

THE UTILITY OF QUANTITATIVE SOURCES IN THE STUDY OF
TRANSPORTATION AND THE GROWTH OF ONTARIO AND
QUEBEC URBAN HIERARCHY, 1861-1901: AN EXAMPLE

A recent issue of *Urban History Review*¹ noted references for historians interested in the connection between the railroad and urban growth in Canada. Resources included the records of the Canadian National Railway and from various departments of transportation within the Canadian government in the 19th century.

Other sources for data on transport in Canadian history do abound. Burghardt's² study of the road network of the Niagara Peninsula from the late 18th to mid 19th century is a spectacular example. He tested a model devised by Taaffe, Morrill and Gould³ on the ideal stages of transport advance with the development of a nation. The research task made use of early maps, county atlases and documents from the archaeological section of the National Museum of Man. Local histories and descriptions of travels were also consulted. Finally, topographical maps and aerial photographs enabled him to examine the local landscape in considering what natural barriers could have hindered the construction of Indian trails, the forerunners of the early road system in Ontario.

Much remains to be accomplished in the study of the influence of transport and the growth of Canadian cities. Burghardt's research, while distinctive and a definite contribution to research in the formation of communities, offers a non-quantitative instance of the new historical work now emerging in this area. Those quantitative analysis are more easily interpreted by a perspective embraced by Lampard in several articles.⁴ This is rooted in demography and human ecology. The "ecological complex" leads the urban historian to define the city and the process of urbanization within a framework composed of "population, environment, technology and organization" as key variables. Urbanization and community structure are interpreted as the outcome of a changing balance between population and environment moderated by organization through an increasingly efficient technology.

This research reports on some on-going analyses of quantitative