

## Thesis Abstracts Résumés des thèses

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## Thesis Abstracts/Résumés des thèses

Maxwell L. Foran. "The Civic Corporation and Urban Growth: Calgary, 1884-1930." Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, University of Calgary, 1981.

This thesis documents certain aspects of institutional behaviour which characterized the civic corporation in Calgary between 1884 and 1930. The time span delineates the period from town incorporation to the eve of the depression which is seen as a catalyst forcing a major redefinition of Calgary's municipal system of government.

The dominant theme in this study emphasizes institutional pragmatism. The civic corporation is viewed as a reactive institution whose activities were responses to constraints and the urgency of public demands. The ultimate policies adopted by local government in Calgary were those of compromise and necessity in the light of the variables supplied chiefly by financial and statutory limitations as well as by public pressure. In this context, the gradual socio-economic changes in the composition of councils to reflect societal heterogeneity were not pivotal in influencing policy.

Calgary town and city councils, being essentially dominated by merchants and commercial interests, were characterized by what has been referred to in this study as the businessmen's view of government. The pragmatic overtones of this view supplied a continuum in council's thinking regardless of the current economic or social milieu. In the frontier period, the civic emphasis was on promotion accompanied by low expenditures. The boom period, 1906-12, saw an unfettered attitude towards expansion. Conversely, during the sustained years of austerity after 1915, civic authorities advocated policies designed to bring a return to solvency. The civic pattern in all three diverse phases was consistent with a pragmatism inherent in sound business practice.

A further emphasis in this study is on the relationship between the legislative and executive components of local government. The dominance of council before World War I gave the civic corporation an unstructured and often unpredictable dimension. The gradual predominance of the executive arm after 1920 gave rise to a conservative approach to municipal matters. It is suggested that the depression arrested this advance somewhat by restoring some of council's former initiative in civic policy-making and implementation.

Finally, this study purports to suggest some direction for useful inquiry into local government which for various reasons has claimed little attention in Canadian urban his-

toriography. The civic corporation existed as the clearest expression of the public will institutionalized at the government level. Because of its unique position relative to its constituents and the types of services expected of it, local government is led into different patterns of institutional behaviour than those followed by higher levels of government.

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Eleanor A. Bartlett. "Real Wages and the Standard of Living in Vancouver, 1901-1929." M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1980.

For many years the consensus among some Canadian scholars has been that the living standards of Canadian blue-collar workers deteriorated during the early twentieth century. This erosion, in the face of economic expansion, has been attributed to the rapid population growth brought about by immigration which increased the labour supply and diluted the quality of the workforce by introducing large numbers of relatively unskilled workers. This explanation has come to be known as the displacement theory. However, recent evidence on national working-class real wages has challenged this pessimistic thesis.

This thesis examines real wages on the smaller scale of the city of Vancouver in order to test the hypothesis that the Vancouver working class did not share in early twentieth-century economic growth. In doing so it also provides one new measure of the working-class standard of living in the city.

According to the indexes compiled in this thesis Vancouver real wages increased some eighteen per cent to twenty-five per cent between 1901 and 1929. Real wages increased until 1905 and then dropped by 1910 reaching a low point in 1911. They then increased reaching a peak in 1915 and then dropped, bottoming out around 1919 and 1920. Thereafter real wages climbed steadily to the end of the decade with slight dips in 1924 and 1925.

All the evidence examined here suggests that economic growth did not wholly benefit the working class in the city. The inflation which came with rapid economic growth could often outweigh the benefits which it brought for the skilled and unskilled, the unionized and the unorganized. In addition the indexes do not contradict the argument that displacement worked to keep wages down. Vancouver workingmen may have benefitted less from rapid economic expansion of the first years of the century than from more modest growth like that which occurred in the 1920s.

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Andrea B. Smith. "The Origins of the NPA: A Study in Vancouver Politics, 1930-1940." M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1981.

This thesis attempts to explain the emergence and success of "non-partisan" politics in Vancouver in the 1930s. It contends that the formation of the Non-Partisan Association in 1937 hinged on the structural change in municipal government from a ward system to an at-large system in 1935; and further, that the NPA was the defensive reaction of provincial Liberals and Conservatives to the success of the CCF in municipal politics under the new system.

This author proceeds from the premise that the non-partisan nature of civic politics is a myth. In Chapter I the conservative ideological foundations of the non-partisan philosophy are revealed in the alarmist response of the province's political and business elites to the depression. In Chapter II an examination of the origins of the change in the structure of Vancouver's government discloses the key role played by G.G. McGeer and other provincial politicians in the city's affairs. Chapter III examines the specific local developments that prompted the NPA's formation. The strength of the CCF in the city is assessed as well as the practical implications of the new at-large system for civic elections. Group biography confirms the partisan character of the NPA organization and reveals its provincial roots.

Finally, this thesis discusses the reasons for the NPA's long-term success and the implications for the city. An examination of the city's voting patterns in the 1930s reveals the effectiveness of the NPA's rhetoric and its organizational abilities under an at-large system.

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Bryan P. Melynk. "Calgary Buildings, 1904-1914: The Emergence of an Urban Landscape." M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Calgary, 1981.

There were fewer than three-quarters of a million people on the Canadian prairies in 1905, but by the time that World War I began, almost a million more were added. In the same period, Calgary's population multiplied more than sixfold, from approximately 12,500 to nearly 80,000. Along with this great influx of immigrants came immense changes to the local economy, society and physical environment. In one decade, Calgary was transformed from a small community on the frontier of an immature region into a progressive, fast-moving metropolis, the centre of a major agricultural and natural resource hinterland. Rapid growth strained the capability of existing facilities to meet the needs of the expanding population. It soon became apparent that more substantial architecture was needed to keep pace with this development, and to

create a new image for the city that was commensurate with its changed status.

This thesis is concerned with the more than 10,000 buildings that were erected between 1905 and 1914, particularly those that were constructed in response to favourable economic conditions during the boom years of 1909 to 1913. Using information from a variety of sources, including local newspapers, city records and directories, government publications, school board documents, architectural drawings, archival materials and secondary literature on western Canadian architectural history and on relevant topics pertaining to Calgary history, this study surveys the architectural landscape that emerged. It not only describes the architectural features of individual buildings, but also analyzes their importance within the broad context of the city's social, economic, cultural and technological development.

This thesis reveals that Calgary very quickly took on both the character and appearance of a modern North American metropolis in this period of unparalleled growth and prosperity. It observes that the city entered into the mainstream of modern architectural design in conjunction with the flourishing of the local economy. Skyscrapers, stores, apartment buildings and industries which utilized construction techniques devised in the United States sprang up in great numbers as opportunities for profit loomed large. Single-family residences also appeared in the thousands as workers immigrated to the city *en masse*. Yet while new architectural forms transfigured the urban landscape, this study shows that Calgary retained its distinctively British atmosphere in the midst of a fast-paced building boom. The palatial residences of the city's upper classes, elegant commercial structures, and grand public buildings and schools manifested a certain preference for Edwardian architectural tastes. In the years leading up to World War I, these edifices thus provided local residents with tangible evidence of their society's fundamental loyalty to the British Empire.

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S. Langin. "Resource Development and New Towns: A Women's Perspective." M.A. Thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1981.

In recent decades a large number of new single-industry resource towns have been professionally planned, designed, built and populated. In spite of improvements in the physical design and development of new resource communities, obtaining "the good life" in these communities is still very much in doubt, particularly for women. Little information on the women residents of single-industry resource towns – their needs, desires and aspirations – has been collected or analyzed. The purpose of this thesis is to provide a clearer picture of what it means to be a woman in

a single-industry resource community. This study examines the quality of life in the most recent single-industry resource town in British Columbia, Elkford, as perceived and experienced by its women residents. It attempts to determine aspects of the community with which the women are most satisfied, aspects with which they are most dissatisfied, and recommends policies which are aimed at improving the future planning and development of resource-based communities with women's needs in mind.

The methods for approaching the study included a review of the relevant literature on single-industry resource communities, as well as a mail questionnaire survey of the women in Elkford fifteen years of age and over. The data were collected and results presented under the following five broad subject areas: employment, housing, geographic and natural environment, socialization and perceptions of community life, and community services and facilities. The results of the survey indicate that, on the whole, the majority of women were satisfied with living in Elkford. Factors linked with community satisfaction include employment, satisfaction with dwelling unit, enjoyment of the natural wilderness setting and the recreation it affords, knowledge of "the state of the community" prior to mov-

ing, residency in the Kootenay Region prior to moving to Elkford, participation in community activities, and the ability to enjoy a small, new community. Factors which contribute to dissatisfaction include limited employment opportunities, limited desirable housing, limited community services and facilities (with the exception of recreation) for shopping, health care, education, transportation, communication and non-sports-oriented recreation, and the absence of a common informal meeting place. Recommendations for improving or influencing those factors which are related to satisfaction are suggested. They provide planners, resource companies, governments, and residents with guidelines for the provision of physical environments and delivery of social services in single-industry resource communities which respond to the needs of the women residents, and which are sensitive to the unique geographic, demographic and economic characteristics inherent in new resource communities. Women have a special role as resident experts of the quality of life in resource communities, and whose expertise should be incorporated into the planning, implementation and evaluation of these communities.

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