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**“I Must Record the Grit of My Little Wife Millie’:
Experience, Representation, and Rural Women
in Early 20th Century British Columbia,” 2006.**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the historical experiences and narrative representations of early 20th century women in north-central British Columbia. First, using empirical strategies, it determines the diversity of women’s gender roles, their contributions to family survival, and their leadership functions in creating rural societies. Then, drawing on Helen Buss’s multi-generational deconstructive mode, it analyzes the local historical record, demonstrating how, although women’s collective voices are over-represented, an androcentric narrative tradition predominates. Conversely, reading the sources from a consciously feminist position also reveals a number of subversive narrative strategies that allowed rural women to quietly exploit their accomplishments, without challenging the social power of men. Finally, the tensions and discontinuities between experiences, and representations of rural women are shown to reflect issues of genre, persisting social tensions between rural men and women, and women’s personal desires to both conform to and resist traditional expectations of femininity.