

SURPRISINGLY UNEXPECTED:  
MOOSE JAW, METRONORMATIVITY AND LGBTQ ACTIVISM

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## **ABSTRACT**

Through an attention to the experiences of middle-aged and older gay men living in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, this work explores how “metronormative” discourses of rural-urban gay migrations obscure the experiences of those living outside metropolitan centres. Using archival and ethnographic methods, this study critically reflects on metronormativity in the lesbian and gay archive and attempts to de-centre visibility from conceptions of LGBTQ activism through a focus on what I call “audibility tactics.” These tactics, deployed by LGBTQ activists in Moose Jaw from 1978 – 2012, minimize the individual and public declaration of sexual orientation while resisting homophobia and heterosexism. This study also identifies the scalar flexibility of metronormativity in LGBTQ lives and activism while tracing the complex migrations of middle-aged and older gay men. Finally, this work discusses the way space is not only sexualized but also “aged” and the role this plays in these men’s disidentifications with metronormativity.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated  
to the generous people  
and unexpected places  
where I have found home.

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## Chapter 1: Welcome to the Friendlier City

As soon as we let go of the universal as a self-fulfilling abstract truth, we must become embroiled in specific situations. And thus it is necessary to begin again, and again, in the middle of things.

—ANNA LAWENHAUPT TSING, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*

It's 5AM and my apartment is the cleanest it's been since the last time I traveled. My blue carry-on-size suitcase is stuffed with clothes, gifts and books while my red backpack bulges with (more) books and snacks for the trip. The pair wait impatiently by the door beneath condescending reminder notes written in capital letters: FOOD, CELL PHONE, CHARGER, TOOTHBRUSH, COMPUTER! A moment of indecision passes and I slip between the sheets for one hour of slumberous bliss.

My cell phone blares a heartfelt rendition of ambulance sirens from the living room and before I'm fully awake, I'm hurrying down the street to catch the metro, to the bus, to Trudeau International Airport. A short layover in the centre of the universe and I rematerialize in Regina as three hours condense into two equally disturbing dreams about an unfinished thesis chapter. I scan a small crowd of expectant faces as I descend *the* escalator at YQR and spot my mom's signature smile and wave.

After a short hug, a desperate cigarette or two and some catch-up banter, we drive five minutes to the nursing home where my grandma and I talk about our knitting projects and the baby blanket she bought for my oldest sister. I can't help but laugh as Grandma playfully teases me about the handsome young man that brings her lunch. On the drive home from Regina, my chipped black nail polish takes a back seat to questions about my lengthy beard as mom and I talk about who will be at my brother's wedding. We both know that this best man will not be wearing nail polish at the ceremony.

We drive 45 minutes west along an exceptionally straight stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway through exceptionally flat prairie until we spot Mac, the world's tallest moose. As I count the latest rooftops peering out from behind a row of trees at the edge

of the city, I ask mom if I can borrow the car for my “gay” group’s weekly meeting tonight at a coffee shop downtown. It strikes me as ironic that after nearly 10 years of journeys to and from this small prairie city, it is only now that I live in Montréal that I would recognize the flourishing LGBTQ life at my doorstep in the Friendly City.

Welcome to Moose Jaw, a city that is both a little less and a little more friendly than it seems. One of Moose Jaw’s proud mottos, the Friendly City characterizes this smaller prairie community as a place that has worn the badge of its humble (colonial) beginnings and (selective) western hospitality all the way to modern city-dom. Contrary to the appeal of the massive shopping complexes and imposing skyscrapers of world cities, Moose Jaw capitalizes on its charming smallness (symptomatic of decades of outmigration) to draw visitors from across the globe (Larsen and Libby 2001). A brief message on the city’s tourism homepage exemplifies this paradox of endemic outmigration and touristic success: “What was once a city you were from is now a city everyone comes to. Close to half a million visitors each year to this city of 35,000.”<sup>1</sup>

Of course, what is charming for some may appear suffocating for others. For many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) tourists, Moose Jaw’s smallness seems to mark the city as an inhospitable and perhaps even impossible travel destination. With megalopolises like New York, Rio and Sydney populating the ranks of the (Los Angeles) Advocate’s Top 20 Gay Travel Destinations of 2013, the LGBTQ nightlife in the prairie elsewhere might seem unappealing at best.<sup>2</sup> Yet, while some LGBTQ people cannot wait to escape the Friendly City and others cannot even fathom a visit, there remain a number of LGBTQ people who call Moose Jaw home. This work seeks to listen closely to these voices and retell their stories of resistance and belonging.

The very existence of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw (GLAMj) was for me, as the city’s shiny new slogan suggests, surprisingly unexpected. Of course, before I began this work, I had not actively searched for LGBTQ life or activism there, believing Moose Jaw to be the abstract, rural, homophobic nowhere of my distant queerless past. Neither did I expect to find that Moose Jaw held a Pride Week dance in 1993 with over 200 people in attendance, that in 1978 the Friendly City’s Main Street

was trampled underfoot by 85 lesbian and gay rights protestors or that Moose Jaw's River Street was the epicentre of a homosexual sex trade on the prairies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

My ethnographic entrance into Moose Jaw is one of return from the larger urban centre, marking how this research is embroiled in the specific situation of my own metronormative journeys and frequent return trips. This story marks my own need to, as Anna Tsing suggests, "begin again and again in the middle of things" (2005:1-2). In her work, Tsing writes against the universality of global capitalism through a description of the transformative "friction" these discourses encounter as they are taken up in different locales. Tsing's work is a poignant reminder that "universal claims do not actually make everything everywhere the same" (2005:2). Similarly, claims about the universality of LGBTQ identities do not make LGBTQ lives everywhere the same, even within a single, ostensibly "gay friendly" nation like Canada. Indeed, the downtown coffee shop where GLAMj hosts its weekly meetings looks nothing like Toronto's Gay Village. This work seeks to describe some of the ways LGBTQ identities and activism are necessarily transformed through the "friction" they encounter in a smaller urban context.

However, even within academia, the sexual politics of smaller centres have drawn significantly less attention than the highly visible metropolitan displays of pride parades and gay villages as LGBTQ researchers themselves seem reluctant to thematically or physically venture out beyond the big city (Gray 2009). The assumption—what Jack/Judith Halberstam (2005) terms "metronormativity"—seems to be that LGBTQ people will inevitably abandon their closeted lives in smaller centres and rural areas for the promise of an open LGBTQ life in the metropolis among a community of like others.

Contrary to the majority of sexuality research focused on larger urban centres, this research does not ask why LGBTQ people (particularly middle-aged and older gay men) leave the smaller centre, but rather what complex migrations and motivations have led them to make home in Moose Jaw, without assuming that they will stay. I ask what strategies and tactics have enabled them to inhabit their specific smaller urban context and how they carry out activism and organizing with smaller numbers, fewer resources and less infrastructure than what is generally found in larger urban centres. I ask how and

where researchers can find the traces, fragments and evidence of this work and what methodologies researchers need to use in order to hear the voices of sexual dissidents in non-metropolitan locations.

While the metronormative bias of sexuality research may leave one wondering if researchers really believe that LGBTQ lives somehow become more important in the metropolis, it also draws attention to an overemphasis on visibility in LGBTQ research and the inadequacy of this concept when applied to non-metropolitan contexts (Gray 2009; Herring 2010; Tucker 2009). In chapters 2 and 3, I seek to de-centre the visible/invisible binary from our understanding of LGBTQ activism and argue instead for a recognition of the broad spectrum of what I term “audibility tactics” in which even silence can be part of a strategy of resistance. Through a focus on audibility tactics whereby LGBTQ people eschew individual public identification with their sexuality in order to (safely) express their support for LGBTQ group acceptance, I intend to critique and disarm the metronormative stereotype of LGBTQ people passively languishing in the shadows of rural and small-town homophobia and heteronormativity (Gray 2009).

As my opening vignette illustrates, my objective here is not to argue that some LGBTQ people do not actually migrate to larger centres to pursue the ostensible freedom and anonymity of an openly LGBTQ life. Rather, I aim to draw attention to the ways that this linear, teleological and ontologically final narrative does not account for the complexities of all LGBTQ experience, particularly for many middle-aged and older gay men living in Moose Jaw. While some LGBTQ people may have spent the majority of their lives living in Moose Jaw, others have enacted complex movements that tack back and forth across rural and urban areas alike. Both in terms of visibility tactics and metronormative migrations, many middle-aged and older gay men in Moose Jaw deployed a strategy of disidentification (Muñoz 1999) in which they neither accept nor reject outright the homonormative discourses that prescribe a particular form of coming out and a metropolitan residence. Rather, these men have modified these discourses in novel ways in order to maintain the coherency and authenticity of their gay identities.

The complex migrations of my collaborators also demonstrate the interconnectivity of rural and urban areas, revealing this spatial categorization as a false binary that privileges urban experience (Halberstam 2005). Similarly, the concurrent functioning of audibility and visibility tactics demonstrate the relationality of smaller centres with one another and with a variety of larger centres that defies the exclusive hierarchical relationship established by the rural-urban binary. In order to describe these multiple, non-hierarchical networks, I use Deleuze and Guatarri's (1987) concept of the "rhizome," which I describe below.

De-centring the hierarchical relationship between rural/urban allows for an understanding of LGBTQ activism and organizing outside metropolitan centres as integral to conceptualizing the complexities of LGBTQ histories—even those focused on larger centres. Such an approach refuses the metronormative and hierarchical characterizations of rural areas and smaller centres as "nowhere(s)" compared to big city "somewhere(s)" and further argues that LGBTQ sexual subcultures also thrive in non-metropolitan locales (Tongson 2011).

### **There and Back Again (and Again) / Home-work**

The idea for this project occurred to me in a gap year between finishing an undergraduate degree in linguistics and my M.A. degree in social anthropology. At that time, I was working as a research assistant for the Rural and Remote Memory Clinic in Saskatoon on a number of projects related to some of the challenges of aging in rural contexts. When I told a colleague about my conflicting desires to study sexuality and aging in a rural environment, she matter-of-factly asked, "Why don't you study older gay people?" I laughed. The possible existence of older gay people had never crossed my mind before and I knew immediately that this was a topic I needed to explore.

Two years prior, I had come out as gay to close family and friends while studying abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico. With a sense of moral obligation, I called family and friends in Saskatchewan from a safe distance of about 4,000 km and with several months in Mexico still ahead of me. On the whole, the reactions were remarkably supportive with

my oldest sister even telling me that I was the “last to know.” However, at the ripe old age of 20, I felt as though I was lagging behind my peers who had come out at a much younger age. I had a sincere desire to make up for lost time and eventually decided that the best route for me to understand my sexuality would be through formal study. When I returned to Saskatoon to complete my degree, I had made it through this rite of passage and had taken on the identity of an openly gay man.

At the age of 16, my family relocated to Moose Jaw from an acreage near Strasbourg, Saskatchewan (population ~750) where I had spent my childhood. While living in Moose Jaw, I attended an evangelical Christian school (of my own volition) ten minutes west of the city and had rather weak ties to and few friends in the Friendly City. The pursuit of a post-secondary education took me from Moose Jaw to Saskatoon which was close—but not too close—to family. In my final year of studies there, a professor of anthropology suggested that I continue with graduate studies with a colleague of his in Alberta. The fear of homophobic intolerance that I assumed blanketed that entire province made that possibility much less appealing. I already knew I wanted to live in Toronto while studying sexuality as I imagined that city offering more resources for my plan of study and the possibility of living the *real* gay life. When I was accepted to York University, I broke up with my boyfriend in Saskatoon and packed my bags for the big city.

Having never even visited Toronto before this, I thought that my best bet would be to live on campus for my first year and find an apartment off-campus the next. Little did I realize, it would take me over an hour by transit to get downtown and even longer to get to the Gay Village. I struggled with the loss of my friends in Saskatoon, mysterious and persistent health complications, the heavy course load, my relative unfamiliarity with the discipline and the box-store aesthetic that I associated with York University. The quiet and solitary life I led on this commuter campus hardly matched my fantasies of a glamorous gay life in the bustling metropolis.

When it came time to select a field site for my research, I quickly realized that staying with my parents in Moose Jaw would allow me to reduce the costs of my research

while being close to my family. Although Moose Jaw was not quite the “rural setting” I had in mind when I started graduate studies, my own assumptions about queer absence and closetedness in rural areas made such research on older gay men appear too difficult, if not impossible.

I also chose Moose Jaw as a way to metaphorically and literally return “home” to explore my own “roots” and fashion a stronger attachment to a place that I often visit. I was keen to make friends in a context where I had previously felt somewhat isolated and I was captivated by questions of what my life might have been like if I had continued to be involved in my church, if I had lived in Moose Jaw decades earlier or if I ever returned for good. Thus, throughout this text I have chosen to use the term “home-work” instead of the traditional anthropological term “fieldwork” in order to acknowledge the ways this work, my collaborators’ migratory narratives and the interconnectedness of “rural” and “urban” areas have blurred the boundaries between the conceptually distinct categories of “home” and “field” (Gupta and Ferguson 1996). While it would be absurd to think that Moose Jawians are somehow “closer to nature” than Montréal or Toronto-based researchers, even from a purely technical standpoint, the term “field” is an inaccurate description for my small-urban research site: “Going to the ‘field’ suggests a trip to a place that is agrarian, pastoral, or maybe even ‘wild’; it implies a place that is perhaps cultivated (a site of culture), but that certainly does not stray too far from nature” (Gupta and Ferguson 1996:9). The term “home-work” refuses the hierarchical, urban-centric scorn of armchair anthropologists for the “field” and the anthropological project aimed at observing and reconstructing the “natural state of the primitive” (Gupta and Ferguson 1996:6).

After four months of home-work in Moose Jaw, I relocated to Montréal where I have experienced the magic and frustrations of interacting with fresh languages, cultures, histories, politics, activisms, art forms and LGBTQ “communities”. An inexpensive bus ticket away from Toronto, I have been able to return to York University when necessary while still having access to adequate resources from four university libraries in Montréal. For me, this city has signified both escape and exile—an escape from the hardships of

home-work and the scholastic pressures of Toronto and an academic exile from some of the people and places that constitute my sense of home. My presence in and attachment to this metropolis are certainly part of the metronormative discourses that I critique throughout my thesis and play a role (both silent and observed) in my analysis.

### **Welcome to the Friendlier City**

Ticket-holders onboard one of Moose Jaw's refurbished trolley cars can expect a very respectable introduction to the Friendly City as officially sanctioned tour guides rehearse a number of factoids in the customary fashion. Moose Jaw is a smaller prairie city in south central Saskatchewan with a population of 33,274 people.<sup>3</sup> Located approximately 60 kilometres west of Regina, the provincial capital, Moose Jaw is home to the Moose Jaw Warriors (Western Hockey League), the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, approximately 36 churches and over 40 outdoor murals depicting (select aspects of) the city's vibrant history.<sup>4, 5</sup> Just five minutes south of the city is Saskatchewan's only military base, 15 Wing, which hosts the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program and Canada's aviation demonstration team, the Snowbirds. In 2007, Moose Jaw was declared a cultural capital of Canada; the city continues to host the annual Saskatchewan Festival of Words, the Moose Jaw Band and Choral Festival and a number of others.<sup>6</sup>

Despite being Saskatchewan's fourth largest city, many of my collaborators described the Friendly City as a "small town" with a strong emphasis on family values. Although Moose Jaw has no formal historical society, the city does boast an active genealogical society with an online presence. I have often heard Moose Jaw described as a great place for both young families and retirees as nearly 19% of the city's population is aged 65 and older (compared to Regina and the entire province at 13% and 15% respectively).<sup>7</sup> According to the 2006 census, Moose Jaw has a high degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, with only 5% of the population identifying as aboriginal, only 3% identifying as a visible minority and a whopping 92% monolingual English speakers.<sup>8, 9</sup>

While many smaller centres are often assumed to be both socially and politically conservative, Moose Jaw's elected officials have varied widely in their political dispositions. At the federal level, right-leaning Progressive Conservatives (PC), Reform and Conservative candidates have often won seats in Moose Jaw although the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the New Democratic Party (NDP) have also had a number of victories. These variations, however, may be due in part to the frequent boundary shifts of the federal ridings representing Moose Jaw and the fact that the city has always shared its vote with the surrounding area, at times including Regina.<sup>10</sup> Since 2004, Conservative politicians have held seats in Moose Jaw's federal riding of Palliser although sometimes winning by a very slim margin. At the provincial level, since at least the 1940s, Moose Jaw has been a stronghold for left-leaning political parties such as the provincial CCF and NDP.<sup>11</sup> However, the Saskatchewan Party, a provincial conservative-liberal alliance, took one of Moose Jaw's two electoral districts in 2007 and both in 2011.

Present day Moose Jaw, whose name comes from the Cree word "moosegaw" for "warm breezes" (Larsen and Libby 2001), squats on land near a First Nations campsite that dates back as far as 8,000 BCE (Moon 1979). More recently, the region was (and still is) inhabited variously by Cree, Blackfoot, Assiniboine and Sioux peoples and served as a Métis fur trading point in the 1800s known as "the Turn" (Knight 1982; Larsen and Libby 2001). In 1881 Moose Jaw was registered as a town site by James Ross and Hector Sutherland who correctly predicted that the site would serve as the divisional point for the Canadian Pacific Railway, which reached the settlement the following year. By 1885, Moose Jaw was a major settlement with an adjacent Sioux village in today's Connor Park. Brian S. Osborne describes the history of Moose Jaw as a "microcosm of that of the Prairie West" with its early colonial history being marked by the Dominion Land Act, the Riel Rebellion, the Laurier-Sifton immigration and the Great Depression (Osborne 2002:18-19).

By 1903, Moose Jaw attained city status and shortly thereafter began producing post cards and tourist books enticing visitors to seize the area's rich agricultural resources

for rock-bottom prices (Rice 1908).<sup>12</sup> By the early 1930s, Moose Jaw's population had grown to nearly 24,000 people with almost 84% of British origin and a smaller but noteworthy number of Chinese business owners (Larsen and Libby 2001).<sup>13</sup> Even at this early stage in the city's history, a guidebook to the 1930 Moose Jaw Rodeo was already memorializing and glorifying (select aspects) of its "immoral" past and "the glamour of the old West" as a way to draw tourists to the city. The guidebook describes a tourist attraction where visitors could purchase "frontier money" and go on a "spending spree" in the gambling halls and saloons in "an exact replica" of an "Old Frontier Town."<sup>14</sup>

More recently, with Moose Jaw's longstanding economic mainstays of agriculture, mining, construction, oil and petroleum, and manufacturing under pressure, the city has emerged as a leader in the tourist industry of Saskatchewan (Osborne 2002:19). In 1989, Moose Jaw began investing in a number of historical-themed mural projects in an effort to increase tourism in the city. The investment has been remarkably successful with an estimated 96,000 visitors to the city in 1996 and 169,000 in 2001 (Koster and Randal 2005). Additionally, the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, one of the city's largest employers, has attracted major business to Moose Jaw with a reported 400,000 visitors between 1996 and 2001 (Osborne 2002:19). Following the demolition of several historical buildings throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a number of Moose Javians fought hard to preserve their architectural heritage, which has also added to the city's tourist appeal (Larsen and Libby 2001).

The latest gem of the city's tourist industry, however, has been found in the Tunnels of Moose Jaw where "history goes underground."<sup>15</sup> In 1985, a collapsed maintenance hole revealed a large, brick-lined area that was not part of the city's sewer system (Osborne 2002). With Moose Jaw's illicit history of opium dens, gambling, prostitution and booze smuggling during the times of prohibition, rumours began to swirl of a possible connection to Al Capone and the Soo railway that linked the city directly to Chicago (Osborne 2002). After a team of local historians conducted archival research, interviews and fieldwork, no conclusive evidence for the tunnels was found but by the 1990s, the debate over authenticity had shifted to discussions of economic development

(Osborne 2002). Although then-Mayor Don Mitchell argued that the city's tourist strategy should stick to the facts and refrain from building a business on the "false promises of history," a tunnels initiative was nevertheless undertaken in 1995 and soon the tunnels were being heralded as the "the focal project in the revitalization of downtown Moose Jaw" (Osborne 2002:22).

These tunnels, which have been "redesigned and expanded" (Larsen and Libby 2001) to accommodate tourists, feature a theatrical production where professional actors (playing gangsters and one feather boa-toting "Miss Fanny") guide ticket-holders through a story of "what could have been" (Collins 2003). By 1999 the "Tunnels of Little Chicago" had boasted 77,000 visitors and with expansion projects in the works, projected the number of visitors to increase to 100,000 annually (Osborne 2002:24-25). The Moose Jaw tunnels even attracted national attention in 2000 from the Canadian weekly newsmagazine, *Maclean's*, in an article by Allan Fotheringham entitled "Raunchy Old Moose Jaw."

Nevertheless, for a smaller prairie city that makes big business out of its clandestine history, the silences surrounding same-sex desire and LGBTQ histories in Moose Jaw stand out like a ten-ton Moose on the side of the highway. While Moose Jaw has drawn historical attention for being a red light district on the prairies (Gray 1971), it has not been until very recently that the city's flourishing homosexual sex trade of teenage newsboys in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has come to light (Korfman 2007). Similarly, when tour guides describe how 15 Wing emerged when the Moose Jaw Flying Club was contracted to train World War II pilots, there is no mention of the citizens' support of female impersonation in entertaining wartime troops. In José Torrealba's (2003) documentary, *Open Secrets*, Canadian Army veteran, Private Bill Dunstan describes how the organizer of a World War II female impersonation troupe "got the IODE [Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire] in Moose Jaw to donate a dress—and this was sort of a ball gown."

Australian geographer, Jane Jacobs, identifies the power dynamics and cultural politics inherent in the process of making heritage sites:

Which places do or do not become part of heritage and what transformations places undergo in this process of recognition is a key arena for combative struggles of identity and power. It is not simply that heritage places symbolise certain values and beliefs, but that the very transition of these places into heritage is a process whereby identity is defined, debated and contested and where social values are challenged or reproduced. (Osborne 2002:25)

Like identities, memory is both personal and social and acts as a key mediator between the individual and society (Tonkin 1992). With a paucity of information on LGBTQ lives in Moose Jaw or other smaller centres, I intend to alter this relationship between the personal and the social through my own memorializing and that of my collaborators. Since all representations of pastness are tied to the relationship of teller and audience and are subject to bias and fabulation (Thomson 2011; Tonkin 1992), I describe my relationship to my collaborators below.

In this smaller prairie city, many residents have made a place in their history for “Miss Fanny” and her feather boa but have yet to formally acknowledge or glorify the other sexual outlaws of Moose Jaw’s past and present. Others, however, like the defunct folk band The Minor Thirds, describe “the dark, forgotten tunnels” of same-sex desire “running underneath this town” in their equally obscure song, “Moose Jaw.” The entrances into these alternate tunnels of desire, as The Minor Thirds suggest, are difficult to find and perhaps even more difficult to navigate without the assistance of an experienced guide. With the collaborative guidance of 10 middle-aged and older gay men, this work seeks to map some aspects of these alternate tunnels of desire through an excavation of silence and an undermining of the city’s respectable topography.

Although some of my collaborators have noted that certain parks and public washrooms in Moose Jaw do double-duty as active cruising sites, the city no longer has a (wide) reputation for a homosexual sex trade. Moose Jaw hosts no annual pride parades, boasts no gay bars or cafés and no congregations that have declared themselves affirming of sexual and gender diversity.<sup>16</sup> Although the city does have some counsellors, doctors and lawyers that are gay-friendly, these services are not widely advertised, if at all. While Moose Jaw once had an AIDS office and a PFLAG volunteer, this is no longer the case.

Still, despite all of this infrastructural scarcity, LGBTQ life and activism abounds in Moose Jaw in ways that are surprisingly unexpected.

### **Reviewing Metronormativity**

While gay rights discourses in metropolitan centres like New York have long asserted “We are everywhere” (Berlant and Freeman 1993:193), the larger urban centre continues to be framed as the “‘habitus’ of queerness” (Gray 2009:9) in the vast majority of research on LGBTQ people. However, since the explosion of lesbian and gay studies in the 1990s, anthropologists, geographers and other scholars have begun to study “gay and lesbian towns” (Faiman-Silva 2004; Newton 1993), radical faerie groups and rural lesbian communes (Morgensen 2009; Valentine 1997), LGBTQ life in suburbia (Brekhus 2003; Dines 2010; Lynch 1992; Tongson 2011) and two-spirit/LGBT migration and aboriginal reserves (O’Brien and Travers 2006). Despite all of this, studies of LGBTQ sexualities outside the metropolis that move beyond non-urban gay enclaves have been remarkably limited (Gray 2009; Wilson 2000) while research exploring the complex migration decisions of sexual dissidents has also been in short supply (Gorman-Murray 2007).

In their (2005) work, *In a Queer Time and Place*, Jack/Judith Halberstam proposes the notion of metronormativity to describe the dominance of narratives of metropolitan migration in which a queer subject is formed through the movement from a place of silence and repression (rural) to one of visibility and tolerance (urban). Radically disturbing the ideological supremacy of this spatial, temporal and psychological journey, Halberstam argues that scholars must begin to understand how “staying put” and the preservation of difference can be part of the production of complex queer subjectivities.

Metronormativity has long been an implicit assumption in research and writing on LGBTQ sexualities. For example, historian John D’Emilio (1983) has argued that the organization of same-sex desire from a set of behaviours into a visible social identity in America was largely due to the economic possibilities in larger urban centres that drew young, rural individuals in the postwar era. Similarly, historian George Chauncey’s

(1994) work on early gay identity and community formation similarly relies on the backdrop of the metropolitan centre to argue that gay life in America in the prewar years was actually more tolerated than in the years following World War II. Mary Gray, however, takes D'Emilio and Chauncey to task for their assumption that “visibility and political dissent operate the same way across space and time and are readily available and universally valued no matter where one might live” (2009:7).

Like D'Emilio and Chauncey, anthropologist Kath Weston has argued that the “great gay migration” to larger urban areas in the 1970s and '80s was fomented by the formation of an imagined (gay and lesbian) community where “gayness” itself is constructed through a symbolic rural-urban contrast (Weston 1995). However, historian John Howard has argued that the movement of some rural queer men may be better characterized by patterns of circulation rather than permanent migration (Howard 1999). Still, the presumption of rural-urban migration remains prevalent in current research on LGBTQ persons (Gorman-Murray 2007; Halberstam 2005).

Unsurprisingly, sexual dissidents have been abandoning the metropolis for greener pastures (or refusing to journey there in the first place) for many years. Scott Herring (2010), for example, identifies forms of metronormativity in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe while simultaneously observing that even fictional queers have been discarding metropolitan life for at least as long. Similarly, at least since 1889, the American medical profession has observed the presence of “male sexual perverts” outside the metropolis. As Dr. G. Frank Lydston of Chicago writes in the *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, “there is in every community of any size a colony of male sexual perverts; they are usually known to each other, and are likely to congregate together” (Lydston 1889:254).

Even Alfred Kinsey, in his landmark study, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Kinsey et al. 1948) devoted a section to describe the extensive practice of homosexual relations in rural America. Although Kinsey romanticizes and essentializes older males in Western rural areas as “men who have faced the rigors of nature in the wild” and as those who “live on realities and on a minimum of theory,” he also importantly observed that “rural homosexuality contradicts the theory that homosexuality in itself is an urban

product” (Kinsey et al. 1948: 458-9). Despite the lack of “city-bred homosexual institutions,” Kinsey portrays these men as having an attitude that “sex is sex, irrespective of the nature of the partner with whom the relation is had” (Kinsey et al. 1948: 457-8).

Although the belief in homophobia is commonly imagined as a timeless characteristic of rural areas or the American/Canadian west, studies on colonial settler societies demonstrate that this is a relatively recent characterization. William Benemann, for example, argues that the “ever-receding [American] frontier [...] provided the opportunity for extensive male-male sexual activity” (Benemann 2006:1). In a fascinating and important thesis, *The Wilde West: Homosexual Behaviour in the Court Records of Saskatchewan, 1895 to 1930*, Geoffrey Korfman argues that settler regions like Saskatchewan may have even been sought out by men in larger centres seeking homosexual sex (Korfman 2007).

In his work, Korfman argues that “sodomy” in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was much more vigorously policed in “Toronto the Good” than in Saskatchewan’s smaller centres. With difficulties policing the “frontier” and a largely male homosocial environment, Korfman contends that (male) homosexual behaviour was tolerated as a necessarily evil of settler society so long as it was discrete, consenting and respected what Korfman calls “the traditional male gender role” (2007:4).

As evidence of this permissive leniency and the regular occurrence of homosexual sex, Korfman cites one court record from 1895 that describes three Regina men who were caught sexually stimulating one another. Despite admitting guilt, a petition pleading for leniency for one of the men was signed by a number of upstanding citizens including the Regina Mayor, the Justice of the Peace who had charged the men and the Staff-Sergeant of the North-West Mounted Police. While the charge of “gross indecency” had resulted in a number of convictions with jail terms in metropolitan London, these three men were found guilty but received only fines.

However, as this “frontier” receded, so did the tolerance of homosexual behaviour: “The permissible sexual spaces of the early frontier in which prostitution and homosexual behaviour appear to have been quite commonly accepted within regulated

parameters, appear to have gradually dissipated as the western frontier gave way to a modern province” (Korfman 2007:100). Yet, this shift in the sexual dynamics of the prairies led to the emergence of a homosexual sex trade in the province that centred around the red light district of Moose Jaw’s River Street. Korfman argues that men may have sought out Moose Jaw specifically for its flourishing sex trade involving teenage newsboys who used the sale of their newspapers to legitimate their presence on the streets late into the night. This sex trade, which made use of Moose Jaw’s theatres, parks, public restrooms, lunch stands, diners and streets, may have operated on River Street as early as 1914 (Korfman 2007:120).

A small body of literature has begun to complicate the exclusively homophobic, socially impoverished and racist stereotypes of non-metropolitan areas that place the existences and experiences of non-metropolitan sexualities under erasure (Herring 2010). In the introduction to their landmark edited volume, *De-centring Sexualities: Politics and Representations Beyond the Metropolis*, Richard Phillips and Diane Watt note that smaller centres and rural parts of North America have been understudied despite their potential to complicate our understanding of sexuality as “it is in such spaces that hegemonic sexualities may be least stable” (Phillips and Watt 2000:1). Gordon Waitt and Andrew Gorman-Murray (2007) take up this challenge in their study of the homemaking practices of mature age (40+) gay men in an Australian provincial town. In this work, mature gay men conceive both town and house as paradoxical spaces where they experience feelings of being both insider and outsider through the presence of social support networks and heteronormativity.

However, the vast majority of research on sexuality beyond the metropolis tends to focus exclusively on the experiences of youth and pays little attention to the aging process in general. In Howard’s (1999) study of the life experiences of older gay men in rural Mississippi, for example, the historical analysis is limited to 1945-1985, effectively ignoring these men’s contemporary experiences with aging. Similarly, Fellows’ (1996) discussion of queer possibility on the “farm” contains an edited collection of the *early* life

histories of older gay men who grew up in rural America and migrated to urban areas later in life.

Studies in geography and sexuality have begun to interrogate the rural/urban divide through exploring the relationality of rural and urban areas (Bell 2001). For example, in her study of lesbian life in a South England town (population 110,000), Kath Browne contests the hierarchization of urban/rural and argues that “lesbian geographies are never simply located or locatable and they point to the need to examine diverse intersections between spaces, practices, identities and particularly imaginings” (2008:30-31). Similarly, Gorman-Murray (2007) points to the teleological and ontological finality of rural-urban migration and notes that the normalization of such movements has elided a complex description of embodied queer migration.

Throughout my analysis, I use Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) metaphor of the rhizome, which challenges the binaristic and hierarchical logic of the root-tree metaphor common in much philosophical theorizing. Found at the base of certain plants, the subterranean network of shoots that form a rhizome is composed of a multiplicity of connections between one point and any other point, making it quite unlike the tree-root with its “preestablished paths” connecting offshoots to the principal root. Thus, rather than conceptualizing Moose Jaw as an offshoot of metropolitan centres in its LGBTQ activism and organizing, I seek to describe the Friendly City as part of a rhizomatic network of other places (including centres of various sizes and rural areas) which can connect to other points of a different nature (e.g. politics, history, sexuality, aging). The strength of the rhizomatic model is that it is “acentred” and “nonhierarchical” with “multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:21) and allows for a complex understanding of LGBTQ migration, organizing and activism that does not centre around the metropolis even as it acknowledges a connection.

Indeed, Bell and Jayne (2006) argue that rather than merely mimicking the logic of global metropolises, smaller cities may operate under a unique mode of “cityness” reflected in that smaller city’s self-image, ways of acting and structures of feeling. Similarly, Tiffany Muller Myrdahl’s study of LGBTQ women in Lethbridge, Alberta,

demonstrates the importance of geographical specificity in queer lives and practices and reflects a growing trend in geographies of sexualities to conceptualize “queer practices in small cities on their own terms” (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:4; Brown 2008). Muller Myrdahl’s argument builds on work by scholars such as Gray who refuses the lie that place is nothing more than a passive backdrop to queer identity work and activism (Gray 2009). In an ethnographic study of identity work and visibility activism among queer youth in rural Kentucky, Gray argues that visibility activism is heavily reliant on the infrastructure of urban-based non-profit organizations. Without such infrastructure in place, the queer youth of Gray’s study formed “boundary publics,” temporary sites for queer identity work, organizing and visibility activism.

Many authors have underscored the inadequacy of the notion of “coming out of the closet” as a universal metaphor for describing queer visibilities (Brown 2000; Johnson 2008; Tucker 2009) especially as it reifies sexual identity categories and reinforces the hetero-homosexual binary (Tucker 2009). While the meanings of “coming out” and “the closet” are reworked over time and space, they often serve as geographical conceptual tools that can frame space of various scales as “gay” or “homophobic,” “progressive” or “backwards” (Howard 1999; Tucker 2009).

However, sexual citizenship discourses aimed at gaining rights for sexual minorities rely heavily on an “urban-based politics of ‘coming out’” (Herring 2010:22) that claims that full citizenship rights can only be attained when metropolitan sexual sensibilities are accepted. These claims are based on a binary division between ostensibly conformist “good gays” who keep their sexuality to themselves and supposedly non-conforming and revolutionary “bad gays” who make their sexuality public (Stein 2001)—a division that clearly works together with stereotypes of non-metropolitan (rural, provincial) purity and metropolitan impurity (Phillips 2000).

José Esteban Muñoz, however, argues that the counteridentification of “Bad Subjects” simply reinforces the power of the dominant ideology and he instead proposes the notion of disidentification as a “mode of dealing with dominant ideology [...] that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather,

disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology” (1999:11). Disidentification, which acknowledges the “multiplicity of interlocking identity components” offers the possibility of “chart[ing] the ways in which identity is enacted by minority subjects who must work with/resist the conditions of (im)possibility that dominant culture generates” (Muñoz 1999:7-8). Throughout my thesis, I use disidentification as way of conceptualizing how middle-aged and older gay men living in small-urban areas resist and rework dominant discourses of visibility and urban migration.

Discussions of visibility activism, even in the context of rural youth (Gray 2009), often fail to consider the role of aging and cohort preferences in affecting the desirability of such practices. In his study of older homosexual men in Canada, John Alan Lee observed that “many older homosexual men still interpret the closet [...] as adventuresome and special” (Lee 1987:63). “Gay liberation” and queer rebelliousness have also been strongly associated with younger cohorts that have tended to exclude older persons (Goltz 2007). Older men, therefore, may be more likely to rework discourses of visibility than their younger cohorts. Kristiansen (2004), for example, has proposed the concept of “discretion” as a cultural logic in Norway that recognizes older gay men’s agency and resistance through their selective disclosure of sexual identity.

### **Methods: Excavating Silence**

In preparation for my home-work, I conducted a Google search of the words “gay” and “Moose Jaw” and was surprised to find the existence of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw (GLAMj). When I arrived in Moose Jaw, I was able to discuss my project with the group and four of the members showed interest in being interviewed. The members of GLAMj graciously allowed me to attend their weekly meetings over the roughly four months of my home-work in Moose Jaw.

From these initial four collaborators, I was referred to four others who matched my criteria, with only one declining to participate. Additionally, I recruited three collaborators through three online gay men’s chat sites—Manhunt.net, Squirt.org and

Plentyoffish.com. On these sites, I posted a summary of my research on my profile and occasionally contacted some of these men using each website's respective messaging systems. While a number of those I contacted online declined to participate, two agreed and yet another proactively contacted me.

Rather than approaching individuals in a group setting about their willingness to participate in one-on-one interviews, each collaborator was contacted either by phone or e-mail to gauge their interest in this project. While most collaborators preferred to be interviewed in their homes, two sets of interviews took place in a public park, another in a collaborator's office, one was conducted at the house I was renting from my parents and yet others took place in a vehicle on a short road trip.

Collaborators were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews using a set of questions found in the Appendix. Each interview lasted between one and three hours and collaborators were interviewed between two and three times each. With ten interviewees, this amounted to nearly 60 hours of interview material. In order to better understand past lesbian and gay activism in Moose Jaw as well as the gendered dynamics of GLAMj, I also briefly interviewed three lesbian-identified women.

Although I had originally planned for a voluntary "participant observation" component of the research, this proved to be undesirable for many of my collaborators. One (heterosexually) married interviewee thought it would be imprudent to spend time together beyond the interview setting while another told me that he did not think it would be very interesting to go for groceries together. Nevertheless, I did spend a significant amount of time with many of my collaborators including informal social visits with certain collaborators and their friends as well as attending Pride Week events in Regina, potlucks in Moose Jaw and Regina Beach, GLAMj coffee nights or movie nights, and even a local musical.

Similar to other scholars doing research on queer lives (Howard 1999; Muller Myrdahl N.d.; Waitt and Gorman-Murray 2011), I have employed oral history methods to examine the "spatial and temporal factors that produce both identities and the lenses through which identities become knowable" (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:7). While

remembering may have an involuntary component (Fabian 2007), oral historian Alessandro Portelli argues that memory is “not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings” (Thomson 2011:7). This awareness has led me to use the term “collaborator” throughout the text as a way of acknowledging the agency of those taking part in the interview process and their role in our collaborative creation of the meaning of those narratives.

Before interviews took place, the project was discussed with collaborators who were given the opportunity to ask questions before signing a consent form. Those collaborators who I interviewed were encouraged to choose their own pseudonyms and request a copy of their interview transcripts.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, when direct quotations were used in the thesis, collaborators were given the option to review these excerpts to make sure that they were being fairly represented.

Throughout this text, I present a number of lengthy quotations in an attempt to provide significant space for my collaborators to tell their own narratives in their own words. As the perspectives of sexual dissidents living in smaller urban areas are relatively rare in extant literature, I have also sought to provide researchers with ethnographic data for further analysis. Both myself and my collaborators have minimally edited these quotations, removing sensitive information, false starts, stutters, and certain interjections (such as “um” and “uh”). However, I have attempted to maintain the original wording of our interviews wherever possible as a way of validating and acknowledging the uniqueness and importance of oral storytelling in the reproduction of LGBTQ histories. As I will discuss in chapter 2, oral storytelling is especially important in contexts like Moose Jaw where few written records of LGBTQ lives and activism are publicly available.

Although I had originally planned to use a pseudonym for my research location, I quickly realized that the rich specificity that archival and historical research provides would be largely inadmissible in an anonymous context. This conflict between protecting collaborator’s identities and meaningfully representing their histories of local activism (especially as they relate and contribute to broader social movements) has certainly

played a role in the proliferation of LGBTQ histories centred on larger urban centres. After discussing this conundrum with all of my collaborators, we have decided to name Moose Jaw throughout the text, similar to the practice of other smaller urban and rural sexuality scholars (Muller Myrdahl N.d.; Trentham 2010). I have, however, taken great pains to protect my collaborators' identities through pseudonyms, careful selection and editing of quotations as well as through meaningful collaboration. In advocating for an understanding and respect for LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw without individually identifying them, I seek to reproduce the “audibility tactics” deployed by many of my collaborators, which I describe in chapters 2 and 3.

In order to contextualize my ethnographic data, I spent several days searching through a number of subject files on Saskatchewan-based LGBTQ activism and organizing in the Neil Richards papers located at the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) office in Saskatoon. Through conversations with archival staff as well as Richards himself, I was able to find a smattering of references to Moose Jaw in this collection while beginning to conceptualize some of the broader trends in LGBTQ activism in Saskatchewan along the way.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, GLAMj gifted me with several documents relating to their organizing and activism from 2004-2011. After a number of discussions with GLAMj members at their weekly meetings, the group decided that these documents would be (selectively) archived at the Moose Jaw Public Library, the SAB (Saskatoon) and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) in Toronto. Interview transcripts from consenting collaborators will also be archived at the SAB under a 50 year restriction, with access being granted only under very specific conditions. As a way of illustrating the value of GLAMj's organizational documents and displaying the LGBTQ historical materials available in the Neil Richards papers, I prepared a short 'zine' using funds from a small grant through the University of Saskatchewan Interdisciplinary Centre for Culture and Creativity, Exploring Culture Working Group.<sup>19</sup>

### **Tour Guides: Us and Them / Me and Them**

By the time I arrived in Moose Jaw to begin my home-work, the words “I hate Toronto” flowed from my lips like blood from a wound. I tried to distance myself from the arrogance and superiority that many Moose Javians seemed to associate with people from Toronto. Yet even before I set out to study my own “roots,” I had already set myself up in a hierarchical relationship with my collaborators with both spatial and temporal dimensions. My attempts to explain to my collaborators that I was studying in Toronto but had family ties to Moose Jaw were met with mixed results—I was often asked about my experiences of gay life in the big city, told how lucky I was to be moving to Montréal, assumed to already “know” what gay life is like in Moose Jaw and instructed like a tourist in the life and politics of the Friendly City. With regards to my origins, as with many of my other positionalities described below, I was variously construed as both insider and outsider depending on the specific context and who was drawing the shifting boundaries of group belonging (Narayan 1993).

Eight of my ten male collaborators had spent some portion of their childhood in Moose Jaw, one came from another smaller centre in Saskatchewan while another spent his childhood in various parts of England. All of my collaborators had lived in Moose Jaw for various lengths of time ranging from eight to 50+ years, with eight of my interviewees having lived in Moose Jaw for over 20 years. Two of my collaborators described themselves as being from Moose Jaw despite their physical residence being located outside of official city limits.

Like many other sexuality researchers who focus exclusively on women, men or trans people, I decided to focus my study particularly on men. This was partly out of my own interest in studying gay, bisexual and queer men’s sexuality and my belief that there were substantial differences between gay, lesbian and trans experience to warrant a separate analysis. Due to my own positionality as a gay man, I also imagined that I would have an easier time finding collaborators. Somewhat surprisingly, few of the men I interviewed knew more than a very small number of lesbians living in Moose Jaw.

Similarly, although I asked my collaborators if they knew any transmen or transwomen in Moose Jaw, I was unable to identify or contact any.

Uncertain of how sexual dissidents in Moose Jaw organized their complex sexualities, I left my study open to any men who have sex with men but found that my collaborators overwhelmingly identified as gay and also sometimes as queer. While four of my collaborators had been heterosexually married (all of whom had children and grandchildren), only one of my collaborators was still married and described himself as currently bisexual. The other three told me how they had previously been in “denial” about their gay identity even though they thought of themselves as straight or heterosexual.

It is also worth mentioning that during my home-work I was in a monogamous same-sex relationship—a similarity that I shared with only one other male collaborator. This placed me in complex relationships with my collaborators as I often perceived a sense of respectability and privilege surrounding my same-sex partnership. However, my collaborators expressed a diverse array of emotions surrounding single life, including satisfaction, loneliness and disinterest. Four of my collaborators described actively pursuing casual sexual encounters.

I also found that as a rather *openly* gay man, I was also positioned in an urban-based hierarchy of visibility where “coming out” is often portrayed in LGBTQ discourses as the morally right thing to do (Herring 2010). While I marched in pride parades and held hands with and kissed my partner in public, this was rarely the experience or attitude of many of my collaborators. Some collaborators expressed shame or embarrassment at not coming out, anger when they were “outed” by others or frustration when this discourse was used to make them feel like second-class homosexuals. As I discuss further in chapter 3, while “coming out” was expressed in a variety of ways, those that were more openly gay sometimes expressed resentment or pity towards those who were not.

Throughout my four months in Moose Jaw, I was not able to identify or contact any middle-aged or older gay men of colour and all of my male collaborators identified as white or of Euro-Canadian descent. As a white man among other white men, I found

that there was very little overt discussion about one's own race or ethnicity although this certainly played a role in many of my collaborators' sense of belonging in a mostly white town. Similarly, as a man with a mostly "masculine" gender performance among other "masculine" men, several of my collaborators commented on my "deep masculine voice" or discussed their distaste for "feminine" men. As a result of these similarities in positionalities, I occasionally heard certain collaborators make remarks that I thought to be racially insensitive, transphobic or misogynist. Through repeat readings of field notes and listening to interviews, I sometimes found myself to be participating in these unsavoury discourses as well.

When I began my research, I intended to interview men who were part of the first wave of the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946-1955) as a way of talking about similar generational characteristics. However, it proved exceedingly difficult to find sufficient collaborators within that age range who were willing to be interviewed. Thus, with limited time and resources available, I elected to fix a somewhat arbitrary minimum age of 50 years old that reflects the relatively younger age at which gays and lesbians are considered "old" or "older" within youth-centred subcultures (Comerford et al. 2004; Goltz 2007). At the time of our interviews, seven of my collaborators were in their early to mid fifties, two were in their early to mid sixties and one was in his early seventies.

As a 24-year-old gay man interviewing men who were twice my age or older, I was aware of the emphasis on youth in "gay hierarchies" that work to put younger, masculine, gay men in control of older men's sexualities (Goltz 2007). Indeed, in the interview setting, some collaborators complimented me on my appearance, told me that they had "checked me out" or that I would look great in porn. Although the attraction was sometimes mutual, I had no sexual relations with any of my collaborators. During both interviews and while spending time informally with my collaborators, many of these middle-aged and older men offered advice or guidance and often positioned themselves in a kind of mentor-like role in relation to me. I also frequently positioned myself as "mentee" and found this to be both comfortable and a valuable way of eliciting greater

elaboration from my collaborators. Similarly, as I openly struggled with chronic health problems, many of my collaborators seemed more willing to share stories of their own health experiences and disabilities.

As a person working on a graduate degree, I often had a “higher” level of education than many of my collaborators but a lower income. While this occasionally placed me in a position of authority, some interviewees commented on the greater value of wisdom and life experience over formal education. However, four of my collaborators had some university education and four others had some technical training. Six of my collaborators owned their own houses, two were living with a parent in a house that their parent owned and two lived in an apartment (one with a parent). None of my collaborators seemed particularly affluent or impoverished with most falling somewhere between upper-middle and working class.

As both a researcher and friend, I was variously construed with a sense of authority, professionalism, camaraderie and familiarity. While I asked a variety of personal and open-ended questions, many of my interviewees directed the process through tangents, silence, reticence, distractions and forgetting. Both prior to and following the interviews, I was often asked questions about my own relationships, life and family, which I attempted to answer honestly and openly.

When the house I was renting from my parents appeared to be the most practical place for that summer’s GLAMj potluck, GLAMj members invited my parents to attend. I was also strongly encouraged to invite my partner at the time out for coffee with some GLAMj members. On three return trips to Moose Jaw following my official home-work, I attended GLAMj meetings and occasionally met with other collaborators. I have kept in contact with my collaborators variously through e-mail, phone calls, texting, Facebook and gay chat sites. With an emphasis on mutual sharing and return visits, I have attempted to mitigate some of the exploitative aspects of the research process.

## **Beyond Walking Tours: Chapter Summaries**

In the following chapter, I explore the historical pairing of the archival institution with the larger urban centre and argue that the lesbian and gay archive is a site of metronormativity that warrants the reflection of LGBTQ researchers. Through an examination of the protests surrounding Anita Bryant's visit to Moose Jaw in 1978 and the public controversy over the proposed establishment of a gay community centre there in the following year, I mark the ways in which Moose Jaw's activism has existed in a rhizomatic network with larger centres and the importance of understanding this dynamic in the writing of LGBTQ histories, even those concentrated on larger centres. Additionally, through my concept of "audibility tactics" I draw attention to the silences of the archive as I map its limits in representing LGBTQ activism outside the larger urban centre. This chapter highlights the need to move beyond the larger urban archive and into smaller communities in order to be able to hear the narratives of activism that are often not represented in the written record.

Chapter 3 continues to explore LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw while augmenting the archival record with interviews, ethnographic data and organizational documents that have not yet found their way into a formal archive. This chapter explores the ways in which LGBTQ activism and organizing in Moose Jaw move beyond simple metropolitan mimicry and produce innovations that are adaptive to this particular context. I argue that even in this smaller centre, metronormativity itself is engaged but with altered logics that have adapted to the smaller numbers, fewer resources and infrastructural poverty facing LGBTQ people in the Friendly City. Demonstrating the functioning of audibility tactics in Moose Jaw, I describe this translation of metronormativity in the context of the city's 1993 Pride Weekend as well as later activism and organizing enacted by GLAMj from 2004 - 2012.

In chapter 4, I present the accounts of two of my collaborators as they map out their own embodied movements that defy linear, teleological and ontologically final metronormative migrations. Contrary to metronormative prescriptions, I describe how these men's "queer quests for identity" (Knopp 2004) play out over the course of their

lives and centre around family and an attachment to the particular context of Moose Jaw. In the process of describing these men's motivations for making home in Moose Jaw, I observe how space is inflected with both sexual and age-related dimensions. Through the process of disidentification, these men resist metronormative discourses for themselves while still recommending them for younger men and continue to maintain an authentic gay identity outside the metropolis. In the final chapter, I discuss some of my conclusions regarding metronormativity in the context of Moose Jaw and suggest avenues for future research.

### **Name Tags: Notes on Terminology**

Throughout this thesis I deploy a variety of terms to discuss and describe non-heterosexual sexualities. Under a number of different organizers, sexuality-based activism in Moose Jaw has been variously identified as “gay” in the 1970s and “gay and lesbian” in the 1990s. When referring to these temporally specific organizing efforts, I maintain the language commonly used at the time, which are attested in archival documents. Similarly, I maintain the terms used by various sexuality researchers in their own work as well as the widespread label “lesbian and gay archives” to describe urban institutional archives that collect material on sexuality.

More recently, however, GLAMj has inconsistently deployed a variety of labels to describe their own organizing and activism including “gay,” “gay and lesbian” and “LGBT”. While GLAMj omits the terms “bisexual,” “transgender” and “queer” from its title, organizers informed me that this was largely an aesthetic decision made to correspond with a catchy acronym. Although GLAMj is comprised of mainly gay or queer-identifying men, lesbians, bisexuals (both men and women) and transgender people have often played important roles in the group's activism and organizing since its inception. While there were no transgender people in the group during my home-work, GLAMj has had at least two transgender people attend its meetings for some time and does engage in a form of (allied) transgender activism through the acknowledgement and recognition of this identity in Moose Jaw. Although recent transgender-focused activism

in Moose Jaw has taken place separately from GLAMj, an article in the *Moose Jaw Times Herald* reported on the city's declaration of "Transgender Awareness Week" where one anonymous transgender interviewee thanked GLAMj for its support.<sup>20</sup>

With a number of queer-identifying members and a sexuality-based activism that knowingly subverts certain aspects of homonormativity and metronormativity, GLAMj's work can be appropriately described as "queer"—a term that often connotes, geographical (urban-) and class-based privilege (Tucker 2009). However, to refer to the group's activism exclusively as "queer" would place other important identity labels under erasure. Thus I have decided to refer to GLAMj's activism and its queer disregard for consistent identity labels as "LGBTQ". I also utilize this alphabetism as a way of describing sexuality-based activism and organizing elsewhere (particularly in larger centres) as well as activism and organizing in Moose Jaw over a broad period of time. Rather than purely additive, this usage is perhaps better conceptualized with an "and/or" conjunction (lesbian and/or gay and/or bisexual, etc.).

As I conceptualized this project, I found that it was exceedingly difficult to come up with an appropriate term to describe the respective ages of my collaborators. Commonly associated with disability, lowered social and economic status and death, old age in the West is predominantly viewed as negative and problematic (Kaufman 1986). Thus, it is not surprising that many people do not self-identify as old, even when others identify them in that way (Gubrium 2005). To social constructionists, old age is an elastic, socially defined category that cannot be objectively defined across time and space (Matthews 1979). Individuals 'feel their years' at different ages, demonstrating the inequalities of living and working conditions associated with race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation and environment among other factors (Mehrota and Wagner 2009). However, biological aging also plays a substantial role in socio-cultural definitions of "old age" and the ways images of old age are culturally constructed (Hazan 2009; Featherstone and Hepworth 2009).

While some of my collaborators (of various ages) were reluctant to self-identify as "old," others described themselves as "older" or "getting older," which may have been

a response to my own categories of analysis. Although my collaborators were familiar with the younger age at which gay men were considered “old” or “older” (Goltz 2007), most continued to refer to their respective ages in terms of broader cultural understandings of aging. Thus, throughout the text, I refer to those collaborators in their fifties as “middle-aged” and those in their sixties and seventies as “older” (than middle-age).

Across Canada there are diverse ways of officially recognizing a population as a “city”. Saskatchewan’s “Cities Act” requires a city to have a population of at least 5,000 people—a far cry from major centres like Toronto, which are sometimes over 1,000 times this size.<sup>21</sup> However, as this work seeks to interrogate and complicate the rural/urban binary, I often deploy the qualifying terms “larger” or “smaller” in my descriptions of “centres” or “urban areas” to refer to the instability, relativity and flexibility of scale, especially in the context of LGBTQ metronormative migrations. Acknowledging the complexity and inexactitude of all spatial categorizations, I continue to use the somewhat fixed terms “metropolitan” and “rural” throughout my analysis. While these terms are certainly subject to contestation, I deploy them heuristically; in the former case to connote major world cities and the latter to name places (such as acreages and farms) that cannot be adequately described by the terms “urban” or “centre”.

## Chapter 2: Finding Ourselves in Silence: Audibility Tactics and the Reticent Archive

Silence can be a plan  
rigorously executed  
the blueprint to a life

It is a presence  
it has a history a form

Do not confuse it  
with any kind of absence

– ADRIENNE RICH, “Cartographies of Silence”

Armed with my laptop and trusty notepad, I coast with my borrowed bicycle down the fifteen blocks to the historic downtown core. I find myself at the Public Library, a monumental centenarian structure composed of yellow-bricks and an elaborate concrete archway that overlooks lofty elms posed on either side of a winding river. My soft footsteps fall on black and white honeycomb tiles as I pass through an imposing marble rotunda lit up by the summer sun gazing through a stained glass rosette.

Crossing into the recent library expansion, I am surrounded by institutional-white interspersed with beige stacks and faded grey carpet underfoot. After explaining to the librarian that I have an appointment to use the archive room, she looks somewhat surprised but leads me to a cold, grey, windowless, multi-purpose room. When I disclose to the librarian that I am doing research on homosexuality, she politely responds: “We don’t have much on that topic—you may have to look elsewhere.” A few moments later, I find myself sorting through a rather slender folder of newspaper articles in the archive room at the Moose Jaw Public Library (MJPL).<sup>1</sup>

I begin my chapter in this reticent archive, a place where I did not find myself for the majority of my archival home-work on the history of LGBTQ organizing and activism in Moose Jaw. It is through these silences that the archive becomes full: full of questions, power relations and traces of something I was not looking for. It is through an

attention to silence and the appearance of absence that I intend to mark the presence of archival record, researcher and LGBTQ activism that might otherwise go unnoticed.

In this chapter, I address the complex issues of representation for LGBTQ people living in (or originating from) non-metropolitan areas through an interrogation of how we find ourselves represented in LGBTQ histories of activism and organizing. In the first half of this chapter, I draw attention to where queer studies scholars find themselves conducting archival research and how this affects the representation of non-metropolitan LGBTQ lives. I argue that the congregation of written archival records in the urban, institutional lesbian and gay archive constitutes a form of what Halberstam (2005) terms metronormativity. I suggest, in the words of Mary Gray that “we cannot examine the social relations of power that produce the meaning of LGBT identities without a careful consideration of how location...matter[s] to those relations” (Gray 2009:89).

When confronted with the particular challenges of heterosexism and homophobia in smaller centres, many LGBTQ people have often found themselves in silence. However, far from an admission of defeat to heterosexist and homophobic oppression, I conceptualize some of the ways in which silence surrounding one’s own sexual orientation can serve as a tool for resistance. Through an examination of the protests surrounding the visit of Anita Bryant to Moose Jaw in 1978 and the controversy relating to the proposal for the Moose Jaw Gay Community Centre the following year, I draw attention to the operation of what I term “audibility tactics” to move beyond a simplistic visible/invisible binary that fails to recognize the transgressive possibility of representation through silence.

Jack/Judith Halberstam’s coinage of the term ‘metronormativity’ “reveals the conflation of ‘urban’ and ‘visible’ in many normalizing narratives of gay/lesbian subjectivities” (2005:36) while simultaneously underscoring the devaluation of the rural within the rural/urban binary. Metronormativity exposes both the temporal and the spatial trajectories of narratives in which gays and lesbians migrate from ostensibly hostile, rural environments to ostensibly tolerant, urban ones in order to “come out” to a community of other gay and lesbian people (Halberstam 2005).

According to Gray, much scholarship on gay and lesbian communities and identities, both within and outside anthropology, has long assumed that “cities are the ‘habitus’ of queerness” (2009:9). Bucking this trend, John Howard instructively argues that rural space “functions as gay America’s closet” (1999:63) while David Bell observes that “the city exists hand in hand with the country[side], each making and remaking the other” (2001:99). Acknowledging the relationality of cities/towns/villages/ruralities, as Kath Browne suggests, unsettles this rural/urban divide (2008:25) while simultaneously recognizing the power dynamics of this relationship. Thus, in order to more appropriately conceptualize queer sexualities, even urban queer sexualities, there is an imperative to document and study sexuality in non-metropolitan areas.

Archival scholars have also identified the archive as imbued with power relations that have long been tied to the urban centre (Derrida 1994). According to Nicholas Dirks (2002), the modern archive was born in Paris in 1790 where public access to the *Archives Nationales* was decreed a right of citizenship. Similarly in Britain, the establishment of the Public Record Office in London in 1838 was tied to electoral reforms for what Dirks calls an “increasingly urban and mercantile bourgeoisie” (2002:62). Although referring to the state in relation to the colonial archive, Dirks’ suggestion that “modern history could only develop in the metropole” (2002:61) instructively points to the importance of location in the production of history and knowledge.

The history of an archival instantiation such as the public library reveals the long-standing relationship between the archive and the urban centre in Canada. According to Maxine Rochester (1995), in the 1930s, public libraries were commonly found in larger Canadian cities while traveling and regional library projects were still being developed to provide democratic access to rural-dwelling people. Deanna Marcum (1991) has argued that these library diffusion efforts in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century America were undergirded by a belief that these institutions had a civilizing influence especially on urban, non-white immigrants and ostensibly “backwards,” rural-dwelling people.

Carolyn Steedman has defined an “archive” as “a name for the many places in which the past [...] has deposited some traces and fragments, usually in written form”

(1998:67). The particular kind of archive that I discuss here is the urban institutional lesbian and gay archive whose collection includes primarily physical documents.<sup>2</sup> Despite the increasing presence of lesbian and gay archival material online, accessing the vast majority of pre-internet-age lesbian and gay ephemera requires the physical presence and thus migration of the researcher to these locations.

While many public libraries or municipal governments maintain archival records, specialized lesbian and gay archives in Canada are primarily located in larger urban centres such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest archive of this sort, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), finds itself in Toronto. Of course, the decisions to house these collections in these locations are partially technical-rational ones, influenced by the history of each archive as well as a liberal democratic commitment to greatest accessibility. While it might seem absurd for the CLGA to find itself in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, one still cannot ignore the metropolitan privilege inherent in its current location in Toronto, Ontario. To modify the familiar feminist mantra, the technical-rational is political.

Research on sexualities in Canada is also more likely to take place in larger urban centres due to the urban location of the majority of the nation's universities. These institutions are increasingly beginning to collect, catalogue and publicize specifically LGBTQ materials as indicated by the very recent establishment of the archives of the Manitoba Gay and Lesbian Society at the University of Manitoba. Even among these universities, those located in major urban centres like Toronto have a competitive advantage over others in terms of the sheer volume of courses, resources and programs they offer on sexuality as well as the number of qualified faculty they employ to teach or supervise interested students. The website for the Bonham Centre for Sexuality Studies at the University College in Toronto, for example, emphasizes the wide range of resources available to the students who enroll in the program:

those associated with the Centre [...] have access to the extraordinary resources of the U of T library system, rich in materials related to sexual diversity. The Greater Toronto Area also has a wealth of institutions providing support for research into

this area – the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Glad Day Bookshop, and Toronto Womens Bookstore among them.<sup>3</sup>

This excerpt demonstrates how this sexuality studies program benefits not only from its own institutional resources, but also from LGBTQ resources and infrastructure available in the Toronto area.

The majority of my archival home-work, however, took place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a queer place, perhaps, to house one of the largest collections of gay, lesbian and gender impersonation material in the country. With functional (that is, stinky) stone barns and substantial research crops at the city's University of Saskatchewan (U of S), Saskatoon seems to present confusing contradictions to our notions of an urban setting. While Statistics Canada labels Saskatoon Canada's 17<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area, some residents describe it as having a distinctly small town feel.<sup>4</sup> However, with a population of around 265,000 people in 2010, Saskatoon is Saskatchewan's largest city, surpassing Regina, the provincial capital, by approximately 50,000 people.<sup>5</sup>

As the collection at the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) can testify, since the 1970s Saskatoon has been a centre of LGBTQ activism on the prairies. Over the past 40 years, Saskatoon has been home to a number of LGBTQ organizations including *Perceptions*, the longest running gay and lesbian newsmagazine in Canada (Korinek 2003).<sup>6</sup> In recent years, Saskatoon has also hosted Saskatchewan's largest Pride Parades, with over 4,000 marchers in 2012 compared with the 400 marching the previous year in Regina.<sup>7</sup>

The Neil Richards papers, the primary source of my primary sources, is housed by the satellite office of the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) located on campus at the U of S. Richards, originally born in Bowmanville, Ontario, studied at Carleton University in Ottawa and later at the University of Toronto before moving to Saskatoon in 1971 to begin a career as a library assistant at the U of S. During the 1970s, Richards began collecting material on gay and lesbian organizations in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan and donated the collection to the SAB in 1994 (Saskatchewan Archives Board N.d.).

The Neil Richards collection includes comprehensive newspaper clippings related to homosexuality from Saskatchewan's major dailies, including the *Moose Jaw Times Herald (MJTH)*, dating back to the 1960s. The collection also contains some ephemera from LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw that is simply absent from Moose Jaw's archive, most notably documents surrounding the protests of Anita Bryant's performance there in 1978. The Neil Richards collection is an enormously valuable and perhaps under-used resource for scholars of sexual diversity studies in Canada.

### **The Metronormativity of the Archive / Historian**

In the context of the archive, the question of "Who speaks?" becomes increasingly important as relatively few traces of LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw have been preserved in either the MJPL or SAB archives. Beyond his vast collection of newspaper clippings and various LGBTQ publications, Richards devoted his finite time and resources to amassing a personal collection of documents that focus primarily on lesbian and gay activism in Saskatoon and secondarily on Saskatchewan. However, to my knowledge, Moose Jaw has had no such activist-archivist and extensive documentation of this city's own LGBTQ activism has yet to find its way into a publicly accessible archive.

When contrasted with the newsletters, posters, videos and other archival materials relating to Saskatoon's LGBTQ activism, the sparse records relating to Moose Jaw's LGBTQ activism point to the paucity of infrastructure, resources and perhaps interest necessary for the production of alternative LGBTQ media in Moose Jaw. While LGBTQ newsletters in other centres may have provided a venue for expression, tensions between activists in different centres as well as the (real and perceived) risks of being caught receiving or participating in such publications may have stifled these options. Yet others may have published entries under pseudonyms or without disclosing their place of residence, effectively silencing the LGBTQ presence one could attribute to Moose Jaw. Although the *MJTH* has often served as the public forum for discussions of sexuality, relatively few LGBTQ people ever disclose their sexual orientation therein. With the

striking bias against homosexuality often found in the *MJTH* and its readership, it is understandable that some LGBTQ people would remain silent in these debates.

For LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw, issues of personal security and privacy also complicate the value of both preserving and accessing Moose Jaw's history of LGBTQ activism. While it is one thing to read a book on homosexuality at the library, it is quite another to ask the local librarian to retrieve the "homosexuality" file from the archive room. Similarly, while the Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw (GLAMj) has advertised itself widely, one GLAMj member told me he felt anxious about being "outed" when he realized that the MJPL had a subscription to *Perceptions*, in which he had advertised his business. Were my collaborators to donate the transcripts from our interviews to the MJPL (which does not restrict access to any files) they might find themselves exposed to gossip, discrimination or violence. Perhaps this partly explains the MJPL's reticence and is a clue to why GLAMj members have not sought to store their historical records there. For some GLAMj members, Saskatoon's archive may offer a way of memorializing and validating their efforts without the same risks of individual local exposure, yet this possibility too has its own obstacles.

While the majority of Richards' collection is open to the public and is physically much closer to Moose Jaw than the CLGA in Toronto, the possibility of the average LGBTQ Moose Javian donating material to the SAB or accessing other LGBTQ materials there is still limited by a number of factors. Among them is the fact that some records relating to LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw have been destroyed in order to protect organizers and participants or simply because they were not considered valuable or important. Other barriers to access and donation include: the time and cost of travel and accommodation, a general unfamiliarity with the archive and its possible uses, and the archive's limited office hours. Even if the barriers to donation are overcome, these factors also increase the likelihood that the traces of LGBTQ life in Moose Jaw will be accessed, interpreted and written into history by urban-dwelling, educated, elites (such as myself) who might not even travel to this community in order to explicate the truths of their existence. For interested Moose Javians, the democratic accessibility argument for

the centralized, urban location of the archive might seem unconvincing. In the words of Jack/Judith Halberstam, “democracy is simply the name of their exclusion” (2005:35).

As I traveled to Saskatoon to research Moose Jaw’s history of LGBTQ activism, I retraced the steps of one of my own metronormative migrations to Saskatoon where, years ago, I found myself staging my own “coming out.” Similarly, some traces of gay and lesbian organizing in Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan more broadly have congregated in Saskatchewan’s largest city, most notably in the Neil Richards collection. However, as I have noted above, the archive’s bias towards collecting material from its own backyard as well as the LGBTQ infrastructure necessary for producing alternative media, leads to particular problems of representation in the archive which must be considered, not only in writing about smaller centres, but also when writing about larger ones. In his chronology of Saskatchewan’s history of sexual diversity, Richards himself insightfully acknowledges the bias this creates in which Saskatoon’s history of LGBTQ activism is aggrandized through reliable documentation (Richards 2005).

Thus, the urban lesbian and gay archive finds itself in a double bind: it either overcomes the obstacles to donation and congregates documents in the big city where they can speak more freely or it tells only an inflated story about itself, that of urban LGBTQ liberation. This leads me to the conclusion that the urban, institutional lesbian and gay archive is always already a metronormative institution. This is certainly not an indictment of Richards’ magnanimous labour or of the SAB’s excellent organization. Rather, it is a call to identify and reflect on the archival route through which metronormativity itself migrates into many LGBTQ histories and the importance of extending our methodologies beyond the existing institutional lesbian and gay archive. In constructing the histories of LGBTQ activism and organizing in smaller centres, there is a clear need to seek out archival fragments that move beyond the existing written record and create new archives that empower LGBTQ people in smaller centres to have a voice in the historical domain.

Archival metronormativity, however, is not limited to binaristic rural/urban contrasts as metronormativity functions at various scales. Archival documents and even

entire archives from urban centres occasionally migrate to even larger centres as indicated by the relocation of the records of Gays of Ottawa or the records of the Gay Alliance Toward Equality (Vancouver) to the CLGA.<sup>8,9</sup> However, Richards' unique collection of LGBTQ material, firmly rooted in Saskatchewan soil, indicates that some records simply cannot be found in the larger centre. Similarly, the telling silences found in the slim homosexuality subject file at the MJPL are difficult to detect amongst the vast archival material in the Richards collection occupying nearly 20 metres of shelf space.

While the CLGA in Toronto may contest New York and San Francisco's exclusive claims over the history of LGBTQ activism in North America, the Neil Richards collection in Saskatoon is a provincial bulwark against the CLGA's eastern dominance but is simultaneously located in its own metropolitan centre in relation to places like Moose Jaw. Even GLAMj's events draw attendees from the surrounding area, not to mention one researcher living in Montréal. Yet, an individual's complicated and idiosyncratic migrations seldom find explicit expression in the archive, thus obscuring the connectedness of activism across rural/urban divides and silencing the non-metronormative migrations central to LGBTQ lives and organizing in places like Moose Jaw.

The location of the archive can also have an affect on the researcher's understanding of the materials it contains. As I was writing this chapter, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop on fisting, complete with a live demonstration, at McGill University in Montréal. I have attended gay bars, drag clubs, gay archives and pride events in this city without much thought as to how this could affect my reputation, social ties or physical safety. This is the metronormativity of my lived experience, interrupted by occasional trips to my parents' home in Moose Jaw and migrations to Saskatoon archives. These locations are not merely passive backdrops to my life and work but rather play an active role in how I see the "Other" who I study and of whom I write. Indeed, even after critical self-reflection and carefully chosen wording, I sometimes catch myself judging my collaborators by metropolitan standards and unfairly representing them as repressed, fearful and pitiable.

## Listening to the Reticent Archive

In the following two sections I reconstruct the visit of Anita Bryant and the controversy over the proposal for a gay community centre in Moose Jaw the following year. Throughout these two accounts, I have sought to put the archival traces from the Neil Richards papers in conversation with those found in the homosexuality subject file in the MJPL archive in order to make the latter speak, to tell its stories and to mark its silences. While the Richards newspaper clippings certainly encompass those found in the homosexuality subject file, I focus here on those articles found in the MJPL and augment this narrative with other ephemera found in the Richards collection including videos, books, memoirs, event posters, articles in gay publications and correspondences.

News of Bryant's 1978 appearance in Moose Jaw ignited a polarizing controversy in which socially conservative Christians and outspoken lesbian and gay activists were portrayed in the *MJTH* as two radically opposed positions with the former camp being attributed the status of locals and the latter camp that of outsiders. Through highly visible displays, gay and lesbian activists deployed religious discourses of tolerance while reworking the scale of locality to include both provincial and national dimensions, effectively reframing their protest of Bryant's visit as a matter of religious difference with far-reaching ramifications. With the voices of (self-identifying) Moose Javian gays and lesbians strikingly absent from the public debate, both Bryant's supporters and her detractors made claims to their local authority to legitimize their right to speak.

In the aftermath of the Bryant polemic, the controversy over the proposed Moose Jaw Gay Community Centre illustrates some of the tensions that existed between lesbian and gay activists in larger and smaller centres. While Moose Javian organizers distanced themselves from the political activism, (perceived) promiscuity and alcohol consumption of community centres in larger cities, activists from Regina and Saskatoon denounced these plans as pandering to public opinion and withdrew the support of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition (SGC), a provincial network of gays and lesbians. While many Moose Javians who opposed the centre were able to express their dissent through the *MJTH*,

the atmosphere of hostility and the absence of local gay and lesbian publications limited the public expression of Moose Javian gays and lesbians to one “out” gay man.

Both accounts presented below demonstrate the rhizomatic interrelatedness of gay and lesbian activism in larger and smaller centres in Saskatchewan. Additionally, both sections draw attention to the difficulties of visibility activism in smaller centres (Gray 2009) and mark the silences of the archive in representing the voices of gays and lesbians who lived in Moose Jaw when these events took place.

### **Anita Bryant Finds Gay Rights Activists in Moose Jaw**

On May 16, 1978, Lynn McLeod, a Saskatoon resident and board member of the SGC, announced in the *MJTH* that a demonstration would be staged in Moose Jaw to protest the upcoming rally of infamous anti-gay crusader, Anita Bryant. The anonymous *MJTH* reporter concluded this brief article suggesting that the “undersigned” of a 36-name petition submitted to Moose Jaw’s City Council had not actually signed the letter itself.<sup>10</sup> It was not until 10 days after the rally that a city clerk would tersely respond to the petition: “City Council [...] considered your letter concerning the above rally, and adopted a Motion that your letter be received and filed.” The emptiness of the letter is interrupted once more by the city’s insignia and its official slogan trailing the bottom of the page: “The Friendly City.”<sup>11</sup>

Bryant was an outspoken evangelical Christian activist who used her popularity as the Florida Oranges spokesperson to encourage others to fight the legal protection of gays and lesbians, especially in the context of the public school system. The Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon’s newsletter, *GAZE*, described Bryant as embodying “a typical American success story: Small-town girl from a broken home wins Oklahoma beauty title, is a Miss America runner-up and turns that into a lucrative career as a singer and super-saleswoman.”<sup>12</sup> In 1977, Bryant established an organization called “Save Our Children” that was instrumental in overturning the recently established legal protections for gays and lesbians in Dade County, Florida where she resided (Fetner 2001:415).

Following her successful campaign in Florida, Bryant began performing for audiences across the United States and later into Canada (Warner 2002:136).

According to Tom Warner, gay and lesbian activists had been preparing for Bryant's eventual Canadian tour since 1977, when a "Coalition to Stop Anita Bryant" was formed in Toronto (2002:136).<sup>13</sup> By the end of April 1978, Bryant had performed for crowds in Peterborough, Winnipeg and Edmonton prompting the "strongest resistance yet by Canadian lesbians and gay men" drawing 150, 350 and 300 protesters respectively.<sup>14</sup> Although Bryant's controversial stances drew throngs of protesters beyond gay and lesbian activists, her appearances in Edmonton and Peterborough resulted in those cities' first protests related to lesbian and gay issues.<sup>15</sup>

While it is not clear who approached whom, the *MJTH* reported that Bryant's "Christian Liberation" rally would be hosted by the Moose Jaw Fellowship for Evangelism, an association of evangelical churches with an estimated membership of around 3,000 parishioners. The president of this group, Reverend Henry Friesen of Moose Jaw's Westmount Baptist Church, coordinated this event with Renaissance International, the Toronto-based organization facilitating Bryant's Canadian tour. In the article, Friesen announced his opposition to homosexual teachers in the public school system and decried the "militant fringe of the gay community" for making "noise" against Bryant.<sup>16</sup>

On May 23, 1978, the first day following the Prairie Gay Conference on gay and lesbian activism in Saskatoon, an initial meeting was held to form the Coalition to Answer Anita Bryant (CAAB).<sup>17</sup> On June 1, 1978, the *MJTH* reported that the CAAB held a public meeting in Saskatoon attended by 12 community groups including university student unions, women's groups, men's groups and religious organizations from Regina and Saskatoon as well as various gay groups across the province including the SGC.<sup>18</sup> *After Stonewall*, a gay and lesbian newsmagazine based in Winnipeg, mentioned that "Moose Jaw will now be approached as part of the work of answering Anita Bryant."<sup>19</sup>

The *MJTH* reported that on June 10, 1978 about 22 people met at Moose Jaw's YM-YWCA to help form a local response to Bryant's "Christian Liberation" rally. The Moose Jaw Women's Centre and the local chapter of the Saskatchewan Association of Human Rights co-sponsored the meeting, which was reportedly attended by people from Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert and Moose Jaw. One of the CAAB's primary organizers, Doug Wilson, revealed the group's strategy to avoid appearing as outside agitators through fomenting local involvement: "The onus will be on Moose Jaw people to get people to write letters, be out on July 1, approach the labor council, churches, whatever." The faithful transcription of Wilson's "whatever" is juxtaposed with an unflattering photo of three youthful activists with mouths open and eyes half-closed.<sup>20</sup>

Wilson, who grew up on a farm near Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, was reputedly "the most openly gay person for at least a thousand miles" (Korinek 2003). As an education student at the U of S, Wilson launched a high-profile sex-discrimination complaint against the university in 1975 that received national media attention (Korinek 2003). Wilson was also a founding member of the Saskatoon-based SGC, whose explicit goals were to connect rural and small-town gays and lesbians to a province-wide movement through its newsletter, political action and education (Korinek 2003).<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps in response to Wilson's efforts to appear local, the *MJTH* reported on June 27, 1978, that Bryant's visit "was drawing considerable interest in Saskatoon" with 9 letters on the topic sent to Moose Jaw's City Council. However, excerpts from the letters in the article show their author's attempts to frame the event as a political issue abhorrent to all of Saskatchewan's residents. One such letter from Dr. D.C. Williams, a Liberal candidate for a Saskatoon constituency, argued that the negative impact of Bryant's visit would be felt beyond Moose Jaw, extending to his own electorate.<sup>22</sup>

Just one day prior to Bryant's visit, the *MJTH* interviewed Elaine Julian from the Moose Jaw Women's Centre and local CAAB coordinator. Primarily discussing the details of the event, Julian assures Moose Jawians that "the group has permission to conduct both the march and the service" and announces her low expectations for the turnout. Tellingly, Julian does not disclose her sexual orientation.<sup>23</sup>

On the day of the rally, between 150 and several hundred protesters converged upon Moose Jaw, including a busload of activists from Saskatoon.<sup>24, 25</sup> The *MJTH* estimated that about 85 protesters met at Moose Jaw's C.P. Rail station at noon and marched with a police escort down Main Street then Athabasca Street to Crescent Park.<sup>26</sup> According to an SGC newsletter and a video of the demonstration, protestors "maintain[ed] a loud verbal onslaught all the way"<sup>27</sup> chanting solidarity slogans in unison such as "Women, workers, gays unite—same struggle, same fight. Gay rights now!"<sup>28</sup>

Documenting this visible display, a number of photographs of the march accompany the *MJTH* article on the CAAB. One portrays a shirtless man, with a brown paper bag on his head holding a placard that angrily demands, "When can I take this off!?" A woman wearing large sunglasses marches behind him. Another, taken from behind, depicts two men and a woman walking down the street with arms wrapped around each other. In both photos, buildings from Moose Jaw's downtown, barely visible, peek out from behind placards and the SGC's proud banner.<sup>29</sup>

In Crescent Park, protesters conspicuously doubled in number as U of S Campus Chaplain and Anglican Reverend Colin Clay led an interfaith celebration denouncing Bryant's monopoly on God.<sup>30</sup> The service concluded with demonstrators linked arm in arm singing "Love Shall Overcome."<sup>31</sup> The event in the park heard presentations from a variety of groups from Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Winnipeg as well as musical performances from Regina and Moose Jaw-based artists.<sup>32, 33</sup> Following the event, some demonstrators attended a party sponsored by one of the SGC's "Moose Jaw friends" although the Saskatoon bus was scheduled to depart at 6:00 PM, strategically avoiding direct confrontation with Bryant's Christian Liberation rally slated to begin at 8:00 PM.<sup>34, 35</sup>

In his memoirs, "out" gay activist and U of S professor, Peter Millard notes that a handful of protesters remained for the Bryant concert. Millard recalls Bryant conjuring tears, singing spiritual songs (including "God Bless America") and talking in graphic detail about the birth of her children. Yet for Millard, the evening reached its climax when two protesters with "arms around each other, [...] walked the width of the arena, creating a shock wave that spread through the whole audience and left Anita singing to

herself.”<sup>36</sup> Millard’s dramatic portrayal of this affectionate display between Saskatoon activists plays on images of small town homophobia and urban demands for tolerance.

In an article titled “Message of God’s love presented to crowd at Christian liberation rally,” the *MJTH* reported that between 2,000 and 2,300 people attended Bryant’s 45 minute performance where she discussed her views on religion, children and the family. The subject of homosexuality, however, is strikingly absent from the article. An accompanying photograph depicts Bryant in a sleeveless dress, firmly shaking hands with a smiling young man while holding a microphone and a Bible in the other.<sup>37</sup>

With so much controversy surrounding Bryant’s visit and the counter-demonstration, the city seemed to be on high alert over the possibility of a violent confrontation. The *MJTH* article on the counter-demonstration seemed almost incredulous at the lack of violence with the headline “Gay supporters demonstrate peacefully against Anita Bryant.” In addition to the police escort at the CAAB march, the *MJTH* reported that at least ten officers were counted at Bryant’s performance.<sup>38</sup> Millard also observed the soaring tension sparked by visibility activism when an officer threatened to arrest his group if they continued their verbal dissent at Bryant’s rally.<sup>39</sup>

The *MJTH* article on the protest concluded with Wilson’s assessment of the CAAB as very successful, especially for Moose Jaw’s first “gay demonstration.” The *MJTH*’s sympathetic treatment of the protest here seems to reflect the way organizers were able to shift the debate from sexual difference to religious difference. The accompanying image of Clay, dressed in full priestly garb lent respectable religious credibility to the protest in a way that other gay activists could not.<sup>40</sup>

On July 7, 1978 two lengthy letters to the editor were published in the *MJTH*. One letter supporting Bryant’s stance describes how this event ties the city to a larger movement of Christian activism.<sup>41</sup> The other letter, attributed to Patricia Spaeth, includes conspicuous details of the protest without confirming the author’s attendance or her own sexual orientation. While Spaeth argues that she disagrees completely with what Bryant has to say, she suggests that both sides are entitled to the right to expression: “as long as we can have two peaceable rallies in town, we’ll be alright.”<sup>42</sup>

## **Finding a Voice in the Gay Community and the Gay Community Centre**

In the weeks leading up to the Bryant protest, the SGC's newsletter, prepared in advance for July 1978 triumphantly announced: "The gay people of Moose Jaw have decided to form a group. They call themselves The Moose Jaw Gay Community [MJGC]." This proclamation was also accompanied by the address for the MJGC's contact mailbox in Saskatoon, the announcement that an ad for the new group would be placed in the *MJTH* and plans for a potluck supper in Moose Jaw on June 30, the day before the rally.<sup>43</sup> The following issue reports briefly on the MJGC's first social event: "Twelve people attended – a very pleasant evening."<sup>44</sup> It was also announced that the MJGC had acquired its own mailbox in Moose Jaw by this time. To my knowledge, this is the first formal gay organization established in Moose Jaw, one that had strong ties to both the SGC and Saskatoon.

After the announcement of the formation of the MJGC and its initial potluck, very little is written about the group in the SGC newsletter. For example, the March 1979 issue lists the group's contact information but has no upcoming activities or events listed like some of the other locales.<sup>45</sup> In the March 1980 newsletter, it is announced that Moose Jaw will host the next rotating SGC steering committee meeting at the end of February.<sup>46</sup> However, by the Fall 1981 issue, the MJGC is no longer listed in the newsmagazine's contact information.<sup>47</sup>

Little more than a year after the Anita Bryant protest, however, another gay controversy lit up the city. Dan Reardon, speaking to the *MJTH*, announced the forthcoming establishment of the "Moose Jaw Gay Community Centre" [MJGCC] after having already spoken to the city's mayor who apparently "[understood] the reasons for the centre being set up." Speaking with remarkable confidence, Reardon, the organizer behind the proposal for the MJGCC, said the centre would take the form of a coffee house where homosexuals could meet without harassment. Arguing that "gay demonstrations have done more harm than good to the furthering of equal rights" and criticizing the Regina Gay Community Centre for "under-age drinking and sexual activity," Reardon avowed the centre would be strictly non-political, not a place for

“sexual activity” and would have no liquor licence. Further, Reardon paradoxically claimed that this de-sexualized centre would put an end to the current situation where “public washrooms are often just a pick up place for gays.” With plans for provincial incorporation, the centre was seeking \$4,000 in municipal funds as well as financial donations from gay organizations across the country.<sup>48</sup> It remains unclear whether Reardon had any association with or support from the membership of the Moose Jaw Gay Community.

Within two weeks, Lynn McLeod, issued a letter to the editor of the *MJTH* on behalf of the SGC and “representing more than 1,600 lesbians and gay men in the province,” in response to the article on the MJGCC. McLeod wrote that the SGC had received a letter from Reardon soliciting funds and its board had hoped that the two organizations could work together to run a successful centre as the SGC had done previously in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. However, in light of Reardon’s interview in the *MJTH*, McLeod sharply criticized Reardon’s denunciations of the Regina Gay Community Centre (of which some of the SGC’s board were members), political action and the broader gay movement. Perhaps assuming that the MJGCC was receiving municipal funds on the condition of some form of muzzling, McLeod continued to highlight the SGC’s credentials as an established force in the province, arguing that “elsewhere the gay community has built its own organization through our own energies, without dependency on government funds.” Sounding somewhat territorial, McLeod was careful to distance Reardon from the SGC and clarified that Reardon did not “have the authority to speak for the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition or its Moose Jaw community members.” The letter concluded cautioning potential donors to request receipts and statements to show how funds were being used.<sup>49</sup> The SGC also published a short advisory in their December 1979 newsletter similarly warning its membership that the MJGCC was not authorized to solicit funds on behalf of the SGC.<sup>50</sup>

Two days after McLeod’s letter to the editor, Herb Taylor, the mayor of Moose Jaw at the time, held a press conference with the *MJTH* to dispel misconceptions about his position on the proposed MJGCC after city council received three letters and five

petitions containing 259 signatures vehemently opposed to it. While two of the letters appear to be from private citizens, a religious opposition to the centre was clearly present: one letter from Reverend Dan Driedger of the Alliance Church, one petition from the Moose Jaw Fellowship of Evangelism and one pastor visiting the mayor in person.<sup>51, 52</sup>

Setting the record straight, so to speak, Taylor clarified that he had met with Reardon and understood what he was proposing but did not agree with his plans. Careful to avoid claims of discrimination, Taylor noted that the MJGCC had not yet applied for a grant, “but if one is received it will be handled in the normal manner.” Taylor goes on to elucidate that “the normal manner” is to give funds only to organizations that benefit the “majority of people.” Exacerbated by letters from angry voters, Taylor drew on his statuses both as a local and a well-known politician to rebuke his critics: “after all [my] years in office” the majority of citizens should know that their tax dollars “would not be spent for projects for which the citizens would not approve.”<sup>53</sup>

By the end of December, Reardon announced that the MJGCC would be seeking funds “elsewhere.” However, with plans for the centre to be up and running within a few months the intensity of the threat of a local gay community centre was maintained, even heightened: “‘We’re all rarin’ to go’ [...] A number of locations are being looked at in Moose Jaw.” Reworking Taylor’s statement on the minoritarian status of gays in Moose Jaw, the article concludes with another quote from Reardon disturbing heterosexism in Moose Jaw: “There are enough gays in Moose Jaw that we could use a school gymnasium for a meeting place.”<sup>54</sup> This estimation of the number of gays in Moose Jaw, especially from someone construed to have the authority of a local insider, paints a very different picture than the *MJTH* coverage of the handful of local gays and lesbians joining gays from elsewhere to protest Bryant’s visit. Perhaps to the chagrin of some local gays and lesbians, the disclosure of such a large number of gays congregating in one place threatened to expose the clandestine tunnels of same-sex desire running beneath the city’s respectable topography.

By the end of January, Reardon was set to meet with the SGC to decide the fate of the MJGCC, saying that plans for the centre would be scuttled if an agreement between

the two was not reached. Here, Reardon estimated the SGC's membership in Moose Jaw to be around 50 people and stated his belief that if the SGC got on board with the project, locals would get involved in establishing the centre. Although he indicates that he was not acting alone, Reardon, described here as the "President" of the MJGCC, complained that he was "tired of it being a one-man operation."<sup>55</sup> Significantly, Reardon is the only person named in association with the MJGCC and perhaps the first Moose Javian to publicly self-identify as gay in the *MJTH*.

However, it is at this point in the MJGCC coverage that Reardon's status as a local begins to unravel in ways that were not previously reported. In the article, a frustrated Reardon notes that "[g]ays here are just scared to come out and support the centre," clearly drawing a line, with a very spatial reality, between himself and the rest. Reardon continues: "I really feel sorry for the gay people in Moose Jaw. They're sympathy cases because they're not willing to stand up for their rights." Ironically deploying rights-based political rhetoric, Reardon sets himself above and apart from the local "sympathy cases."<sup>56</sup>

One of the collaborators for this project, John Lesnar, a gay white man in his early sixties, vividly remembered Reardon:

There was a guy who blew into town about that time, no pun intended. And he was trying to rally all of us guys and he wanted to have a place where we could go and, you know, try [and] maybe rent a place for a dance or a gathering point. I was [teaching] that year and I remember, in the staff room, [people were saying], "Well are there that many gays in Moose Jaw that they'd want to have a place to go like that?" And I'm sitting there thinking, "Yes!" you know.

Now, I somehow got his phone number and I phoned him and we had a lot of phone chats and we were going to meet. So then I got thinking, I was teaching and really closeted and I started thinking, holy shit! This guy, I mean he's talking to the Times Herald and everyone under the sun and I got thinking, I can just see it, "Well I've met with three local teachers," you know, "and I think there's a real need." And I was getting paranoid. So, I was supposed to meet [with him][...], and I phoned and I said, "No. I'm having nothing more to do with you." [...] Well he left town shortly after, that's why I say he blew in, blew out because he was going to get all sorts of stuff going, you know. Didn't.

For John, even though he strongly supported the goal of establishing a community centre, Reardon's status as an outsider, his reliance on strategies of high visibility and a perceived tactlessness made him an untrustworthy figure and a poor leader to rally behind. Reardon's "one-man act" and subsequent departure from the city indicate that the way he sought to accomplish this project through media attention and visibility was not in sync with the social realities of many other gays and lesbians living in Moose Jaw at the time.

### **Invisible Resistance: Audibility Tactics**

The accounts presented above demonstrate the interrelatedness of larger and smaller centres in the context of provincial, national and international lesbian and gay activism. This interrelatedness is clear in the considerable role SGC board members in Saskatoon and Regina played in deciding the fate of the MJGCC. Similarly, the Saskatoon-based CAAB resulted in the establishment of Moose Jaw's first formal gay organization as well as one of the SGC's first successful gay demonstrations. Moose Jaw, however also furnished anti-Bryant activists with the perception of a hostile and homophobic setting in which their demonstration created significant controversy and construed Saskatoon as a progressive urban centre by contrast.

However, in focusing on the relationship between the overlapping histories of gay and lesbian activism in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, there is a danger of slotting these places into a false relationship that ascribes to each a fixed rural or urban character. Moose Jaw's history of gay and lesbian activism does not exist in isolation or in an exclusive hierarchical relationship with its larger urban other, Saskatoon. Rather, the CAAB explicitly connects Moose Jaw to a rhizomatic network of activism in other centres of various sizes including Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Dade County and many other places that are both named and unnamed in archival records. Exploring the gay and lesbian activism that has taken place in Moose Jaw broadens our understanding of the diverse forms this work can take in a variety of places beyond the borders of larger urban centres.

Indeed, the differences between the primary tactics used in the CAAB and the MJGCC are striking. In his 1971 book, *Rules for Radicals*, Saul D. Alinsky gives a playful yet insightful introduction to the use of tactics for community organizers:

For an elementary illustration of tactics, take parts of your face as the point of reference; your eyes, your ears, and your nose. First the eyes; if you have organized a vast, mass-based people's organization, you can parade it visibly before the enemy and openly show your power. Second the ears; if your organization is small in numbers, then do what Gideon did: conceal the members in the dark but raise a din and clamor that will make the listener believe that your organization numbers many more than it does. Third, the nose; if your organization is too tiny even for noise, stink up the place. (Alinsky 1971:126)

Alinsky's humorous illustration of tactics here is useful in distinguishing between the gay and lesbian activism and organizing of larger centres compared with Moose Jaw. Although Saskatoon activists were primarily concerned with making their dissent visible through staging a protest in Moose Jaw, Reardon concealed the numbers of gays and lesbians supporting him and attempted to use this to his advantage, displaying what I will call here an "audibility tactic." While visibility tactics emphasize both individual and group recognition, audibility tactics seek recognition for the group while minimizing individual recognition. This audibility tactic is a powerful tool against Mayor Taylor's attempts to frame the MJGCC as a "minority" issue as the mystery of the exact numbers of gays and lesbians makes Reardon's counter-claims that much more threatening.

While both audibility and visibility tactics can take the form of individual or collective action, the difference between the two is not necessarily one of sight versus sound but rather whether individuals are explicitly identified with non-conforming sexualities or genders. This concealment allows the activist to maintain their status as "insider" which can be an effective survival strategy in environments where codes of familiarity and sameness are profoundly important (Gray 2009). This allows for a type of invisible resistance to heteronormativity and homophobia that mitigates the real and perceived risks to livelihood, social relations or physical security.

The language of "visibility" is inadequate in the description of LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw since it is loaded with assumptions about the universal desirability of

visibility (Gray 2009; Tucker 2009). Indeed, visibility tactics have been recognized as profoundly connected to larger urban contexts (Gray 2009; Herring 2010) and frame those who are not “out” or publicly recognizable LGBTQ subjects as pitiable victims stripped of agency and the capacity for resistance. However, through attempts to strictly regulate information about the activist’s non-conforming sexuality, audibility tactics recreate the anonymity commonly attributed to metropolitan settings. The concept of audibility attempts to contest the dichotomy of visible/invisible in acknowledging the ways that everything from silence to shouting can act as a form of resistance.

Although visibility tactics make use of public spectacles and demonstrations, audibility tactics tend to focus more on both written and verbal exchanges in which the activist continues to conceal their sexual identity while expressing support for sexual and gender non-conformity. While being seen marching in a pride parade could lead to gossip and rumours, audibility tactics can enable greater control over self-representation, as in the case of Spaeth’s letter to the editor which allows her to explain her position without being dismissed out of hand as a “sexual other.” Although audibility tactics mobilize one’s insider status, this has the wider effect of confusing the lines between insider and outsider and encouraging others to speak out in support of sexual and gender diversity.

John Lesnar, mentioned above, also described a situation in which he deployed an audibility tactic to challenge heteronormativity and homophobia in Moose Jaw:

I used to go to [this church]. We were getting a new minister and they [read] her biography and they were going to issue her a call. And so, the committee, one Sunday during the service, asked did we have any questions. I could not believe those people. It was like a witch-hunt; it was like Salem. This, and I’ll be honest, this bitch from the back said, “Is she a lesbian? She’s 44 and not married. She must be a lesbian.” And they said, “No she isn’t.” I felt like saying, “Well how do you know who she’s fucking at night? And does it matter?” And then, “Well why is she single?” And then this other, [...] he says, “Did you ask her her views on gay marriage?” you know. And they said well she’s going to carry on according to the Evangelical Lutheran conference of whatever yadda yadda.

So I stood up and so I said, “Well, I wonder—are gay people welcome in this congregation?” I said, “Do you accept that gays may want to practice spirituality within this congregation? Is that ok with you or not?” Well, everybody said, “Well, what are you asking?” I said, “I’m getting the direct impression that gay

people are not welcome in this congregation.” And I said, “You know, ask yourself about the kind of people Jesus associated himself with. And his teachings, you know, about tolerance and love.” And I said, “You’re sounding like very intolerant people, very closed minded here and I just wanted to know, are gay people welcome here or not?” Well, these ones at the front, “Well—uh—uh—uh—we guess.” I said, “Oh you guess?” [...]

As I was going down the steps, I had numerous people come up to me and say, “We were thinking the same things but we didn’t have the courage to ask like you did. And of course gay people are welcome here.” I said, “Why didn’t you speak up?” I said, you know like, “You’re sitting there in the congregation, you’re the silent majority,” you know it’s older vocal spitfires. [...] And one person came up and says, “Well how would we know people are gay anyway?” And I said, “Well suppose someone proclaimed openly that he was gay? What would you do then?”<sup>57</sup>

John’s remarks challenge the dominant opinions of the group without disclosing his sexual orientation thus confounding the insider/outsider dichotomy. Elsewhere, John mentions: “I don’t go screaming and trying to proclaim my rights.” Rather than declaring his individuality and sexual difference (an act that might come across as selfish in this context), John speaks up for a hypothetical group of unknown “gay people” with the goal of enacting change that would benefit others as well as himself. While John’s activism may have had a profound influence on his congregation and community in encouraging others to speak out against homophobia and heterosexism, it had not previously been written down and as such may never have made its way into an archive.

Far from the perfect solution to homophobia in smaller centres, the use of audibility tactics comes with its own set of limits and power relations. While audibility tactics can draw less attention to certain individuals, it can increase negative attention focused on others such as those who cannot or choose not to pass for straight. As I will discuss in chapter 3, this is often the case for self-identifying LGBTQ people who act as spokespersons for LGBTQ groups and can lead to burnout and difficulties in finding other representatives. However, “visible” spokespersons are also in a privileged position of speaking on behalf of others while those they represent are vulnerable to the accidental or intentional disclosure of their sexual identity. However, as in the case of John’s narrative above, audibility tactics can also allow for more direct, self-representation.

As I have just mentioned, audibility tactics do not always operate separately from visibility tactics, but instead reduce the number of “visible” activists required to communicate dissent. In the context of the CAAB, Julian, Spaeth and a number of silent gay and lesbian Moose Javians participated in audibility tactics alongside activists deploying visibility tactics like Wilson and McLeod. This further underscores the rhizomatic interconnectivity of larger and smaller centres.

### **Excavating Silence**

As I have illustrated in this chapter, the correlation of several primarily historical and technical-rational factors has resulted in the pairing of the majority of lesbian and gay archives in Canada with larger urban centres. Such a correlation reinforces the familiar metronormative trajectory of coming out and naturalizes the assumption that writing LGBTQ histories requires the researcher to travel to a larger urban centre. This assumption privileges the larger urban centre as well as the written word as the arbiter of the past and renders imperceptible the functioning of context-specific tactics for enacting social change that may not centre around “visibility.” This narrative has subtle yet serious consequences for the production of LGBTQ histories and queer theory more broadly. When research on LGBTQ history is centred around a metronormative institution like the lesbian and gay archive, researchers must be critically aware of the role this plays in the knowledge we produce.

Through a comparison of two salient events in the homosexuality subject file at the MJPL, one begins to note the silence of self-identifying gay and lesbian Moose Javians in the archival record. While silence and invisibility have often been construed as symptomatic of rural LGBTQ repression, I contend that this silence can also function as a strategy of resistance that can facilitate social change. Through an excavation of the silence of gay and lesbian activists in Moose Jaw, I argue that the deployment of “audibility tactics” de-centres visibility and larger urban centres from dominant notions of LGBTQ activism as it tunnels beneath and undermines heterosexism and homophobia in smaller centres like Moose Jaw.

### **Chapter 3: The Friction of Translation: LGBTQ Activism in Moose Jaw, 1993-2012**

For those of my gay brothers who are lucky enough to have been able to be open about your homosexuality I am happy. But, remember, just because you can do so, doesn't give you the right to look down and find fault with me (and others like me) because I have to keep my homosexuality sequestered and unrevealed. The circumstances of our lives are not alike.

– SIGNO CANCERIS, “from the closet,” *Fag Rag*, January 1973

On May 31, 2008 coverage of a historic first was buried within the pages of the *Moose Jaw Times Herald (MJTH)*. The story features a photograph of a middle-aged white woman with a genuine camera-smile seated at a round wooden table. Equally prominent on the right-hand side of the image appear two middle-aged white men flanked by a rainbow flag hanging from a short pole in the centre of the photograph. The four lines of accompanying text briefly explain that City Councillor and Acting Mayor, Mary-Dell Findlay, had recently signed a proclamation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Week in the city at the request of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw (GLAMj). The photograph, submitted to the *MJTH* by one of GLAMj's members, depicts the beaming president of GLAMj seated at the table and a rather shy-looking witness standing behind. The photograph marked the first time self-identifying gay Moose Javians would be visually depicted in the local newspaper.<sup>1, 2</sup>

This event came 8 years after the Saskatoon and Regina Pride Committees filed a complaint with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC) against Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco who refused to proclaim Pride Week in that city in 2000 (Richards 2005:57). In his refusal, Fiacco cited guidelines established by the former Progressive Conservative (PC) government led by Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine (1982-1991) that discouraged municipal proclamations related to sexuality (Richards 2005:57). In June 2001, however, Fiacco did proclaim “Heterosexual Family Pride Day” in Regina on behalf of a group called the Christian Truth Activists (Richards 2005:59). In 2002, the New Democratic Party (NDP) government settled the SHRC complaint, paying a total of

\$10,000 in compensation to the Saskatoon and Regina Pride Committees with Premier Lorne Calvert issuing an apology on behalf of the province (Richards 2005:62).

On June 2, 2008, GLAMj raised the rainbow flag over city hall for the first time in Moose Jaw's history. According to an article in the *MJTH*, even with municipal politicians as well as both provincial and federal political candidates in attendance, less than 20 people were counted at this LGBT Pride Week ceremony. Still, GLAMj president, Dale Hall expressed a curious optimism at the turnout: "I didn't expect this many people to show up."<sup>3</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, the event did not prompt any protests or even a single letter to the editor in the *MJTH* in the following weeks and months.

At the ceremony, Don Mitchell, the federal NDP candidate for Moose Jaw's Palliser riding and former Mayor of Moose Jaw spoke of people he had known who had "struggled with their sexual orientation" in the city and of the many young men who "left for places like Toronto where they felt they were more accepted and respected." Moose Jaw-Wakamow NDP MLA, Deb Higgins, also spoke at the ceremony, commenting on the evolution of the city's attitudes symbolized in this event: "As a community, this is absolutely a huge step for us." However, slotting Moose Jaw into an urban hierarchy, Higgins also critiques the city's ostensibly anachronistic stance on LGBTQ issues without an appreciation for the difficulties of LGBTQ organizing in smaller centres: "It's something that should've been done a long time ago."<sup>4</sup>

The *MJTH* article returns to Hall who comments on the group's dwindling numbers (from 50 down to 20) and the difficulty he has had getting support from LGBT Moose Javians for holding Pride Week in the city. The article concludes with Hall's hopes that this event's visibility would draw more people to the group while contesting the image of intolerance often associated with smaller locales: "It makes us a little bit more visible than we had been [...] It also symbolizes to other people that the city is diversity-friendly."<sup>5</sup> This idiosyncratic act of visibility receiving relatively little support from LGBTQ Moose Javians has not yet been repeated.

These short newspaper articles index some of the complexities and contradictions of the translation and transformation of contemporary LGBTQ organizing in the

particular context of Moose Jaw. Although the Moose Javians discussed above seem to gesture to the metropolis as an example of what it means to be a modern, progressive, diversity-friendly centre, construing GLAMj's activism as an attempt to reproduce the pride celebrations of larger urban centres makes this work appear as insignificant mimicry. However, if, as human geographer Tiffany Muller Myrdahl suggests, one considers "queer practices in small cities on their own terms," (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:4) the originality and importance of LGBTQ organizing in Moose Jaw begins to emerge.

In this chapter I argue that through the translation of LGBTQ organizing and activism into the particular context of Moose Jaw, organizers both intentionally and unintentionally contest and transform metronormative narratives. Whereas metronormativity is constructed through the abandonment of the smaller centre or rural area, the discovery of a gay and lesbian community in the larger urban centre and the promise of being able to come out in that place (Halberstam 2005), LGBTQ activism in Moose Jaw has reworked these concepts in its attempts to enable sexual dissidents to stay put through the establishment of a relatively small group of LGBTQ people, a reliance on other (particularly larger) centres and a nuanced meaning of the terms "coming out."

Through an account of Moose Jaw's 1993 "Gay and Lesbian Pride Weekend" I explore the notions of progress that are central to metronormativity, arguing that the enactment of gay and lesbian activism and organizing enables organizers to slot themselves into an urban hierarchy in which they view themselves as both more and less progressive than other centres. However, contesting the claims of the global homogenization of sexuality (e.g. Altman 2001), I deploy Anna Tsing's (2005) notion of friction to describe how GLAMj's LGBTQ activism and organizing in Moose Jaw from 2004 – 2012 does not passively reproduce the LGBTQ visibility tactics commonly found in the metropolis. Rather, faced with the friction of fewer resources, smaller numbers and infrastructural paucity, I argue that GLAMj has sought to establish itself as a centre of LGBTQ activism and organizing which has led to a number of adaptive innovations.

Following this, I draw on four months of ethnographic home-work attending GLAMj's weekly meetings to describe the ways audibility tactics have shaped LGBTQ

identities in Moose Jaw, particularly through the creation of nuanced meanings of “coming out.” I argue that the friction of this small urban context fractures universalizing claims of LGBTQ identities, producing context specific identities, activism and organizing. Finally, I discuss the ways in which GLAMj’s formal activism and organizing leads to high expectations of visibility associated with larger urban centres and how group members balance these expectations with their preference for audibility tactics. I argue that through an engagement with metronormativity in this location, organizers are implicitly being compared to larger centres making it difficult to appreciate their hard work on its own terms (Muller Myrdahl N.d.).

In this chapter, I continue to draw on newspaper articles from the archive room at the Moose Jaw Public Library to chart the changing face of LGBTQ organizing and activism in Moose Jaw from 1993 – 2012. In contrast to the activism taking place in Moose Jaw in the 1970s, more contemporary deployments of audibility tactics has led to a diversification in the voices of self-identifying LGBTQ people in the forum of the *MJTH*. Addressing the bias of the archive discussed in chapter 2, I augment the archival record through interviews with lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer Moose Javians, homework at GLAMj coffee nights and an analysis of GLAMj’s organizational records. These latter records include posters, meeting minutes, receipts, correspondences and photos that have not yet found a home in any publicly accessible archive. This mixed method approach has enabled me to amplify the voices of LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw in order to document the translation of metronormativity into this particular smaller urban context.

### **The Friction of Translation**

Too often, LGBTQ activism and organizing in smaller centres is assumed to have been smoothly transplanted from larger centres into smaller ones without a consideration of the effects of the particular characteristics of these smaller communities on the contours of this organizing (Brown 2008; Knopp and Brown 2003; Muller Myrdahl N.d.). One case in point can be found in sociologist Elizabeth A. Armstrong’s description of sexual organizations in San Francisco from 1950-1994:

San Francisco [...] along with a few other major urban centers in the United States, served as the birthplace of what has become a national (and even international) lesbian/gay movement. The frameworks forged in these core cities diffused to smaller cities and towns around the country. Evidence of this diffusion can be seen in the proliferation of freedom day parades, the ubiquity of the language of coming out, and the spread of gay rights politics. (Armstrong 2002:4)

Using a heteronormative reproduction metaphor to establish San Francisco as the “birthplace” of the lesbian/gay movement, Armstrong bolsters the importance of her own work by describing the unimpeded movement of lesbian/gay “frameworks” from major urban centres to smaller ones as well as to national and international peripheries.

Armstrong’s account of diffusion is exemplary of what Knopp and Brown critique as “rather limited and hierarchical notions of diffusion, in which centralized forms of power more or less determine the geographical patterns whereby queer subjectivities, cultures and politics spread” (2003:409). Rather, they argue that downward diffusions of innovations are better understood in the context of upward, sideward and multidirectional flows while pointing out that even what is deemed an “innovation” is both “culturally bound [and] geographically contingent” (2003:411). Similarly, Martin Manalansan’s work on gay Filipino men in New York interrogates the universal gay or lesbian subject and explores how these ostensibly universal cultures are translated and transformed in specific contexts (Gray 2009). More pertinently, Gray’s work on queer youth in rural Kentucky foregrounds spatial context as she outlines the difficulties these youth face in negotiating place-based values of familiarity with enacting strategies of LGBTQ visibility that focus on difference (Gray 2009).

Armstrong’s description above emphasizes the unity of lesbian/gay frameworks over important differences that reify sexual identities even as she seeks to dismantle them elsewhere. Indeed, in her work, Armstrong effectively argues that “movement claims to universality and diversity made it difficult for those excluded to identify the ways the movement reflected the particular experiences of a cohort of white, middle-class American men” (2002:4). Even here, however, Armstrong is regrettably unreflexive about the privileging of urban experience in these lesbian/gay frameworks.

Contrary to Armstrong's vision of a simple, unimpeded and inevitable global flow, I turn to Anna Tsing's notion of "friction" to conceptualize the translation of LGBTQ activism and organizing through "the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (Tsing 2005:4). Tsing argues that friction is necessary for the movement of universal claims (such as LGBTQ identities) across distance and difference but can also lead to disruptions that "refus[e] the lie that global power operates as a well-oiled machine" (Tsing 2005:6). Friction does not assume the pursuit of common goals in the translation of these universal claims and opens up the possibility that "heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (Tsing 2005:5).

Narratives of progress are the hinges of the closet door, fastened tightly to the language used to describe gay and lesbian identities. Neville Hoad argues that evolutionary narratives are mapped onto the savage/queer body through the spatialization of time, which "hierarchises difference, doing violence, by *a priori* constituted by *progress* through its various others, which are then posited as vestigial, arrested, anachronistic or degenerate" (Hoad 2000:133-4). Metronormativity is also a progress narrative with both spatial and temporal dimensions (Halberstam 2005). This narrative privileges metropolitan organizing and community formation as original, progressive and effective while casting non-metropolitan LGBTQ activism as anachronistic and insignificant mimicry. Yet these tropes fail to consider the ways in which the translation of LGBTQ organizing and activism into specific non-metropolitan environments produces friction that can lead to creative and context-appropriate differences.

### **"It's In To Be Out In Moose Jaw" – Moose Jaw Pride Weekend 1993**

In June 1993, the *MJTH* announced the city's first "Gay and Lesbian Pride Weekend" which would consist of a barbecue and dance to be held at undisclosed locations due to the perceived risk of violence. When asked about having a parade or requesting an official proclamation of Pride Week like in larger centres, Blanche Gadreau, the only organizer to be named in the article, framed this issue as one of

progress: “Moose Jaw isn’t quite ready for such a bold step.” Considering that the Anita Bryant protest took place in Moose Jaw 15 years earlier, Gadreau’s remarks gesture more towards a general dissonance with visibility tactics among gays and lesbians in Moose Jaw than the impossibility of such events in the Friendly City. Elsewhere Gadreau also suggested that this Pride Weekend “hasn’t happened here [earlier] because everybody is too far in the closet” and that “people are scared of their families and their friends.”<sup>6</sup>

Complicating these claims however was an accompanying article in which a gay Moose Javian man named “Dave” mentioned that he *had* “come out” to family and friends but wanted to keep his sexual orientation from the general public. While Dave was optimistic that the Pride Weekend could change things in Moose Jaw, he reinforced the metronormative belief of a better life in a bigger city: “The road to Vancouver is very well travelled.” Although Dave’s identity remains concealed by his pseudonym, his interview with reporter Ted Wyman facilitated an anonymous “coming out” to the paper’s readership. While previous articles focus almost exclusively on event details, this article is the first to interview an LGBTQ Moose Javian about their personal life.<sup>7</sup>

Through reworking discourses of visibility into audibility tactics, the organizers described above engage and reformulate metronormativity. Although these two articles demonstrate a diversification in the ways gays and lesbians are represented in the *MJTH*, the incompatibility of visibility tactics with gay and lesbian Moose Javians led organizers to frame their own efforts as less progressive than larger centres. However, as will be discussed below, even as these organizers in Moose Jaw label their own community as largely “closeted” in relation to larger centres, their organizing allows them to construct themselves as more progressive than gays and lesbians living in smaller communities or rural areas that do not have official gay and lesbian organizations or events.

Through the deployment of audibility tactics, the lines demarcating the backwards, rural gays and lesbians from the progressive urban ones are redrawn on a smaller scale to frame Moose Jaw as its own centre of gay and lesbian activity. Here, Moose Javian organizers rework metronormativity, not viewing themselves as *the* centre of LGBTQ activism but slotting themselves into an urban hierarchy in which they are

more or less “progressive” than other centres. In her own attempts to de-centre metronormativity, Gray argues that “a politics of visibility needs the rural (or some *otherness*, some *place*) languishing in its shadow to sustain its status as an unquestionable achievement rather than a strategy that privileges the view of some by eliding the vantage point of others” (Gray 2009:9). For Moose Jawian organizers, this privileged view consists of a hope for smaller urban progress from silence to audibility and finally to visibility that will distinguish Moose Jaw from ostensibly homophobic “rural” areas.

Yet, LGBTQ organizing in Moose Jaw specifically and Saskatchewan more broadly has not been a story of exponential progress but rather one of stops and starts that often parallel political changes. As Valerie Korinek (2004) observes, following Doug Wilson’s unsuccessful human rights complaint of sex-based discrimination at the University of Saskatchewan in 1975, energetic activism and debates over extending human rights protection to gays and lesbians took place throughout Saskatchewan over the next several years. However, when Divine’s PC government took power from the NDP in 1982, officially sanctioned homophobia flourished in the province through policies, budget cuts and unabashedly homophobic rhetoric.

Korinek notes that “progressive” charities and organizations in the province suffered major cuts under Divine’s leadership, including a 25% cut in funding to the SHRC and a total withdrawal of funding from the Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights (2004:126). It was through these cuts and policies that the PC government muzzled dissent and gay and lesbian advocacy, making it extremely difficult to find outspoken activists “confident enough to risk their livelihood or their organization’s funding line” (2004:126). Even Saskatoon’s reputation for LGBTQ activism suffered under this regime with Pride Week uncelebrated there for over a decade.<sup>8</sup>

Moose Jaw’s two provincial electoral districts, which had previously been bastions for the NDP, also saw PC candidates elected from 1982-1986. However, in 1986 the NDP returned to power in both of Moose Jaw’s districts and won a majority government in 1991, promising to revise the human rights code (Korinek 2004).<sup>9</sup> The promised amendments were slow in coming, but in March 1993, following favorable

public statements from the SHRC Chief Commissioner, the United Church Saskatchewan Conference and the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Saskatchewan, the NDP proposed Bill C-38 to include sexual orientation in the human rights code (Korinek 2004).

Perhaps spurred on by the public debate surrounding gay and lesbian rights, Moose Jaw's Pride Weekend took place just 2 days before Roy Romanow's NDP government passed Bill C-38 on June 22, 1993 (Richards 2005:40). However, even with this aura of excitement, Marie Davidson—a white lesbian woman now in her sixties who had attended these Pride Weekend celebrations—said that she remembered seeing a group of lesbians who had driven to the dance site, but would not go inside:

People from out of town that knew about the dance [...] they'd come to the dance and they'd sit in the car and not go in because they were scared. Somebody might see them or maybe it'd get back to their work. Yeah, they were pretty afraid [...] I don't know if living in a rural town made it worse than say someone living in the city.<sup>10</sup>

Marie's description of this metronormative movement of closeted lesbians from "rural town" to Pride Weekend in the Friendly City places Moose Jaw in an urban hierarchy of tolerance, despite its organizers' own refusal of visibility tactics.

Indeed, the threat of job loss for avowed or suspected gays and lesbians was very real—a reality which the *MJTH* depicted as even more intense for those living outside an urban centre like Moose Jaw. In May 1993, the *MJTH* reported that PC MLA Rick Swenson had received nearly 1,000 letters opposed to Bill 38 from his constituents in Thunder Creek, a rural electoral district surrounding Moose Jaw. However, Moose Jaw's two NDP MLAs, Glen Hagel and Lorne Calvert, reportedly encountered very little resistance to this bill which had their "wholehearted support."<sup>11, 12</sup>

Organizing two large gay and lesbian events without publicizing their exact locations was no small task. According to Marie's recollections, information about the Pride Weekend was spread primarily through strategically-placed posters and word of mouth, resulting in approximately 200 people attending the dance and roughly 40 people attending the barbecue the next day.<sup>13</sup> Marie described those at the dance as mostly white gays and lesbians ranging in age from 19 to about 40.<sup>14</sup> Although some Moose Javian

lesbians and gays attended the dance, the event also attracted extra-local visitors from smaller centres, rural areas as well as from Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Toronto.<sup>15</sup> News of the event also traveled back to Saskatoon where it was published in *Perceptions* (Richards 2005:40). Moose Jaw had, if only temporarily become a centre of gay and lesbian activity, attracting people from both smaller and larger centres.

Marie recalled that the Pride Weekend had been organized by a group of eight people (including gays, lesbians and one straight couple) that had met in group members' homes. Without the infrastructure or resources of a gay bar or community centre, organizers invested their own money to book the dance hall and cover any additional costs. However, with a sizeable turnout, organizers were able to recoup their costs through the sale of tickets, alcohol and T-shirts declaring the event's theme: "It's In To Be Out In Moose Jaw."

Similar to Gray's description of the prerequisites for visibility activism, Pride Weekend organizers were successful in their attempts to "mobilize the social, political, and literal capital [...] [to] claim and prioritize their sexual and gender identities over other identities or alliances," (Gray 2009:165). However, this mobilization was dependent on audibility tactics, enabling organizers to publicly advocate for their rights without the "financial clout and a critical mass of upstanding, respectable gay and lesbian [...] citizens" (2009:165). Indeed, Marie suggested Gadreau's low income self-employment allowed her to publicly organize Pride Weekend, a detail that Marie contrasted with her own unwillingness to get involved as a government employee.

The *MJTH* coverage of Pride Weekend notes that although a reporter was invited to attend the events, photos were not allowed and the use of real names was restricted to Gadreau. Such restrictions clearly differ from the visibility tactics of larger centres where images of Pride Parades are crucial to displaying public support and evaluating the effectiveness of the activism. In the *MJTH* article, one attendee praised Gadreau: "If it weren't for her there likely would be no pride, because she was the one who was willing to stick her neck out." Indeed, in the context of organizing, audibility tactics often rely heavily on a small number of people who are not easily replaced, carrying out a

tremendous amount of work. Pride Weekend organizers continued to meet after the event, hosting a few more dances over the course of a year until the group eventually disintegrated due to internal conflict and group members moving away. As a result, formal lesbian and gay organizing in Moose Jaw disappeared for over a decade.

However, citing the practices of a group of lesbians in Regina, Marie told me that following the disintegration of the group, half a dozen lesbian couples in Moose Jaw began to meet informally about three times a year, continuing up until the present day. Marie was not sure why this group had “excluded the men” but she guessed that it had to do with group members feeling more comfortable around other women who had “settled down” with their partners and not having much in common with single gay men in Moose Jaw. Eschewing the public lesbian and gay advocacy of the previous group, Marie mentioned that this group did not organize major events but rather hosted potlucks, Christmas parties and the occasional trip to a nearby lake in the summertime.

Similarly, informal LGBTQ friendship networks taking place in local, extra-local and online contexts were also common among many of my collaborators. The respite in formal LGBTQ organizing and activism and the related reticence of archival records during this time does not mark a devolution or absence in LGBTQ activism or organizing. Rather, this work simply becomes more difficult to recognize or research without a commitment to moving beyond the existing archival record.

### **“Pop our Cherry” – The Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw**

In 2003, in the context of heightened media attention and controversial public debates surrounding same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights in Canada, three housemates began to discuss the possibility of forming a gay and lesbian community group in Moose Jaw.<sup>16</sup> Without prior knowledge of former (or existing) gay/lesbian groups in the city, these individuals used online social networking sites like MSN messenger and gay.com to organize a group of about 12 people to meet at their shared home in mid-January 2004.<sup>17</sup> Soon after, regular meetings were underway and the group decided on a name: The Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw (GLAMj).

This section describes the work of GLAMj members in translating LGBTQ organizing and activism into the smaller urban context of Moose Jaw and the emergence of creative differences in this process. Although GLAMj certainly links itself to and borrows ideas from LGBTQ activism and organizing in other centres, its efforts move beyond simple mimicry and into the realm of innovation (Knopp and Brown 2003). With smaller numbers and limited resources, infrastructure and organizers, this group has innovated context-appropriate strategies for LGBTQ organizing and activism that defy the assumption that LGBTQ place-making requires “a critical mass of LGBTQ people; a liberal socio-cultural urban environment; or a history of LGBTQ activism” (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:6). In their efforts to establish an LGBTQ community in Moose Jaw, GLAMj both disorients and redeploys the logics of metronormativity, encouraging other sexual dissidents to circulate through the city and enabling local and extra-local LGBTQ people to “come out” in context-appropriate ways.

The simple act of naming this organization has both spatial and temporal dimensions that chart the movement of universalist discourses of LGBTQ identity, organizing and activism into the specific context of Moose Jaw. Spatially, this name functions on various scales that link individual sexual identities to the city of Moose Jaw, imagined LGBTQ communities elsewhere (particularly, larger urban areas) as well as provincial, national and transnational LGBTQ discourses. The naming of GLAMj also facilitates the historical mapping of Moose Jaw’s LGBTQ past, as evidenced by GLAMj’s inclusion in Richards’ (2005) chronology of sexual diversity in Saskatchewan.

This organization’s title is also a temporal claim that connects GLAMj to the gay liberation movement through its public identification with the terms “gay” and “lesbian”—often noted as the essential difference between gay liberation and the homophile movement (Armstrong 2002). However, while some GLAMj members, including some board members, described themselves as “not out,” the organization itself has officially “come out” and thus produces a complicated relationship between individuals, the group and a (imagined, local and extra-local) gay and lesbian past of “closetedness.” Most GLAMj members that I spoke with were unfamiliar with Moose

Jaw's past gay and lesbian activism and were more likely to recognize Stonewall and Harvey Milk than the Coalition to Answer Anita Bryant, Doug Wilson or Dan Reardon. Through its connection to LGBTQ organizing, activism and discourses elsewhere, GLAMj also imagines Moose Jaw sharing in an LGBTQ future of recognition, rights and progress.

While (gay) bars have often played a key role in larger urban LGBTQ organizing, activism and identity formation (Comstock 1991; Valentine and Skelton 2003), Moose Jaw has no such establishment, due in part to the relatively small number of prospective clients as well as a general paucity of resources in its LGBTQ community. However, the challenges of limited human, economic and infrastructural resources have resulted in several adaptations and innovations. According to one GLAMj member, after the original meeting in 2004, the group continued to meet weekly at a private residence until another member offered his home for a monthly movie night. After some time, the growing weekly meetings began circulating through various coffee shops in the city.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the smaller numbers attending some GLAMj events have actually been critical to its continuation of certain activities. For example, movie night is cancelled when group numbers exceed what can be accommodated at the host's private residence. Further, when GLAMj coffee nights became too large, frequent and burdensome to be privately hosted, a cost for "renting" space through purchasing beverages at a local café was distributed among members. Were the group to outgrow the limited space of the coffee shop, GLAMj could be faced with the expense of renting, furnishing and maintaining an exclusive meeting space. Similarly, smaller group meetings also draw less attention from other patrons, which can be crucial to the attendance of those members who describe themselves as "not out."

GLAMj organizing takes place on a volunteer basis and is often done by a small number of people who also manage their own careers and familial obligations. This has led to some burnout among GLAMj organizers such as Barrett F.R. Long, a gay/queer white man in his mid fifties, who mentioned his frustration in organizing events alone and often with low turnout: "You know, you try and do a few things and [...] you don't

feel you're being supported." While GLAMj members may have been in favour of organizing various events, many were reluctant to take on leadership roles, volunteer or sometimes even attend the events lest they be "outed."

As a result, GLAMj activities usually take place on a smaller scale and cater to the desires of its small membership. Although several of GLAMj's original founders and members were young adults, roughly two-thirds of those attending the group during my home-work were middle-aged and older gay men. As such, GLAMj organizers portrayed activities like bowling as less appealing due to the health concerns of some members. In contrast to the ableism and ageism often found in larger urban gay enclaves (Casey 2007), GLAMj events are often responsive to the needs and desires of its middle-aged and older members as well as those with certain kinds of disabilities. Keith, a gay white man in his mid sixties described the GLAMj group as like a family and as providing a welcome alternative to the gay bar in Regina:

Well I'm very glad that it [GLAMj] exists. I mean, to me it's a very positive thing in this community. I would love to see something like this in Regina. There have been groups in Regina that I've been part of [but] things have changed. For about 10 years we had a discussion group going that was excellent—just fabulous discussions. But people died and it just kind of fell apart.

For Keith, GLAMj offers a welcoming sense of community that is not centred around alcohol consumption in a youth-oriented environment—something that he portrays as unavailable even in the much larger centre of Regina.

In addition to weekly coffee nights and monthly movie nights, GLAMj events have included Christmas dinners and gift exchanges, bowling nights, potlucks, barbecues, a golf-tournament and an annual "Dip and Dine" at the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa. These events have been advertised variously at the gay and lesbian bar in Regina, through online mailing lists, Facebook and on gay men's chat sites. While these events have typically not drawn large crowds, occasionally others (most often gay men) from Regina, other smaller centres and rural areas surrounding Moose Jaw do attend. GLAMj's clear emphasis on community-building through social events and LGBTQ place-making defies what Muller Myrdahl describes as a hierarchical and unidirectional definition of

“progress” focused on rights, recognition, activism and visibility to combat the reduction of homophobic violence (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:16).

However, in the first few years of its existence, GLAMj organizers did engage in more typical acts of “political activism” through the translation of visibility tactics into audibility tactics. In October 2004, for example, the group sent a letter to Dave Batters, the Palliser Conservative MP representing Moose Jaw. In the collaboratively composed letter signed exclusively by the GLAMj president, these LGBTQ activists requested a meeting with Batters, reminding him of his LGBT constituents and asking his views on same-sex marriage legislation. GLAMj members received no response.

With few members willing to be identified publicly with their sexual orientation, GLAMj has not staged any public demonstrations but rather has carried out much of its political activism through the *MJTH*. In January 2005, GLAMj members sent a letter to the editor of the *MJTH* to “pronounce as a unified voice in Moose Jaw that there are no valid reasons why we should not be allowed to be legally married.”<sup>18</sup> Again, only GLAMj’s president signed this collaborative letter. While GLAMj certainly did not represent all LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw, their universalizing rhetoric coupled with a concealment of their group’s small numbers, was an enactment of audibility politics that enabled some group members to speak out without being individually identified with their sexual orientation. Again in February 2005, the *MJTH* interviewed the President of GLAMj on the same-sex marriage bill recently introduced in the House of Commons and how it might affect LGBTQ people in the Friendly City.<sup>19</sup> As this article demonstrates, GLAMj was increasingly being recognized as a local authority on gay rights issues.

Although GLAMj has occasionally enacted visibility tactics, its members’ relationship to visibility has been somewhat ambivalent. While the group’s title openly contests Moose Jaw’s image of heteronormativity, members more frequently deploy the group’s euphemistic acronym, which has little significance to the uninitiated listener. Again, in the letters requesting financial support for a dance in 2004, GLAMj organizers describe their organization as “a support group where gays, lesbians and transgendered people of all ages are welcomed to help build a healthy community where people can

safely gather and freely express their lifestyle choice.” However, while GLAMj reproduces the metronormative requirement of providing a space for LGBTQ people to come out, many members of the group described themselves as “out” to different extents and visibly coming out in this space was often limited by group norms. Although group members often talked about the pleasures and challenges of LGBTQ life, overt visible displays of queer affection were generally not encouraged.

Although several of my collaborators had joked about holding a pride parade in Moose Jaw, most agreed that it simply would not draw enough people willing to march. Interestingly, in talking about their experiences of coming out, several of my collaborators said that they would admit that they were gay if asked but were not going “wave the flag” in the streets of Moose Jaw. Some of my collaborators reported that they had never attended a pride parade, sometimes describing these events as an unnecessary flaunting of sexuality. When asked about pride parades, Spook Angel, a GLAMj member and gay white man in his early fifties, contrasted the historical importance of these events with the way that they do not match his ideas about sexual modesty and privacy.<sup>20</sup>

When I think of how the first gay pride parade got started in 1969 or whatever it was, gay people really were being harassed and oppressed. It was a good thing. And that especially in the context of the 60s and 70s, where people were protesting a lot of things, there was a lot of change, social change going on. I think it was good, a good thing that needed to happen. I think maybe it’s because of that history, maybe it’s good to continue that but I don’t know if it’s for the same reasons anymore that we have pride parades.

In some ways it almost is, to me it almost looks [like] sort of, kind of gratuitous sex. This is what we do in the bedroom. And again I have a little trouble with that. Why should people care that you like huge dildos or, you know stuff like that? I mean, it seems like it’s so out there, so explicit. Is this really pride in being who we are or is this just displaying our sex again, you know, putting it out there? Why aren’t there parades for straight people and what they like to do in the bedroom? Because I think there’s a certain amount of modesty in society or, if that’s not the right word, decorum about what people do in private. [SA laughs] So [SA and JW laugh] anyway. So I guess I have mixed feelings about pride parades.

For Spook, pride parades have been instrumental in fighting homophobic violence and oppression but also mark gay people as different and somehow more “sexual” than

straight people. Spook portrays the pride parades' emphasis on visible difference as one that does not match his desire for the greater integration of gays in society.

Similarly, other GLAMj members have sought to downplay difference and emphasize sameness in their political activism. GLAMj's letter to the *MJTH* editor mentioned above, mobilizes discourses of sameness and integration in the community in order to encourage a broader acceptance of same-sex marriage in Moose Jaw: "First of all, we are not 'they.' We are your sons, daughters, friends, family and co-workers." Again in their conclusion, GLAMj members explicitly point to this sameness as a self-evident justification for the extension of their right to marry: "We are not asking for anything more than anyone else, we just want the same."<sup>21</sup> Similar to the rural queer youth in Gray's study, GLAMj activists sought to redraw the boundaries of sameness and difference in a place that "prioritize[s] familiarity through codes of sameness [and] discourage[s] claims to difference" (Gray 2009:168).

However, some of my collaborators did attend pride events, participating in visible displays of LGBTQ identity in other (mostly larger) centres. For example, GLAMj members often participated in Regina's Pride Week celebrations as organizers, spectators and marchers and in 2007 even put together a float for that event. This symbiotic relationship between LGBTQ causes in Moose Jaw and Regina provided a place for LGBTQ Moose Javians to participate in visibility tactics while Regina's event benefitted from an increased show of numbers and GLAMj's volunteer efforts.

Rather than making individual and permanent migrations to larger urban centres characteristic of metronormative narratives, some GLAMj members have travelled as a group to other centres in a manner that John Howard (1999) has described as circulation rather than congregation. During one-on-one interviews, some GLAMj's members talked about short trips they had made together to larger centres like Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton for fun, shopping and visiting gay bars. Similarly, some GLAMj members reported attending and hosting gay men's potluck dinners taking place variously in Regina, Moose Jaw and occasionally in the smaller town of Regina Beach.

However, GLAMj's organizing in Moose Jaw has not always been so low key. According to GLAMj's meeting minutes, as early as March 2004, the group had plans of hosting its first dance. By April 2004 an executive board consisting of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer had been established to organize the event with plans to model GLAMj's constitution on other gay and lesbian organizations in larger centres. One of my collaborators who did not regularly attend GLAMj functions, described his time in the group as too formal with too many rules and taking down minutes. While GLAMj did plan an agenda and keep minutes at its initial meetings, this practice was discontinued shortly after their first dance in 2004 and plans for a formal constitution were also abandoned. The GLAMj meetings I attended were very informal social events full of laughter and tangential discussion, even when a matter needed to be voted on.

In the context of the dance, GLAMj organizers engaged and partially transformed metronormativity in the specific context of Moose Jaw. Like larger pride events in other locations, GLAMj members sought corporate sponsors for their dance, contacting local businesses and larger corporations seeking gift certificates, door prizes or cash donations. One letter addressed to the Account Manager for the Coca Cola Bottling Company in Regina, explained the group's mandate, its small social events and the need for gay, lesbian and transgender services in Moose Jaw: "we are also attempting to create a support network within the city and surrounding area [...] [as] people currently have to travel to Regina for support." Contesting the image of the small-town queer happily migrating to a larger urban centre, these GLAMj members sought to establish Moose Jaw as its own centre of LGBTQ activity to which those from the surrounding area would visit. Unlike the metronormativity of larger centres, however, neither in archival materials nor in interviews did GLAMj members reveal an expectation that other LGBTQ people would move to Moose Jaw because of this organizing.

On June 5, 2004, GLAMj hosted its first dance with the provocative and campy title "Pop Our Cherry." GLAMj meeting minutes indicate that the event was made possible largely through the efforts of volunteers including GLAMj members, a DJ, and drag performers from Saskatoon. In an interview, one organizer told me that while

GLAMj members covered the majority of upfront costs out of pocket, the event also received donations from members, a \$500 loan from the Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR) and a few door prizes from local businesses. With over 100 people in attendance from Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon and other areas, ticket sales and liquor revenues allowed the group to pay back its loan and even make a meagre profit.

GLAMj's dance had not been advertised in or reported on by the *MJTH*, with organizers opting instead to spread information about the dance primarily through LGBTQ social networks. However, event details, including its location at the Golden Nugget Center, were published in the guide to Regina Pride as well as on posters at the GLCR and the universities in Saskatoon and Regina. According to GLAMj's meeting minutes, a version of the event's poster that replaced the words "Pop Our Cherry" with "Come help us Celebrate" was deemed less sexual by the executive and distributed to local high schools. With only a GLAMj e-mail address for contact information, the posters contained no individual names or phone numbers. Although the advertising for the dance clearly indicates an audibility tactic, some LGBTQ people construed attending such a large event as too visible. One white gay man in his sixties told me in an interview that he was frustrated by GLAMj's widespread advertising and did not attend the dance as it had the potential to "out" him in his workplace.

In June 2005, GLAMj organized its second dance, this time titled "A Jaw Dropping Experience." With only about 35 people attending this event, organizers were forced to pick up the tab for the dance's deficit. In an interview, one GLAMj organizer expressed his disappointment with the turnout: "It's really, really disheartening when you try and do something and nobody shows up. [...] It seems like the drive to Moose Jaw is so long, but we can drive to Regina." While the group had imagined its events as drawing some LGBTQ people from the surrounding smaller towns and rural areas, they primarily envisioned Regina and Saskatoon as having a large "out" LGBTQ community that could and (perhaps should) attend and support GLAMj's events, with more people expected to attend this dance from elsewhere than from Moose Jaw itself.

Reluctant to rely on Saskatchewan's larger cities for attendance at their events, GLAMj members scaled back their plans for large events to focus on smaller activities that local group members could sustain, as described above. However, GLAMj continues to invite Reginaans to their events, attempting to rework the urban hierarchy that excludes them. In their refusal to accept Moose Jaw as nothing but a feeder population for LGBTQ communities in larger urban centres, GLAMj has worked to establish Moose Jaw as a "somewhere" for LGBTQ community, often reliant on other locations to supplant its smaller numbers.

### **Coffee Grinds: Friction at Cuppa Joe's**

It's half past seven on a Tuesday night and business is a little slow at Cuppa Joe's in downtown Moose Jaw.<sup>22</sup> With ambient lighting warming up the wood floors and brick walls adorned with the colourful creations of local artists, Cuppa has a welcome atmosphere that invites its clientele to stay a while and savour the reasonably priced drinks, deserts and deli items. As I order a chamomile tea in a substantial mug, I chat with some of the GLAMj regulars sitting on couches and chairs at the back of the small shop. Stepping over a coffee table, I sink into the sofa between Spook and Dean as the tranquilizing tracks from a high school friend's CD play in the background.

Within half an hour, laughter bubbles over this group of eleven as Carl, a white gay man in his fifties, tells a story about taking his mother to a hearing specialist after weeks of listening to the TV at full volume. Travis, a white bisexual man in his twenties and one of the four men under forty, talks excitedly about his upcoming rifle competition while Rod, a white gay man in his forties, tells the group about a bondage conference he went to in Vancouver. From politics to cell phones, food, festivals, news and lube, almost nothing is off limits and sexual innuendos are key in this group of men.

Tonight the group is larger than average with the presence of Dennis and Blaine, a new couple, both white and in their twenties. Unhesitating about touching one another and sporadically erupting in lingering kisses, Dennis and Blaine are loud, sassy and full of laughter and caffeine. When a pink feather earring on a rack behind the couches

catches Dennis' eye, he promptly buys it and puts it on. Some of the GLAMj regulars, myself included, start exchanging glances with eyebrows raised. This is not my first home-work faux pas.

When a song comes on that Dennis recognizes, he shoots up, grabs Blaine by the hand and the two dance beside the circle of couches with bodies pressed tight and arms locked around each other. Lenny, a thirty-something newcomer to Canada and the only person of colour in the group, facetiously asks Spook if he wants to dance too. Both laugh but neither dance. Carl, unimpressed, looks around the room and, sometime after Blaine and Dennis sit down, announces he is going out for a smoke. As one of the entourage of four smokers there that night, I follow him out for a few minutes of exclusive chatter.

When we get outside, I am curious to know what everyone thought about the dance and I initiate the gossip with a pointed question. Carl is visibly upset; he sucks back his cigarette and shakes his head. Barrett cannot contain his laughter as he smokes out of the side of his mouth, "I'm thinking..." He trails off as he crinkles his nose and raises an eyebrow but tells me he is not going to say anything to them. When we return inside, Dennis energetically addresses the group: "I really feel like I can be myself here."

In an interview later on, Spook tells me that he was shocked at first to see those two men being so affectionate with one another but with time felt more comfortable with their behaviour. They were just being themselves, he said, and they weren't hurting anyone. He mentions that it was strange for *anyone* to get up and dance at a restaurant but it wasn't *that* embarrassing with hardly anyone else there. Carl Schmidt, however, was a little more direct in expressing his discomfort:

Go for it. Doesn't matter to me, because I'm just sitting on the sidelines having a coffee with my friends. If you guys want to get up and start dancing to the music, go for it. Doesn't matter to me. But if something happens, don't come looking to me to back you up. You made your bed; you lie in it, sort of thing. If you guys want to flaunt what you are, holding hands walking down Main Street skipping to my Lou, sort of thing, that's totally up to you. But when somebody starts throwing eggs at you, or six guys walk down the street and pummel the shit out of you because you're a faggot, then maybe you'll learn a lesson and keep your hands in your pockets and your mouth shut.

Carl's frank disdain for "flaunt[ing]" one's sexuality demonstrates his perception of the risk for homophobic violence and psychological abuse in this particular context. Similarly, Spook's discomfort and embarrassment at this display of affection indicate the possibility of being "outed" by association in a place of familiarity. Both interviewees gesture towards the undesirability of visibility tactics among many LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw and the relative appeal of audibility tactics in GLAMj's informal social organizing as they work to establish Moose Jaw as its own centre of LGBTQ activity.

Dennis' ironic statement that he felt like he could be himself in this coffee shop amongst such discomfort from other GLAMj members reveals the intersectional relationship between place, group norms and identity. Even in the relatively tolerant space of the GLAMj coffee night, Dennis and Blaine's behaviour transgresses a group norm based on the perception of risk. This norm discourages LGBTQ displays of affection and limits visible identity work. It is not just Moose Jaw's smaller size that makes this identity work difficult, but rather what Muller Myrdahl describes as "the myriad geographic contingencies [that] converge to produce (and reproduce and challenge and modify) place-based social norms" (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:6).

Since at least the Bryant demonstration in 1978, the terms "gay" and "lesbian" have been widely used in the *MJTH*, indexing the proliferation of a "gay imaginary" through which those with queer desires could imagine themselves as part of a (necessarily fictional) unified community of other gays and lesbians elsewhere (Weston 1995). In the same way that Tsing describes global capitalism as being produced through the hidden friction of commodity chains, the globalization of LGBTQ identities requires that these identities "emerge as if untouched by this friction" (2005:31). Yet despite the strong association of LGBTQ identities with larger urban settings, through "articulating their queer desires and embodiments as iterations of explicit LGBT identities," LGBT people living outside the metropolis "receive a measure of cultural recognition and a degree of legitimacy and authenticity" (Gray 2009:167). While many of my collaborators discussed how their lives would be different in a larger centre, none of them mentioned a particular "non-metropolitan" sexual identity. Rather, through the process of

disidentification (Muñoz 1999), many GLAMj members continued to identify as gay, bisexual or queer while rejecting the need to make their sexuality “visible,” choosing instead to make it “audible.” This survival strategy enables these men to negotiate the perceived risks of their environment while still enjoying the recognition, legitimacy and authenticity of a gay, bisexual or queer identity.

Although some of my collaborators who were not part of GLAMj suggested that some (or all) of the GLAMj members were “feminine,” group members often described their own as rather “straight-acting.” Even the one transwoman who previously attended the GLAMj coffee nights reportedly “toned down” her feminine appearance at these meetings. Among my (cis-gendered, male) collaborators, allegations of being “feminine” were almost always denied and were often mobilized to explain homophobic treatment or simply to make derogatory comments about another gay man. While “feminine” behaviours did not seem particularly common among those in the group, neither did GLAMj members regulate “limp wrists” or other ostensibly non-masculine behaviours like those in Trentham’s study of older gay men in rural Alberta (2010:133).

Although some GLAMj members were generally uncomfortable with Dennis and Blaine’s dancing, other members did enact more subtle forms of visibility. One GLAMj member in his sixties had a single pierced ear, while another in his early twenties wore a necklace with rainbow beads and interlocking Mars signs. Although most GLAMj members were unconcerned with the latest fashion trends and often came to meetings in T-shirts and jeans, Phil, a white gay man in his late twenties often wore T-shirts with neon designs and tight pants, describing his style as distinctively gay. Some of my collaborators also indicated in interviews that they perceived it was more acceptable for younger men to be “out” than it was for those who were older. However, the majority of GLAMj members, regardless of age, did not attempt to communicate their sexual orientation through their appearance and the GLAMj group did not appear different than other patrons in the coffee shop.

With approximately two-thirds of the group consisting of middle-aged and older men, at 24 years old I was often the youngest person at the GLAMj coffee nights. While

two of the three original founders of the group were in their late teens or twenties, they have both since moved on to other locations to pursue education, careers and perhaps LGBTQ life in a larger centre. As may be the case with other younger newcomers, three people in their late teens or early twenties that I met on a return trip to Moose Jaw seemed somewhat disinterested in the group and left after a short time without returning. According to one GLAMj regular, over the years the group has had a small but steady stream of newcomers of various ages and occasionally friends of individuals or the group will stop in for coffee when passing through the city.

For the duration of my home-work, the GLAMj coffee night had attendees ranging in age from those in their late teens to those in their sixties. While this somewhat unique intergenerational space allowed for sharing, discussion and understanding, it was not without its own power dynamics. Although some of the younger men in attendance often seemed to command more attention from the group in general, middle-aged and older men often sought to position their younger counterparts in mentorship-like relations. Especially during one-on-one interviews, I often felt as though I was being situated in the role of mentee, receiving advice and lessons from my collaborators' past experiences.<sup>23</sup> When asked about the benefits of getting older, Carl describes these mentorship-like intergenerational relations:

Wisdom, I would say. Especially being gay and when it comes to a situation like with our farmer friend, you know. Like he's just putting his feelers out so to speak and when he's got questions and that—I remember asking those questions myself. And especially since he's at right around the same age as when I come out, sort of thing, I feel kind of obligated, you know, to give him answers to questions that he's got, in an effort to maybe alleviate some of his concerns, you know. I don't know if mentoring would be the right word for it, because mentoring is more exact or pointed to a specific need, where this is so all-encompassing, being gay and being in the community, especially with living that so-called dual lifestyle, sort of thing.

Carl describes feeling “obligated” to guide and support our mutual friend, not only because of his own past experiences as a gay man but also as one who has lived a “dual lifestyle” in smaller centres like Moose Jaw throughout his life. Carl's good-natured

efforts to guide the identity work of his younger counterpart include both evaluating the risks and defining the meaning of “coming out” in this particular context.

Prior to Dennis and Blaine’s dance at Cuppa’s, my partner at the time visited me in Moose Jaw and attended a GLAMj function at the request of some of the men in the group. Before we went into the coffee shop, I was careful to instruct him not to hold my hand or show any public displays of affection in the group so as not to draw attention or “out” anyone—even though I had few hesitations about this on the streets of Moose Jaw and fewer in Saskatoon. Similarly, when Travis—who was not “out” to family or friends—brought his new partner to a GLAMj meeting, they did not even sit beside each other, let alone hold hands. However, from the outset, group members had decided that these meetings were for support and not a “pick up place” and most of the other men in the group were not in relationships. Otherwise, there were few displays of affection between group members besides the occasional hug.

After some time spent at Cuppa, it became clear through conversations with management and staff that they were aware of the nature of the GLAMj group. However, during my time there, no GLAMj member discussed the possibility of being “outed” by a barista. GLAMj members had a very good relationship with the staff at the café and often speculated whether they, or other patrons, might also be gay.

At one of the weekly meetings, I was told that a former GLAMj member used to bring a rainbow flag to meetings and set it on the table for any newcomers to be able to identify the group. However, when this man stopped attending the coffee nights, this sign of visibility was discontinued, making it more difficult for outsiders or newcomers to discern the purpose of the group. Even at my own initial GLAMj meeting, when I entered the café and did not see any signs to indicate that this was an LGBTQ group, I nearly left. Although I had the correct time and location for the meeting, the handful of men who had arrived on time did not seem particularly “gay” to me and I was reluctant to out myself to perfect strangers. Finally, I asked one of the men if they knew the GLAMj president and only through that social connection was I able to identify the group.

Although GLAMj members seemed to blend in quite well with other patrons, the specific conversation was perhaps the only thing to mark the group as “gay.” Sex and sexuality were discussed quite openly and with great frequency and the word “gay” was never hushed or whispered inside the coffee shop. However, as an interesting display of audibility tactics, group members would rarely discuss the details of their own sex lives or make overt statements like “I am gay.” Even with the presence of at least two men who were well known in Moose Jaw as gay, group members who described themselves as “not out” did not appear anxious about attending the group. However, standing on the street outside Cuppa’s for smoke breaks, some members did sometimes censor the content of their conversations if a non-member was within earshot.

While it is impossible to know how many Moose Javians were aware of the time and place of GLAMj’s regular meetings, the group was certainly not a secret. Some people in the broader community that I met during my home-work did know about GLAMj’s meetings while others I spoke with seemingly did not. Towards the end of one coffee night when many GLAMj regulars were chatting outside, a woman approached Spook and the two began a conversation. Later on, when I asked Spook whether this woman had known about the group, he was unsure:

Probably not. She wouldn’t know why so many of us were together or if it just happened that we were all out for coffee. Unless if she was sitting in the room for any length of time, she may have overheard our conversations and figured it out. But she doesn’t know even that there is a GLAMj, I don’t think, or that I belong to it or that I am gay. There again, I doubt if she’d be very shocked.

Spook, like some other GLAMj members, continued to attend the weekly meetings despite the possibility that he could be outed by his presence in the group. However, Spook points to the difficulty for outsiders of recognizing sexuality through audibility, which may explain why some GLAMj members could attend these meetings in a public place without the anxiety of being outed. Yet for some of my collaborators, such as Billy Jealousy, a heterosexually-married white bisexual man in his fifties, attending the group in such a public location posed too much risk and the potential for discrimination against heterosexually-married men.<sup>24</sup> When considering the risk of attending a group like

GLAMj, one collaborator observed: “It’s not that everybody knows everybody in Moose Jaw, but everybody knows somebody that knows you.”

While the terminology of “coming out” is used widely in Moose Jaw, several of my collaborators talked about coming out in nuanced ways that blurred the boundaries between their public and private lives. While some interviewees asserted that they had told (and continue to tell) everyone about their sexual orientation, others talked about coming out to only certain people—often select family members, friends, co-workers, sexual partners or even those in the GLAMj group.

A subtle yet distinct practice among members of the GLAMj group was to refer to attending the weekly meetings using the language of “coming out.” Carl discusses the lack of women in the group in terms of the difficulties in getting them to “come out”:

The lesbians come out, but they have to be asked to come out, here in Moose Jaw. They won’t voluntarily come out. They know we meet on Tuesday, but I’ve never seen any of them come out unless they were asked. [...] But from what I understand, when GLAMj was first formed, there were lesbians that come out to it, but of course I wasn’t there so I don’t know why it changed. But it almost seemed like to me like they felt like they weren’t wanted, so they didn’t come out. [...] But I’m sure there’s got to be lesbian couples out there.

While “coming out” can be used in non-sexual contexts (e.g. Come out to the beach!), Carl’s use here indicates a sense of participating in the only (official) LGBTQ community organization in Moose Jaw. Attending GLAMj’s functions seems important to Carl’s perception of the metronormative requirement of “coming out” to a community of LGBTQ people. Although Marie Davidson describes her informal lesbian friendship network above, the silence of this alternate group has resulted in Carl’s (and other GLAMj members’) uncertainty about why some lesbians do not attend the GLAMj event.

Although “coming out” is one of the central organizing principles of LGBTQ identities, Barrett talked about his ambivalent feelings about this practice in Moose Jaw:

I found it to be very irrational as to why you were telling people. You go ahead and tell somebody and it would be like, what the hell did I tell them for? Like they don’t give a shit. Like why would I tell this person that is almost a total stranger? [...] On the other hand, the good thing is it was kind of liberating and kind of

almost like a weight off your shoulders. It kind of made you feel good in some respects that you weren't hiding all this stuff from people.

For this GLAMj member, coming out was both “liberating” and “irrational.” This somewhat strange juxtaposition indexes the friction involved in translating LGBTQ discourses in smaller urban areas. While Armstrong asserts that “visibility became a primary goal of gay liberation” (2002:70), for GLAMj members, visibility was not uniformly perceived as always a desirable tactic of the group.

Armstrong argues that “before gay liberation, coming out referred to the revelation of homosexuality to in-group members” but through the deliberate efforts of gay liberation activists, the meaning of “coming out” was changed from “a private act into a public one” (2002:68-69). For Moose Javians, “coming out” continues to carry both of these meanings, revealing the temporal claims of Armstrong’s assessment as both evolutionary and universalizing. Such claims about “coming out” fail to take into account the uneven friction that these discourses encounter in various contexts (including metropolitan ones) and results in the hierarchization of difference. Dennis and Blaine’s dancing demonstrates that while it is certainly possible to visibly come out at GLAMj’s coffee night, coming out audibly is more palatable to group members in this small urban context. While the metronormative narrative promises the freedom to “come out” in the anonymous space of the larger urban centre, GLAMj offers some a space to come out to a group of others without the certainty of being “outed” if seen with the group.

The variety of public spaces used by GLAMj members for their identity work can be characterized by Gray’s discussion of boundary publics: “iterative, ephemeral experiences of belonging that circulate across the outskirts and through the center(s) of a more recognized and validated public sphere” (2009:93). These spaces are “not definably or definitely queer, but [their] open-endedness allows for queer definitions and understandings to be written into [them]” (Gray 2009:103). In these public spaces in Moose Jaw, GLAMj members redefine metronormativity as they de-centre visibility discourses from the meaning of “coming out” and focus on strategies of audibility. In

doing so, they simultaneously rework the very essence of metronormative LGBTQ identities into a concept more appropriate for their smaller urban context.

### **High Expectations**

In the context of LGBT organizing in rural Kentucky, Gray argues that “the dominance of a politics of visibility in popular representations of LGBT people and in national LGBT organizing makes it difficult for rural activists to see, let alone revel in, their accomplishments” (2009:58). Indeed, the attendance of over one million people at Toronto’s Pride Week sets the standard quite high for gay and lesbian activism in a city of 33,000 people. As one local politician illustrates above in her comments that the flag raising “should’ve been done a long time ago,” GLAMj members are not the only ones with high expectations for this small group.

Regardless of its representativeness of the general attitudes of the city, the organizational title “GLAMj” positions Moose Jaw within metronormative narratives as an urban space where (at least some) LGBTQ people can come out. In response to my question on her impressions of GLAMj, one non-labeling interviewee in a same-sex relationship with a woman remarked:

My first impression is at least there’s something like that here. [...] Seeing it, I was a little bit encouraged that yeah there’s a possibility [...] that Moose Jaw would be more open to it.

For this late-twenties newcomer to Canada living in Moose Jaw, the presence of GLAMj initially symbolized the tolerance and acceptance of the city as a whole.

Several of the gay or lesbian people I spoke with who were not part of GLAMj expressed a desire that the group be more visible and thus more available to those seeking an LGBTQ community group. Ian Gemmel, a white gay man in his early seventies, opined that the group should advertise more as a way of reaching out to a younger demographic who may be struggling with their sexual orientation:

I’ve never been aware that there was a sort of club here. And I do think [...] that they should advertise for the benefit of all of those fourteen and fifteen year old people, girls and boys out here who are finding life to be so [awful] because

there's no visible evidence of people like them anywhere here. [...] And if they knew there was a group here, if they knew there was someone they could go to for advice and guidance or just companionship, just being able to talk about themselves, I think that would be a good thing. So from that point of view, I wish that this group would have a regular classified ad or something.

Although Ian expressed elsewhere that he had no interest in attending GLAMj's events himself, he still expected the group to have greater visibility to provide support to a broader range of LGBTQ people, especially youth, living in Moose Jaw.

Even among some of GLAMj's membership there is a sense that the group should be more visible as a way of providing support to others in the city. When asked whether many people know about GLAMj, Spook responded:

I would kind of doubt it. Like just the general population you mean? [JW: Mhm] My guess would be not really, not too many people would know that it's a gay group. I don't know [...] how publicized it is for people that might be looking for a group like that. Because I think if it was on some kind of community bulletin board, like on the Internet or something, maybe more people would know that it exists. [...] I think it would be a good thing for people that maybe could use a group like that, to know that there are other people in this small city like them. I suppose it might bring about a few critics too.

While this interviewee felt that GLAMj had a responsibility to reach out to other gays in the city, this perspective was balanced by a concern over the negative attention that a high degree of visibility could bring to the group.

Although GLAMj is certainly not a secret club, its events have been selectively advertised in an effort to draw new members to the group and fulfill expectations of visibility while avoiding unwanted negative attention. Various members of the group have posted event details online as well as in gay publications. While GLAMj has occasionally attracted attention from the *MJTH*, this has been primarily a way of declaring the group's existence and activism rather than divulging the time or location of its events.

The decision to organize GLAMj's events this way is not arbitrary as many of the middle-aged and older gay men I spoke with described homophobia in Moose Jaw in complex and contradictory ways. Several of my collaborators discussed their experiences

of discrimination, gossip, as well as verbal, psychological and (in one case) physical violence in a variety of different settings. Some of these same collaborators also described Moose Jaw as accepting, impartial or easier to live in than other places. Eric Steinhauser, a gay white man in his early fifties and a non-GLAMj member, described his openness about his sexuality as being an advantage to him in his workplace and social life in Moose Jaw as he felt people were always wanting to be his friend, lest they should be accused of being homophobic.

As GLAMj enacts both visibility and audibility tactics in Moose Jaw, politicians, other LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw and even GLAMj members and organizers themselves often expect the group to act in ways more typical of LGBTQ organizations and activists in larger centres. However, the responsibility of being visible is one that is not shared equally by all GLAMj members nor by informal LGBTQ friendship networks in the city. Still, GLAMj's focus on community building and audibility politics has been an innovative way of translating LGBTQ organizing and activism in the Friendly City.

### **Translating Metronormativity**

The widespread assumption that “cities are the ‘habitus’ of queerness” make those LGBTQ people living in smaller centres or less populated areas seem out of place (Gray 2009:9). This assumption is certainly bolstered by the metronormative migrations and narratives that have inflected gay liberation and visibility activism in larger urban centres like San Francisco (Armstrong 2002). Thus, the deployment of metronormative discourses by GLAMj in this smaller urban setting seems almost contradictory. However, as metronormativity is translated into the context of Moose Jaw, its logics are both reinscribed and transformed in a manner that temporarily draws others to the Friendly City (from both larger and smaller locales) and produces context-specific ways of coming out in a smaller community of LGBTQ people.

However, Moose Jaw is not the only place in which metronormativity and LGBTQ organizing encounter friction. Indeed, the normalization of queer place-making in larger centres “render[s] invisible the geographically specific ways that queer lives are

produced in cities of *all* sizes” (Muller Myrdahl N.d.:3). The translation of universalist LGBTQ discourses into larger urban centres also encounters the myriad of geographic factors that produce social norms and identities in those particular places (Muller Myrdahl N.d.). While larger urban centres provide these discourses with the locations in which LGBTQ identities might seem untouched by this friction, it is through a close examination of LGBTQ life in a context like Moose Jaw that reveals this apparition as fantasy.

In her essay on the “great gay migration,” anthropologist Kath Weston argues that “the gay imaginary is not just a dream of a freedom to ‘be gay’ that requires an urban location, but a symbolic space that configures gayness itself by elaborating an opposition between rural and urban life” (Weston 1995:274). This symbolic contrast enables organizers in Moose Jaw to frame this smaller urban area as its own centre of LGBTQ community through its juxtaposition with ostensibly fearful and closeted LGBTQ people in the surrounding smaller towns and rural areas. While organizers have depicted LGBTQ people in Moose Jaw as largely closeted in relation to metropolises like Toronto, through a rescaling of the rural/urban binary, Moose Jaw emerges as its own centre of LGBTQ community and activism in a hierarchy of metronormativity that is contested even as it is reinscribed.

In carrying out an ethnography of global connections, Tsing’s notion of friction focuses on “zones of awkward engagement, where words mean something different across a divide even as people agree to speak” (2005:xi). While GLAMj has sought to enact strategies of visibility and community building found in larger urban centres, these tactics themselves have been transformed through an understanding of “coming out” that does not require a fully public declaration of one’s sexual orientation. Although the group has provided a space for individuals to “come out” to one another, GLAMj’s activism has taken shape in ways that does not require the majority of its members to be publicly identified with their sexual orientation.

While metronormativity can and does lead people to pursue LGBTQ life in cities beyond Moose Jaw, this hegemonic discourse is far from totalizing. LGBTQ organizing

in Moose Jaw has demonstrated that metronormativity is open to contestation and transformation in ways that challenge the notion that the metropolis is the only place where LGBTQ life flourishes.

## Chapter 4: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road: Aging and Embodied Gay Migration

“Then I thought, as the country was so green and beautiful, I would call it the Emerald City, and to make the name fit better I put green spectacles on all the people, so that everything they saw was green.”

“But isn’t everything here green?” asked Dorothy.

“No more than in any other city,” replied Oz; “but when you wear green spectacles, why of course everything you see looks green to you.”

– L. FRANK BAUM, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

When the gay gaze is held captive by the enchanting glitz and camp of bohemian metroscares full of rainbow retail and promises of promiscuity, (gay) life in the prairie nowhere can seem, in the words of L. Frank Baum, “as dull and gray as everything else” (1900:12). This queer fairytale is never more seductive than in the classic American musical, *The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming 1939), whose sepia-toned scenes of an anonymous rural Kansas literally pale in comparison with the Technicolor glory of the Land of Oz. Indeed this cinematographic masterpiece replete with campy costumes, sparkling city skylines and teary-eyed men has been hailed as a “cultural touchston[e] in the gay community” that “towers above the rest in terms of its iconic role in queer cinema’s relationship to queer culture” (Pugh 2008:217).<sup>1</sup> Although Dorothy dreams of a far away *somewhere* “where there isn’t any trouble” as inaccessible by boat or train, this “queer utopia” (Pugh 2008) where “difference and deviation from the norm *are* the norm” (Benshoff and Griffin 2006) has been landscaped squarely onto the metropolis (Conner et al. 1997).

For some gay migrants en yellow-brick route to the Emerald City, gay life elsewhere seems to fade into a distant memory of impossibility and trauma. Yet for the experienced traveler, intricate rhizomatic networks run in every imaginable and unforeseeable direction, to, through and around the bald prairie and the Friendly City.

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is, after all, a story written not only about children, but also a simplistic fantasy for them.

In this chapter, I respond to the metronormative narrative of rural-urban queer migrations through charting the embodied movements of queer bodies through space (Gorman-Murray 2007) and exploring some of the diverse motivations that led my collaborators to make home in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Contrary to metronormative expectations, my collaborators here describe their movements as profoundly affected by a desire to remain close to their respective families. Further, I argue that the rural-urban dichotomy that structures metronormative movements results in an elision of the diversity of non-metropolitan locations as well as the fantastic complexity of gay men's relocations.

Similar to my discussion in chapter 3, I explore the scalar flexibility of metronormativity as it applies to these complex migrations and the queer quests for identity that take place beyond the metropolis. Critiquing the teleology of rural-urban narratives that take the metropolitan centre as the appropriate location for queer research, I contend that my collaborators' homemaking practices in Moose Jaw refuse the hierarchization of space that depict smaller centres as a rural, queerless, nowhere in relation to the metropolitan, queer, somewhere.

Finally, I also argue that in addition to being sexualized, space also has age-related dimensions for my collaborators who described feeling out of place as older gay men in the larger urban centre. Bringing together discourses in geographies of sexuality and queer theory, I use Muñoz's (1999) theory of disidentification to discuss the way in which this "aging" of space has led my collaborators to resist metronormative discourses that locate authentic gay identity in the metropolis.

### **Yellow Brick Roads**

As the metropolis is imagined as the picturesque backdrop for all LGBTQ experience and research, narratives of permanent, rural-urban linear movements abound (Gorman-Murray 2007; Halberstam 2005). *Get Thee to a Big City*, the title of

Anthropologist Kath Weston's (1995) essay on the great gay migration proclaims. "And stay there!" the command continues, doing violence through the conceptual displacement and spatial incarceration of sexual others in metropolitan reservations. In her paper, Weston problematically describes the "odyssey of escape from the isolation of the countryside and the surveillance of small-town life to the freedom and anonymity of the urban landscape" (1995:274). Absent from her account of rural refugees, of course, are the narratives of sexual dissidents who remain in place, move "sideways" to another smaller centre or enact any number of peripatetic movements in multitudinous directions.

Weston further argues that "tales from the Great Gay Migration do not end in the discovery of a bounded community" but rather "culminate in a kind of anti-identification" (1995:269). Weston carefully outlines the forms of this anti-identification: distancing oneself from the imagined gay community, revising the way the gay subject is monolithically represented and carving out a specialized niche within the gay community (1995:273). Strangely, these forms of resistance do not seem to be available to those enmeshed in LGBTQ communities beyond the metropolis and the possibility of leaving the big city or making home in a non-metropolitan elsewhere are clearly relegated to the realm of the unthinkable.

Weston is oblivious to these possibilities despite one of her interlocutor's stated plans to "relax and go back home" (1995:273) to a native reservation. Paradoxically, in her earlier monograph, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (1991), Weston also provides an ethnographic account of the yuletide journeys back to communities of origins undertaken by many gay and lesbian migrants to San Francisco. Weston's oversight here reveals a teleological narrative in which her interlocutors' migrations are perceived to have come to an end simply because that is the space and time in which she encountered them.

However, those with same-sex desires have been disregarding metronormativity for hundreds of years (Herring 2010), sometimes even deliberately seeking same-sex intimacy in the non-urban elsewhere. Benemann (2006) has documented the pursuit of male same-sex relations on the American "frontier" while Korfman (2007) has argued

that this may also have been the case in Saskatchewan, particularly Moose Jaw, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Still, the presumption of rural-urban migration remains dominant in much research on LGBTQ migration (Gorman-Murray 2007; Halberstam 2005).

In his Southern queer history of “men like that” from Mississippi (1945-1985), John Howard aptly observes that “queer interaction presupposed transportation” (1999:78). Importantly, Howard argues that queer movement was multidirectional including movements that tacked back and forth across rural and urban areas in patterns that included not just permanent congregation in larger urban centres but also circulation through many locales (1999:79). Similarly, Angelia Wilson has argued for the value of paying attention to the oft-overlooked queer experiences of those who live outside the metropolis, beyond rural lesbian communes or radical faerie movements (Wilson 2000).

Conversely, scholars such as Anne-Marie Fortier (2003) have complicated the discussion surrounding queer migrations, convincingly arguing that “returning home” for some LGBTQ persons can also take place through the re-membering of the family home and does not necessarily require physical migration at all. Larry Knopp (2004) also explores the symbolics of place, placelessness and movement in his discussion of what he calls “queer quests for identity.” Furthermore, in a conceptual paper that seeks to counter the teleology of rural-urban migrations, Andrew Gorman-Murray (2007) suggests that the diversity of queer relocations is elided through the symbolic contrast of city and country. He offers instead that theoreticians begin to shift their attention to the “actual movement of the queer body through space” and calls for empirical investigation to elucidate this complexity (Gorman-Murray 2007:106).

In the following two sections I trace the embodied migrations of two older gay men living in Moose Jaw. First, I outline Ian Gemmel’s complex movements through larger and smaller centres and explore some of the intersecting motivations of family, identity, sexuality, economic opportunities and aging in his diverse relocations that defy simplistic rural-urban frameworks. Second, I investigate the notion of queer quests for identity in the context of John Lesnar’s migrations to both smaller and larger centres as he navigates and complicates notions of queer absence as well as rural heterosexism and

homophobia. John's narratives demonstrate the scalar flexibility of metronormativity and the diversity of attitudes towards homosexuality in smaller centres.

### **Ian Gemmel: The Tin Man's Foil**

After asking a collaborator for assurances to the point of his frustration, I dial Ian's number, clumsily introducing myself and apologetically describing my project. Ian is surprised to hear about my research and that his name is "out there." However, he explains, "everyone is fine with it—as long as you don't say anything". Contrary to my expectations, Ian invites me to come down to his office the next day for an interview.

Later in the morning on a sunny September day, I am being ushered towards a comfortable seat in Ian's private office. Now in his early seventies, Ian dons a red polo shirt with baby blue and cream stripes, black dress pants and polished black shoes. Despite a hectic schedule that erupts at times into our interviews, Ian seems delighted to meet with me, telling me that I am the only other gay person he has ever gotten to know in Moose Jaw, besides his partner.

After a pleasant conversation leading into the formalities of my research, our interview grinds to a halt before it begins thanks to my technological ineptitude with my digital recorder. Ian kindly invites me to return in a couple of hours and requests that I leave my interview questions for his review. I briefly hesitate but promptly capitulate.

Two hours later, an uncertain red light glows in dubious silence on the bureau between us. I open the interview with what I imagined were fairly straightforward questions: What pseudonym would you like me to use? What year were you born? How long have you lived in Moose Jaw? When I ask Ian what word or words he would use to describe his sexual orientation, he takes charge of the interview and launches into a captivating narrative lasting nearly 20 minutes, which I respectfully present below with minimal alteration.

Ian's response illustrates the interlocking roles of age, family, sexuality, identity and the material realities of his life in motivating his multiple migrations. With a narrative that spans nearly 50 years, Ian explains how his understanding of his sexuality

has changed as he ages in different places and his relationship with his family is reconstituted in fundamental ways. Although Ian does live in a larger urban center after coming out, his migratory trajectory certainly does not embody a singular or permanent metronormative pursuit of larger centres far from the surveillance of family for the exploration of his sexual identity.

As Ian weaves together narratives of place, finances, aging, sexuality, family and identity, I doubt my digital recorder's ability to remember the nuances of our conversation. I jot down notes about the way Ian begins his story staring off into space with his arms cautiously folded across his chest. However, as his narrative journey progresses, Ian's persistent grin accompanies the flowing movement of his hands while he occasionally casts emphatic one-eyed squints in my direction.

Well I was married for 24 years. And I have two wonderful kids and grandkids, all of that. And actually, I'll give you some background as we go. [JW: Sure]

The night before I got married, I said to my father, I was adopted, I said "I can't get married." "Why?" he said. He was a military person and a policeman and tough and everything. And I said, "Because I am queer." This was with great tears and everything. And he said to me, "Have you ever been with a man?" and at that time I hadn't and I said no. And he said, "Then shut your mouth and get on with it." So I had said to my wife to be, because we'd been together really for 5 years and I said to her, "I am attracted to men." And she said, because we'd decided to get married, she'd said, "So am I, but I thought that what we are going to do was a bond between the two of us that we wouldn't fool around. So if you're not going to fool around, neither am I. Either you want to be with me or you don't" etcetera. And I thought, well that's kind of reasonable and so I said, "Yes, you're right." So we got married and we were married all of that time and we lived all over Canada because we emigrated from England. [...]

But eventually I reached the point where I had to be who I was. [...] And she said, "I thought that day may one day come. I was hoping it wouldn't but if it is, that's [about it]. And you've got to get out there and if you think you're gay then go and be gay. And live as happily as you want to be and I will be behind you all the way. And if you want to march in a gay pride parade, I'll be there with you." So it would make it very difficult because she said, "But I have to go back to England because I don't like it here, really." So I said, "OK." So she took off. And the kids, the two kids, stayed with me for about six months and we all missed her dreadfully; the kids just couldn't deal with that. And so they went back to England and I was on my own, out in Newfoundland of all places and in Saint

John's. And after quite a while, I thought, you know I don't like this. I now no longer have a wife, I'm on my own and I don't have my kids. And I hate this.

So I was working [...] at the time and I told [my employer] what had happened. When we broke up I told them at work the reason for breaking up and they were all amazed. Because we were kind of the life and soul, we had lots of parties, we had people over for dinner, we were very outgoing kind of people. And so I said, "I need a leave of absence" or something. So they said, "Oh, okay you can have it for a while." And being in Newfoundland I had told everybody in Newfoundland the reason for our breakup and I also flew to Toronto to tell my bosses in Toronto what had occurred. Yeah, and they kind of, one eyebrow raised, and said "Okay?" you know. I went back to Newfoundland, and then I decided to take a leave of absence. I went to England; I was looking around thinking maybe I could get work there. [...]

So that was all going through and the kids were happy that I was back. I was living on the outskirts of London near Epping Forest and my wife was in the north in Manchester. And so the kids came to stay with me for a while and we went horse riding one day in the forest and they said, "We want to talk." So we chatted, chatted, you know, going along on the horses and they said, "We hate it here. We hate this country. We hate the schools. We hate life here. We want to go back home." So I said, "Okay." So I left England and came back to Canada.

[I went back to my employer but] I'd been away too long for them to keep a job open so they said, "Well we can offer you a job in Thunder Bay or we can offer you a job in Windsor." And I said, "Well, I don't really want to go to a small town. I want to be in a big city because I want the kids to know what life is like in a big city. Because all their lives they'd been in St. John's, small place, small environment. Yellowknife for years, which we all loved, but again, small town. And I wanted them to grow up knowing the pressures of the big city and so on because I didn't want them to be small town people who couldn't cope in a big world, you know. So I wanted a job in a big city and there was nothing available. And they said, "That's it," you know, "You either take those or I'm sorry there's nothing." So I kind of hung around in Toronto. [...]

I was there for 13 years. Meanwhile, the kids had talked about coming back to be with me but they then had that terrible decision to make, do we go back to Canada and dad and then what happens to mom? She's going to be on her own in England. So as often happens in these cases, I hear, one came with me and one stayed with my wife. And so my daughter stayed in England and my son came to be with me. [...]

But [at my new job with another employer], the salary was not that high, they had no benefits whatsoever, no pension plan and I saw my years going by. [...] So all of a sudden there I am in this job with no benefits and no pension and all that. And I had known a fellow who was a singer and he was an inventor and our

families had known each other, he and his wife and [my ex-wife] and me. And he got in touch with me when he came through Toronto and he said I want you to come and work with me or for me. He'd created a [company] in Calgary [...] And so he said, "Here's your contract and this is what you get after so much time and you'll have a part of the company" and I'm thinking wonderful!

So by this time I'd met my now partner. So we talked about it and so I sold my house and went to Calgary and we bought a house, beautiful house, because we had nothing but money in our future. And so I guess we'd been there for eight or nine months doing this and this fellow who had been a friend of mine for a long time came back from a trip that he made to California, business, and said, "I'm sorry to have to say this, but I sold the company. I'm going to California." So, there we were with this bloody great house with a beautiful indoor swimming pool [JW & IG chuckle] and my son with me, and my daughter had come over to be there that summer and everybody loved it—it was just a gorgeous place. And so, suddenly there we were, I had no job [...] and I didn't know a soul, really. [...]

I went to see [an employer] in Calgary and the fellow that was the manager there said, you know, "If something comes up, I'll be in touch" because we knew each other very well. And he eventually hired me [...] and after I'd been there a while they asked me if I'd come to Regina and be the sort of [provincial manager] and I said yeah. So we ended up in Regina. [...]

Later on [an acquaintance] asked me to come and be a part of the selection committee for the person that was going to run this place. And I said, "Well, I'd be delighted to but really I'd rather be on the other side of the table." Because I knew that my work in Regina had limits because they were closing everything down. And so I applied along with forty-two other people for this job and they hired me, because of my experience I guess. And because I was not an expensive hire because I was local. [JW laughs] So I guess, so I came here. And that's, I've answered like fifteen of your questions already, I suppose. But that's the story of how I got there and your question was? [Phone rings] [IG Laughs]

While Ian's narrative here summarizes only some of his many migrations and simplifies his reasons for undertaking them, it still engenders a great deal of complexity that is certainly not captured in the metronormative trope of rural-urban migration.

Although Ian's father is certainly not accepting of his son's self-declared queerness, he does not disown him and Ian does not leave his parents in search of a new "gay family" in the big city. Instead, Ian accepts his father's advice and his fiancé's compromise, resisting mounting societal pressures to come out as gay until the late 1980s.

By his second, more public, coming out in his late forties, Ian had already distanced himself from his family of origin and does not seek to abandon his ex-wife or children to explore his sexual desires for men. Rather, he maintains his family ties and follows his ex-wife back to England in order to be closer to his children. Ian eventually returns to Canada at his children's request where his son lives with him in Toronto and later in Calgary. In Toronto, Ian meets his current partner who plays an increasingly important role in their subsequent decisions to relocate to smaller centres as Ian's son moves out on his own.

Whereas four out of ten of my collaborators had heterosexually married with children and grandchildren, Ian is unique among my collaborators as the only person to be currently in a long-term same-sex relationship—a possibility that many attributed to living in a larger centre. However, Ian does not describe the pursuit of a relationship or even a community of other gay men as a motivating factor in his move to Toronto. Neither in London nor Toronto does Ian actively involve himself in any sort of LGBTQ scene or community and also describes himself as having very few gay friends. Rather, Ian describes his decision to live in Toronto as strongly influenced by his desire that his children “grow up knowing the pressures of the big city.”

However, the effect of Ian's sexuality on his migration decisions did not simply begin with the pronouncement of his “gay” identity. Elsewhere, Ian also describes his immigration to Canada and subsequent relocations within Canada as motivated by both his desire to maintain his heterosexual relationship and his sexual desires for other men.

And then we both left England and went to Vancouver. And so I started my life with her which was wonderful. I mean we had a wonderful, wonderful marriage. But I had this problem being attracted to men. So we kind of worked hard, did well and I eventually got a job [...] And I would be working there and it would only be a matter of time before some guy that I was working with and I began to do the whole, we are both gay, and you know I like you and all of this. And I had to turn away from that. And so I would apply for jobs in other places. So we would move all over Canada because it would happen wherever I went and I would meet guys.

As discussed above, Ian's migration decisions are not individual ones that are separate from his relationship with his family. However, it is important to note that Ian's wife and children's relocations are also influenced by Ian's sexuality—first moving so that he might avoid the temptations of same-sex relationships but also later deciding where to live after Ian pursues a life as an openly gay man. Rather than severing ties with his family due to his sexual identity, Ian's migration decisions are continually affected in complex ways by his changing relationship to his family over his life course.

Although economic factors clearly motivate some of Ian's migration decisions, his resolve to remain in Toronto despite having to change careers reveals that pure financial gain does not play a deterministic role in these decisions. This is in accordance with Richard Parker's assertion that "while education, employment and financial opportunities contribute to the decision to migrate, these are *not* independent of sexuality-related reasons" (Gorman-Murray 2007). Despite his hesitations about being too outspoken about this sexual identity with his clients in Moose Jaw, Ian also informed me that he was upfront with his employers about his male partner in the interview for his current job.

In addition to the interlocking effects of his sexuality with economic factors, Ian's migration decisions are also strongly affected by his age. Ian mentions that while working in Toronto, his mediocre salary without benefits or pension led him to question his future economic security and eventually pursue new financial horizons with his partner in Calgary. In a subsequent section in this chapter, Ian also talks about the desirability of living in a smaller centre as he gets older.

Also contrary to the simplistic myth that pitiable LGBTQ people only live in smaller centres because they cannot afford to live in a metropolis, Ian sells his house in Toronto and buys another in Calgary and yet others in Regina and Moose Jaw. It is clear from Ian's narrative that the expense, time and energy required to relocate was certainly not an insurmountable obstacle for him and his partner.

As Ian's highly varied migrations (and explanations of those migrations) demonstrate, it is nearly impossible to determine a single reason or even to separate and

identify all the factors in a person's migration decisions. While Ian provided a number of explanations for these movements, it is likely that he did not verbalize all of them in our interviews. Perhaps Ian was not aware of or able to articulate some of the motivations for his relocations while others may have been too private or too complicated. Of course, others he may have forgotten or even revised. Knopp, in his discussion of queer quests for identity, argues for a definition of agency in migrations that moves beyond the singular intentionality of metronormativity:

‘agency’ should not be seen as a purely human accomplishment nor as being all about cognitive processes and intentionality. Rather, it should be conceived as something that is the product of negotiations, of sorts, between all kinds of actors with seemingly autonomous (but actually mutually interdependent and determined) capacities. (2004:125)

Knopp's definition of agency helps make sense of the overlapping roles of Ian's family, employers, (aging) body, sexual identity and perception of place have on his complex migrations. Ian's numerous relocations have also been affected in some sense by his gender, linguistic proficiencies, country of origin, race/ethnicity, physical appearance, economic status, sexual orientation, generation, preferences and sensibilities among many other “seemingly autonomous capacities.” Far from the linear yellow brick route the heartless Tin Man follows to the Emerald City, Ian's migrations entail much more complexity than a simplistic byproduct of his sexual orientation and the influence of discourses of rural to urban migrations prescribed for such persons.

### **Lions and Tigers and Bears: John Lesnar and the Dark Side of Oz**

The phone rings four times before the machine picks up and a raspy voice bounces: “Hi you've reached John here. Sorry I missed your call, I've been busy building an ark because of all this rain!” Weeks later, the familiar dryness of the prairie air yields the curious coolness of an August evening. I lazily pedal through silent streets, lined with swaying elms and the ever-vigilant, vinyl-sided bungalows until I see John tending the flowers and shrubs in his front yard. A short and stocky Irish-Scottish-Ukrainian-Canadian in his early sixties, John sports jean shorts, grey socks under black Velcro-

strapped shoes and a blue T-shirt embroidered with a discrete maple leaf and the word “BEAR” in the top left corner.

John greets me with a firm handshake and welcomes me inside where I can hear several excited canines yapping as they paw at their kennels. I sit between the cushions of a comfortable brown couch as John offers me a drink and tells me he has lived in Moose Jaw nearly all his life. As we chat about the project, Montréal and my love life, John suggests I wrestle him for participant observation. I consider it and laugh, knowing he is mostly joking. A few moments later, John is candidly sharing very personal stories about his life, sexuality and travels that complicate standard notions of queer absence, heteronormativity and homophobia in smaller centres.

Born and raised in Moose Jaw, John tells me that he knew from an early age that he was attracted to the same-sex. While he did not explore any overt sexual relationships in his adolescent years in Moose Jaw, John also portrays his first move away from the family home as unremarkable. Moving to the nearby provincial capital to become a teacher, John describes himself as hardworking, with a small social circle—too young for the bars and unaware of a gay presence in that city. Yet, it was not until his return to Moose Jaw from university that he began to actively seek out same-sex partners for intimacy.

This friend of my grandma’s was a gossipy old babe that worked out at the airbase. And we were, at supper at my grandma’s and [...] she says to mom, she says, [...] “Do you know this [Jeff Davies]?”—he’s dead now. She says, “He’s one of those funny guys,” she says.

And I said, you know I was in university, I says, “Well what do you mean funny guys?” you know. “What are you talking about?”

“Well he likes boys.”

“What do you mean he likes boys?” You know [...].

So anyway, late that night I looked his phone number up and I phoned him. And I said you know, “I overheard a conversation tonight and,” I said, “I think I’m like you and I’d like to meet you,” you know, “I’d like to get together.” And so he was my first experience, I went over to his place and he did fellatio on me, you know. Anyway, that was the first person I knew that was gay and he was not a terribly clean guy. He was about five, six years older than I was.

Then after I had that experience, ok, so then I heard that this other hairstylist was. So I became a real little bastard, I started phoning these guys, you know, I wanted to find my own little niche, you know. He and I had a great time. He lived on an acreage and we were out sun tanning nude, you know. Wow! You know what it led to. So he'd call me and say, "Come on out!" you know, so I'd be trotting out there [JW laughs] you know, late at night and having a good old time and it was wonderful.

And then he said to me, "Well I have something to tell you," and I thought, oh shit! And he says, "I have cancer." And it was cancer of the lung—he smoked terribly. And he says, "So I'm not going to be around much longer." So we kind of sped up and had great jolly times and then [it came to an end when his health declined further].

He had some friends that came over one night and he introduced me as a good friend. And I wasn't sure if I was supposed to say anything or not, you know and so. Anyway, then he was hospitalized and I visited him a few times but he died. And, you know, I mean that was kind of a half-assed relationship, I guess you'd say because it was constant, you know, we had a good time.

[JW: And how long did that relationship last?] Oh, five years. [JW: Oh really?]

Yeah, give or take. Oh yeah, it was wonderful because, you know, he liked dogs, and he was going to come over and groom my sheep dog one night, you know. Ironically enough, my mom was getting her hair cut by the lady that was in his shop—he was a hairstylist. And so I started going to [George] to get my hair cut. And you know, it's kind of interesting, like there I am sitting in the chair and you know what you've done the last few nights and everything.

John's story complicates the metronormative narrative through the reversal of the tropes of sexual exploration in the larger urban centre and the absence of same-sex intimacy everywhere else. While John attends university in a much larger city, his small social circle and youth would have made it difficult for him to find an avenue into the clandestine gay scene in larger prairie cities in the late 1960s (see Korinek 2003). John's narrative challenges the idea that the larger urban centre is homogenously viewed as a diasporic "gay homeland" that contrasts with the familial home as the site where a sense of "hominess" is lost due to one's sexuality (Fortier 2003; Sinfield 2000). Howard makes a similar point in the context of Mississippi in the second half of the twentieth century— young men practicing autoeroticism in their bedrooms experienced "the home [as] the premier queer site" (1999:41).

Contrary to many coming out narratives set in a big city far away from the surveillance of family, friends and neighbours (Weston 1995), John returns to Moose Jaw from the larger centre, exploring his sexuality and “coming out” to someone for the very first time. Remarkably, it is in his hometown through the gossip of a family friend and neighbour that John is able to identify and pursue a relationship with another man. While John does exercise a high degree of caution in these pursuits in and around Moose Jaw, he also complicates the trope of rural surveillance through his account of uninhibited nude sun tanning and late-night sex on a nearby acreage.

John’s description of secret sexual affairs and of getting his hair cut by a sexual partner point to both the dangers and pleasures of “the closet” in a place of familiarity. John Alan Lee’s (1987) essay describes such pleasures among older homosexual men in Canada who continued to “interpret the closet and the secret society not as furtive, but as adventuresome and special” (Lee, 1987:63). Through withholding information about his sexual desires, John is able to transgress a social norm prohibiting same-sex intimacy without being punished for it. While the risks to his employment, social ties and even liberty may have been substantial, John seemed to take some pleasure in a kind of secret flaunting of his sexuality at his mother’s salon. Such pleasures fly in the face of a politics of visibility that assert that the closet is always and exclusively a place of shame, oppression and victimization.

The death of John’s sexual partner, however, corrects the easily romanticized portrait of secret sexual affairs in Moose Jaw. While John describes this as a “half-assed relationship,” its lack of recognition may have deprived him of social and emotional support from those who did not understand the significance of this relationship. This form of “disenfranchised grief” (Doka 1989, 2002) is present in John’s discussion of his ambiguous social standing among George’s friends.

John’s recollection of having something “constant” speaks volumes to the possibilities for “queer” sex outside of major metropolitan areas. Elsewhere, John talks about the pros and cons of owning his home and the opportunities for sexual contact this affords. While John is able to host sexual partners in his home, he also conveys feeling

exploited and deceived by (heterosexually) married men who had few spaces available for their (homo)sexual activities.

After finishing his teacher training, John moved to a small village and then to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, a community of around 10,000 souls where he worked at the local school for 5 years. Although he describes these smaller centres as uncomfortable, John also uses these smaller locales to explore heterosexual relationships and bolster his confidence not only in his burgeoning gay identity but also in his ability to live as a gay man in Moose Jaw.

So we had a lot of parties together and invariably, this one young stud muffin that, you know was putting it to every woman in town he could, he starts hanging out with the art teacher. This other guy that was from Moose Jaw, and his big claim to fame was how many women he got laid with on the weekend, you know, the bars and parties and stuff. And these guys they get talking about this. Well I didn't fit, you know? So then they'd sometimes, "What'd you do? What'd you do?" You know, so. "Pff! None of your business!" You know. [JL laughs] [...]

And so then I was there 5 years in Weyburn. And that's where I dated this other girl and she had a strict Roman Catholic background, so. I guess, deep down I was trying things out, I thought, you know. But with someone that was safe because a Roman Catholic wouldn't want to get beyond first base. [JW laughs] And so I, you couldn't be out in Weyburn at all. There's no way. Everybody was super straight. And they had a lot of pride in the guys that were screwing every woman they could, you know what I mean? And of course [JL clicks] I didn't fit that bill, you know. So then when I came back to Moose Jaw, got teaching here, that's when I began to lead my really, really secret life of sneaking around and traveling and stuff. [...]

And I kind of realized it wouldn't be sustainable to be living there as a single person forever and ever amen. In Moose Jaw it's a little different. You know, you can kind of, you know, there are single people that have worked in the system for years that maybe have been suspect, but [JL clicks] you know it's easier to exist in this city.

In Larry Knopp's (2004) much cited article, *Ontologies of place, placelessness and movement*, he explores the concept of "quests for identity" by which he refers to personal (and sometimes collective [...]) journeys through space and time—material, psychic, and at a variety of scales—that are constructed internally as being about the search for an integrated wholeness as individual humans living in some kind of community [...] [which] amounts to a search for emotional and ontological security. (Knopp 2004:122-123)

Knopp considers these quests for identity in terms of queer migrations that often feature movements from rural to urban areas as a form of “testing, exploring, and experimenting with alternative ways of *being*, in contexts that are unencumbered by the expectations of tight-knit family, kinship, or community relationships” (Knopp 2004:123). One salient absence in this discussion is the possibility that one might travel to explore and test out a heterosexual identity, as John did in his movements to smaller centres in Saskatchewan. John’s sense of not fitting in to a community that he describes as proudly heterosexual seemed to help him make sense of his own sexual desires. Even though this resulted in a kind of elimination of heterosexuality from John’s sense of self, this journey is no less important in establishing and supporting his gay identity.

Contrary to metronormative expectations, John chooses to experiment with *heterosexual* relationships in a context where he is removed from the surveillance of his family and friends in Moose Jaw. While John clearly describes himself as having been influenced by the social norms of a place where he perceived being “out” as impossible and being single as not “sustainable,” he pursues a relationship with a “Roman Catholic” who he thought would not want pre-marital sexual intimacy. As he elaborates in the latter part of this narrative, John felt as though he could live and work in Moose Jaw as “single.” Through exploring heterosexual relationships in another centre John is able to avoid some scrutiny of his status as a perpetual bachelor in Moose Jaw. Had John dated women in his hometown, he may have been perceived as a failed romantic rather than respectably disinterested. Elsewhere, John describes being set-up with different women in smaller centres and being careful to avoid showing any interest in dating when he returned to Moose Jaw.

John’s narrative also demonstrates the diversity of attitudes towards homosexuality in smaller centres as well as the scalar flexibility of metronormativity. Describing Moose Jaw as a more comfortable place for single teachers in the education system, John hints at an idea of strength in numbers that takes the pressure off of being the only person who is not engaging in (or at least not bragging about) heterosexual sex. The way John reads these smaller centres as somehow more heterosexist than Moose Jaw

demonstrates the relativity and flexibility of metronormative discourses and the way that geography, even in smaller centres can be used as shorthand for images of homophobia and tolerance (see chapter 3). Although John presents his different experiences as a question of the relatively larger size of Moose Jaw, this also suggests that smaller centres are not homogenous in the queer possibilities they afford. Different smaller centres seem to offer very different queer possibilities that cannot always be reduced to a simplistic “rural homophobia” characteristic of all smaller centres.

When his single mother began experiencing health complications after just a few years of him leaving home, John moved back to Moose Jaw to care for her, living in the same house as her until her death some thirty years later. Throughout his time working in Moose Jaw as a teacher, John often travelled great distances for sex, gay friendships and the experience of the gay scene in larger centres. Although John looked up information about plays and other events so he could “lie better,” his travelling eventually raised the suspicions of some family and friends. He “came out” to his mother and, some time after his retirement, decided to come out to some friends and colleagues as well.

And so, I decided when I retired, I think I told you that I [had] these obsessions. I wanted to march with Toronto leather men in the gay pride parade in my leather regalia. And I thought sure as hell I’ll get on CTV national news or whatever. And so I phoned a few friends and told them. “Well ooh, good, congratulations! We’re glad that you’re coming out, it’s liberating.”

And so after a few more, I thought, I’m going to have a party, damn it! So I phoned them back and said I’m going to have a buffet style supper on whatever day and drinks here and 34 friends and relatives. Somebody said are you going to phone [Jeremy Glidden] because they’re very Christian, you know. And I said, “Yes I am because I think that they will be understanding, kind people. So I phoned [Jeremy] and “Oh,” he said, “OK, we’ll come over. We’ll come to the party,” he said. “It doesn’t matter to us, you know.” And my former vice principal, that I have a lot of [respect for], [Krysta Jameson], I was very sociable and friendly with them and she says, “[John] we know lots of gay people and it’s none of our business that you’re gay or not. But,” she says, “we’ll support you at your party.”

So the party went on ‘til 3am. [JW laughs] And we’re up at our high deck and the interesting thing was that the [Danielson] kids across the lane, they had a very stable family life and they were all very normal heteros, you know, athletic boys.

And so [JL laughs] they came over about 2'oclock, they had beer, they were having a bit of a party and one says, "What's going on here? Is this a staff party or something?" Because all these people were teachers. "Yup, yeah, yeah, we're just having sort of a [school] party. [JL & JW laugh]

John's continued travels to gay destinations and cities where he could more openly experiment with his sexuality seem to match what Knopp (2004) reasons is a queer sensibility around an attachment to and a pleasure in movement. However, contrary to the circumscribed description of queer quests for identity used by other scholars (Waitt and Gorman-Murray 2011), John's travels are not limited to or contained within a certain time frame where he discovers and reveals his gay identity once and for all. Rather, through his sustained travels, John continually reinforces, practices and performs his gay identity.

Despite living in Moose Jaw for over fifty years, it is only after his retirement that John decides to host a coming out party when the risks to his job security were no longer relevant. More at stake were John's social ties and reputation, which he attempts to safeguard through coming out to select friends and family individually rather than risking inadvertent media attention or rumours. While John describes elsewhere one couple who does not attend his party, he portrays the vast majority of his friends' reactions as anything but hostile. He depicts a sensibility among his friends and family where minding one's business is common, a sensibility that John construes as respectful and even desirable responses to his coming out. However, even at John's coming out party he is still very selective in disclosing his sexual identity and continues to experience the pleasures and perils of the closet.

Although John does make a metronormative journey to Toronto, his situation is nothing at all like Spurlin's (2000) description of the prototypical queer child arriving in the metropolis. As a retired older man with his own house and supportive friends and family, John's short trip to Toronto is not directly motivated by homophobia, being kicked out of the family home or even feeling out of place in this smaller urban centre. While metronormative narratives often follow a sequence whereby a person moves to the

big city in order to come out, John was able to have a celebration at his home in Moose Jaw with friends and family in attendance.

To some denizens of the Emerald City, Moose Jaw and other smaller centres might constitute the dark side of Oz whose mysterious forests are filled with the specters of queer absence, compulsory heteronormativity and homogenous rural homophobia. However, as John's journeys in, through and beyond smaller centres demonstrate, these lions and tigers and bears are not always as they seem.

### **There's No Place Like Home**

The heavy July sun slips slowly behind the infamous willows of Wakamow Valley Park as Billy Jealousy, a (heterosexually) married man in his early fifties tells me about the difficulty of finding a place to have sex with other men in Moose Jaw. Regina is still pretty small-town, he explains from behind dark sunglasses, but the Queen City certainly has more cruising opportunities. We both laugh despite the relentless onslaught of a small army of mosquitoes.

The distant clack and clatter of a train passing through punctuates our conversation as Billy divulges an upcoming move to Regina. The plan has been on the table for over a decade. It is not that far away from children, grandchildren, in-laws and friends, he admits, but persuading his wife had still been a formidable task. Moose Jaw is a great, safe little place to raise a family, Billy explains, but now that the kids have graduated and moved out, he and his wife have a brand new piece of real estate to call home after thirty-odd years. Calmly enthusiastic, Billy tells me that they already have a buyer lined up for their current place.

This, however, will not be Billy's first move to Regina. Speaking with a sense of shame and excitement, Billy conveys how his wife became aware of and confronted him about his online sexual pursuits with men three years prior to our interview. Carefully selecting his words, Billy recounts how, with only a suitcase full of clothes, he rented an apartment in Regina where he was able to host other (heterosexually) married men for

sex and friendship. Billy tells me that during these months apart from his wife he felt like a kid in a candy store.

Through the scalar flexibility of metronormativity described by John Lesnar above, Billy's relocation from Moose Jaw to Regina seems to follow the metronormative trajectory of coming out and exploring one's gay identity away from home and family in a larger centre. Billy's narrative demonstrates that metronormative migrations are not in fact limited to people under a certain age. However, Billy's self-description as feeling like a "kid in a candy store" reinforces this trope despite his own counter example. Still, as the first half of this vignette illustrates, Billy felt compelled to return to his wife in Moose Jaw and his later short-distance move takes place after his adult children leave home and in a manner that he portrays as more consistent with his age and life goals.

In this section, I discuss the relationship of aging and migration in the context of metronormativity and the complex and even contradictory ways in which space is not only sexualized but also "aged." Here I deploy the term "aged" to refer to the way places or migratory paths can take on meanings that reflect a perceived appropriate age for people living in or migrating towards those places. Rather than imagining Toronto as a homogenous gay homeland, my collaborators describe this metropolis as a place where they feel out of place because of their mature age and contrast this with aged notions of Moose Jaw that depict it as a more fitting place to live. Although my collaborators were familiar with metronormative discourses, they disidentified with their own need to migrate to the larger urban centre to maintain their gay identities while still prescribing this journey for younger men. In this way, metronormativity itself is also aged in a way that allows these men to resist this discourse and remain in place.

In the 1939 classic, it is not Aunt Em or Uncle Herald but Dorothy, a child (portrayed by 16-year-old Judy Garland), who makes that run-away journey of self-discovery to the Emerald City in which she and her Kansas companions find smarts, courage and compassion.<sup>2</sup> However, age rarely factors into discussions of metronormativity and the way in which rural-urban movements are prescribed for and presumed to be undertaken exclusively by younger sexual dissidents. One notable

exception, however, can be found in William J. Spurlin's essay on queer writings about America's heartland in which he criticizes the "romanticized prototype of the queer child who saves money and gets on a train bound for New York or some other coastal city in search of a new life more compatible with his or her emerging sexual identity" (Spurlin 2000:179).

In a reworking of the epistemologies of LGBT visibility, Mary Gray (2009) takes historian John D'Emilio to task for assuming that "gay identity formation [...] started in (and could not have happened without) a city" (Gray 2009:6). D'Emilio's arguments, however, also rely on age-based assumptions that privilege metronormative migrations in the formation of an American gay subculture in the 1940s. For example, D'Emilio argues that it was young wartime recruits that were uprooted and left to explore their sexuality in non-familial, sex-segregated environments which interrupted the (presumably rural) pattern of moving from parental residence to living with one's spouse (1983). This formulation posits that gay identity formation started with (and could not have happened without) young rural folk migrating to a larger city.

While it is not my contention that these migrations were not important to the development of a gay identity, D'Emilio's overemphasis on young urban migrants ignores the role of their older counterparts in establishing and maintaining the conditions for a homosexual subculture in places such as New York (see Chauncey 1994). D'Emilio's argument, which forges a false chasm between urban and rural, assumes that these migrants traveled from a vacuous nowhere to an urban somewhere. This line of thinking precludes the possibility that urban migrants (and perhaps especially older migrants) might have also brought with them place-based sensibilities around homosexual practices, such as those described by Kinsey et al. (1948) among older men in rural America for whom "sex is sex, irrespective of the nature of the partner with whom the relation is had" (Kinsey et al. 1948: 457-8). Further D'Emilio's theoretical neglect sidelines the circulation of gay men between rural and urban areas (Howard 1999), aging in place as well as many other complex, embodied migrations.

For those who resist the call or feel rejected by elitist urban sexual playgrounds, the Emerald City might never be their homeland. According to Mark E. Casey, “In November 1977 the *Christopher Street* periodical was asking its readers ‘where do all the old gays go?’ with a poster in mid-1980s Toronto echoing this question in asking ‘what happens to homosexuals over 50?’” (Casey 2007:129). Casey’s essay gestures towards the way that space itself is not only sexualized but also “aged” in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. While the larger urban centre is often read as a gay homeland, older gay men and lesbians are often perceived as “undesirable” in gay enclaves which privilege younger bodies (Casey 2007). Thus, when the older gay men I interviewed discussed traveling to a larger centre, they often described temporary visits to a place that they envisioned as offering promises, risks and possibilities that were filtered through a consideration of how their age might function in that place.

When faced with the competing discourses of metronormative migrations prescribed for gay men and counter-urban migrations prescribed for older people (Dahms and McComb 1999), many of my Moose Jaw-dwelling collaborators disidentified with the metronormative imperative. In his discussion of disidentification, José Esteban Muñoz describes the way that

queer desires, perhaps desires that negate self, desire for a white beauty ideal, are reconstituted by an ideological component that tells us that such modalities of desire and desiring are too self-compromising. We thus disidentify with the white ideal. We desire it but desire it with a difference. (1999:15)

Muñoz elaborates disidentification as a survival strategy that differs from an assimilationist identification or a reactionary counteridentification. In a similar vein, many of the older gay men in Moose Jaw that I spoke with described a desire for life in the metropolis, but one that did not require their continual physical presence there in order to conceptualize themselves as gay.

In many ways, John Lesnar disidentified with the metronormative ideal. Although John spoke frequently and quite fondly about his travels to gay destinations for sex and gay community he was steadfast in his decision to remain in Moose Jaw.

Well, I'm a strange bird because while I enjoy the gay sex life and everything, I was never too optimistic about a long-term relationship. And I would always question very skeptically what have you got to gain or lose by going to another centre. And I thought, you know, you could be all alone and lonely somewhere, you know, or you could be alone but not totally lonely here. So I have a really great circle of hetero friends that I don't want to divorce myself from. I have a good doctor, a good dentist, a good vet. I've got my animals and I'm not one of these people that could—they'd have to come with, I just couldn't give them up, you know. [...] They give me that unconditional love. We have a good relationship; they're like, like my family.

So although I consider, like every time I go to Toronto, I look at apartments—not look at them but inquire about prices and everything. And if I ever wanted to move, if I ever won a lot of money, I'd love to be in Toronto where there's a bit of a scene that I feel comfortable in.

And I'll be quite blunt, being a short, overweight, little old man, you are not as sexually desirable as, like when I was younger I used to lift weights and I was in much better shape. And I had people, you know when I'd go to these different bars and wear some of my leather stuff, that found me physically attractive. Well I'm not anymore, you know and I know that. And so I'm going through a phase of, boy I'm glad I didn't throw it all away, you know. [...] The hand writing is kind of on the wall that, you know, people have even now said to me, some of my friends, why don't you sell your house and go? Well, go into what kind of scene when you're an older person and you know, in the gay world, let's face it, everybody's looking for the body, and the young, very attractive person with the haircut and the stylish clothes and all that. It's a reality and even on these websites and stuff, you know.

While John describes feeling satisfied that he did not listen to the metronormative narrative and its resulting displacement from his current home, he certainly does not view Toronto as an undesirable place to live. John seems to recognize the metronormative narrative but rather than rejecting it outright with counteridentifying claims that gay life is better outside the metropolis (Herring 2010), John desires metropolitan life with a difference—from a distance.

After living in Moose Jaw for over 50 years, John articulates a strong sense of belonging and describes the possibility of moving to another centre largely in terms of loss. John indicates having “a really great circle of hetero friends” that he does not want to exchange for gay ones in the big city. Similarly, although some of John's family ties in Moose Jaw have passed on or moved away, he portrays his current financial situation as

prohibiting him from renting a place that could comfortably accommodate his family of canines. John also mentions having a sense of security and familiarity with his health service providers that he would need to work hard to establish elsewhere. Through temporary visits to larger urban centres that have increased with his retirement, John is able to maintain his ties to Moose Jaw while also occasionally enjoying the gay scene of the larger centre.

Similar to Casey's (2007) findings that many older gays and lesbians feel out of place in urban gay enclaves, John also pictures Toronto as a place where his body is not desirable. However, for John it is not just the gay village but the very possibility of living in Toronto that is perceived as less attractive to him based on his height, weight, style, age and build, among other factors. When the primary appeal of living in the larger centre is based on interacting with other gay men, John's anticipated rejection makes the prospect of moving to the larger centre less desirable for him. John reads the larger centre as being welcoming to gay men—but with vague age limits.

In contrast with his description of sexual possibilities in his youth, John now paints Toronto as providing him with limited options for sexual relationships with other men. While John describes the appeal of visiting larger centres as affording him the possibility of increased sexual liaisons, he also imagines living in a larger centre as affording him the possibility of a long-term relationship, however (un)desirable that may be. Although the majority of the gay, bisexual or queer men that I met in Moose Jaw (regardless of their age) were not in long-term relationships, those that were had almost exclusively found partners in other locales. These possibilities however, were also viewed as limited by his age.

Even though John does not see the city as a place that would be particularly welcoming to someone of his age and body type, this does not change his perception of the metropolis as a desirable place to live, especially for younger gay men. John tells me about how after coming out to his mother even she encouraged him to leave Moose Jaw for a larger centre.

I was amazed at the profound advice she gave me. She said you know, you should perhaps be saving more money for your retirement so you can move to a cosmopolitan centre where there's a community because there isn't one here. And so I often say to younger people if you, you know, put down too many roots in a small place, you might regret the day you're young, maybe your career could take you to a place where you have a support group or where you can be yourself, you know. If you wait too long you might not have that freedom. So, you know a lot of people, a lot of young guys will ask these sorts of questions.

Despite not acting on her recommendation, John views his mother's suggestion to leave Moose Jaw as "profound advice" that indicates his view of the desirability of larger urban life, even post-retirement. Elsewhere, John also reveals his anxieties about being forced "back into the closet" if he ever had to live in a nursing home in Moose Jaw which he contrasts with the desirability of "gay friendly" nursing homes in Toronto.

Contrary to Billy's experience of moving to Regina, John explains that he no longer has the "freedom" to make a permanent move to a larger city as he has put down "too many roots in a small place." Instead, John's metronormative advice is aimed at "young guys" who he views as being less rooted to a smaller place and thus more able to relocate to a larger urban centre that holds for them the promise of "support" and the possibility of "be[ing] yourself." Interestingly, John's age-based disidentification with the metronormative narrative and its possibilities does not stop him from encouraging younger men to pursue a life in the big city.

Similarly, Ian Gemmel disidentifies with life in larger cities due to his age but continues to depict metropolitan centres as desirable places for him to visit and ideal places for younger people to live. While Ian's move to Moose Jaw was influenced by a variety of complex factors, Ian also connects his non-metronormative journey to discourses of "counter-urban" migrations related to aging (Dahms and McComb 1999). Ian's narrative backgrounds the importance of his sexuality in the appeal of larger centres but establishes a strong link between age and place. When I asked Ian what he liked most about Moose Jaw, he elaborates on the appeal of smaller places as he gets older.

I like it because it's small. I like it because you can get everywhere easily. I like it because the weather as a whole is good. I like it because you are not inside a massive conurbation of people, you know. It's nice to be able to know people that

you see walking down the street. It's nice to have that kind of local kind of feeling. I enjoy that.

But that's also got to do with getting older. Because when you're young you want to be in New York City or London and there's nothing more wonderful than that, you know. There's nothing more exciting, more vibrant than a big throbbing city where everything is going on and where you have nothing but decades to come and you've got such energy and you've got dreams that are going to become realities and all of that. That can only be done in a big city. But as you get older, when you've been there and you've done that it's nice to be able to go back into that every so often, you know. To be riding the subway in London or New York, to be able to go back to the Tate or to the Museum of Modern Art or to the Met. Occasionally you go and you experience that. You go and you come away and you live in this quiet, little, safe little place and that is lovely. So it's a nice place to be and it's a nice place to come back to.

For Ian, familiarity, safety, quietness, ease of transportation, the slow pace of life in a smaller centre and even smallness itself become more and more appealing as he ages. Conversely, larger cities, for him become less enticing as a permanent place to live but remain appealing places to visit. Ian does not describe the metropolitan centre as uninviting but rather as a place of realizing ambitious dreams and pursuing a wide range of activities that he associates with youth. Like John, Ian envisions long-term relocation to a larger urban centre as more appropriate for "young" people while "occasionally" visiting larger centres as more appropriate for older people such as himself. While Ian's reference to renowned art galleries and museums signals a trope of gay identity, his account here largely reflects the fact that his disidentification with larger urban centres is not solely predicated on his sexuality.

However, Ian describes elsewhere the way in which he views both Toronto and Moose Jaw as aged and sexualized in different ways. For Ian, who "came out" in his late 40s, his experiences of the gay scene in Toronto as well as life in Moose Jaw are strongly affected by his sexuality, age and generation.

It's just that as I've got older, I've never been one to go to gay bars or to do the whole gay club thing. Because I was too old when all this happened, you know, for me to start that kind of lifestyle the way it's normally run in those places. Although when I was on my own, for a very brief period when I came back to Canada from England and my kids were over there, I went to some gay bars on

Church Street and so on. And I thought it was just, it was exciting, the music was great, there were lots of great guys to look at but it was all frenetic I found. It was just this whole thing which I really was too old for. Because I had never grown up that way, I'd never been trained to behave that way. I would find it difficult to be a part of that. And so I was kind of an outsider in many ways. And so I never really got into that.

And then as I grew older, you know, I end up here. I haven't got the need for a community around me, a gay community, you know. So I don't feel any different here than I would or did in Toronto. I mean I knew it was out there in Toronto just as it may well be out there here. I don't know, you know, because I've never looked into it. I've never looked for anything in Moose Jaw about gay life. So I don't really see a difference because I was quiet in Toronto and I'm quiet here. And my partner's the same. And we've been very happy here. [...] So we've experienced nothing but good things from this community.

But if I was to be, I do feel that if I was to be in here, being very gay, but I'm not like that, I guess. But if I became very flamboyant or something, I think that may turn off quite a few of the old timers, you know. But I'm not that way and I don't see any point in that anyway.

Ian describes feeling like an “outsider” at gay bars in Toronto in the 1980s, which he does not directly attribute to feeling undesirable but rather due to the unfamiliarity of the expected behaviour in spaces which he depicts as “frenetic.” Elsewhere, Ian describes this experience as a nightmarish “mania on speed” filled with “young bodies” that did not seem interested in “cerebral exercises.” Ian portrays himself as a spectator with “lots of great guys to look at” but not a full participant even in his attempts at intelligent conversation. In addition to perceiving his older body to be out of place, Ian also points to the generational effects of the late popularity of gay bars in relation to his life course. Ian's narrative gestures towards the difficulties of starting “late” in an environment geared towards younger bodies.

Through his distaste for gay bars and indifference towards gay community that he attributes to his age, Ian expresses disinterest in the metronormative promise of acceptance among a community of other gay men. Further, as a gay man in a long-term relationship, Ian depicts himself as having no need to search out other gay men in his smaller centre. Ian also describes himself as being “quiet” about his sexuality and feeling that he and his partner have had very positive experiences in Moose Jaw. While Ian does

not talk about his sexuality with strangers, he mentions elsewhere that neither does he feel the need to hide his relationship from his friends or employer. In this way Ian has the possibility of “being himself” without the need for a double life or a larger urban environment.

Ian also discusses the way his normative masculine gender performance allows him to maintain the privacy of his sexuality. In doing so, he also describes the way he views Moose Jaw as both aged and sexualized by the presence of older (homophobic) heterosexuals. This description of Moose Jaw was very common among my collaborators of any age, even among those with anti-homophobic older heterosexual friends. For Ian, it seems to be more preferable to use discretion with his homosexuality in a place that tolerates aging than it is to try to hide his mature age in a metropolitan centre that (supposedly) tolerates homosexuality. For Ian and John, as for many of the other older gay men living in Moose Jaw, there’s no place like home.

### **Goodbye Yellow Brick Road**

Ian Gemmel’s journey from the metropolis to the smaller centre should not be read as “Chapter 2” or the conclusion of the metronormative narrative. It is not that gay men move to the Emerald City in their youth and those that do not fit in return to Kansas in their old age. Gay men’s lives and migrations are decidedly more complex and are influenced by a variety of factors (Knopp 2004). Ian’s peripatetic movements do not always follow a neat, linear trajectory of rural to urban or smaller centre to larger centre or even vice versa (Gorman-Murray 2007).

As John Lesnar’s narratives of departure and return illustrate, queer bodies have been in motion long before I interviewed my collaborators and they will continue to migrate or linger in place long after. This movement reveals the false dichotomy of rural and urban as those who live in different locations can and do move in a vast array of directions (Browne 2008). John’s movements from Moose Jaw to smaller centres also emphasize the fact that neither is the smaller centre separate from other smaller centres. The rural-urban dichotomy itself fuels metronormativity and simplifies complex

trajectories into linear corridors (Gorman-Murray 2007). Contrary to Angelia Wilson's (2000) formulation of queer migration in her essay "The Road Runs Both Ways," queer "lines of flight" connect many different locations in a rhizomatic network of non-hierarchical complexity (Deleuze 1987).

While studies in geography and anthropology have long argued that place is sexualized (Browne et al. 2007; Gray 2009), relatively little attention has been paid to the way that these sexualized spaces are also differentially aged (Casey 2007). This diverse aging of space has a profound affect on the effectiveness of metronormative discourses. For both John and Ian, not conforming to the dictum of metronormativity does not result in a kind of counteridentificatory queer anti-urbanism (Herring 2010) or even a sense of inauthentic identity but rather a disidentification with metropolitan gay ideals, a kind of desire with a(n) (age) difference from a distance.

Much like Weston's (1995) article on gay and lesbian rural-urban migration, this chapter has demonstrated that gay men can often be found wherever it is you look for them. Although my collaborators may appear to have "ended up" in Moose Jaw, for some such as Billy Jealousy, this is not their terminus. Rather, the location of my collaborators in Moose Jaw is simply an intersection of our lives at the time of my home-work. While some dreamed of life in smoggy metropolitan pastures others imagined their futures in the expanse of the bald prairie or in the familiarity of the Friendly City's streets. Yet others, like Jay Smith, a gay white man in his early fifties, were reluctant to predict where they would be in even 5 years:

Don't know. Haven't got a clue. Haven't got a clue. Couldn't even venture a guess. Couldn't even venture a guess. Because life happens. And that's my biggest life lesson that I've ever learned. You just never know.

Although *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Baum 1900) ends with Dorothy safe at home in the arms of Aunt Em, the migrations and lingerings of gay men are often profoundly more complex if not more magical. While some gay men such as John Lesnar may choose to return home from the Emerald City, it is clear that even these trajectories require a theoretical framework that moves beyond the yellow brick road of

metronormativity and rural-urban dichotomies. Thus, I close this chapter with all the pixie dust I can muster and the inspiring chorus of a Sir Elton John classic.

So goodbye yellow brick road  
Where the dogs of society howl  
You can't plant me in your penthouse  
I'm going back to my plough

Back to the howling old owl in the woods  
Hunting the horny back toad  
Oh I've finally decided my future lies  
Beyond the yellow brick road

## Chapter 5: Surprisingly Unexpected

Moose Jaw's new brand, unveiled in 2009, was received with mixed results by local residents as well as those from further afield. The apparent silliness of "Surprisingly Unexpected" captured headlines across the country and provoked a decent amount of online chatter. Like it or not, this humorous and memorable motto got people talking about Moose Jaw and asking questions about the city from "Where's that?" to "What were they thinking?" Yet, the seeming tautology of the phrase points to the low expectations an outsider might have about the city while promising its potential visitors that they will not be disappointed.

In defense of the logo, one City Councillor, Dawn Luhnig, explained that "the brand isn't designed to try and convince those who live in Moose Jaw how great the city is. She said it is designed to entice and draw new people who have never been to Moose Jaw and have them leaving only to wanting to come back."<sup>1</sup> Of course, much of what I have written here about Moose Jaw will not come as a surprise to my collaborators. However, it is my hope that this brief tour of the Friendly City, will leave my readers with the sense of wanting to come back to both the concepts explored here and the city itself.

As a smaller city, Moose Jaw confuses the simplistic rural-urban dichotomy that fuels the metronormative imperative to move from a rural "nowhere" to a metropolitan "somewhere." As Moose Jaw's history of activism and organizing has shown, LGBTQ life in this city does not exist in a vacuum, separate from other centres. Rather, through province-wide protests and pride dances that aim to draw LGBTQ people to Moose Jaw, it is clear that this city's history of activism exists within a rhizomatic network of people, places and events happening across various scales from the province to the globe. While a history of LGBTQ activism and organizing in a smaller centre must always take the wider context of the larger centre into account, for some reason, this does not seem to

apply in reverse. While Moose Jaw is not separate from Toronto, neither is Toronto separate from Moose Jaw. Understanding this relation in terms that move beyond the hierarchical structure of rural/urban is crucial to a broader understanding of the effectiveness of LGBTQ activism and organizing in Canada, North America and beyond.

Margrit Shildrick's (2009) discussion of the false dichotomy between abled/disabled critiques the notion of a self-sovereign subject and argues that "disabled" people do not have a uniquely unstable, vulnerable or interdependent corporeality. Rather, their interdependence is not masked through normalization in the same way that the "able bodied" subject is. Similarly, Moose Jaw is not uniquely dependent on larger centres for its activism. This is an interdependence where larger centres like Toronto often benefit from a flow of activists and other LGBTQ people from smaller centres.

Supporting this separation of rural/urban is the metronormativity that can be found in the institutional lesbian and gay archives that are often located in larger urban centres. These archives, which provide the source material for many LGBTQ histories, often collect material relating to their own centres first and foremost. Similarly, when written material documenting LGBTQ activism and organizing is produced in larger quantities in larger centres due to greater infrastructure and availability of resources, the archive promulgates the myth that LGBTQ activism has primarily taken place in the metropolis. However, as Richards (2005) notes, these histories are inflated through the availability of reliable documentation. Methodologies that create new archives through interviews and ethnographic research and those that seek out documentation that has not yet been archived are needed to understand the ways in which LGBTQ activism has also taken place in smaller centres.

An investigation into the way discourses like metronormativity are translated into the particular context of Moose Jaw demonstrates the friction these discourses encounter in smaller centres. While there is also friction in the translation of these discourses in larger centres, there are particular differences in smaller locales such as smaller numbers, and a lack of resources and infrastructure that yield creative ways of responding to homophobia and heteronormativity. These different responses reveal the power dynamics

of the politics of visibility and the ways in which visibility tactics are custom tailored for larger urban locales. Through an attention to audibility tactics, we can begin to understand how activism takes place in smaller centres in ways that are (sometimes intentionally) more difficult to recognize.

With the flexible relation between urban/rural or smaller and larger centres, metronormativity does not take a single form. Metronormativity may also be enacted in smaller centres that engage in LGBTQ organizing and set themselves up as their own local centres for LGBTQ activity. Somewhat ironically, this reveals the diversity of smaller centres in their attitudes towards LGBTQ people. Even among metropolises, some of my collaborators noted that Vancouver seemed somehow less safe than Toronto. As one of my collaborators quipped: “Not all metropolises are created equal.”

While metronormativity is certainly alive and well in Moose Jaw, there are also those who resist the call to relocate to a larger centre through forming attachments to place. As two of my collaborators map out their various movements across both “rural” and “urban” areas, the linear rural-urban migration narrative is revealed as simplistic, and both teleological and ontologically final. Indeed, when researchers like Kath Weston (1995) study sexuality in San Francisco and find a number of younger gays and lesbians who have migrated from smaller centres, the possibility of LGBTQ people leaving the metropolis eludes them.

Although metronormative movements can certainly take place at any age, the sexualizing and aging of space has in turn led to the aging of metronormativity itself. Through a sense of exclusion from the gay scene or (imagined) gay community in larger centres, my collaborators discussed how these centres and thus metronormative journeys were more appropriate for younger men. This exclusion enabled the men I spoke with to resist metronormativity, even when they had the resources to pursue this gay ideal. While acknowledging some of the differences that living in a smaller centre can produce in their “gay identities,” through their disidentification with the urban gay ideal, my collaborators did not imagine their gay identity to be any less authentic. This points to some of the power dynamics in the relations between larger and smaller centres where larger centres

gain through attracting a younger workforce and deprive smaller centres of many young, talented (and often educated) people.

While GLAMj may not resemble the large LGBTQ organizations of the world's global metropolises, this is likely due to the simple fact that Moose Jaw is decidedly not a global metropolis and the value of its activism and organizing must be considered on its own terms. A remarkable amount of creativity and ingenuity goes into the process of translating LGBTQ activism and organizing into a smaller urban context. While this process certainly has its drawbacks, it has also produced an environment that is more open to middle-aged and older men as well as those with disabilities. When organizers and critics get lost in a comparison with the metropolitan centre, this work is rarely given the credit it deserves. Indeed, LGBTQ people, some of whom now reside in metropolitan centres, also grow up in contexts like Moose Jaw. Thus, the work of local activists in seeking acceptance and understanding for sexual dissidents in smaller centres is profoundly important not only to Moose Javians but also to those living elsewhere.

### **Next Stop: Moose Jaw?**

There is much research yet to be done on Moose Jaw's relationship to dissident sexualities and genders within an intersectional framework. While middle-aged and older gay men living in smaller centres rarely receive much media or analytical attention, in Moose Jaw these men seemed to be in a position of power within formal LGBTQ organizing. Although I did interview three women who identified as lesbians, one of my collaborators indicated the existence of an informal friendship network of lesbians living in the city that I did not explore. How these women might respond to or resist metronormativity, their thoughts on activism and organizing and even the simple pleasures and struggles of their everyday lives and relationships remain open questions. Similarly, the issue of bisexuality was occasionally brought up by some of my collaborators, often with a great deal of skepticism. Perhaps this is due in part to the large number of previously (or currently) married men among my collaborators or the perception of particularly strong heterosexist expectations in this context. How do

bisexual men and women negotiate their identities in an environment that is doubly hostile to such a possibility and how does this play out in their decisions to leave or remain in Moose Jaw?

On a return trip to Saskatchewan following my formal home-work, Neil Richards drew my attention to a recent article in the *MJTH* on the city's proclamation of "Transgender Awareness Week" and an interview with a pseudonymous 65-year-old transwoman living in Moose Jaw.<sup>2</sup> An accompanying editorial piece described the way Moose Javians need to be mindful and accepting of transgender people like they have been with gays and lesbians. As I read the article, I asked myself whether a consideration of transgender rights would lead Moose Javians to see their community as tolerant and accepting of LGBTQ people by contrast? While I never met any transgender people during my home-work, some of my collaborators suggested that this is likely because transgender people often leave the city to find a community of others like them in larger centres where they could be themselves. In addition to questions about transphobia and the life experiences of transgender people in Moose Jaw, these responses raise questions about the relationship between transgender people and metronormativity (both real and imagined) and their possible exclusion from the audibility strategies of local LGBTQ organizing and activism.

Similarly, during my home-work I met two people of colour who were associated with the GLAMj group. It was clear from my conversations with these two individuals that negotiating their sense of belonging in Moose Jaw was not only a question of sexuality but also of race, ethnicity, language and their relationship to their countries of origins (among many other factors). Among my collaborators, references to LGBTQ or two-spirit aboriginal people in Moose Jaw were limited to one person organizing a dance in 1993 and another who was an ex-partner of one of my collaborators. The latter reportedly experienced discrimination from his ex-partner's family in Moose Jaw and returned to a larger city shortly thereafter. With Moose Jaw's relatively small population of aboriginal people, questions abound about the life experiences and particular challenges facing LGBTQ or two-spirit aboriginal people who reside in Moose Jaw.

Although one of my goals in recruiting middle-aged and older gay men was to find people who had resisted metronormativity, further research should be undertaken that explores the functioning of this discourse among younger LGBTQ identifying individuals living in Moose Jaw. An exploration of how metronormativity might function for younger people coming of age in Moose Jaw may yield important insights regarding homophobia in the public school system especially in relation to same-sex sexual education.

While homophobia certainly plays a role in metronormative movements, with limited time and a narrow theoretical focus, I was unable to map out the specific contours of homophobia in Moose Jaw. While only two of my collaborators discussed experiencing physical violence due to homophobia in Moose Jaw (one in the context of high school bullying and the other cruising in a local park) the perception of the risk of homophobic violence was commonly reinforced by many of my collaborators. Many of my collaborators also described the prevalence of gossip, discrimination in their workplaces and sometimes tension in social ties due to a disclosure (or even suspicions) of their sexual orientation. During my home-work I also experienced mockery and gossip, literally behind my back, while holding hands with my former partner at a medical clinic. However, it should be noted that homophobia is not limited to smaller centres or rural areas (Gray 2009) and several of my collaborators described various strategies for resisting, limiting and navigating their experiences of homophobia in Moose Jaw, including in a number of religious contexts.

The Neil Richards papers also contain a vast collection of newspaper references to homophobia, LGBTQ issues and AIDS published in the *MJTH* since the 1970s. As I have demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3, this newspaper has often been the public forum for discussions of homosexuality both at home and abroad. There is truly a wealth of material there waiting for a team of aspiring researchers.

The proliferation of the Internet and various types of new media and new communication technologies in Moose Jaw has had a profound impact on LGBTQ organizing, activism, community and connection. Several of my collaborators talked

about having profiles on gay chat sites and occasionally using these sites to advertise upcoming events. My own experiences navigating these sites revealed that Moose Jaw has a much larger number of men (of various ages) pursuing sex or relationships with other men online than those involved in GLAMj or the other informal friendship networks I encountered. The prevalence of this new technology leads me to ask questions that I could not explore in my thesis: What role does this new media play in the formation of LGBTQ identities in Moose Jaw? Do these gay chat sites facilitate metronormative movements or perhaps disorient its logics through providing a virtual (perhaps anonymous) local or extra-local community of like individuals to come out to?

In exploring sexuality in Moose Jaw, I have elaborated a number of concepts particular to this place. These findings amount to a case study whose results may or may not be similar to other smaller centres or rural areas in Saskatchewan, across the prairies, in Canada or beyond. However, Moose Jaw has its own particular histories of LGBTQ activism and organizing that are markedly different, though often connected to those of other centres in Saskatchewan such as Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert. Thus, I encourage other researchers of sexuality or other interested individuals to investigate, preserve, value and initiate dialogue about the LGBTQ activism and organizing that has taken place in the “elsewhere” beyond the metropolis. After a bit of digging, investigating and perseverance, one could find a wealth of information that is, like Moose Jaw, surprisingly unexpected.

## Notes

### NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> “Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada,” Tourism Moose Jaw, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www.tourismmoosejaw.ca>.

<sup>2</sup> “Top 20 Gay Travel Destinations of 2013,” The Advocate, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www.advocate.com/travel/destinations/2012/09/11/top-20-gay-travel-destinations-2013>

<sup>3</sup> “2011 Census Profile,” Statistics Canada, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the information presented here has been gleaned from the Tourism Moose Jaw website. “Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada,” Tourism Moose Jaw, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www.tourismmoosejaw.ca>.

<sup>5</sup> “Moose Jaw Church Directory,” Moose Jaw Church Directory, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://mjchurches.com/directory.html>.

<sup>6</sup> “2007 Cultural Capitals of Canada,” Canadian Heritage, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1289309513559>.

<sup>7</sup> “2011 Census Profile,” Statistics Canada, accessed October 4, 2012, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>

<sup>8</sup> “2006 Community Profiles,” Statistics Canada, accessed October 6, 2012, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>.

<sup>9</sup> This is compared with provincial statistics of 15% identifying as aboriginal, 4% identifying as a visible minority and 85% monolingual English speakers.

<sup>10</sup> “Ridings: Saskatchewan,” Government of Canada, accessed October 6, 2012, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/FederalRidingsHistory/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=Rres&ridProvince=11&submit1=Search>

<sup>11</sup> “Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory: Election Results by Electoral Division, Including Active Service Voters,” Saskatchewan Archives Board, accessed October 6, 2012, <http://www.saskarchives.com/services-government/seld>.

<sup>12</sup> “Greetings from Western Canada,” post folder with images of Moose Jaw, Lewis Rice, 1910, Main Y CAN, FC 3205.2.G7, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

<sup>13</sup> “The Moose Jaw Rodeo of 1930,” guidebook, Moose Jaw Rodeo Association, 1930, MAIN CAN, PO 16190, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

<sup>14</sup> “The Moose Jaw Rodeo of 1930,” guidebook, Moose Jaw Rodeo Association, 1930, MAIN CAN, PO 16190, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

<sup>15</sup> “History goes underground,” Tunnels of Moose Jaw, accessed October 26, 2012, <http://www.tunnelsofmoosejaw.com>.

<sup>16</sup> While Korfman (2007) does discuss a variety of spaces used by men pursuing homosexual sex in Moose Jaw in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these were not publicly

advertised and certainly differ from contemporary notions of “gay bars.” To my knowledge, there has been no official “gay” bar or café in Moose Jaw to date although Dan Reardon’s attempts to establish a Moose Jaw Gay Community Centre in 1979 are discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> Encouraging collaborators to choose their own pseudonyms sometimes resulted in some very creative names such as “Spook Angel” or “Billy Jealousy.” Other times, collaborators explained that they had chosen the first name of a former crush, a celebrity or a relative; these decisions occasionally reflected the collaborator’s own race or ethnicity. Although some pseudonyms had personal significance to some of my interviewees, others were chosen more arbitrarily. In my endnotes, I discuss my collaborators’ explanations for their pseudonyms where appropriate.

<sup>18</sup> As will be discussed in the following chapter, Neil Richards is a Saskatoon-based archivist/activist whose vast collection of LGBTQ newspaper articles and publications pertaining primarily to Saskatoon and Saskatchewan span more than 40 years.

<sup>19</sup> This zine is available online at the “Saskatchewan Resources for Sexual Diversity” website: [http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/\\_media/Surprisingly\\_unexpected.pdf](http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/_media/Surprisingly_unexpected.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Joel van der Veen, “Mayor Declares Transgender Awareness Week,” *Moose Jaw Times Herald*, March 24, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> “The Cities Act,” Government of Saskatchewan, accessed October 28, 2012, <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/deplist.cfm?d=1&c=42>.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup> A shorter version of this chapter was presented at the Social Anthropology Graduate Association’s interdisciplinary graduate student conference “Knotty Encounters” at York University in March 2012. Many thanks to Neil Richards and Cheryl Avery at the University of Saskatchewan Archives who read this earlier draft and made a number of insightful comments and suggestions. Of course, I take full responsibility for any mistakes or misguided theoretical orientations contained herein.

<sup>2</sup> My usage of the term “lesbian and gay” here refers to the actual titles of many of these archives despite the fact that many of these institutions also collect materials relating to a vast array of sexual and gender identities, practices and communities.

<sup>3</sup> “Research,” University College: The Founding College of the University of Toronto, accessed September 21, 2012, <http://www.uc.utoronto.ca/research>.

<sup>4</sup> “Census Metropolitan Areas,” Statistics Canada, accessed February 24, 2012, <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo05a-eng.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> “Census Metropolitan Areas,” Statistics Canada, accessed February 24, 2012, <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo05a-eng.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> “Perceptions,” University of Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Resources for Sexual Diversity, accessed 24 February 2012, <http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/perceptions/>.

<sup>7</sup> My estimate of the number of Regina's marchers comes from my own ethnographic home-work, while the estimate for Saskatoon comes from an article written by Roy Maclean, "Saskatoon shows its Pride," *The StarPhoenix*, June 17, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> "Archival Records: Guides," Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.clga.ca/research/papinvent.shtml>.

<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that a wide variety of LGBTQ publications from larger centres also make their way to archives in smaller centres.

<sup>10</sup> "Gays Plan M.J. Meeting," *Moose Jaw Times Herald (MJTH)*, May 16, 1978, Subject File on Homosexuality (SFH), Moose Jaw Public Library Archive (MJPLA), Moose Jaw.

<sup>11</sup> Moose Jaw City Clerk to Barbara Bloom (President of the Coalition to Answer Anita Bryant), July 11, 1978, Neil Richards Papers (NR), A821.VI.1, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Anita Bryant, 1977-1978, Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Saskatoon.

<sup>12</sup> Newsletter, *GAZE*, August 78, NR, A595.II.76, Publications, Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon, 1974-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.

<sup>13</sup> Coincidentally, Tom Warner was also one of the founding members of Saskatoon's Zodiac Society, one of the city's first homophile groups (Korinek 2003).

<sup>14</sup> "Bryant hits Canada; Canada hits back," *The Body Politic*, May 1978, No. 43, NR, A821.VI.1, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Anita Bryant, 1977-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.

<sup>15</sup> "Bryant hits Canada; Canada hits back," *The Body Politic*, May 1978, No. 43, NR, A821.VI.1, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Anita Bryant, 1977-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.

<sup>16</sup> "Bryant Rally Stirring Up Controversy in Moose Jaw," *MJTH*, June 24, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>17</sup> Saskatchewan Gay Coalition to Membership, May 23, 1978, NR, A821.VI.2.a, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Correspondence 1977-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.

<sup>18</sup> "Rally Plans Struck Saturday to 'Answer Anita Bryant,'" *MJTH*, June 12, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Davis, "A Spirit of Unity," *After Stonewall: A Critical Journal of Lesbian and Gay Liberation in Prairie Canada*, Summer 1978, No. 6, NR, A595.II.2, Publications, SAB, Saskatoon.

<sup>20</sup> "Rally Plans Struck Saturday to 'Answer Anita Bryant,'" *MJTH*, June 12, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>21</sup> According to Valerie Korinek (2003), Wilson was also the president of the Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon at this time. Wilson would later serve as the Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Association of Human Rights from 1978 until his relocation to Toronto in 1983 where he ran as the first openly gay federal candidate in the city's Rosedale riding. Wilson died of AIDS-induced pneumonia in 1992. Korinek, who completed a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto before taking up a position in the Department of History at the U of S, has written about the history of lesbian and gay activism in Saskatchewan. References to her fascinating work can be found in my bibliography.

- <sup>22</sup> “Bryant’s Opponents Continue Complaints,” *MJTH*, June 27, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>23</sup> “Rally Planned as Greeting for Bryant,” *MJTH*, June 30, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>24</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>25</sup> Peter Millard’s more generous estimate of several hundred protesters is found in his memoirs, “Or words to that effect” which were acquired by the University Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon. Three sections of these memoirs including “Anita Bryant’s 1978 Visit to Moose Jaw” are available online at [http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir\\_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj](http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj).
- <sup>26</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>27</sup> Newsletter, *GAZE*, August 78, NR, A595.II.76, Publications, Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon, 1974-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>28</sup> “Video – ‘Gay Liberation,’ 1978,” NR, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition A821.VI.6, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>29</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>30</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>31</sup> “Video – ‘Gay Liberation,’ 1978,” NR, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition A821.VI.6, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>32</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>33</sup> Newsletter, *GAZE*, August 78, NR, A595.II.76, Publications, Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon, 1974-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>34</sup> Newsletter, *GAZE*, August 78, NR, A595.II.76, Publications, Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon, 1974-1978, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>35</sup> Event flyer, NR, A595 II.34, Publications, Coalition to Answer Anita Bryant, 1978, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>36</sup> Millard, Peter, “Anita Bryant’s 1978 Visit to Moose Jaw,” found in “Or words to that effect,” accessed October 27, 2012, [http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir\\_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj](http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj).
- <sup>37</sup> “Message of God’s Love Presented to Crowd at Christian Liberation Rally,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>38</sup> MJPLA, SFH, *MJTH*, ‘150 March in Parade: Gay supporters demonstrate peacefully against Anita Bryant,’ 3 July 1978.
- <sup>39</sup> Millard, Peter, “Anita Bryant’s 1978 Visit to Moose Jaw,” found in “Or words to that effect,” accessed October 27, 2012, [http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir\\_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj](http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/memoir_millard.php?part=abmj#abmj).

- <sup>40</sup> “150 March in Parade: Gay Supporters Demonstrate Peacefully Against Anita Bryant,” *MJTH*, July 3, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>41</sup> E. Sanderson, letter to the editor, *MJTH*, July 6, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>42</sup> Patricia Spaeth, letter to the editor, *MJTH*, July 6, 1978, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>43</sup> “Gay Saskatchewan: Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition,” July 1978, Vol. 1, No. 6, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>44</sup> “Gay Saskatchewan: Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition,” August 1978, Vol. 1, No. 7, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>45</sup> “Gay Saskatchewan: Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition,” March 1979, Vol. 2, No. 3, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>46</sup> “Gay Saskatchewan: Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition,” March 1980, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>47</sup> “Grassroots: Voice of Gay Saskatchewan,” Fall 1981, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>48</sup> “Facility Seen by Spring: Gay Community Centre Opening,” *MJTH*, November 28, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>49</sup> Lynn McLeod, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, letter to the editor, *MJTH*, December 11, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>50</sup> “Gay Saskatchewan: Newsletter of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition,” December 1979, Vol. 2, No. 3, NR, A821.VI.4, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, Newsletters, 1978-1982, SAB, Saskatoon.
- <sup>51</sup> “Mayor Wants Air Cleared About Gay Centre Plans,” *MJTH*, December 13, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>52</sup> “Letters oppose gay centre funding,” *MJTH*, December 18, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>53</sup> “Mayor Wants Air Cleared About Gay Centre Plans,” *MJTH*, December 13, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>54</sup> “Gays Seek Funds, But Not From City,” December 29, 1979, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>55</sup> “Saturday Meeting Sets Fate of Gay Community Centre Plan,” January 29, 1980, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>56</sup> “Saturday Meeting Sets Fate of Gay Community Centre Plan,” January 29, 1980, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.
- <sup>57</sup> In reviewing this quote, John Lesnar asked me to mention that at the time of this exchange, the national body of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was moving towards formal acceptance of gays and lesbians in their congregations including the blessing of same-sex marriages. John also explained that it appeared that many members of this congregation in Moose Jaw did not agree with this direction.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> “Pride Week Proclaimed,” *Moose Jaw Times Herald (MJTH)*, May 31, 2008, Subject File on Homosexuality (SFH), Moose Jaw Public Library Archive (MJPLA), Moose Jaw.

<sup>2</sup> Although photos of Graham James, the former coach of the Moose Jaw Warriors who described himself as a “homosexual” after being accused of sexually assaulting his players, had previously appeared in the *MJTH*, he was not living in Moose Jaw at the time of this disclosure. Additionally, this case is significantly different from the self-identification of LGBTQ people for the purposes of visibility activism.

<sup>3</sup> Lacey Sheppy, “Residents Pay Tribute to City’s Diversity,” *MJTH*, June 3, 2008, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>4</sup> Deb Higgins was an NDP MLA in the provincial electoral district of Moose Jaw Wakamow from 1999-2011. After being defeated by the Saskatchewan Party candidate in 2011, Higgins was elected Mayor of Moose Jaw in October 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Lacey Sheppy, “Residents Pay Tribute to City’s Diversity,” *MJTH*, June 3, 2008, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>6</sup> Ted Wyman, “Homosexuals Plan Party,” *MJTH*, June 11, 1993, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>7</sup> Ted Wyman, “It’s Tough to be Gay in Moose Jaw,” *MJTH*, June 11, 1993, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>8</sup> Jo Lynn Sheane, “Gay Pride Week First in Decade,” *StarPhoenix*, June 23, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> “Saskatchewan: Executive Council and Legislative Assembly, 1905-2010,”

Saskatchewan Archives Board, accessed September 26, 2012,

<http://www.saskarchives.com/services-government/seld>.

<sup>10</sup> I have used a pseudonym here, chosen by the interviewee in order to protect her identity.

<sup>11</sup> Abbie St. Rose, “1,000 Letters Taking Issue with ‘Bill 38,’” *MJTH*, May 7, 1993, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>12</sup> Hagel was later voted in as the Mayor of Moose Jaw (2009-2012) while Calvert became the Premier of Saskatchewan (2001-2007).

<sup>13</sup> Ted Wyman, “Gay pride weekend goes off without a hitch,” *MJTH*, June 21, 1993, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>14</sup> Marie also noted that one heterosexual couple and one gay native man were also on the organizing committee and present at the dance.

<sup>15</sup> Ted Wyman, “Gay pride weekend goes off without a hitch,” *MJTH*, June 21, 1993, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>16</sup> In July 2002, the Ontario Superior Court in Toronto ruled that it was unconstitutional for the province to prohibit same-sex marriage and gave Ontario 2 years to make the necessary changes (Richards 2005:62-63). By April 2003, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the legal recognition of same-sex marriages held its first and only Saskatchewan meeting in Moose Jaw where four briefs were filed in favour of

recognition and three against (“Federal Committee on Same-sex Marriages Holds Meeting in City,” *MJTH*, April 5, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section draws on interviews with GLAMj members as well as a number of GLAMj records that were given to me by the group for the writing of this thesis.

<sup>18</sup> Dale Hall, President of GLAMj, letter to the editor, *MJTH*, January 21, 2005, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>19</sup> Corey Atkinson, “Introduction of legislation pleases local group,” *MJTH*, February 2, 2005, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>20</sup> Although Spook Angel was aware of the possible racial connotations of this pseudonym, Spook made it clear that this is simply a childhood nickname that he received from his father. Spook explained that he earned this name because of his quiet demeanour and unintentional habit of sneaking up on his father around the family home.

<sup>21</sup> Dale Hall, President of GLAMj, letter to the editor, *MJTH*, January 21, 2005, SFH, MJPLA, Moose Jaw.

<sup>22</sup> I have used a pseudonym to refer to the specific GLAMj meeting space.

<sup>23</sup> Due to the nature of my broad research questions and specific interview questions, I also played a role in situating myself in this kind of mentorship-like relationship.

<sup>24</sup> As part of the standard practice for this study, collaborators were invited to choose their own pseudonyms. Despite the rather biting tongue-and-cheek choice of this particular collaborator, I have respected his decision.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

<sup>1</sup> Even Pugh’s assessment of this film “towering” above other gay cultural touchstones gestures towards a metropolitan skyline.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1939 film, 3 rural Kansas characters double as Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion. These representations undoubtedly play upon stereotypical representations of rural ignorance, masculinity and xenophobia.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

<sup>1</sup> Lyndsay McCready, “New Brand Gets Mixed Reaction,” *Moose Jaw Times Herald (MJTH)*, April 4, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Joel van der Veen, “Mayor declares Transgender Awareness Week,” *MJTH*, 24 March 2012.

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## **Appendix: Interview Question Template**

The following is a list of questions, eloquent or not, that loosely guided the interview process. I did not systematically pose every question listed to every interviewee or even in this exact order. Instead, I tried to be responsive to each interviewee, adding questions as interviewees brought different themes to my attention. This is the seventh and final version of my interview question template.

### **Introductory Questions**

1. What pseudonym/fake name would you like me to use to identify you in this project?
2. How long have you lived in Moose Jaw?
3. Are you currently employed? If so, what do you do?
4. What year were you born?
5. What word or words would you use to describe your sexual orientation? (Gay, bi, queer, homosexual, other?)
6. How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

### **Daily Life / Aging**

7. How would you describe an average day in your life?
8. How would you describe yourself to others? To other “gay” men?
9. What would you say are some of the challenges of getting older?
  - a. What are some of the benefits?
  - b. Are there any extra challenges or benefits to getting older as a gay man?

### **Childhood/Teen Years**

10. Where did you live as a child?
  - a. What was that place like / How do you remember it?
11. How would you describe your relationship with your family as a child?
  - a. What were they like?
12. What were you like as a child?
  - a. What did you like to do?
13. How would you describe your childhood friends? What sorts of things would you do together?
14. Did you know any boys who were effeminate or girly? What did you think of them?
15. How would you describe the influence of church/religion on your childhood?
  - a. How has that changed over time?
16. Did you have a role model as a child? Who was it?

17. How did you first start to understand your sexuality as a young person?
  - a. Did you hear many people talk about homosexuality?
    - i. What did they say?
    - ii. Do you remember the first person you knew was gay?
  - b. Were you attracted to boys/men at that time?
    - i. Did anyone know?
    - ii. Was it important that people know or not know? Why?
    - iii. How would you decide who to tell and who not to tell?
    - iv. Did you ever experience or see others experience homophobia?
18. Did you go to junior high school or high school? (If no: What did you do during your teen years?)
  - a. What do you remember about those times in your life?
  - b. What was important to you?
  - c. What sorts of things did you struggle with throughout your teen years?
19. Did you ever go to college, university or trade school?
  - a. Did you ever take classes or courses after high school?
20. What kind of jobs have you had over the course of your life?
  - a. Did people at work know about your sexual identity?

### **Coming Out**

21. What do you think about the idea of “coming out”?
22. What do you think about gay pride parades?
  - c. Have you ever been to one? Why or why not?
23. Who have you told about your sexuality? Are there any people that you hope don't find out about your sexuality?
24. Do you consider yourself politically active? Have you ever been?
25. How do you feel about being around other gay men in public?
  - d. Do you have any/many gay friends?
  - e. Do you talk to gay men online? What have your experiences been with on-line gay sites?
  - f. Have you ever been to a “gay” bar? What were those experiences like for you?
26. What do you think about “GLAMj”? (Gay and Lesbian Association of Moose Jaw)

### **Moose Jaw**

27. How did you end up living in Moose Jaw?
  - g. Have you lived anywhere else?
  - h. How did you end up living in those places? (Why did you go?)
  - i. What did you think of those places then?

- i. What do you think of them now?
- 28. How would you describe Moose Jaw to someone who's never been here before?
- 29. What do you like most about Moose Jaw?
  - j. What do you like least about it?
- 30. What do you think about bigger cities? (E.g. the size of Regina or Toronto)
  - k. Smaller towns?
  - l. Rural areas?
  - m. How do you think your life would be different if you lived in one of those places?
- 31. If you had the choice to live anywhere else, where would you live and why?
- 32. One thing that is often said about people living in smaller towns is that they often have to be in the closet. What do you think about that?
- 33. Have you ever experienced or know of someone that experienced homophobia in Moose Jaw?
- 34. What do you think people in Moose Jaw think about homosexuality?
- 35. What do you think of transgender people?
  - a. Are there many transgender people in Moose Jaw?
  - b. What do people in Moose Jaw think of them?
- 36. Do you know or have you ever known many people in Moose Jaw with HIV/AIDS?
- 37. I haven't met very many gay men in Moose Jaw who are not white. Why do you think that is? Do you know any?
- 38. I haven't met very many lesbians in Moose Jaw either. Why do you think that is? Do you know any?
- 39. Are there any places in Moose Jaw that are particularly friendly to gays or are frequented by gays?
  - a. Any that are particularly hostile?

### **Relationships**

- 40. Were you ever married? How did you feel about it when you first got married compared to now?
- 41. What are your personal views about relationships with men?
- 42. Do you ever travel to meet other gay men?
- 43. Have you ever fallen in love? Can you tell me about a couple of those experiences?
- 44. How would you describe your ideal man?
- 45. Do you have a preference for younger or older men? Which do you think is more attractive? Why?
- 46. What do you think about checking guys out?
- 47. What do you think about gaydar?

48. How do you understand your sexuality now?
49. What do you think of “safe sex”?

### **Comparing Past and Present**

50. Is there an event or time in your life that you would say was most influential in defining who you are today?
51. How would you compare attitudes towards homosexuality (in Moose Jaw) now with when you were younger?
52. What kinds of differences do you see between younger and older gay men?  
Similarities?
53. What did you think about aging or older gay men when you were in your 20s?
  - a. What do you think about younger gay men now?

### **Concluding Questions**

54. What do you think are some of your greatest accomplishments thus far?
  - a. Do you have any regrets?
55. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?
56. What do you look forward to most as you get older?
  - a. Is there anything that you are afraid of as you get older?
57. Do you have any advice for young gay people living in Moose Jaw today?