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Thesis Abstracts

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THESIS ABSTRACTS

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Clark, W.L.R. "Politics in Brandon City, 1899-1949." Ph.D. Thesis
(University of Alberta, 1976).

Brandon, in 1899, was represented in both the Manitoba Legislature
and in the House of Commons by a member of the government. That was
equally true in 1949. Furthermore, when one examines the results of the
thirty-one provincial and federal elections in which Brandon voters
participated during the 1899-1949 era, it becomes immediately evident
that Brandon voters most frequently elected a candidate who proved to be
"on the winning side." In fact, "opposition" members were elected on
only six occasions. Whether Brandon voters were simply "in step" with
public opinion throughout much of this period or whether they were
consciously seeking to vote "ministerialist" in their community's self-
interest is one of several questions to be considered.

The underlying assumption in the study of the political process
in this single community (which constituted, but for a minor degree, the
provincial constituency of Brandon, initially Brandon City) from 1899 to
1949 is that there are significant "local" factors which influence--or
even determine--the electoral results. Consequently, the political
history of this rather minute area has been thoroughly analyzed to
discover whether such "local" factors exist--and to evaluate their
significance. To determine the degree of inter-relationship, if any,
that exists between the three "levels" of politics--i.e., municipal,
provincial and federal--has also been an integral part of this examination.
To what extent was a constituency such as Brandon City a political unit
unto itself? To what degree did the political process at the municipal,
provincial and federal level correspond, vary or inter-relate with the
others?

As a result of this study, several tentative conclusions have
been reached. While Brandon does appear to be a part of a larger
political "whole" on many occasions--when its voters seem to respond
essentially as electors elsewhere are reacting and presumably for similar
reasons, a considerable number of "local" political factors are also in
evidence. For example, the personal appeal of individual candidates
(irrespective of party affiliation), the influence of a local daily
newspaper, local economic conditions, the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness)
of the local constituency's "get out the vote" campaign, the lack of unity
within local party ranks, and the coalescence of certain political forces
in response to a particularly offensive (i.e., radical) opponent are
factors which (on occasions) have obviously been significant--and even
determinant. In addition, an analysis of "Politics in Brandon City, 1899-
1949" does demonstrate that frequently there was a strong inter-relation-
ship between political developments at one "level" and another--an
inter-relationship that was not, however, necessarily positive in nature.
Consequently, one can conclude that Brandon was sufficiently a political
unit unto itself from 1899 to 1949 that one would risk ignoring (on
occasions) the essence of politics if one were to ignore such local factors.

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Flanders, Douglas L. "Urban Church Redundancy, 1914-1975: Case Studies in London, Ontario and the Parkdale District, Toronto." M.A. Thesis (University of Western Ontario, 1977).

Although its effects may be seen all around us, little has been written on the current problem of urban church redundancy in Canada. This thesis, which analyses the locational patterns of churches for a given period, is an attempt to add to the limited work that has been done.

Those churches which were involved in the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925 were reviewed within the confines of two case study areas, London, Ontario, and the Parkdale district of Toronto between the years 1914 and 1975. Within that time, these two locales manifest the various factors leading to change that can induce church redundancy; they also offer examples of methods used in solving the problem.

The historical background of London and Parkdale, and the history of the selected churches which are located in both areas, is first outlined. The various demographic and ideological changes that have affected their popular base of support and the resulting effects on church locational patterns, are then analysed. Finally, after offering examples of both traditional and contemporary means of coping with the problem of redundancy, the thesis concludes with an outline of the problems that can beset such redevelopment schemes.

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Gilpin, John F. "The City of Strathcona, 1891-1912." M.A. Thesis (University of Alberta, 1978).

This thesis is a study of the City of Strathcona from its origins in 1891 as a Calgary and Edmonton Railway townsite to its demise as an independent political entity by virtue of its amalgamation with Edmonton in 1912. This study of Strathcona's history examines both its great expectations for future development as well as the realities of its growth in spatial, economic, political and social terms.

Strathcona's expectations focused on the idea that it would be on the mainline of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and would be the terminus of a major Canadian Pacific Railway branch line from Winnipeg. Strathcona boosters felt that these developments would allow it to play a significant role as an entrepot for Northern Alberta and Northern British Columbia. It was expected that these developments would take place because Strathcona had a number of "natural advantages" which would serve as a magnet for capital and captains of industry. These expectations epitomized the boosterism that was an important part of the "last best west."

In addition to examining the nature of Strathcona's metropolitan ambitions, this thesis also outlines their origin and support within the community. The idea that Strathcona was a future metropolitan centre was first suggested by the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company which

anticipated that its new townsite would dominate the older settlement of Edmonton which was located on the other side of the North Saskatchewan River. This idea was enthusiastically embraced by Strathcona's local press. J. Hamilton McDonald, editor of the <u>Strathcona Plaindealer</u>, was particularly strong in his belief that Strathcona had a metropolitan future as a separate community.

Strathcona's great expectations can, however, be contrasted by the reality of its failure to achieve only marginal success with respect to these goals. This thesis suggests a number of factors contributing to this course of events. Strathcona despite the booster editorials of the local press lacked a business community with a high degree of commitment to the idea of Strathcona as a metropolitan centre. This lack of strong community support can be demonstrated by Strathcona's reluctance to create a chartered Board of Trade and to seek incorporation. This lack of commitment is also demonstrated by the failure of Strathcona to undertake an aggressive program of bonusing with respect to the railways, manufacturing industries and wholesale companies.

A second factor in Strathcona's non-rise as a metropolitan centre was the aggressive efforts by Edmonton to achieve the same goal. Edmonton's success and the construction of transportation links between Edmonton and Strathcona blurred the distinctions between the two communities. Strathcona's future expectations became increasingly identified with Edmonton thus amalgamation was a positive step towards this goal.

Strathcona's setting also played a role in its history. Its location on the southside of the North Saskatchewan River proved to be a disadvantage in that it made the construction of transcontinental railways through it more expensive in comparison to Edmonton. The surveys that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway undertook on both sides of the river demonstrates this fact.

The city of Strathcona is thus an important chapter in the history of Edmonton because its history helps to explain why and how Edmonton emerged as the winner in the rivalry for metropolitan growth.

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Potyondi, Barry. "Country Town: The History of Minnedosa, Manitoba, 1879-1922." M.A. Thesis (University of Manitoba, 1978).

This thesis examines the development of a country town during its formative years. The setting is Minnedosa, an agricultural service centre situated in the parkland belt of west central Manitoba, in the period from 1879 to 1922. It is an exploration in local history which seeks to establish the structure of a society neither wholly urban nor rural, and to illustrate the relationship between that local society and the larger society to which it belonged.

The theoretical underpinnings of the thesis derive mainly from the Leicester School of local history, whose principal tenet is that the study of a particular community or society over a finite period possesses an intrinsic worth. Each community has rhythms and patterns of development, as well as a chronology, which set it apart from all other communities. The limited geographical scope of such a study is not, however, to be confused with parochialism. If the study is structured around universal themes, themes common to all communities of a particular region or historical period, then its findings will have application beyond the boundaries of the community examined. The country town, as a central feature of the prairie landscape and as an important focus of nineteenth-century life, is a type of community especially worthy of study by the local historian.

"Country Town" is written around four broad themes. The first is that of site, best articulated by W. L. Morton. For some two hundred years prior to European settlement, the comparative hunting and trapping advantages of the Minnedosa area lured and held both native groups and mixed bloods. With the influx of homesteaders into the area after 1878 the future townsite became an important river crossing on a main artery of the western interior, the Saskatchewan Trail. This immediately prompted small-scale commercial development at the crossing, and shortly thereafter led to the construction of a much-needed grist- and saw-milling operation. By 1883 local entrepreneurs, under the leadership of townsite owner J. S. Armitage, had secured a connection with the Canadian Pacific mainline which, in conjunction with the milling concern, soon established Minnedosa as a commercial entrepôt for much of northwestern Manitoba. The discussion of site, then, focuses on changing perceptions of the land.

The second theme concerns Minnedosa's economic base. Throughout the study period Minnedosa was an agricultural service centre, providing goods and services to a prosperous mixed-farming hinterland some thirty miles in diameter. The aggressive commercial policies pursued by civic leaders were instrumental in securing and retaining this hinterland trade, since competition with neighbouring communities was pronounced. The townscape reflected the enduring strength of the economic base. In the course of forty years Minnedosa changed from a frontier town of rude log houses, false-fronted commercial buildings and no public utilities to a thoroughly modern urban centre. The nature and timing of this physical transformation is linked to changes in the provincial communications network and is used to indicate the rate at which new attitudes and technological innovations diffused from Winnipeg to its provincial hinterland.

Local society is the third theme. From the beginning Minnedosa was a remarkably homogeneous Anglo-Saxon/Celtic, Protestant community. This was particularly evident in local institutions, attitudes, and recreation. In this respect Minnedosa was very much a community of its time. Unlike many other western towns, however, Minnedosa experienced no great influx of continental Europeans after 1896. The town's cultural uniformity kept displays of antipathy toward aliens to a minimum, although

in times of stress, such as the Great War, nativistic sentiments were
marked. Stratification in this society was based on status, which derived
mainly from financial standing and occupation. Conspicuous consumption
was the most overt manifestation of individual status. During the first
three decades of development, decision-making power resided with an elite
of Protestant male professionals and businessmen. Only after 1910 did a
measure of decentralization occur as women assumed greater civic and
social responsibilities. The changing social roles of women and children
are discussed and related to the broader current of social reformism
which all Western Canadians experienced at this time.

The final theme is that of town-country relations. For a
majority of local farmers the relationship was primarily economic.
Living perhaps three to fifteen miles from town, these people visited
Minnedosa for supplies and services, and only rarely for social reasons.
Only those farmers proximate to Minnedosa participated regularly in its
social and recreational activities. Before 1900 relations between
Minnedosans and almost all farmers appear to have been cordial, the result
of a common heritage, common economic objectives, and common institutions.
This changed markedly in the ensuing two decades as differential rates of
economic growth and the spread of agrarian reformism led to an ideological
polarization of townspeople and farmers. Despite this rift, best
illustrated by distinctive patterns of political behavior, economic
relations remained unchanged.

This thesis, then, shows the applicability of the Leicester model
to the Western Canadian context, and suggests that the model may be used
to advantage in the study of other country towns. The themes explored
and the findings obtained should serve as guideposts of inquiry for other
students of this under-developed area of Western Canadian history.