison, a buggy only cost from $38 to $48!) Quincy's tack was probably of an even higher quality, because then (as it is now), Texas was renowned for its fine western saddles. English saddlers also retain reputations of the highest order. *1908 Sears, Roebuck Catalogue: The Great Price Maker*, facsimile (Chicago: Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1908), 117; facsimile, (Northfield, Illinois: Digest Books, Inc., 1971), 127, 130–31; *Sears, Roebuck and Company, Inc.: Consumers Guide* (Chicago: Sears Roebuck and Co., Inc., 1909), 118; facsimile, (New York: Ventura Books, Inc., 1979), 229–30.

41. Farrington, 116–17. Marie Broughall's grandmother insisted that she return to Scotland shortly after the Broughalls arrived. One might think that Quincy was courting MacMillan, but she gives no hint that this might be the case.

42. Elizabeth Jameson, Afterword, "A New Historical Territory," in Julie Jones-Eddy, *Homesteading Women: An Oral History of Colorado, 1890–1950* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 227–28.

43. Lindgren, 20, 112, 104, 117, 50. Also see Katherine Harris, *Long Vistas: Women and Families of Colorado Homesteads* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1993), ix–x, 5. Harris concludes that homesteading empowered women who were able to seize its opportunities. Another valuable source of information is Phillip I. Gerber, ed., *Bachelor Bess: The Homesteading Letters of Elizabeth Corey, 1909–1919* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990). Corey's letters substantiate current research on women homesteaders.

44. Jensen, "New Mexico Farm Women," 85–90.

45. *Alamogordo News*, 8 July 1905.

46. Fugate and Fugate, *Roadside History*, 325. The lodge that had been built for the railroad construction workers was turned into a resort for tourists and became a popular destination for people wanting to escape the heat of the plains.

47. U.S. Census of Agriculture (hereafter USCA), 1935, "General Report Statistics By Subjects," U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 3:175, 168–69. It must be noted that these statistics depended upon the farms that responded to the census. See the appendix to this article, tables 1 and 2.

48. USCA, "Average Crop Acreage," 321, 327. There were no statistics for oats. See appendix, table 3.

49. Farrington, 74.

50. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), New Mexico Section, Climate and Crop Service of the Weather Bureau, Annual Summary (Santa Fe: Weather Bureau Office, 1902), 2, (1903), 12, (1904), 9. See appendix, table 4.

51. USDA, *Annual Summary* (1905), 9, (1906), 107, (1907), 105.

52. R. Douglas Hurt, *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 5. Farrington, 98. Paul Bonnifield, *The Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt, and Depression* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 14, 20–22. Bonnifield writes that a severe drought lasted from 1873 to 1881 but that the weather cycle was wet in some of the same Dust Bowl areas from 1906 until the late 1920s. Helen Hickam, who farmed near Clayton in northern New Mexico,

stated that her parents before her, and she and her husband had no problems with drought before 1930. "The last good crop was in '29. Everybody had a crop then and it just gradually got worse." Rain, she reported, was quite regular in her area in the 1920s and people could depend upon having snow, although the amount varied with the area and from year to year. Interview with author, 15 May 1995, tape recording, Springer, New Mexico.

53. Farrington, 61–64, 87–88.

54. *Alamogordo News*, 30 December 1905.

55. *Alamogordo News*, 27 May 1907.

56. Farrington, 121–23.

57. Ibid., 122–23.

58. Ibid., 123–26; Bennett, telephone interview with author, 27 April 1995.

59. Ibid., 128–29. It is interesting to speculate that Loftus also might have been a remittance person.

60. See Lindgren, 24–29, 221–24; Jameson, "A New Historical Territory," 224. See also Paula M. Nelson, *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900–1917* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986), 47–50.

61. Farrington, 121.

62. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1935, "Farm Acreage and Value," U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 3:41. In 1910 an acre of farmland was worth $9.92.

63. Lewis, telephone interview with author, 9 June 1999. Lewis volunteered that people around Weed, New Mexico, liked MacMillan and the Westlakes because they "tended to their own business and worked hard . . . . They were real go-getters," she explained.

64. Ruleen Lazzell, "Life on a Homestead: Memories of Minnie A. Crisp," *NMHR* 54:1 (January 1979), 60; Lindgren, 117.

65. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 77, 121.

66. There are a few New Mexican female homesteaders' reminiscences, but most are brief sketches in county *Pioneer Family* books. See also the *Caprock Oral History Collection Project: 1900–1941*, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and National Extension Homemaker Council, Oral Histories (Extension Homemaker Oral History), MS 248 3/5, New Mexico Women's History Archives, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Other New Mexico libraries and museums have also collected oral histories. For more on homesteading women outside New Mexico, see Sheryll Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," *Frontiers* 1 (Spring 1976) and Deborah Fink, *Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

67. The newlyweds farmed successfully for a number of years on their farm "Kairovan" in Freeport, Kansas, where Jessie raised Hereford cattle. After losing everything in 1933, when the drought and its dust storms followed severe flooding, they drove to California, settling in San Bernardino, where Loftus died two years later. Bennett, interview with author, 7 May 1997.