

The 1859 New Year's Day Fight: Race, Place, Marriage, Gender, and Status in Western James Bay

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Many a dance was held in Moose Factory's old carpentry shop, where Hudson's Bay Company ships were built and, later, treaty gatherings were sometimes held. Wedding dances and special holidays provided an occasion to celebrate and relax at this trading post, established by the HBC in 1673. The 1859 New Year's Day dance was an especially memorable one, for simmering tensions between local HBC employees of Indigenous-European ancestry and their transient Norwegian co-workers erupted in violence. I will examine two oral accounts of this event, along with the corresponding archival records, and comment on Métis ethnogenesis, place and gender in western James Bay from the mid-nineteenth century.

WILLIE FARIES' ACCOUNT

William Richard Faries (whose surname is pronounced Ferris) was born at Fort Albany, now known as Albany Island (or, locally, Old Post), on 17 July 1895. He was the second of four children of HBC cooper George Faries Sr. (1869–1901) and his wife Mary (née Wesley 1873–?).¹ When George died, his widow and children lived for four years with Willie's paternal grandparents, 65-year-old HBC laborer Patrick Faries (1836–1924) and his 63-year-old wife Jane (née Mark 1838–?).² When Willie's

1. His siblings were Jane (eldest), James Walter, and George Edgar.

2. The 1901 census lists Cree English Breed Patrick Faries, color red; his wife Jane and daughter-in-law Mary, both Cree and red; and the four Cree English Breed, red grandchildren living in Fort Albany dwelling number 15 (Canada 1901; see also MNC). On census categories see Long 2008.

mother remarried in 1905, he and his siblings continued to reside with these grandparents.³

When I met him at Moose Factory in the 1970s, Willie was a retired HBC servant who had worked throughout the James and Hudson Bay region and eastern arctic, a veteran of World War I, an active man with a blind, bedridden wife (Maggie, née Wesley).⁴ He was proud that their only surviving child, George, represented the fifth Faries generation to work for the HBC, even as the Company's hegemony was being challenged at Moose Factory by his nephew's son, Donald.⁵ I knew Willie as a kind and generous man (see Illustration 1). I never used a tape recorder during our visits but among the memories I treasure of Willie's friendship is his account, written for me in 1978, of ethnic conflict at Moose Factory 120 years earlier. It is a written version of an oral account that he had heard, recounted to him perhaps half a century earlier, recorded by my 83-year-old friend as if his paternal grandfather were recounting an event that took place when Pat was in his early twenties.

3. Widow Mary Wesley-Faries married HBC servant and widower Peter B. Louttit (1861–?) in 1905. The 1901 census lists Peter as a Cree French Breed, color red, but he would be Cree Scotch Breed, if Peter Louttit Sr. was his father. Peter B's first wife, Jane Wynne (–1903), was recorded as Cree, color red, and their children (Willie Faries' half-siblings) included James, Sophia, Margaret, Ann Elizabeth, Peter Harry and two others who died in infancy. Peter B's parents were Peter Senior (?–1903), categorized as a Cree French Breed (but perhaps Scots-Cree?), color red and his wife Jane (née Mariette?), red and Cree—but perhaps French-Cree (Canada 1901).

4. Willie started his 42-year career with the HBC at Fort Albany in 1914. After the war he was carpenter at Attawapiskat, outpost manager at Ghost River, and interpreter at Eastmain and Winisk. In 1948 he was assigned to the Arctic Division as a carpenter at Arctic Bay, Fort Chimo, Port Harrison, Povungnituk, Cape Dorset, Perry River, and Cape Parry (*Moccasin Telegraph* Winter 1960, 8; Winter 1970, 83).

5. Pat Faries' parents were Walter Faries, a steersman, guide and laborer in the Kenogumisse district, and Jenny Robertson. His paternal grandfather was Hugh Faries Jr., a former Northwest Company trader and, following the 1821 union, a chief trader with the HBC. Hugh Jr.'s parents were Hugh Faries Sr. and Mary Warfinger. Angus and William Faries were Pat's half-brothers through his father and Hannah Hardisty, and Frederick Faries was Pat's uncle (personal communication with Willie Faries; HBCABS Faries). Don, a son of Willie's nephew Gilbert George Faries, was starting his own store, "GG's," part of what is now a highly successful commercial conglomerate. Willie told me that he had cautioned Don about advancing credit to Indians. Gilbert's mother was Willie's sister Jane.



Figure 1. Willie Faries (author's photo).

*An Early 1[9]th Century Tale as Told to Us Boys by My Grandfather,
Pat Faries*

The Hudson's Bay Company had Norwegians as Post Servants in them days, maybe because they thought they were harder or tougher as they were from Norway. The tale is as follows, as told by my grandfather:

During ship time, sailing barges and smaller vessels were used for unloading goods from ship to Post, and landed at the dock. I had the job of seeing [that] everything came ashore dry and in good shape.

All of a sudden I heard shouts; a fight was going on! Big Jim Linklater and Rutherford were fighting in front of the warehouse. This Big Jim Linklater was the son of an Englishman, and Rutherford was a Norwegian blacksmith. Someone shouted to me, "Come up, Pat, and see the fight."

As I was running up, I heard Big Jim cuss and swear, "If this one don't get you, I don't know what will!" Just as I was getting there, Jim gave him one square on the chin. That laid Rutherford out cold, so they had to wheel him back home in a wheelbarrow.

This affair seems to have hurt the other Norwegians. There were twenty of these Norwegians [employed] as Post Servants, and we Halfbreeds were also Post Servants.

So then everything went fine after the fight was settled and forgotten. Or so it seemed.

New Year's came. The Company usually gave a feast and a dance for two nights. The New Year's Eve dance was fine. But the next dance, New Year's Night, this was where the devil came in.

First I will tell you boys that these Norwegians made wrist bands with a piece of lead fixed or tied on the wrist under the sleeve of their shirts, to use as a weapon.

Big Jim Linklater and Jimmy King Jr. were grand pals. They were step dancing, and while they were dancing the Norwegians piled on them. We didn't sit there to watch. We young Breeds jumped in!

I was playing the fiddle at the time, and my pal [George or James] Elson was the drummer. I went in with my fiddle in my hand, and broke it on the head of the first one I came on. Smashed it in a hundred pieces! And so, with Elson and his drum (which he didn't smash), in no time we had them lying all over the floor—smashed noses, broken arms, and black eyes. We didn't give them time to use the weapons they made. When it was over, there wasn't anyone else in the building, just ourselves. I never seen a man so mad as was old Jimmy King Sr. He was jumping round the floor shouting, "Is there any more Norwegians standing around?"

Yes, it was a humdinger of a night. The Chief Factor came in, and his staff, to see all things were quiet. The doctor sure had his hands full that night, in bandaging and pulling noses straight!

Well, that ended the dance. All we fighters went home with the Kings to their "butt and bens"⁶ where they lived. This old Jim King Sr. was the son of a Scotchman from Montreal. As we were all sitting around hitting the remains of the Scotch and so on, Jim's dog was barking. Out went old Jim King, gun in hand, and shouted, "Who goes there?"

"A friend," someone shouted. It was Isaac Hunter, who was staying in the Men's House (where the Norwegians also stayed).

6. Willie Faries explained this was a "dwelling house." In the case of a modest two-room HBC servant's home, the inner room was "ben" and the outer one "but." See the *Oxford English Dictionary* explanation of "ben" as adverb, preposition, adjective, and noun online at www.oed.com.

Old Jim King [Sr.] shook his hands and told him, “Good thing you’re a Scotchman, ma laddie, or else you would ha’ been a dead man!”

This old Jim King was the bully that night, and he was a bareknuckled fighter too.

And so, the Boss called us over to the Carpenters Shed [see Illustration 2]. When we went in the building, most of the Norwegians were inside already. Then Mr. Miles, the Chief Factor, gave us a real good talking to. “First I want you men to know that what I say goes. All you Norwegians are going home this summer, and all you Breeds stay where you are ’til transferred to other posts. And none of this monkey stuff again.” Then, as the bell hadn’t rung for over a week, he said, “Tom, go ring the bell now.”

We were about ten Breeds in that fight, and none had any broken limbs. Maybe black eyes only.

Then summer came. Isaac Hunter, Big Jim Linklater and I were sent to Albany Post. Before leaving, we got married, and behaved the rest



Figure 2. Looking out to sea (north[east]) from the District Manager’s residence, Moose Factory 1934. Photographer: H. Bassett. Credit: Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba HBCA 1987/363-M-110/47 (N79-125). George and Emma Moore’s residence with dormers, carpentry shop with bell, servant homes far below, and James Bay in distance. In earlier photographs the bell tower is freestanding.

of our days. Hunter was sent up the Albany River to be Post Manager at Mammaweemattawow (which means 'all branches in one' in Cree, later renamed English River). I myself became a voyageur on the Albany River, and Big Jim was skipper of the Albany sailing barge. Out of all the Norwegians, two was kept back; the blacksmith Rutherford, and Gunner Udgarten (who was cook for the gentry or officers).

Gunner Udgarten was the great grandfather of the present Gunners. Isaac Hunter was the granddad of the present Hunters. The Linklaters are descendants of Big Jim, and all we Faries are from old Pat.

Such was the old days.

WILLIE MOORE'S ACCOUNT

William Edwin Moore was born at Moose Factory in 1897, the youngest of four children born to George Moore III and his wife Emma. Little Willie was a short man, a bachelor who had worked for the HBC in Moosonee and Moose Factory for much of his life, the fifth generation of Moores in James Bay. Willie was twelve years old when his father died, and it fell to him to care for Emma until her own death, thirty-six years later.

When I met him, Willie was retired and living in the senior citizen's building in Moosonee, always a gracious host [see Illustration 3].



Figure 3. Willie Moore (author's photo).

In June of 1984, 87-year-old Willie played his accordion for me and answered numerous questions in his soft, gentle voice. He gave me additional information concerning the same New Year's incident in this excerpt from a taped interview. Willie Moore's account, told to him by his mother, "a baby . . . in a cradle" at the time, originated with his maternal grandmother, Mary (Turner), wife of HBC boat builder James Morrison, Jr.:

JL: You heard that story from your mother?

WM: Yes, my mother used to tell me about it. Her mother [Mary] told her; she [Emma] was only a baby when they had that fight. She was tied in a cradle, she said [see Illustration 4]. She was at this dance; her mother had her there. And they took all the young fellows' caps, she says. Her father's [James Morrison Jr.] cap got mixed up with them and they took his too. He went to get it and boy was he ever looking mad, eh. He says they give him his cap, all right.

JL: Did she say what started the fight?



Figure 4. Christmas Ball in Bachelor's Hall (York Factory). Sketch by Bayard in Ballantyne's *Hudson Bay*, p. 198.

WM: Well, . . . that [Norwegian] guy that was dancing over, in and out among the women when the Moose Factory boys were dancing. And the girls wouldn't dance with them, wouldn't dance their dance, you know. Waltzing, I guess. Then this guy started dancing in and out among the women, when they wouldn't dance with him I guess. This old Linklater hit him, she said, and that's what started the fight. They put the lights out and a bunch of them must have piled on him [the Norwegian].

JL: And that's when they stabbed him?

WM: And they were stabbing him, she said. Stabbing him with knives, only so much. Small cuts, eh. All over his body, I guess.

JL: What happened to them after that?

WM: I don't know what happened after that. They didn't mix up with them, I guess. They kept away from them. That was the New Year dance, eh, that they were having . . . My mother said the young fellows didn't walk [home] on the main road [that night], they walked down through the bush. They didn't want to let them catch them, I guess. If they caught one they'd have piled on him, I guess. They had to send them away to different posts. . . . That old Linklater was quite a fighter too, eh. That's what they used to say about him.

More than a century after the incident, Willie Faries and Willie Moore provided us with the names of several participants or observers in the New Year's fracas. We can supplement this information by examining church and HBC archival documents from the 1850s.

Norway House, in present-day Manitoba, attests to the employment of Norwegian prisoners-of-war by the HBC in 1814–17, clearing the winter road from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg (Burley 1997:85–6.). Others worked at Moose Factory (*ibid.*, 187). Four decades after this initial and

largely unsuccessful venture, HBC Governor Sir George Simpson proposed that the Company again recruit Scandinavians. Historian Elizabeth Hurley notes that

Mid-nineteenth-century Norway, like northern Scotland, was underdeveloped and poor, populated by cottars who mixed subsistence agriculture with other occupations, such as working aboard ships and in fishing and lumbering. Presumably, its belief in the desirability of workers from such a society overwhelmed any memories of the unruly and insubordinate Norwegians it had hired in 1814 (*ibid.*, 85, 100).

At Moose Factory, Orkneyman Isaac Hunter and Norwegian Gunder or Gundar H. Udgaarden were relative newcomers to James Bay, each in his third year of HBC service by 1858. James Rutherford was a man of Scottish, not Norwegian, ancestry and a comparative veteran in his fifteenth year of employment. Patrick Faries, Jim Linklater, Jim King, James Morrison and the Elsons were men of Indigenous-European ancestry who had been born in the territory and apprenticed to the Company in their early teens (HBCA 1858–9a). Tom cannot be identified and oral tradition errs in assigning Englishman Robert Miles (1795–1870), chief factor at Moose Factory from 1843–57, a role in this incident. Scotsman John George McKenzie had just replaced him (HBCABS Miles and McKenzie).

Our oral accounts have given us an excellent understanding of the New Year's conflict. We can summarize the sequence of events as follows. There was a fight involving Jim Linklater when the ship was unloading. The New Year's Eve dance was uneventful (WF). There was a second fight at the New Year's night dance. When Linklater was jumped upon, his fellow half-breeds retaliated. The Norwegians had weapons made of lead weights, while the half-breeds used their fists (WF). There was teasing, involving caps, and there was rivalry over women. Linklater initiated the fight, and knives were used (WM). Afterward there was a drinking celebration at the King residence (WF). Half-breeds avoided the path along the river (WM). The HBC doctor attended the injured. The chief factor investigated, called a meeting, and reprimanded those involved. All the Norwegians returned to Britain, except for Udgaarden (WF), and the quarrelsome half-breeds were apparently dispersed (WF, WM).

The Reverend John Horden, Moose Factory's resident clergyman at the time, reported a drunken brawl in the fall of 1857 (Horden 1858, 23

March). Horden, who had arrived from England in 1851 to replace the Wesleyan Methodist George Barnley, ministered to the resident English-speaking population as well as the more mobile Cree. "I am afraid," he wrote soon after arriving, "that my fellow whites will prove the greatest hindrance to the Mission . . . their example may prove prejudicial to the Indians but I hope not" (Horden 1851). Six years later he reported that many of the Company's servants were "drunkards," and knives were often drawn when they fought (Horden 1857a, 20 January). During the winter of 1857–8 he studied Norwegian and held classes and services in that language, aided by apprentice HBC clerk and Norwegian Charles Crowe (Horden 1857b, 24–25 December; 1858, 31 January and 2–25 March; HBCABS Crowe).

January of 1858 brought dramatic signs that some of this second wave of Norwegians, like their predecessors, were dissatisfied with working and living conditions. First, Gustaf Lundquist deserted from Fort Albany, arriving at Moose Factory in early January (HBCA 1858a, 9 January). On the same day, eleven other Norwegians sent chief factor John Mackenzie a letter outlining their grievances: "Sir we beg your pardon for taking this opportunity, but compelled of necessity we must write these few lines to let you know that we all wish to go home the next Ship time" (HBCA 1858b). They complained about their accommodations, their food, and their fellow workers. Before leaving Norway, they had been promised "free house and boarding." Instead, they were housed in the Company men's house at Moose Factory, "where wind and snow goes right through from one end to the other" and had to purchase their own bedclothes (*ibid.*).

Their food consisted of "a piece of pork or sometimes equal peas, beef so salt[y] & rusty as it is not eatable and many half rotten geese and on top of that, we must drink cold water." Although they had signed four-year contracts, they no longer considered themselves bound: "we are sure the Company have broken their Contract already from the first day we came on shore here" (*ibid.*; see also Burley 1997:170).

The Norwegians' fellow servants were another source of grievance, and their letter gives us a different perspective on ethnic tensions at Moose Factory, thirty-six years after the Hannah Bay murders (Long 2000; Chabot 2001): "[M]ost of us have been attacked by the natives of this country, yes some of us almost killed or at least spoiled for their whole life." They wrote that they had "not come here for to be killed one way nor yet the other" and gave notice of their intent to return home by ship—with or

without permission. Their letter was signed “with one wish and will” (HBCA 1858b).

Later in the month the Reverend Thomas Hamilton Fleming, Horden’s associate, took a four-day return snowshoe trip to the “Log tent”—evidently a moss-covered log tipi or *askiigan*—known as “Fort Magnus,” named for its Scottish foreman Magnus Linklater. For several months each winter some of the Company’s servants were sent some twenty-seven miles upriver to cut wood, which would be floated down to Moose Factory in rafts after spring break-up (Fleming 1858). In mid-February, Magnus reported the desertion of two Norwegian servants, N. Olsen and C. Hindmarsh. Search parties failed to locate them that winter (HBCA 1858a, fos. 47d–49).

Two months later, on the evening of St. George’s Day,⁷ James Linklater became intoxicated and during a fight “got all the Norwegians upon him.” It was apparently not Rutherford but Gustaf Lunquist, the only Norwegian to use a weapon, who stabbed Linklater—the victim, not the victor, in HBC records—“in several places” (*ibid.*, 35d–36). In May, Mackenzie reported that even Lundquist’s countrymen were afraid of him, requesting that he “be put in irons as he had threatened the lives of several of them, and that unless I did so they would refuse to work.” This was not the first time that Lundquist had come to Mackenzie’s attention, and the chief factor wrote that he “was glad to comply with Mens request.” James Linklater, the Company blacksmith, was instructed to forge a set of handcuffs, and Lundquist was imprisoned for the night “in one of the Rooms in the Factory” (*ibid.*, 34d–36). Next morning Lundquist was moved to another location, to remain there until ship time in August, and security measures were increased. In addition to the handcuffs, “his feet were manacled” and he was guarded by fellow Norwegian Gunder Udgaarden, the “Mens Cook,” who was promised a gratuity once Lundquist was “safely put on board Ship” (*ibid.*, fos. 35d–36).

June brought tragic news. The two Norwegians who had escaped in February were found by an Indian named *Quawecheeshik*:

He one day was following up an Otter and before his sight was one of these men dead from starvation along the bank of the [Abitibi] River. . . . [O]n his way up to the Post he found another Body of the said Norwegians at the mouth of the fredrick branch [Frederick House River]. It [appears] by what he Saw that this one must had died before the other left him as the Body was covered with a Blanket & Surrounded with Sticks, he supposed

7. St. George, the patron saint of England, is celebrated on April 23.

to prevent the animals from destroying the Body. [A]long the bank of the River was hung up a pair of Snow Shoes & a Bell as a Sign to any one who might pass (ibid., fos. 51d–52).

This disturbing news must have shocked the other Norwegians, although the climate was often unforgiving in their homeland as well. It prompted Horden to comment that “Moose as a place of confinement for Europeans is much more secure than Pentonville Prison” in England (Horden 1858, 13 June).⁸

As ship time approached, Lundquist was allowed a little freedom “in the afternoons but he [was] put in Irons again towards Evening” (HBCA 1858a, 29 July, f.6d). Five Norwegians were sent home on the Company ship *Prince Arthur*, their contracts terminated (HBCA 1858–9b, 26–28 August, f.9d).

There were 17 Norwegians at Moose Factory in 1858–9, sixteen servants and officer Crowe (HBCA 1858–9a). Lundquist’s departure did not end the labor troubles at Moose Factory, but things proceeded peacefully for a time (HBCA 1858–9b, 16 and 30 October, 15 November, fos. 13–14d). During Christmas week the servants were given a holiday and each received “3 Gallons Porter” (ibid., 27 December). This was a challenging season for Horden, who provided this description of Christmas holidays at Moose Factory soon after his arrival: “many of my white brethren hav[e] no doubt sore heads as the effect of last night’s revelry, when cups were passed around rapidly, and blows dealt freely, and oaths of course uttered constantly” (Horden 1852, 25 December). He soon noticed a change in the men’s behavior and was able to state that nearly all had tried to prevent liquor from gaining mastery of them. This, he realized, was an amazing feat when there was no work for a week and thirty to forty men were crowded together in one room with no restriction on the sale of liquor (Horden 1853, 31 December). Not everyone was sober, of course, but they learned to avoid the clergyman.

At 6 p.m. on Monday, the 27th of December, 1858, a “disturbance arose among the Norwegians and Half Breeds which however was soon quelled.” The following day “No liquor was sold to the Men . . . in consequence of the disturbance last night.” On Wednesday each man was given “1 quart Porter.” Thursday passed without any difficulties, and “some of the married Men [were] employed hauling home wood for their families.” On Friday the year ended, and each of the men received his customary “Regale” or ration

8. On Pentonville Prison, see Duncan 2000.

of liquor (HBCA 1858–9b, 27–31 December). New Year’s Eve was celebrated without any major problems, just as Willie Faries was told by his grandfather.

On New Year’s Day it was customary for Company employees to visit the chief factor. Mackenzie reports: “Saturday. Nearly all the Company’s Servants called this morning & had each a Glass of Wine & the day passed over quietly.” That night, however, “the Men had a dance in the Carpenters Shed & about 7 P.M. a serious disturbance took place between the Half Breeds & Norwegians.” The unhappy Norwegians were “more in liquor than the others,” and so they “got the worst of it & ran to the Mens House & took Guns threatening to shoot any Half Breeds who came near them.” Mackenzie attempted to calm the Norwegians and left George Brown, a servant from Fort Albany, “as a Watch to prevent the entrance of any of the Half Breeds.” Dr. W. Cowan, a Scotsman who had replaced Alexander Long as the Company’s surgeon, was kept busy tending “3 or 4 Norwegians . . . badly cut,” among them Christian Swendsen and Martin Johansen. Only two were injured “on the other side,” James Linklater and John King (*ibid.*, 1 January 1859).⁹

Sunday passed, Mackenzie apparently taking it as a day of rest. He then spent all of Monday investigating the affair. Willie Moore’s account was correct: every witness agreed that James Linklater was to blame. He had struck one of the Norwegians “who was in liquor & interrupting him in the dance.” Bilingual men of Indigenous-European ancestry were valuable commodities, but Linklater had proven to be a troublemaker. “As he has been in every row we have had since I came to Moose,” wrote Mackenzie, “I intend removing him to Albany first opportunity” (*ibid.*, 3 January 1859).

On Tuesday, January 4th, a second day was occupied “adjusting the difficulties between the Norwegians & Half Breeds.” Linklater was banished to Albany on the 5th, escorted there by George Brown and Willie Moore’s grandfather, James Morrison Jr. The servants resumed their normal tasks, except for those on the sick list. Starting on the 12th, the men were given their “drams” twice a week but no liquor was allowed to be sold until the Company’s Governor, Sir George Simpson, could be consulted (*ibid.*, 4–12 January 1859).

Later in January, many of the Norwegians were on the sick list (*ibid.*, 19–21 January 1859), although their ailments were perhaps unrelated to the

9. Cowan, who was married to Hariette Sinclair and placed under house arrest by Louis Riel in 1869–70, retired to St. Paul, Minnesota (HBCABS Cowan).

New Year's revolt. Burial records confirm Horden's gloomy observation that nearly every European lost a child during the winter of 1858–59 (Horden 1859; LUA 1851–1906). Labor troubles resumed. Mackenzie reports: "we had much trouble with the Norwegians today, about settling the question of an allowance of Tea & Sugar which they maintain was promised them by the Company at home, after some time I agreed to allow them 1/2 lb Tea & 3 lbs Sugar p[er] Man p[er] Month, having had previously Sir Geo. Simpsons sanction." As we might expect, the other employees wanted the same treatment—but this "was refused as they had no right to it" (HBCA 1858–9b, 17 February; Horden 1859; Burley 1997:170).

When two of the injured Norwegians, Swendsen and Johansen, were released by Dr. Cowan after six weeks of care, they then "refused to do any more work" and were put on reduced rations in February (HBCA 1858–9b, 22 February). A month later they, and another man who had refused to work since New Year's, had a change of heart and "commenced working." In April, after repeatedly refusing to work before breakfast "& being taken to task for it," Knud Waaler and Johansen stormed out of the "Carpenter's Shed" and again "refused to work any more" (ibid., 14 March and 6 April 1859).

On May 20th the Norwegians were allowed to celebrate Constitution Day, their national holiday (ibid., 20 May 1859; Loken 1980:5). Next month six of the men "refused to work . . . under the pretence that it [too] was a Norwegian Holiday." Mackenzie suspected this, and the earlier holiday, were simply "a got up scheme between them." He suspended Swendsen, Waaler, and four others from work (HBCA 1858–9b, 2 June; Horden 1859).

Ship time came again. Six of the Norwegians cancelled their contracts. These plus one more countryman left for England on the *Prince Arthur* (HBCA 1858–9b, 6 September). Within a short time, Gunder H. Udgaarden was the only one who remained. Horden spoke for many when he wrote of the others: "I by no means regret their departure; with the exception of a few honourable men, they conducted themselves very discreditably, engaging in frequent quarrels, in which the knife was on almost all occasions resorted to, and their general conduct being such as set a very improper example before my people" (Horden 1860).

The story of the New Years fight at Moose Factory is more complicated than oral tradition suggests. The earlier confrontation, told to Willie Faries, involved the stabbing of big Jim Linklater by Lundquist during the St. George's day celebrations. The New Year's dance did involve knives, as Willie Moore heard, but three or four Norwegians were very badly cut.

Willie Faries indicates that the “half-breed” participants married and led more settled lives, but we can now appreciate the reason: married men had their own living quarters, and some of these perhaps did not indulge to the same extent as single men in holiday carousing because they had to cut and haul firewood—a cooperative activity (Anderson 1961:26).

Archival documents inform us of the Norwegians’ general dissatisfaction with their living and working conditions, a situation that prompted some of them to refuse to work (see also Burley 1997:187). They reveal Lundquist’s desertion, his incarceration (in handcuffs forged by his victim) and eventual deportation. And we learn from these same sources of the deaths, through starvation or freezing, of his countrymen Olsen and Hindmarsh.

The documents and the oral tradition agree that the monotonous life of a Company servant living in the drafty men’s house with its poor food was occasionally relieved by celebrations. When alcohol flowed freely, they could step dance to the sound of the fiddle and drum in the old carpenter’s shop, or in the private homes of those HBC servants who had established families. But simmering tensions could be expected to explode occasionally into violence involving fists and knives.

The oral traditions, passed down from participants and observers to their grandchildren, provide an exciting record of events, involving what Dick Preston (n.d.) calls “known people in known places”—the Linklaters, Faries, Hunters, Udgaardens—and about the limits of misbehavior and their consequences for Company servants of Indigenous-European ancestry in the 1850s. Unfortunately, we cannot say what significance these winter events may have had for the inland Cree and Ojibwe who visited Moose Factory only for a few weeks each summer to trade their furs, or for the coasters, who formed a large summer workforce and sometimes visited the post at Christmas. In the 1850s, they were denied access to alcohol. It is clear, however, that those who decried the “less desirable” working-class model provided by transient construction workers in Canada’s north during the second half of the twentieth century (Fried 1968:199–200) were unaware that working-class drinking was a well-established tradition a century earlier (Burley 1997:131–9).

HBC Governor Simpson soon realized that the Norwegian experiment of 1850s had failed, but he hoped that in smaller numbers they would “accommodate themselves to the habits of the country” and assimilate (Burley 1997:142). Gunder Udgaarden married Harriet Turner, thereby

becoming an uncle to Willie Moore's mother. Gunder raised six daughters and three sons, retiring in 1902, when the HBC reduced the size of its workforce at Moose Factory (Long 1985).¹⁰ One of his sons, Augustine or Gustavus, produced eleven children and ensured that the family name—variously spelled and now contracted to Gunner, a mispronunciation of the patronymic Gunder—would continue at Moose Factory and beyond.¹¹ Another moved to northeastern James and Hudson Bay, where he married an Inuk woman (HBCABS Udgaarden). The HBC service was not, of course, the only way for Norwegians to reach Canada. Over 28,000 Norwegians arrived at Quebec during the 1850s. Gunder Udgaarden was typical of many who became “scattered so far and wide . . . that they could establish no meaningful contact with their own ethnic group” and became assimilated into the Canadian mosaic, no longer identifiable as Norwegians (Loken 1980:14, 52). Many of his descendents at Moose Factory became identified as “half-breed” Company servants who were proud of their Indigenous-European ancestry, while others—since Bill C-31 amended the Indian Act—acquired Indian status if one of ancestors happened to have married an Indian. Since the 1970s the term “half-breed” has largely been replaced by “Métis” at Moose Factory and Moosonee.

When “ethnstatus distinctions” (Waldrum 1987) arose in western James Bay at the signing of Treaty No. 9 in 1905, the Moores and other HBC servants at Moose Factory, were denied Indian status, while further north and west the Linklaters, Faries, and Hunters were admitted to the treaty (Long 1985; Manore 1988). The family histories of Willie Faries, Willie Moore, and others involved in the 1858–9 New Year's festivities suggest a new reason why the treaty commissioners made these distinctions.

10. In June of that year, Brian Gettler (2007) reports that “the HBC eliminated twelve Moose Factory servants from its payroll in order to lower the post's expenses.” However, given that these men were “deeply in debt to the Company” and thus “on arrival at the front [the railway] will find themselves totally destitute,” the HBC's James Bay district manager, George McKenzie, foreseeing this problem, had suggested several months earlier “to give each party say a ten Dollar Bill as a bonus. Even this would be a saving in order to get rid of them.” The men were: Kenneth McLeod Sr., K. McLeod Jr., Malcolm McLeod, M[?] Linklater, Walter Ritchie, Geo Turner, Jas Turner, Gunder Udgaarden, James Udgaarden, Wm. Bain, Tom Bain, and R. Swanson.

11. Gus, a resident of Moosonee, died on 23 January 1942 and was buried on the 28th. LUA Moose Factory Burials.

At Moose Factory, headquarters of the HBC's southern department, fur trade exogamy—whereby descendents of old Company officers married others of similar class and race, a practice which was perhaps beginning to reach its limits by 1900—was still possible, at least for men, at mid-nineteenth century. Willie Moore's grandfather, Joseph Moore, had married Helen Alder. Willie Moore's father, George Moore III, had married Emma Morrison, whose mother was a Turner. The Moores and Turners were descended from what Company officers and servants would have considered the fur trade elite (Long 2008).

Willie Faries' grandfather, Pat, was also descended from fur trade elites. Pat was a great-grandson of Hugh Faries Sr. and Mary Warfinger (Wallace 1948:319) and a grandson of Hugh Faries Jr.—whose marriage *à la façon du pays* to the “half-breed or ‘Metis’ Indian” woman Joseph Mainville was posthumously recognized by Montreal's Superior Court (Bethune et al. 1867:249–50). Pat's parents were Walter Faries and his first wife, Jenny or Jane Robertson, a daughter of Orkneyman John Robertson (HBCABS Robertson).¹² Pat married Jane Mark of Moose Factory, a descendent of Mark Apitakiishikaw (Half a Day) and his wife Mary Moar; Mary was a woman of Indigenous-European ancestry from eastern James Bay, while Fred was apparently a Cree and a seasonal HBC employee (Long 2008). Willie's father, George Faries, married Mary Wesley; Wesley is a surname that Barnley first assigned to Wapunewoetum and his wife Shkwashesh, renaming them John and Suzannah Wesley, and to Malotaskitan, baptized Charles Wesley (Long 1986:319). Willie's widowed mother married another HBC man of Indigenous-European ancestry, Peter B. Louttit. And Willie, like his father, married a Wesley.

In 1905, at Moose Factory, the Marks were included in Treaty No. 9 and Fred Mark was chosen as the first treaty chief. The Moores, however, like the Udgaardens, Morrisons—and others like the McLeods, Taylors and Turners—were denied Indian status and petitioned unsuccessfully for half-breed scrip (Long 1985). Through fur trade endogamy (half-breed with half-breed) and marriage to incoming Europeans, the treaty commissioners may

12. Eight years after Pat's birth, Barnley officiated at the marriage of Walter Faries and Hannah Hardisty, who had been united by contract since 1841. AO Moose Factory Marriages 1826–56, 26 May 1844.



Figure 5. Mary Turner Morrison (author's collection).

have felt that any Indigenous “blood” had been almost entirely displaced in these families. Their appearance may have confirmed this—Willie Moore’s grandmother had snow white hair (see Illustration 5). Most of these families did not apparently desire Indian status; they petitioned, unsuccessfully, for half-breed scrip.

At Fort Albany, big Jim Linklater’s descendents, Pat Faries (with his grandchildren Willie and Jane), along with the Wesleys and Louttits were classified as Indians. Even though the commissioners likely knew that the Faries, Linklaters, and Louttits were half-breeds, they likely thought that exogamy (half-breed with Cree) had increased their Indigenous blood quantum and watered down their white or European blood. Willie Faries, like his sister Jane, became Indians, a status that meant very little in the early years of the twentieth century, aside from the \$4.00 annuity which their grandfather would have received while they were his dependents.

Jane’s first children also qualified for Indian status, for she wasn’t married to the Scotsman who was their father. An HBC clerk, he enlisted in

1917 (when Robert Renison recruited Crees and half-breeds for the Forestry Depot's Indian draft) and never returned (Renison 1957:100–2).¹³ Had she married him, Jane and their children would have lost Indian status. Jane eventually married Walter Chum, a member of the Moose Factory band, in whom she found a dependable life-long partner. Her first son, Gilbert, after attending the residential school at Moose Factory, married Nellie McLeod of Moose Factory, a descendent of one of the half-breed petitioners.¹⁴ Nellie acquired Indian status by marriage and later became Moose Factory's first female chief. (Gilbert also served as chief.) Gilbert's sister Daisy also attended residential school, worked for the Anglican minister for a while, and then married Bill Turner (see Illustration 6)—whose father Robert would have been a young boy at Moose Factory at the time of the New Year's Night fight. Daisy lost her Indian status through marriage. Bill—like the Moores, McLeods, Morrisons, Taylors, and Udgaardens did not have Indian status—so his wife and children couldn't have it either (until Bill C-31 amended the *Indian Act* in 1985).¹⁵ Place, gender, marital status, and marriage partner determined Indian status.

Willie Faries died in 1979, a few months after writing his grandfather's narrative for me. Although he had become an Indian at the age of twelve, Willie voluntarily enfranchised, rejecting Indian status. He showed me his certificate of enfranchisement, signed by him on 20 June 1952,¹⁶ and explained that he took this step after two of his three children died as a result

13. Vincent Martin Macdonald of Aberdeen, born 18 May 1896, “freckles all over body,” signed his attestation papers in Toronto on 30 July 1917, listing his marital status as “single.” (http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/cef/001042-119.02-e.php?image_url=http://data2.archives.ca/cef/gpc011/519900a.gif&id_nbr=148739).

14. Nellie's father, Thomas Hamilton McLeod (son of petitioner William), was evidently named after the Reverend Fleming.

15. Those born in northern Quebec also qualify as potential beneficiaries under section 3.2 the 1975 *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*, but there are residency requirements.

16. The certificate, which he allowed me to photograph, stated that “the provisions of the Indian Act and of any other act or law making any distinction between the legal rights, privileges, disabilities and liabilities of Indians and those of Her Majesty's other subjects cease to apply to him and he now possesses and enjoys all the legal powers, rights and privileges of Her Majesty's other subjects and is no longer deemed to be an Indian within the meaning of any laws relating to Indians.”



Figure 6. Marriage of Bill Turner and Daisy Faries at Moose Factory in 1938 (author's collection, courtesy of Daisy Faries).

of neglect while attending the Indian residential school at Moose Factory. Many veterans enfranchised so they could vote and legally drink, having been treated as equals of their comrades during wartime. Willie Moore, a life-long bachelor, died in 1985, less than a year after our interview. I am grateful to both of these old friends. Their accounts of the New Year's conflict at Moose Factory broaden our understanding of at least two of the post-Powley indicators of Métis identity: self-identity "not of recent vintage," ancestral connections to one or more historic Métis communities and acceptance by a modern Métis community (SCC 2003:para30–33; see also Reimer and Chartrand 2004). First, judging by Pat Faries' story, there appears to have been self-identification by some as "breeds," which echoes the more formal self-description as "half-breeds" in the petition presented to Treaty No. 9 commissioners at Moose Factory in 1905 (Long 1985). Second, the Faries and Moore families (and others) illustrate multigenerational

connections to HBC trading posts and regions, arbitrarily separated into two categories at the signing of Treaty No. 9. Finally, both family lines persist and intermarry in Moosonee/Moose Factory, and beyond, some as Métis and others as Indians—both groups recognized as having aboriginal rights in section 35(1) of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982* (CDJ).

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