

**FROM DUSTY PAPERS TO ARCHIVAL TREASURES:
CANADIAN MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES, THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ARCHIVES,
AND
THE RECORDS OF WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL, 1874-1971**

BY

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**From Dusty Papers to Archival Treasures: Canadian Municipal Archives, the City
of Winnipeg Archives, and the Records of Winnipeg City Council, 1874-1971**

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Sara Hemingway-Conway

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
Master of Arts**

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DEDICATION

To my heart, my love, Christian: your faith in me and your love have made all the difference in the completion of this thesis.
Thank you.

Abstract

This thesis discusses a number of things. The first chapter sets the stage for the rest of the thesis with a discussion of the development of archives in Canada generally and municipal archives specifically. The reasons why municipal archives have been created as well as why, for the most part, they remain underdeveloped will be discussed in detail. Examples of various municipal archives are used to illustrate the various causes of municipal archival development. This history of municipal archival development in Canada sets the broad historical context for understanding the history of the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch of the City Clerk's Department.

An overview of the development of the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch is presented in chapter two. It will illustrate how this archives has developed and presents reasons for its slow progress towards a full archival program. To date, the City of Winnipeg still does not have a full archival program in place with, for example, a complete description of its records.

In order to contribute to the development of such a full archival programme the third chapter of this thesis contains the first (albeit still preliminary) description using the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) of one of the most important bodies of records in the archives – the Winnipeg city council's records or fonds from 1874 to 1971. RAD is a standardized descriptive format in wide use in Canadian archives. The third chapter opens with a brief overview of the theoretical underpinnings of archival description in what is often called the contextual approach to archival administration. This approach (rooted in an understanding of the provenance of the records) has proved important for a number of reasons. It assists in records retrieval, protects records as evidence and assists in the administrative control of records over their lifespan (all of which are important to

any municipality). The importance and use of standardized archival description (such as RAD) are also discussed. The final chapter of the thesis concludes with a preliminary description using RAD of the City of Winnipeg Council Fonds and its components (1874-1971). These records occupy approximately 233 metres of shelf space in the archives but only make up a small proportion of the total number of records available for use at the archives. This description only covers the records of the City of Winnipeg council. There are many other records in the archives from other agencies within the city as well as from the other former municipalities which now make up the City of Winnipeg. These records await formal description and are not included in the description provided here.

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Chapter One

Trends and Trendsetters: Municipal Archives in Canada

Of all national assets archives are the most precious; they are the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilization.

Arthur G. Doughty¹

Municipal records have been undervalued, neglected and ignored for far too long in Canada. As the above statement points out, archives are a vital resource which need to be taken more seriously. Archival records convey our country's history in a way that no other source can match. Municipal archival records are a rich and diverse source of that history. Although these records can be used in a number of ways, they truly are a largely untapped resource. This chapter will provide a brief overview of trends in the history of Canadian archives and municipal archives in particular. The chapter discusses the valuable role municipal archives can play and suggests some of the key reasons for the general underdevelopment of municipal archives in Canada. This chapter thereby provides the broad archival context in which the history of the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch can be placed. That history is the subject of chapter two.

Archives provide an essential service. They preserve various records of enduring value as well as make them available. An archives' main function, then, is to make these valuable resources available to both the organization that it serves as well as to researchers. As one archivist has said, "Usefulness, whether it be to the institution or to the general public, is the acid test of a successful programme."² Archives are also of importance as they assist in establishing intellectual control over records, a necessary component of any good archival program. Unfortunately, not all municipalities see this

role as an important one. This has meant that records are unavailable for the use of anyone. As Victor Russell pointed out of municipal records in Ontario in 1978:

Do then all these records exist as a real or potential source for research? Unfortunately not. For many reasons including lack of administrative skills, shortage of space, even ignorance, municipal clerks across the province are accustomed to disposing of records at their own discretion without the required authority.³

This situation started to change in the 1990s with the passing of various pieces of legislation, including freedom of information and privacy legislation. There has also been a trend towards making government more accountable to the public which has meant a change in attitude towards records management and archives by municipal corporations.

Trends in the development of Canadian archives generally and municipal archives specifically cast light on why municipal archives develop, how they do so and also why they do not develop at all in some cases. This will assist in understanding how the Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch has developed.

Archives in Canada have not had a long history. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were only 17 archives in Canada.⁴ By 1950 the number of archives had risen to only 49. Between 1960 and 1970 archives developed at a rate of about 5 per year. By 1978 Canada had 174 archives.⁵ A number of other surveys and data from Statistics Canada point out that archives in Canada have been growing continuously over the last twenty years. The figures from Statistics Canada covering 1993-94 show that there were a total of 337 archives in Canada. Archives had .93 million people use their services. Canadian archives employed 2615 people. The total operating revenue for archives was \$115.1 million.⁶ Curiously, a survey by the Canadian Council of Archives in 1986-87 received responses from 627 archives. Only a small number of the archives were

municipal archives. As of 1987 when a survey was taken by the CCA to collect information for a national needs assessment and priorities report, 65 municipal archives responded.⁷ But as the report points out:

These numbers indicate there has been a significant increase in local government archives. But statistics can be misleading; for example, 100 local archives responded to a 1989 survey conducted by the Municipal Archives Section of the Association of Canadian Archivists. Of these, only twenty-one were administered by local governments, had separate operating budgets, a mandate to acquire and preserve municipal records and at least one full-time professional staff member.⁸

The 65 archives represented 10.4 per cent of the total number of archives in Canada.⁹

These figures from 1986-87 can be set beside the figures from a 1980 survey prepared for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. It was found, at that time, that there were 14 municipal archives in Canada. Six were in British Columbia, 2 in Alberta, 4 in Ontario, and 2 in Quebec. Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and the Yukon listed no municipal archives.

The figures for archives in Manitoba are very interesting; no municipal archives were reported among the seven archives in the province.¹⁰

These figures seem somewhat confusing as to the actual number of archives in Canada. This can possibly be explained by the use of different criteria for defining an archives and what may be considered a municipal archives. It would seem that a couple of criteria would include having an official mandate, and having a full-time staff person, among other things. The Canadian Council of Archives has published a Directory of Archives that perhaps can shed some light on the actual number of archives in Canada as well as the number of municipal archives. This directory, published in 1996, lists the names and addresses of 520 archival institutions that are members of provincial or

territorial councils of archives. And so, the figure of 627 archives from 1986-87 is possibly quite accurate. It is interesting to note that the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch is not listed in this directory. There were, however, 47 archives listed under the category Government-Regional and Local and approximately 58 municipal institutions listed under Politics and Government. It might be, that the figures from Statistics Canada are inaccurate due simply to the use of more stringent criteria.

The status of archives in Canada has been well documented over the years in a number of reports and surveys. The reports share some common themes. The archival system, while growing at a rapid rate, is underdeveloped.¹¹ As one report points out, the Canadian archival system has not developed enough to protect our country's archival documents over the long term. It concludes: "Much is being lost through neglect."¹² In 1987, Statistics Canada reported that Canadian municipalities spent approximately \$8.7 million annually on archival services. The total textual holdings of the 37 municipal archives identified was nearly double that of the National Archives of Canada. But their combined staffing and budget levels were less than one half and one fifth, respectively, of those of the National Archives.¹³

Archives suffer from a lack of resources and have large backlogs of records that have not been described and made available for use. Archives lack the ability to perform well some of the most basic archival functions, such as public reference services and conservation. They also often lack good quality storage space, and other necessary equipment. They are often reliant on volunteers for staff support.¹⁴ Governments at various levels do not rank archives high on their priority list for funding.¹⁵ Generally

speaking, archives and, therefore, the records they preserve, exist in a very unstable environment.¹⁶

All archival activities from acquisition to arrangement and description to conservation and research services are staff intensive. Most archival programs remain extremely vulnerable to budget, and particularly to staff, reductions.¹⁷

These problems exist when the need and use of archives seems to be at an all-time high.

There are a number of reasons why municipal archives have developed so slowly in Canada. The centralizing tendency of the National Archives of Canada and the various provincial archives is one of the most important. The first archives in Canada developed almost exclusively in the public domain. The federal and some of the provincial governments established archives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to collect both public and private records.¹⁸ The then Public Archives of Canada took its mandate very seriously. In 1912 legislation was passed which set out the wide range of archival material which it was to preserve. The Dominion Archivist was to have "custody and control of 'public records, documents and other historical material of every kind, nature and description'"¹⁹ A good example of this centralization of municipal records, in particular, is Windsor, Ontario. A lot of the early documentation on the area went to the Archives of Ontario, the National Archives of Canada, and archives in Detroit and as far away as Wisconsin.²⁰

The presence of the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa has slowed the development of Ottawa's own municipal archives. As Edwin Welch has pointed out, the then Public Archives of Canada collected the local records in Ottawa because they would not have been preserved otherwise.²¹ The City of Ottawa finally established its archives in 1971. It appointed a City Archivist in 1974.²² The City of Ottawa should have been

quicker to see that it had a responsibility to preserve its own records because it had the example of the National Archives before it. As archivist Kent Haworth pointed out, "the attention of city officials should have been drawn to their own responsibilities for maintaining an appropriate local archives service."²³ The result of these centralizing tendencies has been the slow development of other types of archives including provincial ones.

Provincial governments and provincial archives have also been instrumental in curbing the development of municipal archives. The provincial governments have been slow to pass legislation requiring the preservation of municipal records within the community. The provinces, until recently, have encouraged municipalities to deposit their records in the various provincial archives:

Similarly, the maturation of many of the provincial archives, accompanied by the development of a desire to counter the national archives' 'dominance' in their respective jurisdictions, has resulted in numerous cases of indiscriminate procurement of local records.²⁴

Provincial archives have also acted to slow the development of municipal archives:

Similar reasons for the delay in establishing a city archives in the nation's capital can be discerned in almost any provincial capital city where there is, but a few blocks down the street, a large provincial archives apparently prepared to take responsibility for local government records.²⁵

(This will also be seen in Manitoba with the City of Winnipeg and its slow archival development.)

The Provincial Archives of Manitoba is no exception to this rule of collecting records from municipalities. Although not a great deal has been collected and by no means in a systematic way, the majority of the municipal records the archives does hold are contained in RG 15. This record group contains smatterings of original material as

well as microfilm copies of some material from approximately 19 rural municipalities and other communities, including Winnipeg, Brandon, the municipalities of Beautiful Plain, Shell River, Minnedosa, St. Boniface and the town of Boissevain. Some Winnipeg material is also held in manuscript groups of individuals.

This tendency toward centralization can also be seen in Saskatchewan. Until very recently the records of the City of Saskatoon were held and administered by the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB). The records of the City of Regina are still in the care of the SAB. This unique cooperative arrangement occurred as a result of the development of records management programs in these two cities in the 1980s. The Saskatchewan Archives Board helped to develop retention and disposal schedules for the two cities. This led the cities to enter into a contract with the SAB to make it trustee of their records.²⁶

These early policies of centralization are beginning to reverse themselves. Mark Walsh reports:

Some recognition is being given to the idea that maintaining custody in the location in which the records keeping activity took place adds a physical context which can provide insight into the spatial relations and other aspects of the subject under examination.²⁷

Haworth suggested that the National Archives could promote this policy:

Indeed, this could become a major policy of the Public Archives of Canada: a programme designed to stimulate the growth of local archives similar to the programme of decentralization announced by the Canadian government in 1972 for its National Museums.²⁸

Some of the provincial archives have also taken up the idea of decentralizing archives. The provincial archives in Ontario is an example. As the then provincial archivist, Ian Wilson, stated in 1990:

We are beginning to see ourselves as a trustee for local communities, custodians of the record until such time as they are able to receive and give it the necessary care. We are also refusing to make ourselves the 'dumping ground' for municipalities which do not want to go through the process of setting up proper records management programmes.²⁹

The reasoning behind the turn to decentralization is that provincial archives cannot possibly preserve all of the municipal records from their respective jurisdictions. The amount of records which municipalities produce is large and only a very few could be preserved if provincial archives had responsibility for them.³⁰

While the problem of centralization of municipal records has begun to abate, there are other serious concerns, such as conservation of these records. Decades of neglect are very quickly catching up with municipal records. The state of municipal records in both Canada and the United States is very similar. American archival educator Richard Cox points out: "The deplorable condition of local government records in the 1980s differs little from their condition in the early twentieth century."³¹ Canadian municipalities have tended to store their records in inadequate facilities such as attics, basements and long forgotten vacant buildings. This has meant that records have been exposed to extreme conditions daily. In such cases, there is no adequate ventilation and records face the extremes of heat, cold and humidity. In basements, they face damp conditions and run the risk of destruction in floods. Rodents, other wildlife and insects can very easily make their home among these records as well as use them for nesting material. The lack of centralized control can lead to theft of the records and the possibility of unauthorized destruction of records.³² As T.H.B. Symons pointed out in 1975 in To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies: "Documents survive by chance, having somehow escaped wastebaskets, rats, moisture, disintegration and house-

cleaning."³³ There are, of course, other reasons why municipal archives have been slow to develop.

Until the 1970s historians were generally uninterested in local history or the valuable records which local communities had in their possession. This may have contributed to the slow development of municipal archives. Says one report: "Professional historians' lack of interest in local history may have contributed to the delay in establishing municipal archives It was not until historians began to study social history that local sources were recognized as being important."³⁴ The upsurge in the use of municipal records by researchers and the resulting establishment of municipal archives began in the 1970s. This can readily be connected to the increased popularity of urban history and social history:³⁵

This new awareness of the importance of archives was part of the general upsurge of interest in our history which occurred in the early 1970's as nation and province matured and as regional and local communities, public and private institutions came to reflect on their past.³⁶

It is easy to understand why historians may not have used such sources in the past. An almost Catch-22 situation existed. These valuable municipal records were not really accessible for use by anyone, including municipal officials. As a result, as Edwin Welch pointed out about the Ottawa records: "Most articles on the history of the City quote from local newspaper files or items at the Public Archives rather than the original sources at City Hall."³⁷ Historians did and still do have an obligation to act as advocates for these valuable sources.

Rather than acting as advocates for the development of municipal archives historians have, until recently, undervalued and neglected municipal records:

Even the academic community, in large part, has not grasped the absolutely fundamental importance of archives to the future of Canadian scholarship. If this is true of many of those who are actively engaged in education, how much larger still must be the lack of awareness among the wider public?³⁸

But historians not only need to start using these municipal records more often, they also have an obligation to point out to municipalities that they have a responsibility to preserve their historical records.³⁹ It would appear that historians' attitudes towards the development of municipal archives have begun to change since the study of urban history developed:

Despite historians' support for a central approach in order to bring efficiency to their research efforts, one might question how much their own perspective was changing as national themes gave way to regional and localized studies, particularly in the so-called new social history.⁴⁰

Archivists have also not done a good job of promoting the role of archives in their communities until the 1970s. It appears that archivists and the archival profession in Canada and the United States have had a distinct lack of interest (until recently) in municipal archives and records. As Bohdan Zelenyj has pointed out, this situation is beginning to change and archivists are beginning to act:

Yet as unsettling and disheartening as the lack of viable programmes may be, it would be wholly inaccurate to characterize the contemporary local archival scene as one dominated by apathy, inactivity and general stagnation, bereft of professional standards and practitioners, lacking in vision, and accordingly for the most part devoid of any measure of success.⁴¹

At the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) in 1996 a report was presented on the association's Municipal Archivists Special Interest Section (MASIS):

MASIS was reformed at last year's ACA conference in Regina. Ivan Saunders and Erik Anderson were appointed co-chairs (pro tem). Since

then, ties have been re-established with other municipal archivists and a mailing list of members has been compiled.⁴²

Municipal governments are also responsible for the slow development of municipal archives. Many have failed to recognize their duty to preserve the valuable records that have been and are being created everyday. Municipalities also have an obligation to ensure that once an archives program is put in place it remains adequately funded. As well, because many municipalities have not taken up records management, individual departments have been left to care for their records on their own. In most instances municipal officials are already overworked and therefore the care and preservation of records has not been a top priority and records are indiscriminately destroyed. But municipal officials must realize that they too have an obligation to be accountable to the public they serve. As S. Silsby points out:

...(Government) not only affects the lives of all citizens but inherent in that contact between government and citizens is a complex interdependence of rights and obligations, of mutual responsibility and accountability...⁴³

It is very difficult to be accountable to the public when access to government records is difficult. "National, provincial and municipal archives," notes Andrew Lipchak, "foster public accountability by selecting, preserving and providing access to key government records."⁴⁴

Municipal neglect of archives is illustrated by the fact that municipal records have sometimes even been "rescued" from landfill sites. For example, City of Calgary records were retrieved from a landfill site by the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives in 1960. A city official with a sense of history contacted the Glenbow. Eighteen linear feet of correspondence, reports, petitions, agreements, financial and general papers dating back

to 1886 were rescued.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the City of Calgary did not learn from its mistakes. Again in 1962 files and papers which had been stored at the Glenmore Dam and which contained Waterworks Department records and copies of City Council minutes from the 1930s and 1940s were being readied for disposal. A concerned city official called the Glenbow-Alberta Institute to prevent this from happening again.⁴⁶ The City of Vancouver also faced a similarly embarrassing situation in 1969. Vancouver did not have a systematic records management program. The vast amounts of paper being produced led to problems with the appraisal of records. It also meant that the records were not being transferred from departments on a regular basis. Archivist Robin Keirstead described this uneven process as very "hit-and-miss"⁴⁷ In October 1969 a large number of city records were discovered by two young people in an empty lot in Burnaby. The records documented some aspects of the city's early history. It was surmised that they had been dumped to save space in a city department office. The records were quickly retrieved by a city official.⁴⁸ It is unknown what happened to them after that incident.

Weak municipal records programs have meant that early municipal archives have had limited mandates. A number of municipal archives in Canada have collected all kinds of records and items that were of a private nature. This gave them an initial *raison d'être*. In the early days of municipal and other archives there did not seem to be a problem with collecting materials other than municipal government records. As the CCA has pointed out:

A major problem lay in the very concept of archives. Since archives originally were not established to care for the records of their creating agencies, they sought to acquire the most important and interesting documents from various sources The idea of jurisdictional or territorial rights had not developed nor was the establishment of other collecting institutions encouraged.⁴⁹

These records were valued primarily because they were related to the community's history. A prominent example of this is the work of Major J.S. Matthews, who was the archivist for the City of Vancouver from 1932 until his death in 1970.⁵⁰ As the CCA report, Canadian Archives in 1992 points out:

The Archives consisted primarily of manuscripts, memorabilia and ephemera which were valuable for historical and cultural research. However, they did not include official city records.⁵¹

The Municipal Archives in the Windsor Public Library has also collected private records for quite some time.⁵² There is much to be gained by a mandate that permits acquiring archival records of both the municipal government and the private sector. A balanced approach is necessary, however. The City of Toronto Archives complements its holdings of municipal records with other material that illustrates the city's history:

The Archives is more than a repository for municipal government records In order to enhance the research value of government records, the Archives actively acquires maps, documents, photographs, architectural plans, fine art and artifacts that pertain to the City's historical experience.⁵³

Ottawa has also had a policy of collecting other records related to the city's history.⁵⁴

Two recently established municipal archives in Ontario collect private sector material related to their communities' history. The first is the archives of the City of Vaughan. It has a mandate to acquire, preserve and make available records of its creating agency as well as fonds of private provenance related to all aspects of the community's past.⁵⁵ The archives (as of 1993) held 350 accessions of private material ranging in date from 1806 to 1985.⁵⁶ The need for balance is still not always recognized when municipalities create archives, however. The Dufferin County Archives was established in 1994. When the archives opened it did not yet have a formal agreement to house the

county's records. It did collect many other types of records that related to the area's history.⁵⁷

Although collecting other materials seems like a good idea because many private records are preserved, it may well mean that the official records of municipalities wallow in neglect. It also means that when the budget "crunch" comes, such archives may be vulnerable because they are not concentrating more on the records of their sponsoring agency.

The limited commitment of Canadian municipalities to archives can also be seen in the fact that some Canadian municipal archives have developed because a prominent and persistent citizen has taken the initiative – not the municipality. The strong presence of Major Matthews played a significant role in ensuring that a city archives was established in Vancouver in 1935. Matthews, however, kept the archives from modernizing in any significant way. John Archer observes that under Matthews the archives "never did fulfill the traditional role of public record office at the civic level. It remained the embodiment of its creators' individual concept of what the City Archives should be."⁵⁸ During his tenure as City Archivist Major Matthews showed little concern about the official records of Vancouver. The records of the city government of Vancouver were not adequately cared for by the archives. Keirstead adds:

While the archives provided the Mayor with historical information about certain events, the official records which documented past civic policies and activities remained scattered in the originating offices or in various, often inadequate, storage facilities.⁵⁹

There are a couple of examples of cooperative arrangements between municipalities and other institutions. The City of Kingston and Queen's University Archives have developed a cooperative arrangement. Although the Queen's Archives

received city records as early as 1961, a formal agreement was not reached until 1973. An official city archives at Queen's University was established as a result of a tercentenary project to renovate the city hall. The city records, stored at that time in the basement jail cells in city hall, had to be moved to more secure storage at the University during this project.⁶⁰ By the late 1970s this arrangement was being praised as a cooperative arrangement which worked very well for both parties. Queen's University Archivist Anne MacDermaid points out:

The shared-quarters arrangement with Queen's Archives appears to have succeeded completely with both users and staff benefiting (sic) City minutes have been used hand in hand with private papers, institutional records with citizens' petitions, assessment rolls with architectural drawings and the regional photograph collection. The City and University have thus joined successfully to provide a total research resource in this regional collection.⁶¹

Another example of a cooperative arrangement with a municipality can be found in Windsor, Ontario. The City of Windsor has had a policy which only permitted city records to be released to a municipal agency. In 1983 the Windsor Public Library agreed to establish a municipal archives.⁶² Although this arrangement has been of benefit, former city archivist Mark Walsh points out that there have been some problems. He believes the archives would be better served under the jurisdiction of the City Clerk's department.⁶³ As Walsh goes on to point out, however, the existing arrangement has been noteworthy:

The fact that there is a municipal archives in a city with no other full-time, staffed archival repositories is, however, notable. That it has flourished in an archivally underdeveloped area is truly remarkable and indicative of the support which archival activities have received from both the library, administration and municipal government.⁶⁴

The final example of a cooperative arrangement is that of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute and the City of Calgary. Although the City of Calgary (as of 1981) now has its

own archives, this was not always the case. As was pointed out above, the Glenbow initially acquired records from the City of Calgary in a rescue operation.⁶⁵ March 15, 1973 saw the designation of the Glenbow as the archives for the City of Calgary.⁶⁶

Cooperative arrangements between municipalities and other institutions can be of value. They do allow greater access to municipal records by a wider audience. But, one must ask, what happens when the documentation explosion within municipalities reaches these archival institutions which have taken on the task of caring for the records? Will these cooperative arrangements break down?

Municipal archives in Quebec may be the exception to the general rule in Canada. They have developed somewhat differently from other municipal archives in this country. Archives in Quebec developed early this century and the level of development seems to have been much higher:

Generally speaking a more systematic approach to the management and preservation of municipal records is practised in Quebec and stems from provincial legislation on archives enacted in 1983. The provisions relating to municipal records have created a relationship between provincial and municipal authorities unique among Canadian provinces.⁶⁷

The City of Montreal created *la division des Archives* in March 1913.⁶⁸ Today, this archive "emphasizes active city records management and operates a records centre and an extensive microfilming programme."⁶⁹ Quebec City opened its archives in 1924.⁷⁰

Sous la responsabilité immédiate du greffier, le nouvel archiviste entreprend de regrouper et de classer les documents produits par l'administration municipale depuis l'incorporation, en 1833.⁷¹

As a 1992 CCA report points out, the Quebec City Archives "is the most comprehensive municipal archives and records management programme in the province."⁷² Ginette Noel

has done a survey of archives in Quebec. The survey has had some interesting results that may be applicable to the rest of Canada:

De l'analyse des données recueillies au cours de notre enquête, il ressort que la traitement des documents municipaux est mieux structuré dans les villes à forte concentration de population. Les localités de moindre envergure accordent davantage la priorité au classement des documents actifs et à la préservation des archives essentielles qu'à l'utilisation du microfilm, l'élaboration d'un calendrier de conservation ou à la mise sur pied d'un centre de pré-archivage.⁷³

This study may very well have some common features that can be extrapolated for the rest of Canada. Perhaps the larger centres are able to preserve their records more readily because they have the resources needed to do so, resources which smaller centres do not have available to them. Perhaps the reason archives have developed more easily in Quebec may be for reasons which Archer pointed out in his 1969 thesis. According to Archer, centres in Quebec have preserved their records more readily because civic leaders have a greater sense of their own history:

It is fortunate that civic leaders and administrators in Quebec City, Montreal, Granby, Sherbrooke and other municipalities have possessed a sense of history. Fires and floods have caused the destruction of some records in Montreal but the bulk of the civic records have been preserved.⁷⁴

A number of benefits arise from the development of municipal archives. Municipal archives are of great importance as they are the only institutions that can adequately and properly preserve many of the most important records for local history.

Without local archives there can be no local studies. Federal and provincial departments may generate documentation on local governments, but these sources will provide at best a partial image of interplay of personalities and events in municipal government, whether rural or urban. Local archives will increasingly be recognised as an integral part of archival development in Canada.⁷⁵

There would be definite savings for municipalities if time spent on searching for poorly managed records and on high priced storage space in offices could be reduced through proper records management programs:

In the field of municipal archives there is a growing appreciation of the advantage of records management programs. The savings in storage costs and clerical staff time to be gained seem not to be appreciated even by those elected officials who see no real income for the municipality from a records program.⁷⁶

The most obvious benefit of municipal archives to many municipal administrators is the records management function which they can promote and assist. Municipal archives can no longer simply be viewed as institutions for valuable historical records. They must also be viewed by archivists and government officials as an administrative necessity.⁷⁷ This idea of administrative necessity will appeal more readily to municipal government officials:

For an institution to undertake to establish a records and archives programme there must exist, first and foremost, a strong sense of need for such a programme. This sense of need is unlikely to be inspired by the lack of a repository for historical records. It will come, if at all, from the recognition that there is a lack of control over information vital for the daily operation of the organization.⁷⁸

The first step, then, is to make sure that municipal officials are "aware of the importance of their records" and "the need to preserve them."⁷⁹ In many cases this may be an uphill battle:

It seems clear that few governments have adopted a consistent policy towards the retention of these public records. One 'generous estimate' puts the number of North American municipalities with records management or archives programs at 1 per cent.⁸⁰

There are, of course, other benefits from using and developing local or municipal archives. As Haworth points out, local archives will not only stimulate cultural and

educational interest in local history, but also in archives.⁸¹ He adds: "Communities which are highly aware of the role of an archives are more inclined to deposit their documentary heritage with an agency in which they have confidence through easy and immediate contact."⁸² It will also be possible for the provincial archives to provide municipal archives with copies of previously acquired local material.⁸³ Or, indeed, such municipal records may even be transferred to the appropriate municipal archives.

In Canada it appears to be essential to have some type of legislation to encourage municipalities to develop archival programs:

It should be pointed out that the state of these institutions and of the records themselves depends to a considerable degree on the legislation governing municipalities. In most instances city clerks, on whose shoulders the care of the records usually rests, are too preoccupied with daily tasks to seek out such further duties as the establishment of archival policies would entail.⁸⁴

Access to information legislation seems to be a possible prompt to proper care and preservation of valuable archival records. Such legislation has been passed in Ontario (among many other jurisdictions) and requires that municipalities improve management of their current records. This can also provide an opening for discussion of better management of their archival records. Access legislation may ensure, as Lipchak pointed out, that:

municipalities, [and] local boards will have an opportunity to learn what archives have been telling them all along, that records which have not been adequately identified, organized and preserved, cannot be accessed.⁸⁵

The City of Vancouver has also had to deal with freedom of information in the late 1980s and early 1990s:

From the Archives' point of view, there was initial surprise that a demand had arisen for an access to information by-law. Behind the by-law, however, lay not disgruntled scholars' thwarted research, but more

fundamental issues of governmental accountability and freedom of information.⁸⁶

This was a monumental step forward for Vancouver and for municipal archives generally. These types of archives normally look to the provincial government to pass legislation first before having to deal with it.

It is important that archivists and archives continue to use the idea of administrative necessity to show the importance of their role in the organization they serve. But it must also be remembered that in the past archivists have not always used this to their advantage:

Archives and archivists have not been 'street smart.' With notable exceptions, archivists as a group have not yet learned what museums, art galleries and other non-profit groups have become well-practiced in: promoting themselves.... Like those other bodies, archives cannot reach their professional and public service objectives without aggressively arguing their value to the community and developing influential users and supporters.⁸⁷

It must be remembered that an archives, especially a municipal one, depends on its parent organization for funding and it must daily show its usefulness.⁸⁸ "In the final analysis," says American archivist and historian H.G. Jones, "local records management will be as good or as bad as the county or municipality chooses it to be."⁸⁹ There are a number of examples of cities that have implemented successful records management programs. They include Etobicoke, Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Windsor. Walsh points out of Windsor that:

One of the tests of the archives program established in Windsor has been the efficient retrieval of information for the public and the City. In this area there is no substitute for sound archival practice. Proper standards of physical and intellectual control over the documents must be maintained.⁹⁰

Once again an archives must provide easy access to the records it preserves. The problems of municipal archives do have some possible solutions.

As has been shown, there are a number of problems and obstacles that archives in general and municipal archives specifically have had to face. There are a number of solutions that have been offered to resolve this situation. Archives cannot handle this monumental task alone. It is extremely difficult for archives to deal with the increased needs of users when their resources are shrinking.⁹¹ A number of reports have suggested setting up regional archives and regional networks of archives. Among others these include the Symons Report of 1975⁹² and the Wilson Report of 1980.⁹³

Preserving historical records is no longer a matter of rescuing the remnants of a distant past. Today it is a question of building a national network of repositories spread across the country to preserve the records of contemporary society that will be the archives of the future.⁹⁴

But we must be cautious in advocating this type of approach as it is highly unlikely that archivists have the time or energy to involve themselves in networking. A CCA survey "found that most archives lack the resources and staff to keep their own house in order, much less to look externally to network with other archives."⁹⁵ Others have suggested that an interdisciplinary approach to archives is needed. If the problems of local archives are to be resolved, historians, archivists and local government officials need to work together:

The implications for the future availability of local records are serious and should concern archivists and researchers alike.... Much can be achieved by making sure that municipal officials are aware of the importance of the records in their care and the consequent need to preserve them.⁹⁶

For local archives to develop and flourish a change in attitude on the part of government and society in general is necessary: "What is needed most of all is a change

of attitude on the part of governments, a new recognition of the central place that heritage must have in cultural policy.”⁹⁷ Many municipal governments still have not yet embraced the administrative necessity of local archives. It is also important that federal and provincial governments begin to realize that the funding must be directed to local governments if local archives are to survive: “Until such time as the higher authorities are prepared to see local areas receive their share of the money needed to preserve archival resources, all local archives will continue staggering beneath the crushing burdens of lack of space, staff, and facilities.”⁹⁸ The likelihood of this happening in the near future are slim if Ontario is any example. Provincial archives have begun to encourage the development of records management programs and records retention legislation. But, in most cases, an enabling by-law is necessary to implement the law. Historians still, to some extent, resist the idea of local, scattered archives. This attitude must change so that everyone can work together to save these valuable records.

The story of municipal archives in Canada is both complicated and short. It is hoped that this overview has contributed to a better understanding of these types of archives. Municipal archives have been neglected and under-funded for far too long. They have been undervalued by historians and municipal governments. Archivists have not invested sufficient attention in the care of municipal records. This has led to a crisis in the preservation of these records. These valuable resources may, in many instances, no longer be available for use. The loss of these irreplaceable records is tragic.

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Chapter Two

The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch: A Case Study

City of Winnipeg Archives are virtually non-existent apart from masses of uncatalogued materials stored in boxes and envelopes in the basement of the City Council Building, and one City clerk who has the title of 'archivist'. The materials are not available to the public or scholars, there are no facilities for their use, no staff, no money provided for such purposes.¹

The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch of the City Clerk's Department has suffered some very serious growing pains during its fairly short life. The history of the branch began much later than in many Canadian cities. Today, the facility serves records management purposes primarily with archival functions as an afterthought. However, it is on the verge of becoming a very good municipal archives.

The need for an archives and records storage facility for the city of Winnipeg records was first discussed in 1977. A report to the city council on this issue led to the first steps by the city towards its establishment. Within the report to council was a discussion of the reasons why such a facility was needed as well as some of the benefits to be reaped by its establishment. Once the facility was deemed necessary, it was placed under the control of the City Clerk's Department as a one year pilot project with a number of objectives. These objectives were met and the project continued. It was decided in 1979 that the microfilming functions of the city should also be transferred to the Archives and Records Control Branch. The facility has tried over the years to demonstrate its usefulness to the City of Winnipeg.

But one wonders just how committed the City of Winnipeg was and is to an archives and to a records management program. The best example of this is the late hiring (1994) of an Archivist despite legislation compelling the city to do so much earlier. The Archives was, however, seemingly committed to preserve Winnipeg's historical records. Numerous attempts were made to gain access to modest amounts of grant monies for such purposes. The city did seem to be committed to providing access to city documents. This is clearly illustrated by its Access to Information policy and access by-law. Unfortunately, the efforts of the city and the staff at the Archives did not solve some very serious flaws in the records management system.

A city Ombudsman was appointed in 1994. Her attempts to resolve complaints about city service by the public were hindered greatly by a fundamentally flawed records management system. Instead of providing better access to records, the system failed utterly to do so. The recognition of these problems led to a 1995 report by Lea Frame which clearly demonstrates that records management and archives services must improve very quickly. But not much progress has yet been made towards the implementation of a proper archives program, although the city has once again renewed its commitment to an archives and records and information management system. Access to the archives is possible. Although the archives is still far too little known in the city, more people appear to be using the facility for research purposes. An Access Guide has been produced by the archives which should allow researchers better knowledge of the current records which departments control. But this Access Guide does not (and was never intended to) include the archival records. Proper archival description of the records is still required.

That said, the archives has recently acquired the records of the Pan American Games Society which document the 1999 games in Winnipeg. The archives also helped initiate a comprehensive needs assessment by prominent Canadian archivist Terry Cook. Cook's report ("In the Public Trust: A Strategic Plan for the Archives and Records Management Services in the City of Winnipeg") was submitted on 29 November 1999 and approved by city council on 26 January 2000. Although it has not been possible to incorporate further discussion of this very recent report into this thesis, it can be said that the Cook report augurs well for the city archives. Council approval of the report authorizes the City Clerk to reassign resources in that department to enable the archives to lead a reinvigorated records management program and offer a much improved archival service.

This chapter will illustrate how a municipal archives grows, develops and adapts to its ever-changing environment. The City of Winnipeg offers an example of a municipal archives which is beginning to meet the challenges set before it. Whether it succeeds still remains to be seen. Further work is yet to be done before it reaches its goals.

The idea of an archives and records control centre was first introduced to the Winnipeg City Council in a report of the Committee on Works and Operations dated September 27, 1977. The report recommended that the Carnegie Library Building at 380 William Avenue be considered as a site for a city archives and museum.² There were a number of reasons why an archives and records storage facility was deemed necessary. An amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act made the establishment of a centralized archives and records storage facility a necessity.³ Due to the amalgamation of Winnipeg and

several adjacent municipalities in 1971, a records management problem was created.⁴ As the report goes on to point out, because of this “a considerable amount of records and artifacts are once more in danger of being lost or inadvertently destroyed in the upcoming reshuffle of communities.”⁵ During the 1972 restructuring of the City of Winnipeg, records were stored in a number of places around the newly reconfigured city. The records were stored in space that could have been used more efficiently:

This material is, in the main, of historic value and in some cases of significant monetary value and was known by the then Secretary-Treasurers or Clerks of the various areas. In the reorganization, some of the responsibility and intimate knowledge of this material has been lost.⁶

The report acknowledged that the city’s storage areas were full: “Most of the storage areas of the City are at a state wherein they cannot take any more material; furthermore, the stored material is taking up storage space which could be more effectively used as active-use-areas.”⁷ It was further noted that there were four major areas being used for records storage: the basement of the Council Building; the Goldin Building; the Carpiquet Barracks Building; and the old bus garage at the rear of the Fort Garry Hotel.⁸ The city wished to use this space for other purposes, therefore, a new storage facility needed to be secured. As well, a number of departments were using the same storage areas thus creating difficulties in determining which department records belonged to. All of this resulted in retention of records that were useless or of no long-term value:

When materials or files are deposited in these storage areas, access for records retrieval and reference is maintained but sorting and destruction of useless materials is seemingly never achieved. The departments depositing the materials cannot afford the time of the senior administrative staff to review and dispose of excess materials and to classify and document valued or historic materials.⁹

A central facility was expected to serve records management functions. The report concluded "that records management is a pressing need in the city organization at this time, to manage properly the growing problem of archives, records storage and retrieval."¹⁰ As was pointed out in chapter one, the recognition of an administrative need is an important step in the establishment of a municipal archives.

There were a number of reasons for setting up an archives and records control facility in the William Avenue building. As the report points out:

In addition to the provision of space for this material, the space at the Carnegie Building would permit the integration of the various community artifacts and historic documents with the 'old' City of Winnipeg original documents and artifacts, as well as space in which this interesting material may be displayed.¹¹

In 1978 the Archives and Records Control Branch in the Carnegie Building was placed under the authority of the City Clerk's Department as a one year pilot project.¹² The project was to be undertaken through the management of a steering committee that was to develop policies and procedures and deal with any problems which may have arisen. This committee was to have as members the City Clerk, the Chairman of the Documents Committee, a representative from the Civic Properties Divisions of Works and Operations and a representative from the city libraries.¹³

This pilot project had a number of objectives. It was to centralize records storage at minimum cost and with maximum benefit. It was to identify records located in the various storage areas around the city so that some idea of the volume of material could be determined. It was to create a cataloguing or index system for retrieval of material.

Finally, it was to "identify associated problems and recommend solutions."¹⁴ This project was to be undertaken by four clerks from the City Clerk's Department:¹⁵

Mr. Sanger (the 'City Archivist') said the four clerks will go through the material and catalogue it. Before throwing any document away, they must consult with the department from which it comes and also get permission from a documents retention committee which will be headed by the city auditor, he said. Only this committee can authorize the destruction of documents.¹⁶

During the course of this pilot project the decision was also made to transfer the microfilming function for the city to the Archives and Records Control Branch:

With the introduction of the Records Management and Archives Centre at the Old Carnegie Library Building at 380 William Avenue, and the cycling of record materials through the centre, it would seem that the re-location of the microfilm unit to that location would simplify the handling process of microfilm materials in a much more orderly and simplified manner. The materials would have ample storage space until microfilmed and proofed with a minimum of handling or continued involvement by initiating departments. Ample space exists in the building to organize and process the operation.¹⁷

According to a report of the Executive Policy Committee of city council dated November 15, 1979, the pilot project was considered a success. The report said that, "The Archival and Records Control has demonstrated that it is a long overdue and necessary service."¹⁸ It had demonstrated its importance by transferring records to lower cost storage space therefore freeing up active use areas in departments. It provided more accurate retrieval of materials. It had reduced the amount of material actually kept by one third. It opened up filing cabinets to be reused for active files.¹⁹ As a result of these successes it was recommended in the report of the Executive Policy Committee that the Archives and Records Control Branch should be established as a permanent branch of the City Clerk's Department.²⁰ While the operations were successful in achieving their stated goals it was noted that:

While a large amount of valuable records have been centralized, there still remains a large quantity of records to be centralized. It is estimated that approximately one more year is required before the Records Section can move into its role of storage, microfilming and destroying redundant records.²¹

Despite the development of the Carnegie Building as a location for the city's archives and other records, the city was to show little real commitment to its archival program. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s the city did not hire a professional archivist. The Winnipeg Free Press reported that "Mr. Sanger said there are no plans to hire a professional archivist, but the city hopes to train its own staff in archival work by sending them on courses of study."²² The city did consider the need for an archival facility at a City Council meeting dated June 14, 1978. However, it was not recognized as a necessary function at that time: "While it is the City's intent to preserve and display archival material, it appears that the present priority is the establishment of a Records Storage Centre, for which sufficient expertise appears to be available in the present staff of the City Clerk's Department."²³ The need for professional archival staff was not entirely unappreciated. The Board of Commissioners proposed in 1982 that the city "reconsider the function of the Archives and Record Control Branch and the demonstrated need for a professional archivist on either a full or part time capacity."²⁴ Nothing was done, however.

It was not until 1994 that the city once again began to look seriously at hiring archival staff. During the major reorganization of the city in 1994 the contract position of City Archivist was posted internally. It was only open to current employees of the city. It is quite obvious that the city still did not have a real understanding of what it meant to have a professionally trained archivist on staff, however. The qualifications for this position illustrate that the city still, at this late date, did not have a true sense of what an

archives was and what an archivist did in the course of his or her work. One of the minimum qualifications for this position was “University Degree in Business/Commerce, or Library Science with courses in history or an acceptable equivalent. (Certified Records Manager designation would be an asset).”²⁵ It still appeared that the city was more interested in the records management function than the archives. On the other hand, the duties of this position do at least acknowledge archival duties:

The City Records Manager and Archivist will take a leading role in the planning, development and implementation of an Archive or municipal records and a corporate records management program. Initially the Manager will plan and conduct a feasibility study and then oversee the implementation of programs. The Manager will research and formulate requirements related to public archives with a highly developed automated records management system. The Manager will liaise with internal and external resources, including members of the archival community.²⁶

Provincial legislation has always played a significant role in the way the City of Winnipeg operates. The safekeeping of records and the establishment of an archival program are no exception to this. As in many municipalities in Canada, the Clerk of the city council has been charged in Winnipeg with responsibility for safekeeping certain types of records as well as making them available. This means that the responsibilities for records management and archives are in the hands of the City Clerk’s Department.

Over the years various pieces of legislation and by-laws have governed records retention and destruction in the City of Winnipeg. In 1955, provincial legislation was passed which contained sections dealing with the retention and destruction of municipal records. The most important provincial legislation to deal with records was passed in 1989. Two acts clearly changed the direction of records and information management in the City of Winnipeg. The City of Winnipeg Act and The City of Winnipeg Amendment

Act have provided direction for the city in a number of areas. For the first time, the city was legally obliged to appoint a City Archivist. The legislation also clearly pointed out the duties of the Archivist. The Records Committee was also to be re-established. The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act provided for the retention and safekeeping of historical documents as well as the destruction of others according to specific schedules. The results of these two pieces of legislation are telling. The City of Winnipeg had at least authorized the creation of a professional records and information management system.

Traditionally and legally, the official records keeper for a municipality has been the Clerk of the Council. This represents the influence of Ontario precedents on the government of the city. Alan Artibise explains that “One of the more noteworthy facts about the Act of Incorporation was that it was based on the Ontario system.... The slate of elective and appointive officials and the powers of the mayor were also based on Ontario examples.”²⁷ In the case of the City of Winnipeg the role of the City Clerk as records keeper was set down as early as 1902. In that year, “An Act to provide for a Charter for the City of Winnipeg and to repeal all Acts and parts of Acts in conflict therewith” was passed. This act clearly sets out the duties and responsibilities of the City Clerk. The clerk

...shall keep the books, records and accounts acted upon by the Council, and also the originals or certified copies of all by-laws and of all minutes of the proceedings of the Council, all of which he shall so keep in his office or in the place appointed by by-law of the Council.²⁸

This act also required that the clerk make certain documents in his possession available to any person: “Any person may inspect any of the particular aforesaid, as well as lists of electors, poll books and other documents in the possession of or under the control of the

Clerk, at all seasonable times..."²⁹ Later legislation in 1940, 1959 and 1971 show little or no change in these sections.³⁰

In 1955 "An Act to amend The Municipal Act" was passed. This piece of legislation contained provisions dealing with the retention and destruction of municipal records. Section 15 had five schedules that dealt with records and documents which were to be retained permanently; those which could be destroyed after specific retention periods, and records which could be retained or destroyed at the discretion of the head of the council and the secretary-treasurer of the municipal corporation.³¹ An Act of 1970 (Chapter 100) also dealt with retention and disposal schedules for the City of Winnipeg.³² It also, for the first time, directed the City of Winnipeg to pass a by-law with provisions for the retention and destruction of records. Those records which were to be retained permanently included, audit reports, assessment rolls, by-laws, cemetery records, committee reports, general ledger, general journal, list of electors, one copy of minutes, building permits, municipal plans, building inspection reports, subsidiary ledgers, tax sale records, tax rolls and vital statistics records.³³ Major changes to legislation dealing with the City of Winnipeg and its documents did not occur until 1989.

In 1989 the Manitoba Legislature passed the two most important pieces of legislation affecting the preservation of historical records by the City of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg Act and the City of Winnipeg Amendment Act. Almost four years of consultation took place before these acts were finally passed. The main thrust behind the new legislation, the City of Winnipeg Act Review Committee Final Report, and the public consultation were intended to make Winnipeg city government more accountable:

Openness in government and the availability of information are prerequisites to informed debate about civic issues. Disclosure of the information upon which City decisions are made will enhance the legitimacy or acceptability of the decisions. The greater the secrecy, the greater the difficulty of gaining public acceptance, and probably the worse the decisions.³⁴

The result has been comprehensive legislation that, for the first time, clearly defines records and the role an archivist is to play within the civic administration as well as sections that dealt with access to information.

In 1984 a Manitoba government order-in-council appointed The City of Winnipeg Act Review Committee.³⁵ This committee had a number of responsibilities but the one of importance here is that which resulted in significant changes to the preservation and use of records and information in the City of Winnipeg. The committee that produced its report in 1986 made a number of recommendations designed to improve management of the city's records and archives. The report points out that:

The thrust of these recommendations is to place responsibility for a central city management function – records and information – in the hands of professional staff. The current ad hoc measures for safekeeping would be replaced by a formal, dynamic responsibility for measures, mechanisms and policies to ensure adequate protection of records and availability of information.³⁶

The Review Committee made a number of recommendations of significance. It recommended that the City of Winnipeg Act be amended to require Winnipeg City Council to adopt an access to information by-law. This would clearly establish how the city would provide for the public's right to information.³⁷ Other recommendations included the appointment of an Ombudsman who would "review denials of access to City documents upon request."³⁸ The report went on to recommend the establishment of a

Records Committee which would "be responsible for and report on the management and condition of records keeping and information handling, and to determine suitable retention and disposal authority procedures for all city records."³⁹ The committee also recommended the appointment of a City Archivist.

The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act of 1989 contains a section concerning "Records Management."⁴⁰ This section covers such things as the passage of a by-law "to provide for the management, retention, safe-keeping, disposition and destruction of records."⁴¹ The reasoning behind this section is simple. The committee believed that records management was not operating as it should and therefore could be improved:

We are persuaded by these presentations, and by our own observations, that Winnipeg's records management system is not equal to the standard which should be in place. We also observe that the benefits of a modern records management system in terms of cost savings and increased and efficient access to records have yet to be recognized by the City. The responsibility of the municipal government to secure and preserve valuable records and to make these available to citizens must be recognized in explicit terms.⁴²

Section 77 also discusses the appointment and duties of a City Archivist. The duties of the archivist were to include the establishment and administration of a records management system for the city.⁴³ The archivist was to organize and administer the archives for the city. The archives was to preserve records designated by the Records Committee as having enduring significance.⁴⁴ The archivist was to acquire and preserve records related to the history of the city.⁴⁵ Research was to be promoted and conducted by the Archivist into the history of the city.⁴⁶ A guide and index to the records were to be prepared, published and made available to the general public.⁴⁷ The archivist was also required to perform other duties as required by the council.⁴⁸

Section 77 also established a Records Committee, which was to be made up of the City Archivist, the City Clerk, the City Treasurer, the City Auditor, and the City Solicitor along with two citizens of Winnipeg.⁴⁹ This committee was to "make recommendations to council, and implement policies and procedures approved by council for the management, retention, safe-keeping, disposition and destruction of records in all departments, and report annually to council."⁵⁰

Chapter 10 of the 1989 City of Winnipeg Act contains a section dealing with "City Documents."⁵¹ There were a number of reasons for the inclusion of this section.

The Act does not define city records. No part of the city administration (excepting the City Clerk, and only by inference) is charged with specific responsibility for the management of records and information. No explicit policy on the retention of records is administered consistently throughout the civic bureaucracy. The City Clerk leaves the disposition and disposal of records to the judgement of the Provincial Archivist.⁵²

Section 669(1) calls for the passage of a by-law "for the permanent retention and safekeeping of the city documents and records of the nature and kind described in Schedule 1 to this section...."⁵³ Schedule 1 includes: agreements; easements and awards affecting the city; audit reports; assessment rolls; by-laws; cemetery records; committee reports; general ledger; general journal; list of electors (one copy); minutes; building permits; city plans; building inspection reports; subsidiary ledgers; tax sale records; tax rolls; and, vital statistics records.⁵⁴ The by-law that was to be passed would also:

Provide for the destruction of the city documents and records of the nature and kind respectively described in Schedules 2, 3 and 4, to this section, after the lapse of the period of time, and in accordance with the conditions, respectively set out in those schedules.⁵⁵

Section 669(2) called for the passage of a by-law which would "make provision for the microfilming or photographic filming of every document or record mentioned or described

of a kind or class mentioned or described in the by-law."⁵⁶ The legislation also provided for the deposit of records with the Provincial Archives in Manitoba.

The council of the city may, by by-law, direct that any of the documents and records to which reference is made in clause (1)(a) be deposited for safekeeping with The Archives and Public Records Branch of the provincial government if the Archivist of that branch has stated in writing that he desires those documents and records to be so deposited, and any documents or records deposited shall be conclusively deemed to be retained for safekeeping as provided in clause (4)(a).⁵⁷

Although the City of Winnipeg has never used this section of the Act it is significant in that it provides a way out for the city. It could place its records with the provincial archives. But this is not really a viable option for a city with as large a volume of municipal records as Winnipeg has.

Since the passage of these two pieces of legislation, the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch has made attempts to obtain grants for conservation measures for specific records and to make certain records more accessible. Given that the city's records storage facility could not really be perceived as an archives in the 1970s and 1980s, it is not surprising that the archival profession did not recognize the Archives and Records Control Branch as a genuine archives. As a result most of the grants which were applied for were denied. One grant proposal for the early 1990s is of note because its rejection illustrates the Manitoba archival profession's dissatisfaction with the city's "archival" programs. Application for the grant was made to process and microfilm the Assessment and Tax Rolls of the municipalities that made up the unified City of Winnipeg. These records were brittle and water damaged, and there was a concern that the information they contained would be lost if they were not microfilmed quickly.⁵⁸ The application was denied by the Manitoba Council of Archives on behalf of the Canadian

Council of Archives. In the letter that discusses the denial of the grant, it is mentioned that until the city hires an archivist similar applications would probably be denied:

Should the City of Winnipeg wish to apply for funding in the futur [sic] for its Archives, it is strongly recommended that the City move forward on the issues of the appointment of an archivist and of members to the Archives Committee.⁵⁹

It is also of note that the archival profession thought the city needed to differentiate between the archival and records management functions more clearly.⁶⁰ The committee also felt that the city needed to determine which documents were in the greatest need of archival care.⁶¹ All of this had to be done before any further thoughts of grant money could be undertaken. Making records accessible to the public has become one focus of the City of Winnipeg.

The City of Winnipeg has taken some steps towards making the records of city government more accessible. As early as 1981, the city had an Access to Information Policy⁶² that, although it has taken some time, resulted in the creation of a Winnipeg Access to Information Committee in December 14, 1994. This committee was to review the draft By-Law No. 6420/94 and formulate recommendations concerning changes to it.⁶³ While accessibility was a concern for the City of Winnipeg, it was not necessarily a reality.

Although it would appear that records were more easily accessible and retrievable because of the records management system which the City of Winnipeg had instituted, this apparently was not the case. Under the terms of The City of Winnipeg Act, an Ombudsman was to be appointed to act as an independent office within the city. Virginia Menzie was appointed in September 1994. She discovered that access to records in the various departments was very poor. The Winnipeg Free Press reported that Menzie said

records management was in such a poor state that she could not readily find information to respond to citizen complaints.⁶⁴ Clearly the records management system in the city was not working.

The above mentioned article and others resulting from Ms. Menzie's inability to locate information within the city files resulted in a study of the archives and records management services of the city government. The 1995 report by Lea Frame entitled Yesterday... Today... Tomorrow: Records Management & Archives in The City of Winnipeg dealt with two areas of concern. The first was records management. The report pointed out that this function was managed, at best, inconsistently across the city. It was noted that some departments were doing quite well in indexing and/or microfilming their records while others were not. Most departments were storing records at the William Avenue facility while others were not. The Frame report noted: "As a consequence, access to and retrieval of records, such as would be required under an Access to Information By-law, is difficult, time-consuming, and labour-intensive."⁶⁵ The report went on to point out the limitations of the Archives and Records Control facility:

The William Avenue facility is essentially functioning as a warehouse for inactive records, provides a basic microfilming service, and coordinates destruction of redundant records. Departments are provided access and retrieval services. The facility also houses some valuable historical records, and limited access is made available for academic research. The facility is essentially 'full', and therefore unable to handle any large volume of boxes which might be transferred in the near future. The central index is manual and should be automated.⁶⁶

The report's second concern, the archives function, identified equally serious problems:

However, the collection is scattered in various locations across the organization, and is deteriorating. The 380 William facility is essentially a

warehouse, with neither the equipment nor the staff to preserve or restore historical records. Similarly, there is no capacity to conduct research, develop displays and publications, and conduct presentations.⁶⁷

The report blamed the poor records management and archival service on budget cuts: "This has resulted in reduced microfilming, storage of files in unsuitable conditions, and reduced indexing and production of inventories. As a consequence, there is a large backlog of work to be done to implement a proper Records Management system."⁶⁸ It was further pointed out that although the staff of the William Avenue facility was dedicated, additional staff with the needed expertise was required to meet the needs of city administration.⁶⁹ The report argued that there was an urgent need to solve these problems quickly:

Today, in 1995, the need to implement a comprehensive system is more urgent than it has ever been before. It is essential that steps be taken to protect the City's assets and preserve its history. With every day that passes, pieces of this historical record disappear forever through deterioration. It is crucial that the City develop an inventory of what exists, index and store all records so that they can be easily accessed, preserve those that are fragile. And this must be undertaken in a planned fashion so there is a single system across the organization, and technology is both managed and utilized consistently. Without immediate action, it is inevitable that records will be destroyed or mis-placed during the huge changes occurring as a result of New Directions (a massive reorganization of the government of the City of Winnipeg).⁷⁰

Since this report some steps forward have recently been made. These initiatives are meant "to fix a records management system in desperate need of repair."⁷¹ A City Records Manager and Archivist, Marc Lemoine, was appointed in 1994 from within the city organization. Lemoine has been attempting to respond to the problems identified in the Frame report. "Our goal," Lemoine says, "is to create a records management program that serves both the immediate needs of each department and the long-term interests of the

organization as a whole.”⁷² The Records Committee has been reconstituted and is once again operating. Mary Jambor, a member of the city archives staff, comments: “In particular the reconstitution of the Records Committee … reflects a renewed commitment to records management at the City. Among the Records Committee’s concerns will be to set long-term strategic directions for the management, retention, and disposition of records in all departments.”⁷³ The report recently solicited by the city from Terry Cook permits a significant step to be taken in that direction. The city has also attempted to increase its own accountability by appointing two members of the public to the Records Committee.⁷⁴ Around 1995 another staff member was hired – James Allum – bringing the branch’s professional staff complement up to three. The branch has also produced an Access Guide that contains a general listing of contemporary city records. But no archival records are described. This guide has helped to renew understanding of the value of a records management system. Jambor notes: “The process of compiling a list of their (departments’) records for the Access Guide … has made them realize that precious time, money, and space can all be saved by treating records management as a key administrative task.”⁷⁵ Through an interview by email Lemoine was asked whether the departments’ views of records management were changing. The answer was yes: “Departments are recognizing the role and the value that a good records management system can have in improving their day to day operations.”⁷⁶

The current status and position of the Archives and Records Control Branch shows some further signs of new life. The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch is now an institutional member of the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA). As Carole Boily, then Chair of the association’s Board of Directors, pointed out in an e-

mail communication, "this means that they meet the minimum standards set out be [sic] the AMA."⁷⁷ An institutional membership is "for institutions engaged in the acquisition, preservation and use of archival records, [which] have an operational mandate, formal commitment of[f] resources and a public access policy."⁷⁸ As will be shown, the Archives and Records Control Branch is working to maintain and surpass the minimum standards for being an institutional member.

Over the two years up to October 1997, the Archives and Records Control Branch has had 1,948 patron visits.⁷⁹ Of these visits 1,450 were from city employees and 498 were by members of the public.⁸⁰ By comparison in 1989, 585 used the branch.⁸¹ Marc Lemoine reports that the facility "currently (1997) has 7,403 metres of records. Of these 4,189 metres are considered to have some historical value."⁸² In the last two years (up to 1997), Lemoine says the facility "took in 860 metres of new records of which 327 metres are deemed to be permanent."⁸³ When asked if some departments still keep their own historical records, Lemoine replied that:

The majority of records within the Archives & Records Centre are controlled by individual departments. The Archives acts only as a custodian of the records for the most part. As well, some departments store their own historical records in their own facilities.⁸⁴

All departments within the city now have at least one person whose responsibilities include records management functions for their department. Some of the larger departments have more than one person to perform these duties.⁸⁵ According to Lemoine, the commitment to an archives and to a records and an information management system has strengthened over the past few years:

The City of Winnipeg recognizes Records Management and Archival Preservation as an integral part of the business process. The Archives acts as a major player in that process, developing policies & practices, and preserving the heritage of the organization.⁸⁶

When asked which of the functions is currently stressed more, archives or records management, Lemoine reports some interesting steps forward in thinking about these issues:

The Archives and Records Centre stresses both disciplines equally. Records management activities are always underway with the arrival of new materials, retrieval of existing materials, and destruction of temporary documents as required. Archival practices are also constantly underway. Several projects are currently being worked on including the creation of electronic indices for council minutes, appraisal/culling/sorting of historical records and the creation of archival descriptions for collections such as the papers of former Mayor William Norrie.⁸⁷

Two points of interest arise from this information. The first is that the archives now seems to be collecting some records which are not necessarily municipal government records but which relate to the history of the community. This follows the example of other municipal archives in Canada which complement their collections with other related fonds from private sources. The second point is that while the archives is putting more effort into describing records from other sources, which will perhaps prove to be of interest to researchers, where does this leave the municipal records? The municipal records have not yet been described according to archival principles. Access to them, therefore, is still not adequate and the valuable records which complement a mayor's papers will not be seen and used to their full potential.

Access to the archives, however, does seem to be stressed more now than four years ago. As Marc Lemoine points out, the Archives and Records Control Branch is open

to everyone, whether city staff or general public. There are no restrictions on who can or cannot do research there.⁸⁸ The branch now provides a research room which can comfortably accommodate several researchers.⁸⁹ The branch is making an effort to provide copies of more fragile documents in other formats for research use.⁹⁰ Lemoine claims that researchers are "quite pleased" with the service.⁹¹ However, all of this must be tempered with other facts. The city's archival service is still not widely known among residents of Winnipeg. The City of Winnipeg and the archives ought to be working on public programming activities such as exhibits and publicizing more widely the services of the archives.

As with any enterprise, including archives, budgeting is always an issue. But Marc Lemoine claims the City of Winnipeg is very committed to this venture:

The City is committed to the Archives, and to providing the funding required to ensure that our mandate can be met. As with the staff issue, the current budget allows us to handle our day to day requirements, to tackle the appraisal & classification of existing records and to do some exploration in new directions & with new opportunities.⁹²

As of October 1997 the branch had seven full-time staff members – three professional staff and four clerks.⁹³ They are assisted by contract archivists who are hired to complete specific projects and students who do short terms of work.⁹⁴ The number of full-time staff members is not enough, however, to run an archives and records management program for a city the size of Winnipeg. The Cook report maintains that the staff of the branch should be increased by five people (four of whom are professionals) to carry out records management duties and three additional professional archivists to manage the archival program.⁹⁵

The City of Winnipeg demonstrates a new sensitivity to its archives and records management programs. But recent and still modest accomplishments have only come after a great deal of neglect and struggle over the last twenty years. The Archives and Records Control Branch languished for much of that time as a mere warehouse for archival and other records. The city began to show greater commitment to the archives by hiring a records manager and archivist in late 1994. But it also demonstrated that perhaps it still did not understand the true nature of archival work. This is evident in the list of qualifications for the position, as well as in the fact that Marc Lemoine does not have a professional background in or education as an archivist or records manager. Lemoine has made significant contributions to the new awareness of the importance of the city archives and records management functions. He has also been a strong advocate of the need for further improvements to these programs. A professional archivist and records manager, however, will be needed to implement and manage a mature archives and records management program. The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch has made some progress towards such a program. But it still has some way to go to achieve it.

The third chapter contains the first preliminary description of the records of the City of Winnipeg council. To understand the archival description itself a brief overview of the theoretical underpinnings of archival description is presented. This includes the contextual approach to archival administration and an understanding of the use of standardized descriptions such as the Rules for Archival Description (RAD).

Endnotes

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Chapter Three

Who? What? When? Where? Why? The Contextual Approach to Archival Description

**Nothing exists without a context
John Le Carre¹**

We are all voyaging from the known to the unknown, in search of common tools to unlock the value of archival resources. Metaphorically, our common ‘destination’ is to recover/reclaim archival treasures for the enrichment of the wider community.²

The above two statements say a great deal about what is discussed in this chapter. This chapter’s premise is that the contextual approach is the key to unlocking the “hidden treasures” which Ann Pederson mentions. The contextual approach is also the basis for the type of standardized description which is discussed later in this chapter. Before discussing the contextual approach, however, it is important to have some understanding of why Canadian archivists have turned to this approach in their work. This chapter will look at the nature and purposes of the contextual approach and the central role provenance plays in it. A discussion of the aims of the contextual approach and provenance such as records and information retrieval, protection of evidence, and administrative control will illustrate how this approach is the essence of archival description. It is also important to understand that a full standardized description according to the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) would also extend to multilevel description. This will lead into a discussion of the value of standardized description, such as RAD. A primary focus of all description is and should be the fonds, as RAD strongly recommends. The fonds level will be the primary area of concern within the description of the City of Winnipeg Council records from 1874 to 1971. The chapter concludes with

the first and thus still preliminary fonds level description of the records of the City of Winnipeg Council.

In order to understand the reasons why the contextual approach and standardized descriptions have become necessary, it is important to have some knowledge of the background to these momentous changes in the field of archives. First it is necessary to understand the aims and characteristics of archival description. The most important reason why description has become so essential is the increasing volume of information and documentation.

The explosion of documentation has led to tremendous problems for archivists and users of archives. The vast amounts of records which archivists must deal with in government archives alone have, in many cases, become overwhelming. Without description of the records, they remain mute witnesses to our past. Archivists have struggled with the problems of description for some time and are still searching for appropriate approaches. In many of the writings about archives there appears to be one common thread: providing access.

At the root of every archival description is the desire to facilitate access to archival documents. While archival description initially sought to impart information about archival sources to archivists, it now has evolved into a function aimed at providing tools for researchers.³

As Victoria Lemieux points out, however, archivists have not always been consistent in their descriptive work: "The description of archives inevitably reflects their arrangement; but archivists have not been nearly so consistent in their description of archives as they have in their application of archival principles to arrangement."⁴ This inconsistency means that the full potential of archival records has not been realized.

But making records accessible has not been easy to achieve. In 1986 and 1987 the Canadian Council of Archives questioned archives in Canada about a number of issues including description:

Archives were asked whether they routinely prepare a brief description of each collection (including name, dates, call number, etc.) when textual records are being processed. Only 63% of Canadian archives undertake this basic level of arrangement and description.⁵

This is a telling statistic and it is only for textual records. A key purpose of archival finding aids is to provide descriptions of the records which make them more accessible to users and to the archivist who must help those users.

Everyone will agree that finding aids are an essential link between archives and research; they are the key to communicating the information contained in archival collections. Without finding aids, archives remain inactive, and researchers remain unaware of what collections really contain. Archives exist so their collections can be used for research, and finding aids are the best way to serve this purpose.⁶

Without these essential tools in archives researchers really do not have the best possible access to all of the records they might require. As Ian Wilson the National Archivist of Canada, and his colleagues have pointed out, users of archives suffer from a lack of knowledge about records:

With the advance of coordinated records management/archives programs, research using archival records is often less hampered by the failure of archives to acquire materials than it is by the inability of researchers to know of the existence and contents of the rapidly expanding volume of records under archival care in sufficient detail to allow them to exploit these records.⁷

With the rise in the number of records being created by modern bureaucracies archivists in a number of countries have been looking for new approaches to provide better understanding of and access to records. In Canada, this has meant turning back to some concepts which have been around for quite some time. These concepts and basic

tenets of archival practice include provenance and respect des fonds as well as respect for the original order of records. “This is increasingly important,” argues Tom Nesmith, “because only provenance knowledge can provide ‘order and meaning’ for the overwhelming amount of information and documentation with which archivists and researchers must now cope.”⁸ This contextual approach draws descriptive information about the records primarily from knowledge of their provenance – or the context of their creation – rather than from the subject content in the records. This approach has become the basic underpinning of archival arrangement and description in Canada.

In order to understand the contextual approach one must first understand the principle of provenance. The provenance of documents includes understanding the origins, original purposes and the organic characteristics of that documentation.⁹ Therefore archivists are obliged to identify the original creators of records as well as identifying all of the records originating with a particular creator. In other words, archivists must identify the fonds and then respect the ‘original’ order in which records arrive in such fonds. As Terry Cook says, provenance “is the central core of the archivist’s craft.”¹⁰

The next important term in modern archival description is the fonds. French archivist Michel Duchein has defined the fonds as “the whole of the documents of any nature that every administrative body, every physical or corporate entity, automatically and organically accumulates by reason of its function or of its activity.”¹¹ Respect des fonds “means to group, without mixing them with others, the archives (documents of every kind) created by or coming from an administration, establishment, person, or corporate body.”¹² This includes respecting the original order of records within a fonds.

As Couture and Rousseau point out, “each document must be left or, if need be, replaced, in the fonds from which it originated and, within the fonds, in its exact place of origin.”¹³

All of these concepts comprise the principle of provenance, which is the guiding principle behind the contextual approach to archival description.

The contextual approach returns to some of the basic underpinnings of the archival profession. Archivists in nineteenth-century Europe developed the basics of the contextual approach. They believed that documents could only be understood in context. Records must be seen in relation to other documents, and to their origins. They should not solely be seen individually and they should certainly not be reorganized along subject lines, chronologically or by geography.¹⁴ This return to the basic tenets of the archival profession has also meant, in Canada, the call to remember the place of historical knowledge in archives. Tom Nesmith points out that

...archival work remains in essence an exercise in historical understanding. Unlike other professions whose expertise may become obsolete when new techniques are introduced, the archival profession is dependent on knowledge of the history of archival records and work in order to serve its clientele.¹⁵

Nesmith sees the use of historical knowledge as important because it will assist archivists in preparing extensive reference aids that are needed to describe fonds.¹⁶ “For when all is said and done,” says George Bolotenko, “without the training in history, without the eye of the historian, without the desire of the historian to serve the record of the past, there can be no archivist.”¹⁷ The contextual approach involves the study of records and fonds to enable archivists to better arrange and describe them:

In summary, then, the study of archives encompasses the history of records, media, and series in the aggregate; the investigations required to appraise, describe, and understand individual documents; and the development of archival theory within the broader social sciences and

humanities. As shown, such study requires at almost every point the knowledge, skills, and methodology of the historian. Therefore, while the archivist is not an historian as the term is generally understood, he must nevertheless be an historian, if a special kind of historian, in order to fulfill the essential and unique challenges of the archival profession.¹⁸

Such historical knowledge also helps archivists to assist users of archives more efficiently:

Even though archivists may neither be able to offer nor be required to offer background historical information on all the topics our expanded research clientele studies from archival records we must understand the history of those records; otherwise, we will be inadequately prepared to help any of them.¹⁹

So, not only does historical knowledge provide the archivist with important information about a fonds, it also provides users with the tools they need to access information in a fonds.

The contextual approach based on knowing the provenance of records is also of great importance for reasons other than provision of access for users. Provenance also provides information that protects the records' integrity and reliability as a source of evidence of the actions or decisions of their creators:

Although archives have a secondary research or informational value for the types of information they record about people, events, places, and activities at particular times, the value of that information – expressed as its accuracy, integrity, and reliability – can only be established if one understands its provenance or lineage, ie, the context from which it came.²⁰

As Pederson points out, no individual document or piece of information can stand alone.²¹ It must be seen or understood in relation to other documents in and beyond the fonds to which they belong. If a document is viewed in isolation, without knowledge of its origins or of other records, it loses its meaningfulness and status or value as evidence.²²

Consequently, to appreciate a document, it is essential to know exactly where it was created, in the framework of what process, to what end, for whom, when and how it was received by the addressee, and how it came into our hands. Such knowledge is possible only to the degree to which the whole of the documents which accompany it have been kept intact, quite separate from and without confusion with documents of different origins, even if the latter are related to the same subject.²³

The fonds provides evidence of the actions of the creator of the record. Archival educator Heather MacNeil writes: "The reason why records must remain in the fonds from which they originate and, within the fonds, in their place of origin is to ensure that the records being preserved provide authentic and adequate documentation of the functions and associated activities of their creator."²⁴ As has been pointed out above, a good archival program that includes description will allow easier access to the records within a fonds. It will also sustain administrative control of all of the records. When the origin and history of transfer and care of the records throughout their lifespan is known administrative control is maintained. This also assists in the protection of the records as evidence of the creators' thoughts, deeds and actions. The need for administrative control and easy access to information are key arguments which archivists can and should use to convince municipal officials of the necessity for full archival programs. All of this can be achieved using the contextual approach to archival arrangement and description.

A fonds is the larger entity which is described but each fonds is made up of levels which also must be described. Multilevel description of fonds is a key feature of the contextual approach in the description of archives. The multilevel approach to description allows users of archives to gain a better understanding of all the parts of a fonds and, thus, gain better access to the whole fonds:

The multilevel technique of organizing archival descriptions of a fonds and its parts enables us to describe the specific historical and functional

contexts in which the various parts of a fonds were created, accumulated and used while, at the same time, preserving a sense of the larger, unifying context that ties the various parts to the whole.²⁵

This type of multilevel description better reflects the true nature of the fonds. MacNeil adds: "Multilevel description is used for preparing descriptions of a fonds and its parts when in addition to the description of the fonds as a whole, separate descriptions of some or all of its parts are required."²⁶ The multilevel approach also enables the users of archives to gain better access to records of all parts of a fonds because the ultimate goal of finding aids is the description of all of the parts which make up a fonds:

In other words, accurate description should present to users both a description representing whole to part relationships and a means of achieving, as efficiently and independently as possible access to the information they require. As a result, an accurate archival description will represent the structural manifestations of a fonds.²⁷

The multilevel approach merely reflects the arrangement of the fonds and its parts.²⁸ A fonds is already multilevel in nature. Hugo Stibbe points out that "archival descriptive structures, therefore, are multilevel in nature, where the fonds represents the top, or highest level, the series the next level down, the file the next level, etc."²⁹ This reflection of the whole-part relationship should be the basis of all archival descriptive work:

How to treat the part without losing sight of the whole is, in a nutshell, the dilemma of all archival arrangement and description, and consequently of defining precisely the nature of the fonds.³⁰

In other words, a full multilevel description of a fonds will provide researchers with the tools necessary to access the records within it.

The contextual approach provides a great deal of information about fonds but something more is needed in today's age of automation. Users of archives want to access information quickly, easily and efficiently using computers. They also want to be able to

move from one archives to another and not have to learn a new system of accessing information each time. Archives also want to be able to share descriptions of records between themselves. This can only be accomplished through the use of descriptive standards. As a study dating from 1986-87 pointed out, "there is a low level of use of descriptive standards for processing textual records of Canadian archives, as 40% of archives do not make use of any types of standards."³¹ There are reasons why descriptive standards are important.

Descriptive standards are important for several reasons, not the least of which is improved service to our users, who stand to benefit the most from their implementation. Applying agreed upon standards to our descriptive practices will facilitate the exchange of information between archives at the local, national, and international level.³²

This has become especially vital in recent years with the introduction of projects which provide and produce electronic versions of archival descriptions from multiple archival institutions and make them available on the internet.

Until recently in Canada there has been little consistency in the way fonds have been described. The Canadian Council of Archives reported in 1989 that "standards for description of archival material are virtually non-existent on a national scale, and even individual institutions would find it difficult to articulate any descriptive standards."³³ This lack of consistency led to the call for the development of descriptive standards.³⁴

A number of recommendations made by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists aim to ensure that description will become more uniform. The first is that descriptive work "proceed from the more general to the more specific levels of description."³⁵ This meant starting at the fonds level and working down from there. The bureau went on to recommend that Canadian archivists recognize five levels of arrangement. These were

repository, fonds, series, filing unit and item.³⁶ It also recommended that seven levels of description be recognized. These are: inter-institutional, repository, thematic group, fonds, series, filing unit, and item.³⁷ These types of standards would be applicable to all archives in Canada.

These descriptive standards, when used by all archives, will ensure better and more uniform access to records by users and archivists alike. According to two proponents of descriptive standards, "Descriptive standards development, implementation, and maintenance are essential if archivists and archives are to be effective in making their holdings available and in taking advantage of the opportunities for automation."³⁸ In Canada, the call for descriptive standards led to the creation of Rules for Archival Description which, when completed, will provide rules for describing archival records in any form.³⁹

The use of descriptive standards such as the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) preserves the context that ties the various parts of a fonds to the whole. As is pointed out in the RAD manual:

These rules aim to provide a consistent and common foundation for the description of archival material within a fonds, based on traditional archival principles. The application of the rules will result in descriptions for archival material at various levels, e.g., fonds, series, file, and item levels, and will aid in the construction or compilation of finding aids of all kinds.⁴⁰

This type of multilevel description provides better access to records by users of archives. This emphasis on the whole-part relationship is very important as it shows all of the fonds and its parts as well as the context in which it was created. MacNeil comments:

Taken together, the multilevel technique outlined in RAD and the descriptive elements defined in it, provide a means of illuminating the

context of the fonds as a whole while, at the same time, ensuring that the separate and meaningful contexts of the parts are not obscured.⁴¹

Now that an understanding of the contextual approach and standardized description has been provided, a description of the fonds of the Council of the City of Winnipeg using RAD is offered.

What follows is a preliminary description of one of the key archival fonds located at the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch. The components of the City of Winnipeg Council Fonds, 1874-1971 are described according to the Rules for Archival Description. It is important to note that this description contains certain key elements. It will begin with a brief administrative history. This will outline important information about the history of municipal government in the City of Winnipeg. Each separate component of the fonds will contain a brief administrative history, a scope and content note and notes on the availability of finding aids for the records. It is important to note that this fonds is only one small part of the larger collection of records available for use at the Archives and Records Control Branch. The archives holds a vast number of records for the former municipalities as well as other municipal government records which are not described here.

An Administrative History Overview of the City of Winnipeg, 1874-1971

The City of Winnipeg was incorporated in 1873 by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature. "An Act to Incorporate the City of Winnipeg" led to the holding of the first civic election in January 1874. Historian Alan Artibise explains:

Corporate authority was vested in a council composed of a mayor and twelve aldermen, three for each ward.... Some of the numerous specific powers of the civic corporation included the passage of bylaws concerning nuisances, safety, sanitation, fire, police and markets.⁴²

The government of the City of Winnipeg carried on under this Act until 1886 when it was repealed.⁴³ From then until 1902 the city's affairs were administered under the provisions of the Manitoba Municipal and Assessment Acts. In 1902 the city was again administered by separate legislation (or special charter) that was not substantially revised until 1918 when it was consolidated and revised.⁴⁴ The City of Winnipeg has been governed by this special charter and its amendments since 1918.

Although there is not space to discuss the many amendments to the charter and acts it is important to understand some of the changes which took place in the City of Winnipeg's history. For approximately the first forty years of Winnipeg's history as a municipality, city government was controlled and dominated by a commercial elite. This commercial elite had a major impact on the priorities and operation of the municipal government in Winnipeg:⁴⁵

The commercial elite's overriding commitment to growth had severe effects on Winnipeg's social development. With so much of the elite's talent and energy, and the municipal corporation's resources, expended on growth producing schemes, programs that would have benefitted the vast majority of Winnipeg's citizens were ignored, or received only passing

attention.... As a result, after forty years of prodigious growth, Winnipeg in 1914 still lacked decent housing, good schools, adequate recreation facilities, and integrated neighborhoods.⁴⁶

The commercial elite in Winnipeg also sought to bring business "efficiency" to city government.⁴⁷ The elite supported a "reform" movement in the 1890s that wished to change the governmental system in Winnipeg. Artibise writes that, "During these years many criticisms were made of the council system and all began with the observation that this form of government was the very antithesis of an efficient business organization."⁴⁸ This criticism led to various plans for "reform". None of them was successful however.⁴⁹ It was not until 1905 that any real "progress" was made in this area. In 1905 and 1906 the city faced a number of serious problems. These included a typhoid epidemic, an inadequate water supply, and the need to build a new power plant.⁵⁰ As Artibise points out, it is doubtful that any reforms would have occurred if the city had not been facing some serious problems.⁵¹ These problems led to the institution of a Board of Control system.

Until 1907 the council of the City of Winnipeg had operated under a council-committee system. Between 1907 and 1918 the financial matters of the city were governed by a Board of Control system:

Furthermore, in an attempt to achieve business efficiency in municipal government, these men (the commercial elite) instituted a Board of Control in 1906 designed to 'restrain any financial rashness on the part of City Council in guiding the growth of the booming city.'⁵²

Under this system all committees of council were required to funnel their reports through the Board of Control if they called for the expenditure of money by the council. The Board of Control had to approve the expenditure before the report went before the council. The city abolished the Board of Control system in 1918. When the Board of

Control was abolished the city again operated under a council-committee system (including a Finance Committee).

The City of Winnipeg and its surrounding communities have participated together in a number of inter-municipal ventures. But these ventures were not as successful as they could have been. George Nader writes:

There had been a number of single-purpose boards and commissions in existence, including the Greater Winnipeg Water District (created in 1913), the Greater Winnipeg Sanitary District (1935), the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Greater Winnipeg (1943), and the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission (1953). The failure of the co-operative approach to the solution of metropolitan problems prompted the formation of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg by an act of the provincial legislature in 1960.⁵³

This, as the above quote illustrates, led to the idea of more municipal cooperation in the Greater Winnipeg area.

In 1955 the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission was set up and recommended in 1959 that a two-tier system of metropolitan government be established for the area.⁵⁴ The recommendations of this report were implemented in 1961 with the establishment of a Metropolitan government.⁵⁵ The metro area included ten municipalities completely within its jurisdiction as well as nine more that were partly in the metro area.⁵⁶ This government was given jurisdiction over a number of services that were considered to be of joint interest and concern to all the areas.

The existing boards and commissions were dissolved and their responsibilities were assumed by Metro Winnipeg, along with some other services previously administered by the municipalities themselves.⁵⁷

Metro Winnipeg was given power and responsibilities in the following areas: assessment, planning, zoning and building controls, water supply and wholesale distribution, sewage

and land drainage, major streets and bridges, public transportation, major parks and recreation areas, civil defense and disaster and mosquito abatement.⁵⁸

This metropolitan government had a very stormy ten year history. The municipalities and especially the City of Winnipeg did not look favourably on many of the metro council's actions and decisions. As Harold Kaplan has pointed out:

Adding to the problems was the extent of opposition to the new metropolitan system. Some negative reaction had been expected, since the suburbs had wanted the status quo and the City of Winnipeg had wanted complete amalgamation.... What occurred instead was a virtual municipal insurrection, an assault on metro far exceeding anyone's expectations. During its ten year history, but especially in 1961-65, metro lived under a state of siege.⁵⁹

During this time the municipalities still, of course, had separate governments.

In 1969 the NDP formed the provincial government in Manitoba. It favoured an amalgamated approach to local government and prepared a White Paper on the subject. "Proposals for Urban Reorganization" was released on December 22, 1970. Nader observes: "In its White Paper the government indicated that Greater Winnipeg's governmental problems stemmed from three main sources: fragmented authority, segmented financial capacity, and lack of citizen involvement."⁶⁰ As a result of this White Paper, the Winnipeg Unicity structure of government was established effective January 1, 1972.⁶¹

Since January 1, 1972 there has been in practice one City of Winnipeg (or Unicity as it is popularly known) covering the total area of the former metropolitan corporation, and all local services are unified under a single municipal administration.⁶²

This system of government, with its amalgamation of all of the municipalities marked a major turning point in the history of civic administration in Winnipeg and its surrounding

**area. What follows is the description of the records in the City of Winnipeg Council
Fonds from 1874-1971.**

City of Winnipeg Council Fonds [multiple media]. -- 1874 – 1971. -- 233.36m of textual and other material.⁶³

Administrative History: The City of Winnipeg was incorporated in 1873 by a special charter which it operated under until 1886. From 1886 to 1902 the city was governed by the Municipal and Assessment Acts of the Province of Manitoba. In 1902 the city of Winnipeg was again granted a special charter which was subsequently revised in 1918. This charter and its amended forms have governed the City of Winnipeg ever since.

The Council of the City of Winnipeg is the principal legislative body for the city. It has operated under a council-committee system for most of its history. The only exception to this was when a board of control was instituted to administer the financial matters of the city between 1907 and 1918.

Scope and Content Note: The City of Winnipeg Council Fonds consists of 233.36m of textual and other material. The inclusive dates of the records are 1874 to 1971. A great deal of this material is now available on microfilm. Please consult the Archives staff concerning this matter.

Fonds consists of the following: Council Records, Standing Committees of Council, Board of Control, Committees Other Than Standing, Special Committees, Election Records.

Records of Council proper include: Minutes of Council 1874-1971; Council Communications 1874-1971; Council Communication Registers (dates unavailable); General Correspondence 1878-1889, 1951-1971; General Correspondence ("Screwball Files"⁶⁴) 1949-1970; Rough Minutes of Council 1884-1887; Council Files 1958-1961, 1953-1970; Minutes of Informal Meetings of Council 1931-1959; Letter Registers and Index 1874-1926; Letter Books 1874-1878, 1881-1883; Seal Records 1960-1969; Requests for Certified True Copies (City Clerk's Department) 1965-1969; By-laws (books, printed copies, pack files) 1874-1971; Alderman's Files (dates unavailable); City Clerk's Correspondence Books 1967-1971; Municipal Manual files 1943-1971; Files Council Misc. 1953-1970.

Records of standing committees are described in *all* pertinent places (i.e. with each committee and reorganized committee) therefore reflecting their multiple provenance and use.

Access Note: Access to archival material discussed in this description is open.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Notes: The term Pack Files will be used throughout this description. The term refers to files in boxes known as packs. The files are in a form unlike what a file is thought of today. The files are folded into three and usually have a cover sheet over top. The files can contain any number of items which refer to a particular subject or topic.

Standing Committees of Council [multiple media]. – 1874-1971. – 174.78m of textual and other records.

Administrative History: From 1874 to 1906 and 1919 to 1971 the City of Winnipeg operated under a council-committee system whereby standing committees were appointed by council and consisted of council members. During the years 1907 to 1918 when a Board of Control was controlling the financial matters of the city there were standing committees of council except for the Finance Committee whose duties were carried out by the Board of Control. It is important to note that the duties and responsibilities of these committees through the years have shifted among the various committees. Therefore certain records are listed within all pertinent committees. There have also been a number of name changes and combinations of committees.

Records were created by the following committees: Finance Committee; Committee on Public Works; Legislation & Reception; Personnel and Legislation Committee; Utilities and Personnel Committee; Market, License and Relief Committee; Health Committee; Public Safety Committee; Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Committee; Parks and Recreation Committee.

The standing committees of council had some general duties. They were to report to council from time-to-time on all matters connected with the duties given them. This included recommending action. They were to prepare and introduce to council all such by-laws as may be necessary to give effect to reports and recommendations. They were to consider and report on all matters referred to them by council. They were to strictly adhere to the rules prescribed by the respective by-laws of the council when conducting all business transactions.

Scope and Content: Consists of 174.78m of textual and other records. Records include: Committee Letter Books 1889-1890, 1895-1897; Letter Registers 1907-1941; Letter Books 1874-1878, 1881-1883; Reports 1885-1893; Pack Files and Reports 1874-1971.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Finance Committee [textual records]. – 1874-1906, 1919-1971. – 61.42m of textual records.

Administrative History: The Finance Committee traditionally has been the most powerful of the standing committees of council. Any committee report that called for the expenditure of money had to be examined by this committee. The Finance Committee considered and reported on all financial matters as well as supervise all contracts. This committee prepared the annual budget. The Finance Committee supervised all matters connected with receptions or public entertainment, thus taking over the duties of the

Legislation and Reception Committee. It was responsible for reporting on pensions and gratuities as well as the settlement of any claim under \$3000. It is important to note that the Claims Committee whose records are listed below, is a sub-committee of the Finance Committee and had its own separate minutes until 1959 when its' duties were incorporated into the Finance Committee as a whole.

Scope and Content: Consists of 61.42m of textual records. Records include: Minutes 1883-1906, 1919-1971; Reports 1874-1903; Pack Files (letters, reports, estimates, reports from committees and organizations) (dates unavailable); Correspondence (dates unavailable); Correspondence (dates unavailable); Files (dates unavailable); Claims 1954-1971; Misc. Information 1963-1971; Auditor's Reports 1883-1910; City Controller's Annual Reports 1910-1930; City of Winnipeg Annual Financial Reports 1931-1954, 1956, 1960, 1962, 1964; Claims Committee minutes 1915-1925; Reports Book 1885-1892.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives

Committee on Public Works [textual records]. – 1874-1971. – 52m of textual records.

Administrative History: A Board of Works was first appointed in 1874 as a standing committee of council. In 1884 this committee went through a name change to the Board of Works and/or Committee on Works. As of 1886 it became known as the Works and Property Committee. In 1917 it became known as the Works Committee. In 1921 it became known as the Public Improvements Committee. It was renamed in 1949 as the Committee on Public Works, a title which it still had as of 1971.

The Committee on Public Works had responsibilities in a number of areas. These included: maintenance of streets and sidewalks, snow clearing, bridges and subways, street naming, house numbering, city quarries, civic buildings, the city gravel pit, and the concrete and asphalt plant. This committee was responsible for approving all plans and surveys carried out by the City Surveyor. The committee recommended works of permanent improvement to the city. The committee directed the work of the City Engineer.

Scope and Content: Consists of 52m of textual records. Records include: minutes 1876-1971; reports 1874-1895; correspondence 1903-1920; work orders 1957-1971; local improvement registers (sidewalks, sewers, pavement) 1892-1950; alignment and building restriction register 1912-1931; grading register 1904-1918; spur tracks and sidings 1882-1907; appropriation balances {dates unavailable}; reports of the building inspector 1901-1913; record of works ordered {dates unavailable}; street railway lines 1891-1928; files {dates unavailable}; records from streets and lane openings 1902-1950; street and lane

registers 1902-1950; street and lane openings files {dates unavailable}; reports 1874-1901; correspondence {dates unavailable}.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Legislation and Reception Committee [textual records]. – 1892-1949. – 1.44m of textual records.

Administrative History: The Legislative or Legislation Committee first appears as a committee in 1892. At that time it seems to have been a special committee of council. In 1907 the special committee entitled Legislation, Reception, Trade and Commerce Committee began to perform its duties and continues as such until 1916. In 1917 a Special Legislation and Reception Committee is formed and continues as such until 1918 when it becomes a standing committee of council. In 1949 the committee is renamed the Personnel and Legislation Committee and operates as such until 1957 when it ceases to exist as a standing committee. In 1960 some of the duties of this now defunct committee are incorporated into the Utilities and Personnel Committee. The legislation and reception duties were undertaken by the Finance Committee.

The Legislation and Reception Committee considered and reported on matters which may cause the City of Winnipeg to seek legislation on matters requiring it, through the provincial legislature. It was in charge of all matters connected with public receptions and entertainment. It also reported on salaries and wages to be paid to employees of the City of Winnipeg.

Scope and Content: Consists of 1.44m of textual records. Records include: minutes 1895-1896, 1906-1957; communications 1910-1920; files 1910-1920; other files 1937; letter registers (dates unavailable); files Memorials/Addresses/Receptions/Conventions (dates unavailable); files Certified True Copies (of Bills) (dates unavailable); files/communications Reception Committee (dates unavailable); files in Fire, Water, Light and Sewer file boxes (dates unavailable); files Legislation and Reception Royal Visit 1939; minutes Trade and Commerce Committee 1906-1908.

Finding Aid: None available

Location: Please consult Archives

Personnel and Legislation Committee [textual records]. -- 1895-1896, 1905-1957 (predominant 1905-1957). -- 1.44m of textual records.

Administrative History: This committee is directly connected to the original Legislation and Reception Committee which is described separately above. It took over the duties of that committee in 1949 under the name Personnel and Legislation Committee. It continued under that name until 1957 when it ceased to exist as a committee. In 1960 the Utilities and Personnel Committee began to function as a standing committee. The duties in the areas of receptions and legislation were taken over by the Finance Committee while the duties in the areas of personnel became part of the Utilities and Personnel Committee.

This committee had jurisdiction in a number of areas. They included: legislation, receptions and wages. The committee was responsible for overseeing and reporting upon the following: wages and working conditions of civic employees, staff changes and appointments, grievances concerning civic personnel, labour union negotiations, the work of the employer-employee advisory board, general legislation and charter amendments.

Scope and Content: Consists of 1.44m of textual records. Records include: minutes 1895-1896, 1905-1957; pack files 1910-1920; communications 1910-1920; minutes Personnel Organization and Salaries Committee 1928-1929; minutes Utilities and Personnel Committee 1960-1971; minutes Commission on Civic Salaries 1928; minutes Personnel Organization and Salaries Committee 1928-1929, 1933-1934; files in Fire, Water, Light and Sewer pack files.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Utilities and Personnel Committee [textual records]. -- 1874-1971 (predominant 1874-1920). -- 23.77m of textual records.

Administrative History: This committee is directly connected to the Personnel and Legislation Committee described above. This committee began its duties as the Fire and Water Committee in 1874. In 1875 its name was changed to the Committee on Fire, Water and Light. In 1912 its name again changed to the Fire, Water, Light and Power Committee which operated until 1920. In 1921 a new committee, the Public Utilities Committee, took over the duties of the Fire, Water, Light and Power Committee. This committee operated until 1957. In 1960 the Utilities and Personnel Committee took over most of the duties and responsibilities and operated as such until 1971.

The early years of this committee are not well documented but the name of the committee speaks for itself as to what its duties were. Later on this committee was responsible for considering and reporting upon a number of things. These include: the supply and distribution of water; the high pressure water works system; the city's hydro

electric system; steam heating and street lighting systems; the construction, operation and maintenance of sewers; garbage collection; the Fire Department and the signal system of the city; staff changes and appointments; grievances concerning civic personnel; and, labour union negotiations. The committee was to hear any appeals resulting from the decisions made by a department head involving the suspension or dismissal of civic employees. The committee was also responsible for directing the Personnel Manager.

Scope and Content: Consists of 23.77m of textual records. Records include: minutes Fire, Water, Light and Power Committee 1874-1920; files/correspondence Power Committee 1908-1909; reports/correspondence Fire, Water & Light/Market, License, Health 1885-1893; reports Fire, Water & Light Committee 1874-1920; files Fire, Water, Light & Sewer Committee {dates unavailable}; files Fire, Water, Light & Power Committee {dates unavailable}; minutes Public Utilities Committee 1921-1971; minutes Utilities and Personnel Committee 1960-1971; files Utilities and Personnel Committee 1964; files re Royal Visit 1939; pack files 1920; pack files Public Utilities {dates unavailable}; minutes Personnel Organization & Salaries Committee 1928-1929, 1933-1934; minutes Commission on Civic Salaries 1928.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Market, License and Relief Committee [textual records]. – 1874-1920. – 22.43m of textual records.

Administrative History: This committee began as the Market Committee in 1874. In 1887 it became the Health, Market, License Committee and remained as such until 1906. In that year it became known as the Market, License and Relief Committee and continued as such until 1920 when this committee ceased to exist. Some of the duties of the committee were taken over by the Health Committee after 1920.

Scope and Content: Consists of 22.43m of textual records. Records include: minutes Market Committee 1876-1920; reports 1874-1891; reports Market Committee 1874-1895; files Health Committee (dates unavailable); reports License and Police Committee 1874-1877; License and Police 1881-1897; reports Health and Relief 1874-1891; files/communications Market, License and Relief Committee 1904-1905, 1908-1911, 1920; communications Health Committee 1905-1906, 1919-1920; files Market, License and Relief 1920; files in Fire, Water, Light and Sewer files.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Note: Includes the Health Committee.

Public Health and Welfare Committee [textual records]. – 1880-1971.

Administrative History: In 1880 the Health, Relief and Cemetery Committee was appointed. In 1887 the committee became known as the Health, Market and License Committee. Variations of this name were used until 1906 when the market and health functions were separated and the Health Committee became a separate entity. In 1958 the Health Committee changed its name to the Public Health and Welfare Committee. It had that title as of 1971.

These committees considered and reported on a number of matters including: public health and sanitation; businesses or callings subject to licensing; public markets, weigh houses, weigh scales, weights and measurements of commodities and goods offered for sale; comfort stations; relief matters; cemeteries and, finally, the establishment and maintenance of markets and market buildings. The Committee on Public Health and Welfare was charged with the same duties as well as the supervision of the Health Department and the Department of Public Welfare.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes Market Committee 1876-1920; minutes Health Committee 1921-1925, 1929-1971; reports 1874-1891; files Health Committee (dates unavailable); reports Health and Relief 1874-1891; files/communications Market, License and Relief Committee 1904-1905, 1908-1911; communications Health Committee 1905-1906, 1919-1920; files Market, License and Relief 1920; files Public Health and Welfare (dates unavailable); files Public Welfare Department 1951-1957; files in Fire, Water, Light and Sewer files; files "General Correspondence Hotel Licenses" 1957-1969.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Note: Other files pertaining to health and welfare matters are located at the archives but have restricted access. Please consult archives staff concerning these records.

Public Safety Committee [textual records]. – 1921-1957. – 1.56m of textual records.

Administrative History: The Public Safety Committee began as a committee in 1921 and continued as such until 1957. Its duties included supervision of the Fire Department; signal system; building, plumbing and electrical inspection services; transportation and traffic. The duties in the area of supervision of the Fire Department and signal system were taken over by the Utilities and Personnel Committee in 1960. The traffic duties were taken over by the Winnipeg Traffic Commission and/or the Advisory Traffic Commission.

Scope and Content: Consists of 1.56m of textual records. Records include: minutes 1921-1951; pack files (reports, communications, petitions) {dates unavailable}.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Committee [multiple media]. – 1965-1971. – 3.41m of textual and other material.

Administrative History: In 1960-1961 the city had an Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation Board. In 1965 the Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Committee was appointed as a standing committee and still existed as such in 1971.

The committee considered and reported on the following matters: public and emergency housing projects, zoning, town planning, enforcement of by-laws related to urban renewal and rehabilitation or conservation areas, the development of the Civic Centre, construction of the Public Safety Building and parking garage. The committee also appointed a technical committee to report and advise on the above mentioned activities.

Scope and Content: Consists of 3.41 m of textual and other records. Records include: minutes 1965-1971; pack files (reports, communications, development plans, proposals) {dates unavailable}.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Parks and Recreation Committee [textual records]. – 1893-1971. – 8.20 m of textual records.

Administrative History: In 1893 the Cemetery and Parks Committee was listed as a committee of council. It is not seen after that year. In 1904 the Public Parks Board appeared and operated under this name until 1953. In 1953 it became known as the Winnipeg Board of Parks and Recreation and operated under this name until 1964. In 1965 this public board became a standing committee of council known as the Parks and Recreation Committee. Please also refer to the Public Health and Welfare Committee above.

This committee considered and reported on a number of matters including: public parks; the laying out, improvement and maintenance of parkways, boulevards, street trees and public squares; swimming pools; Brookside Cemetery; and public recreation (including operation of supervised skating rinks, community clubs and summer playgrounds). The committee directed the work of the General Superintendent of Parks

and Recreation. The playground duties were taken over from the Playgrounds Commission on April 3, 1919 when By-law No. 9835 was passed.

Scope and Content: Consists of 8.20 m of textual records (included in this figure are the records of the Playgrounds Commission). Records include: minutes 1893-1971; files (dates unavailable); letter books 1904-1920; reports 1915-1929, 1960; filing records Parks and Recreation Department (in Olympic Games report box) 1965; Olympic Game report 1967; files re Municipal Manuals 1943-1971; minutes of sub-committees (Cemetery, Boulevard and Trees, Parks, Animals, Finance) 1909-1917; reports Cemetery Committee 1885-1893; files Parks and Recreation (dates unavailable).

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Board of Control [textual records]. – 1907-1918. – 2.15 m of textual records.

Administrative History: Between 1907 and 1918 the executive work of the City of Winnipeg was carried out by a Board of Control. It was composed of the Mayor and four Controllers elected annually by the city at large.

Scope and Content: Consists of 2.15 m of textual records. Records include: minutes 1907-1918; pack files {dates unavailable}; communications {dates unavailable}; bank statements 1915-1916; letter registers 1909-1915; appropriation balances 1915-1916; costs records/record of work ordered 1911-1916; minutes Claims Committee 1915-1925.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Committees Other Than Standing [textual records]. – 1902-1971. – 1.25 m of textual records.

Library Committee [textual records]. – 1902-1971 (predominant 1902-1920). – 1.25m of textual records.

Administrative History: There was a Library Committee as of 1893. It became the Library Board in 1901. There was a Carnegie Library Committee in 1904. As of 1910 the Library and Public Baths Committee was in operation. It was discontinued in 1920. In 1935 the Library Committee was established and it operated as a special committee or committee other than standing up to and including 1971.

The Library Committee was created under By-law No. 14789, passed November 4, 1935. It was to be composed of five Aldermen and four persons who were not members of council.

Scope and Content: Consists of 1.25 m of textual records. Records include: minutes Library Committee 1904-1914; minutes Committee on Library and Public Baths 1915-1920; minutes and index (loose leaf book with other committees) 1970-1971; communications (files) 1902-1920; files Library and Public Baths (communications, reports, rough minutes) 1918-1920; letter registers 1907-1941; files (communications, reports, statistical reports, minutes) 1951-1971; files within Fire, Water, Light and Sewer files.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Special Committees [multiple media]. – 1879-1971. – 9.32 m of textual and other material.

Administrative History: Special committees could be appointed at any time by the council by resolution specifying the business to be dealt with by the committee.

Scope and Content: Consists of 9.32 m of textual records. Records include: minute books 1879-1971; files 1874-1918; reports (and communications) 1874-1918.

Note: Special Committee records appear among other records and file blocks for other committees. There appears to have been a great deal of interspersing of records. For instance, Special Committee records can be found among the Aldermen's files.

Special Committee on Street Railways [textual records]. – 1909-1932.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1909-1932; minutes and communications in Aldermen's files (dates unavailable).

Special Committee on Unemployment Relief Works [textual records]. – 1924-1962.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1924-1962.

Special Committee on 75th Anniversary of Incorporation of City of Winnipeg [textual records]. – 1945-1950. – .55 m of textual records.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1945-1950; files 1949.

Special Committee on Centennial Celebrations [textual records]. – 1963-1978. -- .11 m of textual records.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1963-1971; files 1967-1978.

Special Committee on Winter Works [textual records]. – 1958-1971.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1958-1971; files(communications, reports) 1971.

Special Water Power Committee [textual records]. -- 1874-1918.

Scope and Content: Records include: files (reports to, communications to, rough minutes) 1874-1913; reports 1903-1906.

Special Power Committee [multiple media]. – 1908-1909.

Scope and Content: Records include: letter register 1908-1909; files (minutes, communications, blueprints) 1908-1909.

Special War Memorials Committee [textual records]. – 1927-1929. -- .11 m of textual records.

Scope and Content: Records include: files (communications, minutes) 1927-1929.

Special Committee on Railways and Bridges [textual records]. – 1879-1881.

Scope and Content: Records include: minute books (rough minutes, communications, reports to council) 1879-1881.

Special Civic Employees Adjustment Committee [textual records]. – 1937-1950.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1937-1950; files (in Grievance Committee files) (dates unavailable)

Purchase Waterworks/High Pressure Waterworks Committees [textual records]. – 1892-1899, 1905-1912.

Scope and Content: Records include: files/communications re Purchase (of) Waterworks 1892-1899; files/communications re High Pressure Waterworks 1905-1912.

Grievance Committee [textual records]. – 1938. -- .44 m of textual records.

Scope and Content: Records include: files/communications 1938; see also files for Civic Employees Adjustment Committee above.

Transportation Committee [textual records]. – 1919-1920. -- .11 m of textual records.

Scope and Content: Records include: minutes 1919-1920; files (agendas, rough minutes) 1920.

Election Records [textual records]. – 1874-1974. – 16.87 m of textual records.

Administrative History: The City of Winnipeg has been required to hold elections for Mayor and Council since its inception in 1874. These elections have been held throughout its history. The records contained herein were created as a result of that statutory regulation.

Scope and Content: Consists of 16.87 m of textual records. Records include: Election Papers (files) 1874-1969; Election Files 1874-1933, 1945-1971 (actually 1974); Parliamentary Voters Lists 1881-1882, 1883, 1888; Voters List Books 1890; Electors Lists 1890, 1892, 1898-1900, 1902-1908, 1910-1969; Statutory Declarations (files) 1874-1970.

Finding Aid: None available.

Location: Please consult Archives.

Endnotes

¹ Cited in Jean Pierre Wallot, "Limited Identities for a Common Identity: Archivists in the Twenty-First Century," Archivaria 41 (Spring 1996): 9.

² Ann Pederson, "Unlocking Hidden Treasures Through Description: Comments on Archival Voyages of Discovery," Archivaria 37 (Spring 1994): 48.

³ Victoria Lemieux, "RADical Surgery: A Case Study in Using RAD to Produce a Thematic Guide," Archivaria 39 (Spring 1995): 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The Canadian Archival System: 17.

⁶ Jacques Ducharme, "Finding Aids," The Life of a Document: A Global Approach to Archives and Records Management, English translation, eds. Carol Couture & Jean-Yves Rousseau (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1987): 199.

⁷ Report of the Advisory Committee on Archives: 43.

⁸ Tom Nesmith, "Archival Studies in English-Speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance," Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance ed. Tom Nesmith (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993): 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰ Terry Cook, "Media Myopia," Archivaria 12 (Summer 1981): 148.

¹¹ Cited in Debra Barr, "The Fonds Concept in the Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards Report," Archivaria 25 (Winter 1987-88): 163.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Carol Couture and Jean-Yves Rousseau, "The Concept of the Fonds d'Archives," The Life of a Document: 162.

¹⁴ Nesmith: 1-2.

¹⁵ Tom Nesmith, "Archives From the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship," Archivaria 14 (Summer 1982): 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁷ George Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," Archivaria 16 (Summer 1983): 7.

¹⁸ Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," Archivaria 19 (Winter 1984-85): 47.

¹⁹ Nesmith, "Archives From the Bottom Up": 24.

²⁰ Pederson: 52.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Heather MacNeil. "The Context is All: Describing a Fonds and its Parts in Accordance with the Rules for Archival Description," The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice, ed. Terry Eastwood (Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992): 202.

²³ Michel Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of Respect des fonds in Archival Science," Archivaria 16 (Summer 1983): 67.

²⁴ MacNeil: 202.

²⁵ Ibid., 214.

²⁶ Ibid., 213.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hugo Stibbe, "Implementing the Concept of Fonds: Primary Access Point, Multilevel Description and Authority Control," Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 115.

²⁹ Ibid.

Since this description of the city council records is a preliminary one, much more research into the characteristics of these voluminous and complex records is needed to designate series and/or sous-fonds within the council fonds. The matter of determining whether a particular body of records is a series or a sous-fonds is especially complex and subject to interpretation. RAD defines a series as "File units or records within a fonds arranged systematically or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation or arising out of their receipt and use." [Rules for Archival Description : D-7.]

Some archivists might well designate the records of a standing committee of city council as a series with the council fonds. Others might designate it a sous-fonds of the council fonds (within which sous-fonds there may be various series of records) because they are all of the records of an administrative sub-unit of the organization that created the fonds, the council in this case. (See Jeff O'Brien, "Basic RAD: An Introduction to the Preparation of fonds and series-level Descriptions Using the Rules for Archival Description" (Saskatchewan Council of Archives, 1997, available at www.usask.ca/archives/rad/index.htm). It is not within the scope of this thesis to address these issues in archival description. I have simply identified the records of the council as a fonds and identified the administrative components of the council and their records. Further clarification of their status awaits further research.

³⁰ Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description, and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era," The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice ed. Terry Eastwood: 45.

³¹ Canadian Archival System: 17.

³² Andre Martineau, "Foreword," Rules for Archival Description, Bureau of Canadian Archivists (Ottawa, 1990): ix.

³³ Canadian Archival System: 15.

³⁴ Jean E. Dryden and Kent M. Haworth, Developing Descriptive Standards: A Call to Action, Occasional Paper No. 1 (Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1987).

³⁵ Kent M. Haworth, "The Development of Descriptive Standards in Canada: A Progress Report," Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 76.

- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Dryden and Haworth: 14.
- ³⁹ Bureau of Canadian Archivists, Rules for Archival Description (Ottawa, 1990).
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 0-1.
- ⁴¹ MacNeil: 217.
- ⁴² Alan Artibise, Winnipeg: An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1977): 20.
- ⁴³ Report of the Royal Commission on the Municipal Finances and Administration of the City of Winnipeg, 1939: 15.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 15.
- ⁴⁵ Alan Artibise, "The Urban Development of Winnipeg, 1874-1914," Urban History Review No. 1 (February 1972): 5.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 6.
- ⁴⁷ James D. Anderson, "The Municipal Government Reform Movement in Western Canada, 1880-1920," The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City, eds. Alan F.J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1979): 75.
- ⁴⁸ Alan F.J. Artibise, Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth 1874-1914 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1975): 52.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 55.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 56.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Alan F.J. Artibise, "Winnipeg, 1874-1914," Urban History Review No. 1-75 (1975): 47.
- ⁵³ George A. Nader Cities of Canada Vol. 2: Profiles of Fifteen Metropolitan Centres (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976): 293.
- ⁵⁴ C.R. Tindal and S. Nobes Tindal, eds., Local Government in Canada 2nd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Series in Canadian Politics, 1984): 74.
- ⁵⁵ Nader: 293.
- ⁵⁶ Tindal and Tindal: 74.
- ⁵⁷ Artibise, Winnipeg: An Illustrated History: 184, 186.
- ⁵⁸ The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Review Commission Report and Recommendations, 1964: 7.

⁵⁹ Cited in Tindal and Tindal: 74-75.

⁶⁰ Nader: 293-294.

⁶¹ Tindal and Tindal: 75.

⁶² Nader: 294.

⁶³ These records are part of the City of Winnipeg Archives which is housed at the Archives and Records Control Branch, 380 William Avenue.

The information contained in the administrative histories for this fonds has been taken from the City of Winnipeg Municipal Manuals from 1904 to 1971.

⁶⁴ These pack files contain letters written to the city by alleged "screwballs" (thus the name). Each letter has notations written on it, presumably by city staff, as to where they should be filed (i.e. "screwball files" or "squirrel food files").

Conclusion

As was demonstrated in Chapter One, municipal archives in Canada have had a history of neglect and decay and have developed slowly. There have been a number of causes for this slow development. Centralization has played a role as has the failure of archivists to act as advocates for the development of municipal archives. Historians have also not advocated municipal archival development or the use of such records. Municipal governments have shown their culpability in this slow development by being unwilling to recognize the value of their records, and their responsibility to preserve and provide for their archival care. Municipal archives in Canada have developed in other similar ways. Many archives have had a mandate to collect private records which complement their municipal records, if they preserved the records of their creating agency at all. Municipal archives have developed for a variety of other reasons; because a prominent person has acted as an advocate for their creation as well as through cooperative arrangements.

It is important to recognize that there are benefits to be reaped from municipal archival development. Municipalities can save time and money by developing archival programs. Records management must be promoted and be viewed as an administrative necessity. As archivists we must use these arguments to encourage the development of municipal archives. We must help municipal governments and society generally to recognize the necessity of municipal archives. These archives must be encouraged to develop and given an opportunity to flourish.

The history of the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch follows many of the trends outlined in Chapter One. It came into fruition late (1977) and has still not developed into a full archival program. It was instituted to fix a records

management problem created by the amalgamation of communities which occurred in 1971 and was to serve, for the next 20 years as a records storage facility, not an archives. This, despite numerous reports showing a records management system which was not functioning properly and outlining the obvious need for a well run archival program. Some rays of light have been seen recently with the Terry Cook report. Some believe this report is the beginning of what could very well become a well-managed archives and records centre. This writer will reserve judgement on this for the time being as the City of Winnipeg has had a history of getting behind initiatives involving their archives but not really doing anything concrete. Time will tell.

In Chapter Three the concepts of archival description were introduced to set the stage for the archival description which followed. The contextual approach (one of the basic underpinnings of archival description today) which involves understanding the origins and original purposes of records as well as the relation of records to one another in the fonds and the use of standardized description such as Rules for Archival Description were introduced. The preliminary description of the City of Winnipeg Council Fonds which has been presented is meant to provide a starting point for further work. It is hoped a great deal more work will be done on the records encompassed by this description as well as the much larger body of records which have yet to be described.

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