

## Teaching, Travel, and Mission: Independence in the Life of Annie Leake Tuttle

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Several factors were stacked against Annie Leake Tuttle: she was a woman, born in rural Nova Scotia in the nineteenth century. Despite these potential limitations, she led a varied and active life, teaching, travelling, and performing mission work, and only marrying later in life. This essay explores the question of what options for independence were available for Canadian women in the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, based on Annie Leake Tuttle's life writings. After an overview of Annie's life and autobiography, the paper takes a chronological approach, analyzing key stages in her life in relation to the question of independence. It concludes by examining the broader themes of Annie's supportive family and its provision of a stable home base, as well as changes that were occurring in society, and how these elements made it possible for her to lead a relatively self-sufficient life. The paper argues that Annie's life illustrated different ways that a woman of her time could attain independence, specifically within the fields of teaching and mission work.

Annie Leake was born on August 3, 1839, at a farm in Cross Roads, Parrsboro, Nova Scotia.<sup>1</sup> At the age of eleven, she left her parents' home to go help the family of her uncle Christopher, a Methodist minister who was living at the time in Chatham, New Brunswick.<sup>2</sup> In 1857, while back home in Parrsboro, two events occurred that Annie described as "turning point[s] in [her] life": her conversion to Methodism and a talk advertising the Normal School in Truro, which was a teacher-training institute.<sup>3</sup> Annie began working as a teacher in May 1858, the start of a career that would last for over twenty-eight years and would take her to schools around her native Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, and even to St. John's, Newfoundland. In late 1887, she became the first matron

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, ed., *The Life and Letters of Annie Leake Tuttle: Working for the Best* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31; *Ibid.*, 34-35.

of the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society's Chinese Rescue Home in Victoria, British Columbia, which housed – and attempted to convert – Chinese immigrant women who had been working as prostitutes.<sup>4</sup> In January 1895, at the age of fifty-five, Annie married widower Milledge Tuttle of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, whom she had had a romance with in 1860.<sup>5</sup> After Milledge's death in March 1902, Annie visited relatives and friends and continued her involvement with the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS). In July 1907, at the age of sixty-eight, Annie Leake Tuttle entered the Old Ladies' Home in Halifax, where she would die on December 17, 1934, at the age of ninety-five.<sup>6</sup>

In 1897, Annie began writing the history of her parents' families. At this point, she was living with Milledge and his children, "a family to which she did not truly belong," and through writing, she "claimed her family identity for herself."<sup>7</sup> In February 1906, she started a different form of writing, which she called "The Story of my life, or pleasing incidents in it."<sup>8</sup> Whiteley notes that Annie started this second writing project between Milledge's death and her entry into the Old Ladies' Home, in "a period of dislocation and anxiety."<sup>9</sup> Whiteley also explains that Annie's "account began as a memoir ... the testimony of one who saw herself as a witness to a bygone era."<sup>10</sup> This quality is evident when Annie mentions visiting "[a] veritable 'log School house,'" even using quotation marks to emphasize the quaintness of such a building.<sup>11</sup> However, her work morphed into an autobiography as she started "record[ing] her struggles and also her personal accomplishments, which were well out of the ordinary for a woman of her day."<sup>12</sup> Annie divided her life and autobiography into chapters, starting, for instance, with "The Simple Life: 1839-1849," which relates memories and anecdotes from her childhood, up until she first moved to the house of

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 93; *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 104; *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>7</sup> Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, "'My Highest Motive in Writing': Evangelical Empowerment in the Autobiography of Annie Leake Tuttle," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1992): 28-29, <https://historicalpapers.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/historicalpapers/article/view/39482/35804>.

<sup>8</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> "'My Highest Motive,'" 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 13.

<sup>12</sup> Whiteley, "'My Highest Motive,'" 30.

her uncle Christopher.<sup>13</sup> Late in life, Annie passed her autobiography along to her niece, Edna Leake Nix.<sup>14</sup> The edited version, *The Life and Letters of Annie Leake Tuttle*, consists of Annie's autobiography, with brief chapter introductions by Whiteley, as well as some of Annie's letters and other miscellaneous writings.

Writing about her life would not have been a particularly unusual choice for a woman in Annie's position. Women who wrote about their lives were often "from evangelical backgrounds" or entering a new situation.<sup>15</sup> John Wesley, an important Methodist leader, encouraged Christians to undertake some form of writing.<sup>16</sup> Annie's life writing would have been "religiously-justified," acting "as testimony to the working-out of God's plan for her."<sup>17</sup> Joanna Bowen Gillespie explains that early-nineteenth-century American Protestant women used the concept of Providence flexibly, to explain both "good and bad eventualities."<sup>18</sup> Annie used the same strategy, claiming, for instance, that although she did not marry Milledge in her youth, "Our Father' had us both in His care and things worked out best for us both."<sup>19</sup> Annie's life writing fit within a Christian autobiographical tradition

When examining Annie's teaching career, an obvious feature is her frequent movement between different teaching positions, sometimes due to external factors and sometimes of her own initiative. She taught in nine different locations (see Figure 1 for locations of Nova Scotia positions). Other than two ten-year stretches – one in Truro and one in St. John's – she generally held positions for less than a year, often much less than a year. Several times, Annie needed to leave a position because the school building was not fit for instruction in the winter, as was the case with a school in Athol in 1862.<sup>20</sup> Rural Nova Scotian schools in the mid-nineteenth century varied in quality, with many "in poorer

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<sup>13</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, eds., *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (Halifax: Formac, 1988), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Joanna Bowen Gillespie, "'The Clear Leadings of Providence': Pious Memoirs and the Problems of Self-Realization for Women in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 2 (summer 1985): 212, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/stable/10.2307/3122952>.

<sup>17</sup> Whiteley, "'My Highest Motive,'" 27; *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> "'Clear Leadings,'" 203.

<sup>19</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 46.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

communities ... simply falling apart.”<sup>21</sup> This variability would have required some improvisation: one school took place in a carpenter’s shop, and, for another, Annie made her own globe and abacus, with her father’s help.<sup>22</sup> She speculated that one school did not invite her to return because she was “too modern,” perhaps because she had insisted that they rearrange the seating according to the Normal School pattern.<sup>23</sup> Another reason that Annie left a teaching position was to attend school herself, for instance to complete a second term at the Normal School.<sup>24</sup> It was common for women teachers to do short stints at the Normal School “to improve their qualifications.”<sup>25</sup> In one case, Annie turned down a teaching position at a new graded school in Amherst because the salary was too low, noting that although residents had been charged taxes for the school’s construction, not enough money was left for teachers’ salaries.<sup>26</sup> Rural Nova Scotians were not happy about the institution in 1864 of “compulsory school taxation,” which led to the burning of schoolhouses, including in Cumberland County.<sup>27</sup> Already, female teachers received lower wages than men, justified based on the fact that they were restricted to certain teaching licences and on the argument “that women were just performing a natural feminine function.”<sup>28</sup> Annie would not have been the only woman teacher to change locations “as a strategy for improving [her] wages and working conditions.”<sup>29</sup> A final motivation for leaving teaching positions was for personal or familial reasons, such as displeasure with her aunt,

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<sup>21</sup> Paul W. Bennett, “The Little White Schoolhouse: Myth and Reality in Nova Scotian Education, 1850-1940,” *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 13 (2010): 139, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/881834302?accountid=10406>.

<sup>22</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 43; *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>25</sup> Janet Guildford, “Family Strategies and Professional Careers: The Experience of Women Teachers in Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia” (lecture, Dawson Lecture Series, Nova Scotia Teachers College, Truro, NS, March 29, 1994), 23.

<sup>26</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> T. H. Rand, *Annual Report of Superintendent* (1865), quoted in A. F. Laidlaw, “Theodor Harding Rand,” *Journal of Education* (March 1944): 213-14, quoted in Bennett, “Little White Schoolhouse,” 140; Laidlaw, “Theodore Harding Rand,” 211, and William B. Hamilton, “Society and Schools in Nova Scotia,” in *Canadian Education: A History*, eds. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1970), 102, quoted in Bennett, “Little White Schoolhouse,” 140-41.

<sup>28</sup> Guildford, “Family Strategies,” 15-17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

with whom she was staying.<sup>30</sup> Whiteley argues that although Annie expressed “frustration” about the obstacles in her teaching career, “she found satisfaction in [her] occupation.”<sup>31</sup> Through the ups and downs of her teaching career, Annie would have developed a resourcefulness and confidence.

Although the majority of Annie’s travels between teaching positions occurred via road transportation, during the course of her life, she was part of a transportation shift that had a significant impact on women’s ability to travel. Most of Annie’s early journeys occurred via horse and carriage, including the stage coach and the mail service.<sup>32</sup> Early-nineteenth-century British North American roads were in poor condition, containing “deep holes,” although Nova Scotia’s “Great Roads” were greatly expanded between 1815 and 1850.<sup>33</sup> Annie only rarely emphasized the difficulty of land transportation, as when her brother John came to collect her at the Normal School in Truro in late March 1862, which was “a drive of at least sixty miles over West Chester Mountain ... before the days of railroads ... not an easy drive for the horse, and an anxious one for [Annie].”<sup>34</sup> She also pointed out as exceptional that when she was teaching in Athol, she would get “a farmer’s team an old horse & carriage and driv[e her]self home twenty miles, after school on a Friday evening.”<sup>35</sup> In general, she seemed to travel with relatives, and she only “timidly” agreed to go for a drive with Milledge when they first met, and he seemed to be “looking for a wife.”<sup>36</sup> Although women did increasingly travel solo over the course of the nineteenth century, there was an “imagined opposition ... between ... exploration, travel, and geography,” and femininity and

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<sup>30</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, “Annie Leake’s Occupation: Development of a Teaching Career, 1858-1886,” *Historical Studies in Education* 4, no. 1 (May 1992): 108, [https://historicalstudiesineducation.ca/index.php/edu\\_hse-rhe/article/view/734](https://historicalstudiesineducation.ca/index.php/edu_hse-rhe/article/view/734).

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 41.

<sup>33</sup> Isabella Lucy Bird, *The Englishwoman in America* (1856; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 27, quoted in Robert MacKinnon, “Roads, Cart Tracks, and Bridle Paths: Land Transportation and the Domestic Economy of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Eastern British North America,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (June 2003): para. 1, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/224236487?accountid=10406>; Reginald D. Evans, “Transportation and Communication in Nova Scotia, 1815-1850” (master’s thesis, Dalhousie University, 1936), 19, quoted in MacKinnon, “Land Transportation,” para. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 46.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

domesticity.<sup>37</sup> Annie noted that a solo trip to Boston in 1863, to visit an aunt, “was a venture surely, my first time in a large city and all alone with no one to meet me.”<sup>38</sup> The new Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), which Annie took to Victoria in 1887, would have provided women with more opportunities for independent movement, because they were “under the care of the railway company.”<sup>39</sup> The first half of the nineteenth century saw a transition from individual travellers’ having to plan and manage their own journeys to a view “of travel as a service to be purchased.”<sup>40</sup> Annie provided next-to-no details about her rail journey, but did comment that she “found all the comfort necessary in the Pullman car,” Pullman cars being a type of sleeping car.<sup>41</sup> Women would have had separate train cars.<sup>42</sup> Train travel was a “liminal” space, in which women were in public but could also “take certain liberties they would not take in a truly public space,” although they were expected to maintain a “respectable appearance” within this new environment.<sup>43</sup> Annie’s autobiography illustrates changing transportation practices and the possibilities that these changes were opening up for women.

Annie’s autobiography implies that she understood the significance of her chance to travel. Some of her accounts give detailed route information, as with her travels by carriage between Aylesford and Barrington at the age of fifteen with her uncle Christopher’s family, including his ten-month-old baby. They drove via Nictaux, Liverpool, and Shelburne, and Annie wrote, “How! well I remember every stage of that journey.”<sup>44</sup> Besides this familial travel, much of her travel was related to her mission work with the WMS, and she stated that

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<sup>37</sup> Monica Anderson, “Introduction,” in *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1870-1914* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 15; Lisa N. LaFramboise, “Travellers in Skirts: Women and English-Language Travel Writing in Canada, 1820-1926” (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1997), 1, <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/nq23012.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 48-49.

<sup>39</sup> LaFramboise, “Travellers in Skirts,” 94.

<sup>40</sup> Will Mackintosh, “‘Ticketed Through’: The Commodification of Travel in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 32, no. 1 (spring 2012): 63, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1353/jer.2012.0001>.

<sup>41</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 70; Rebecca Jumper Matheson, “‘Ways of Comfort’: Women’s Dress for Long-Distance Train Travel in America, 1870-1915,” *The Journal of the Costume Society of America* 43, no. 1 (April 2017): 26, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/03612112.2017.1288486>.

<sup>42</sup> LaFramboise, “Travellers in Skirts,” 100.

<sup>43</sup> Matheson, “Women’s Dress,” 30; *Ibid.*, 35; *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>44</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 24-25.

she was able to sightsee, for example at Niagara Falls, because of her “missionary duties, or more properly privileges.”<sup>45</sup> Earlier in her autobiography, she called her time in British Columbia a privilege, referring to the opportunity to travel “across the Continent,” visit many places, meet great missionaries, and get to know the Chinese girls.<sup>46</sup> This passage suggests that Annie was curious about the world and enjoyed travelling. Similarly, in discussing the “Northern Route through California, Oregon, Washington, &c,” Annie commented on “the grandeur of the Mountain scenery some of the finest in the world,” while, closer to home, she referred to “the beauties of a June in the Annapolis Valley.”<sup>47</sup> At one point, she also noted “feel[ing] the need of a change.”<sup>48</sup> Travel, with its opportunity to see new places and escape the quotidian, seemed to inspire a sense of gratitude and awe in Annie.

Annie’s involvement with the Methodist WMS enabled her to assume a position of authority and to perform work that she considered meaningful. During her tenure as matron of the Chinese Rescue Home, in Victoria, she managed the Home’s finances and provided the resident girls and women with instruction, including related to the Bible and housework.<sup>49</sup> She hoped “to train [them] for a better and for an eternal life,” expressing enthusiasm and “joy” when some of the girls converted to Christianity.<sup>50</sup> She expressed her sense of her work’s importance when she asked, “Will they not rise up in the judgment to condemn us, that we withheld from [them] the knowledge of salvation?”<sup>51</sup> Writing in 1886, Frances E. Willard, of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, claimed that women had an innate “*organizing* power,” evident in their frequent “‘board meetings,’ ‘conferences,’ [and] ‘conventions.’”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, upon her return to Nova Scotia, Annie was able to rise up within the ranks of the WMS, acting as the “Organizer for Cumberland Co. for ten years,” a position that

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 73; *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>52</sup> “Power of Organization as Shown in the Work of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union,” *Lend a Hand* 3, no. 1 (March 1886): 168, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/1300262301?accountid=10406>.

involved travelling around the county to attend meetings.<sup>53</sup> In 1905, Annie also “attend[ed] the annual meeting of the W.M.S. Board of Management held in Peterborough, Ontario.”<sup>54</sup> Within the WMS, Annie took up leadership roles in both Victoria and her native Cumberland County, Nova Scotia.

Annie would have been unusual, although not alone, in not getting married in her youth. In a letter to her niece Edna, Annie praised Edna for “wait[ing] until [she was] over 22 years of age” to get married, implying that women tended to marry by their early twenties, as opposed to at the age of fifty-five.<sup>55</sup> Although “marriage was the chief mode of survival for adult women in Canada ... a significant proportion of Canadian women did not marry, especially before the Second World War.”<sup>56</sup> Annie did express a certain regret at not having had children, writing to her sister-in-law Lottie, “It must be nice to be a mother & Grandmother ... But of course I have to get along without and I suppose get along very well also.”<sup>57</sup> Annie became stepmother to nine children through her marriage to Milledge Tuttle in 1895, a label that she admitted to not enjoying, although she believed it to be God’s “choice for [her].”<sup>58</sup> In referring to the stepmother role as a “position” and in describing herself as giving “faithful service” to Milledge’s family, Annie did not paint a very romantic picture.<sup>59</sup> Her relative lack of enthusiasm about getting married, compared to Milledge, contrasts with her earlier declaration about their 1860 romance that “Something involuntary had taken possession of me, something that was ... to cling to me always everywhere.”<sup>60</sup> Annie maintained her practical tone when she described the marriage itself, commenting on housework and on Milledge’s work ethic and final illness.<sup>61</sup> However, she did characterize Milledge as “[a] good and faithful husband always and a faithful father,

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<sup>53</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 103.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>55</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 97.

<sup>56</sup> Jenéa Tallentire, “‘The Ordinary Needs of Life’: Strategies of Survival for Single Women in 1901 Victoria,” *BC Studies*, no. 159 (autumn 2008): 45, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=36615625&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>57</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 128.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 75; *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 94; *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.



faithful unto the Church.”<sup>62</sup> Annie seemed to value her independence, or at least to have grown accustomed to it, for she left the Tuttle house after Milledge’s death, desiring to be able to reach church on her own.<sup>63</sup> Annie took a practical view of her midlife marriage, simply one episode in a life of independence.

While Annie did not portray her marriage with Milledge as a significant part of her life, she referred to her family frequently, revealing her interdependent relationship with them. Her extended family’s importance to Annie is evident in the fact that she had all her relatives’ birthdays notated.<sup>64</sup> Many of her trips involved visiting relatives, and she described having had the opportunity to visit all her brothers and all her nieces and nephews as “a great privilege.”<sup>65</sup> Tallentire notes that many single women depended on their relatives “for their financial support,” while “families depended deeply on the unpaid domestic labour of women.”<sup>66</sup> Annie was, in fact, able to support her family financially, at least some of the time: in 1880, she paid off her struggling parents’ mortgage.<sup>67</sup> Guildford explains that women entered teaching partly “to support themselves and their families.”<sup>68</sup> On a similar note, some young people left rural Nova Scotian communities in search of employment, sending money back to their families.<sup>69</sup> Annie’s financial contribution to her family included paying for her sister Louisa’s wedding dress, even though she was having difficulty at the time saving money for her own Normal School tuition.<sup>70</sup> In a similar self-denying vein, Annie resigned her teaching position in St. John’s to look after her sick father, noting that she was the only one of her siblings available to help their parents “in their time of need.”<sup>71</sup> Whiteley asserts that “we cannot determine what blend of fatigue, family duty, and financial frustration caused

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>66</sup> “Strategies of Survival,” 53.

<sup>67</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 63.

<sup>68</sup> “Family Strategies,” 12.

<sup>69</sup> Rusty Bittermann, Robert A. MacKinnon, and Graeme Wynn, “Of Inequality and Interdependence in the Nova Scotian Countryside, 1850-70,” *The Canadian Historical Review* <sup>74</sup>, no. 1 (March 1993): 32, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.3138/CHR-074-01-01>.

<sup>70</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 45.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

Annie's decision."<sup>72</sup> In any case, the familial support network extended in both directions, and her family helped a young Annie prepare for her teaching career, as when her father accompanied her to the store to purchase warm clothing for the forty-mile drive from Parrsboro to Apple River.<sup>73</sup> Later in Annie's life, she stayed for a month with a cousin in Pictou after Milledge's death, "need[ing] rest," and after the Halifax Explosion, she received several offers to stay with people outside Halifax, including a niece in Windsor.<sup>74</sup> Annie's relationship with her family combined independence and dependence.

Unlike many of her relatives, Annie stayed for most of her life in Nova Scotia, using her home province as a stable base for her varied activities. Eventually, all her siblings left the province.<sup>75</sup> Annie's brothers would not have been unusual in moving to the United States, which was a popular destination for English-speaking Canadian emigrants.<sup>76</sup> Scholars of migration discuss two major relevant economic forces, "'push' and 'pull,'" with push forces being those that would make an individual want to leave a region, such as lack of opportunities, while pull forces attract a person to an area, for example cheap land.<sup>77</sup> Examining two rural Nova Scotian communities, Middle River and Hardwood Hill, Bittermann, MacKinnon, and Wynn conclude that over half the farms in each community were unable "to meet the needs of their occupants."<sup>78</sup> Annie's own family struggled economically, which was at least part of the reason that she agreed as a girl to go help her uncle Christopher's family.<sup>79</sup> However, she would return to her parents' house in Parrsboro as a home base throughout her life, for instance after turning down the low-paying teaching position in Amherst and during the summers while teaching in St. John's.<sup>80</sup> After Annie left the Chinese Rescue Home in Victoria in 1893, she visited relatives in San Francisco, North Dakota, and Arizona, but she eventually "felt the

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<sup>72</sup> "Development of a Teaching Career," 107-08.

<sup>73</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 39.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 101; *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>76</sup> Alan A. Brookes, "Out-Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," *Acadiensis* 5, no. 2 (spring 1976): 26, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30302523>.

<sup>77</sup> E.S. Lee, "A Theory of Migration," *Demography* 3, no. 1 (1966): 47-57, quoted in Patricia A. Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look," *Acadiensis* 15, no. 1 (fall 1985): 10, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30302704>.

<sup>78</sup> "Inequality and Interdependence," 23-24.

<sup>79</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 50; *Ibid.*, 60.

impulse to get back to [her] Native land, among those who were left on the Old Home.”<sup>81</sup> However, Annie soon realized that “it was not [her] home for any length of time,” and she wrote in a letter to her niece Edna in 1902 that “[i]t is not a very comfortable situation to be homeless in one’s old age.”<sup>82</sup> Annie also confided to Edna in 1926 that she did not want to end up an invalid.<sup>83</sup> In both cases, Annie betrayed a fear of ending up dependent in her old age. Although many elderly Nova Scotian women faced poverty, Annie had saved up enough money for “a ‘Government Annuity’ bringing [her] in an income of \$200.00 yearly.”<sup>84</sup> She found a new home in the Old Ladies’ Home in Halifax, writing to her brother and sister, “it is so comforting to feel that one little spot is my own, where I can sit and write &c without any interruptions.”<sup>85</sup> She would use the Old Ladies’ Home as a base for trips to WMS meetings and “to [her] old homes, Parrsboro, Pugwash & Truro,” thus circling back to her places of origin. Throughout the changes that occurred in her life and in society, and despite forces that might have compelled her to leave Nova Scotia, Annie returned frequently to her home.

Annie’s activities – teaching, mission work, and travel – would have been on the forefront of what was acceptable for a woman in this period of transition. The “feminization” of the teaching profession in Nova Scotia gathered steam only after the passing of the 1864 Free School Act, which “centralized ... public schooling in the province.”<sup>86</sup> Annie had begun teaching in 1858.<sup>87</sup> With teaching, women performed “the work of the private sphere – the training of children – ... in a public arena.”<sup>88</sup> In general, women were not permitted to speak in public: when female teachers wrote papers for meetings of the Provincial Education Association, “the papers were read [aloud] by men and the writer remained anonymous.”<sup>89</sup> An exception – besides

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-74.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 74; *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>84</sup> Suzanne Morton, “Old Women and Their Place in Nova Scotia, 1881-1931,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 20, no. 1 (October 1995): 22, <http://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/4147>; *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>85</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 113.

<sup>86</sup> Guildford and Morton, *Separate Spheres*, 121.

<sup>87</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 35.

<sup>88</sup> Guildford and Morton, *Separate Spheres*, 122.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

teaching – would have been religion, or at least Methodism, within which women could lead “public prayer meetings” and hold “private all-female class meetings.”<sup>90</sup> After her conversion to Methodism, Annie went on trips with her grandfather, “testify[ing] as to what great things God had done for [her].”<sup>91</sup> Women’s speech in this context likely would not have pleased everyone, given that a minister in 1872 considered “both ‘heroic zeal’ and ‘Christian meekness’ [to be] female virtues.”<sup>92</sup> Methodists also permitted women’s participation in church societies.<sup>93</sup> Annie’s involvement with the Methodist WMS enabled her to go to the Chinese Rescue Home in 1887, just six years after the WMS’s founding, taking the CPR to Victoria just one year after the start of its “transcontinental operations” in 1886.<sup>94</sup> In many ways, Annie’s life kept pace with changes in society, including in women’s position.

The study of Annie Leake Tuttle’s autobiography offers insights into potential paths to independence for Canadian women in the years leading into the twentieth century. Although this essay has only begun to explore these paths within Annie’s life, already, some trends emerge. Teaching and religion were two major aspects of Annie’s life that enabled her to live a life of relative independence. Through teaching, she gained an income to support herself and even her family and, no doubt, developed self-reliance. Through her membership of the Methodist Church, she acquired the opportunity to write and speak in public and to act as a leader in mission work, both within her regional organization and far from home. Throughout all these activities, Annie relied upon the support of her family and the stability of home, while also taking advantage of developments within society. In doing so, she led a life that, even by today’s standards, seems extraordinary.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>91</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 34.

<sup>92</sup> Guildford and Morton, *Separate Spheres*, 103.

<sup>93</sup> Lynne Marks, “‘A Fragment of Heaven on Earth’?: Religion, Gender, and Family in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Church Periodicals,” in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History*, 6th ed., ed. Mona Gleason, Tamara Myers, and Adele Perry (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2011), 160.

<sup>94</sup> Whiteley, *Life and Letters*, 70; Rosemary R. Gagan, “No Serious Risk in Sending her to Pt. Simpson,” in *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 161; LaFramboise, “Travellers in Skirts,” 7.

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