

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA / UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

THE SHAPING OF A NEW ORDER IN THE WEST: THE INFLUENCE OF
WINNIPEG'S AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITIONS, 1870 – 1915

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BY
CLAUDE LE GRAS

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

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CLAUDE LE GRAS

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

OF

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Exhibitions embody notions of power, culture, and history. The study of exhibitions from 1870 to 1915 in Winnipeg shows how a middle-class agenda dominated these events. In an era of profound change, exhibition advocates sought to coax stability through popular assent. The study attempts to explain how exhibitions, as a mechanism of order, were inherently contradictory. Hegemonic elements, which sought to impress the desirability of system and harmony, simultaneously attempted to break down established habits, values, and expectations and replace them with new ones.

The exhibition began as an idea that reflected the social thinking of the day and as a model that provoked action. It was the Victorian state of mind that attributed political, economic, and cultural importance to exhibitions and weighed them down with ideological and historical burdens. As a consequence, the study of the purposes of exhibition seeks to clarify the limited identity we are left with today.

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To Melanie and Catherine

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INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS

Introduction

During the late Victorian era in Winnipeg, exhibitions, while subjected to criticism and resistance, largely succeeded in conveying their messages of power and thus entrenching a new prevailing order. The study of the exhibition concerns hidden forms of power and persuasion, which were acted out behind veils of constructed narratives, rhetoric, and materialistic distractions. Such a public display was inherently social.

The thesis considers exhibitions in Winnipeg between 1870 and 1915 as representations of an emerging modern, urban culture. Such events were temporary but recurring public arenas, which modeled hegemonic values and social ambitions. The purpose in examining exhibitions as social interventions is the utility that these urban, public events afforded for the dominant culture to express itself culturally through its action, rhetorical strategies and technologies of knowledge and of display. Social relations between classes in capitalist economies were sharply delineated during this late Victorian Era, but the illusion of the exhibition was that differences among classes were largely resolved with the promise of progress and the socialization of the masses.

The social function, rituals and meanings of exhibitions were closely related to overt and implicit values that a particular group recognized as essential to its ideology

and world-view, its social identity, and its historical continuity. At different times and places, this group was urban, culturally homogenous and dominated by bourgeois values and ideals. This group sought to shed its traditional origins in the relations of production and construct a new identity as the vanguard of progress. In an atmosphere of constant and rapid change, a tendency to remodel identity was a quest for meaning. Implicit in such recognition was that this group controlled its social order, had economic power, and desired to be recognized for it. Power relations have always been embedded in the way the dominant group told and comprehended the history of its society.

Through the study of these exhibitions, the general themes of class and identity, of order by domination or subjugation, and of master narrative and modernity can be interpreted in ways contrary to the postmodernist notion that history is irrelevant to identity. By attempting to develop new or innovative social theories with the postmodern critique in mind, it is possible to use the same tools for new interpretations or explanations even while making problematic old ones. Despite the decline of modernization theory as a model, the questions that it posed remain as vital as ever and continue to exert a profound influence on historical study.

Comprehension entails properly defining key elements within a viable structure of understanding. The history of society is still being constructed. It is history, which has real chronological time as one of its dimensions. This concerns not only structures with their mechanisms of persistence and change along with the general possibilities and patterns of their transformations, but also with what actually happened. What is the significance of chronological time and the nature of the changes involved in the past?

The most direct approach to the history of society must come through the study of class in a wider sense. Class defines not a group of people in isolation, but a system of relationships, both vertical and horizontal. Therefore, class is a relationship of difference or similarity and of distance as well as a qualitatively different relationship of social function, of exploitation, of dominance and subjection. Class thus involves the rest of the society of which it is a part. How, then, does class as a conceptualization of social relationships help us to understand that change?

In order to study any institution and the image of the society it represents, the shape of the social structure must be established. Working outwards and upwards from the process of social production in its specific setting, an approximate order of research priorities and a working assumption about what constitutes a complex of connections about the subject matter implies a model - a more modern one. But how do specific institutions and the image of social relationships that they model instruct and form social behavior? The thesis attempts to answer such questions by examining exhibitions held in Winnipeg between 1870 and 1915.

In particular, the thesis attempts to address the age old problem of competition among the inhabitants of a place for its resources. Fostering competition for all things, however, leads to problems of order, culture, and class. The Victorian ideal of maximizing economic gain was equated to not only wealth, but glory. Not greed or avarice, but a virtuous enterprise. But glory, in the form of wealth, prizes, or trophies, can only be valued if it is scarce. Encouraging such a competitive pursuit, as the artifice of exhibition provoked, runs the danger of also encouraging domination. As glory is a

power that is exercised over others, those deprived of this power are bound to be discontent.

Historiographical Context

Initially seen as empty space by those outside the region, western Canada held the promise for national expansion and growth. The ideological construction of the West as a utopian region is discussed in works such as Carl Berger's *The Sense of Power*, Doug Owram's *Promise of Eden*, and A.W. Rasporich's "Utopia, Sect, and Millenium in Western Canada, 1870-1940". The year 1870 heralded the end of a traditional society and political order. The Dominion of Canada's annexation of this region led to the closing of a frontier and a new order of things.

The victors of the Red River Resistance sought to carve out a new nationalism in the North West. The sectionalism of eastern Canada would not be repeated in this region. By concentrating on the material development of the region and re-enforcing the link to empire, it was now possible to shed the mantle of colonists for those who sought a parallel manifest destiny with their neighbors to the south. A sense of power, as Carl Berger mentions in his interpretation of imperialism in the West, with a new tradition and identity was possible in this era of major transformations.¹ A British-Canadian national determinism could preserve the guiding principles of the past, while shaping a new place in the future. History in its broadest cultural sense was the medium in which the tradition was expressed and history was the final and ultimate argument for imperial unity.

¹ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies In The Ideas Of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), Introduction.

The metropolitan-frontier, modern-primitive dialectic was not new to Western Canada. Owram discusses the promise that this region held and offers an insight into the propaganda of western boosterism.² Scientists were among the most avid propagandists to argue for the agricultural potential of the North West. The utopian projection of a settled European society had been in evidence since Lord Selkirk's philanthropic plan to settle the North West. Rasporich explains how Selkirk's colonizing venture of 1812 presaged a wholesale onslaught of similar community-building experiments launched in the 1880s and 1890s as metropolitan institutions and society moved westward.³ State expansion and trade would transform this new space. Exhibitions can provide empirical representations of such transformations.

The imposition of the scientific, modern state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was itself a utopian exercise of colonization, which included "assimilation of the population, discrimination against some of its sub-groups, interventionism and centralization, and an attempt to apply the latest scientific methods to the problems of government."⁴ The emphasis on classification as an exercise of power stressed the diversity of racial types and an evolutionary hierarchy that also tended to blur class distinctions.

The growth of cities in the West could not "be fully explained by internal factors alone, such as the activities of individuals or groups", but neither could the process of

² Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansion Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

³ A.W. Rasporich, "Utopia, Sect, and Millenium in Western Canada, 1870-1940," *Prairie Forum* (1987), 217-44.

⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*. (London: Duckworth, 1983), 234.

growth “be explained by impersonal or mechanistic forces”.⁵ This process was a combination of both internal and external factors. A city promoted itself through a Board of Trade “in order to attract investment and immigration.”⁶ Combine this with the idea of an exhibition, and the city had a vehicle for growth that over time surpassed the expectations of its board members.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, trading was not only a convenient means of justifying or disguising imperial exploitation. Trade was seen as a source of civilization; one which needed to be ordered. Exhibitions held during this late Victorian era can provide us with many visible representations of the order of things.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 in London had brought together an ensemble of disciplines of knowledge and techniques of display from previous museums, panoramas, Mechanics Institute Expositions, art galleries and arcades. By doing so, the event translated these into an exhibition, which simultaneously ordered objects and the public that observed them, having a profound effect and lasting influence on the subsequent expansion of public institutions. Within such an arena, the classification of displays, of competitors, and the status of the people attending were ordered.

In North America, state expansion and urban development sought similar economic and ideological European goals with the trickling down of ideas pertaining to economic development, class formation, and cultural hegemony. Success required the ordering of political, social and economic spheres in the quest for power, influence and

⁵ Alan F.J. Artibise, "In Pursuit of Growth: Municipal Boosterism and Urban Development in the Canadian West, 1871-1913," *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process*. Edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise. (Ottawa: Carlton University Press, 1982), 120.

⁶ Alan F.J. Artibise, "Advertising Winnipeg: The Campaign for Immigrants and Industry," *Manitoba Historical Society Transaction*, Vol. 3 (1970-71), 27.

more trading opportunities. Through object lessons of power, by commanding and arranging bodies and objects for public display, the masses could then learn a set of cultural technologies to organize a voluntarily, self-regulated citizenry.

In some ways, exhibitions became mechanisms whose primary purpose was the imposition of order. How was an emerging modern urban culture to “civilize” and educate the lower and laboring masses on how to comport themselves in a more public world and acknowledge the dominant group's control of it? The all-pervasive political economy of power, transformed into new forms of spectacle, produced a more complex set of relations through which power was exercised and negotiated, partly through these masses. The forces of historical change in this era produced highly disruptive economic conflicts and political forms of disorder. The problem of order, through exhibitions, sought to transform itself into a problem of culture. Converting these masses required disciplining and orientating them with a mechanism which made visible the forces and principles of order.

Exhibition organizers sought to make the whole world, past and present, known. Exhibitions played a key role in the formation of the modern state and were fundamental to its self-conception as a set of “educative and civilizing” agencies.⁷ Exhibitions served to place the masses, conceived as a nationalized citizenry, in an indirect position to power, subject to the direction of ruling groups for the good of all. Such an invisible rhetoric of power, embodied within the exhibition, gave organizers the ability to coordinate an order to things and provide a place for the masses in relation to this order.

⁷ Dana A. Brand, *The Spectator and the City: Fantasies of Urban Legibility in Nineteenth-Century England and America*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2.

Nineteenth-century exhibitions consistently highlighted the ideological economy of such organizing principles, transforming displays of machinery and industrial processes, of finished products and of *objects d'art*, not only into material signifiers of progress, but of progress as a collective national achievement with capital as the greatest coordinator. In a era of dramatic changes, technological innovations (such as steam power, electricity, the railroad, printing techniques) and a collective sense of belonging in a more ordered world fostered national-consciousness. Through mediated forms of cohesion, public space in cities represented the order of things from the top down. Within this thesis, and in the larger context of the subject matter, such works need to be included in an analysis of Winnipeg Industrial Exhibitions.

Exhibition literature seems to imply that an exhibition, as an institution, not only extended the agencies of the state, but was also the primary, public vehicle that helped shape a new social order over time, through technologies of knowledge and power relations. Order was constructed from above. The suggestion is that the problem of order was transformed into a problem of culture, which entailed winning the hearts and minds as well as training and disciplining the masses - a preamble to the formation of a fetishized economy. Institutions, whose foundations were based on the values and beliefs of the dominant culture, transformed the masses into subjects, thereby creating a citizenry. Technologies of order and marketing techniques, administered by members of this dominant culture's urban, middle class, can perhaps unravel the dynamics of social relations between knowledge and power.

Many studies of power, history and social theory relate to the subject matter of this thesis. In modern, developing states, libertarian ideas and the problem of containing

the masses were considered important during major transformations. "Putting the urban public in its place required devices other than force, which was always an alternative."⁸ In order for submissiveness to be entrenched, "the majority must resign itself to the consumption of fantasy, with illusions of wealth sold to the poor, of freedom to the oppressed, dreams of victory to the defeated and of power to the weak."⁹

The exercise of power, linked to a variety of institutions, entailed entrenching a new identity and ideology for the dominant culture. Ideology refers to "the imaginary relation of individuals to their real conditions of existence."¹⁰ This existence was largely controlled by technologies of knowledge and the dynamics of power relations. The central concept of "appropriation" also touches on the empirical question of the difference between the messages transmitted by exhibition propaganda and the messages received by visitors.¹¹ Suggested is that a multi-dimensional view of power is needed for less visible exercises of power.

A public sphere concept by itself, which sees a small elite developing city institutions, needs elaboration. Shedding a one-dimensional view, allows meaning to be broadened to encompass the informal, hidden aspects of the exercise of power, such as the tacit consent of the masses, for example. The focus on manipulation and decision-making can show how power prevented subordinate cultures "from having grievances by

⁸ Margaret Judson, *Emergence of a Free Press*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 91.

⁹ Eduardo Galeano, "Days and Nights of Love and War," *Monthly Review*, (1983), 167-68.

¹⁰ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy*. (London: New Left Books, 1971), 121.

¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. English translation by Steven Randal. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Introduction.

shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things.”¹² Societies themselves are “constituted by overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial networks of power.”¹³ Tangible and intangible benefits of exhibition were embedded in terms of power.

Exhibitions popularized anthropological findings as the science of man that reached the public and had a distinct hierarchical message, which served a hegemonic function. Reflected were the intellectual, political and business leaders' efforts to establish a consensus about their priorities and their vision of progress regarding racial dominance and economic growth. Different cultures were something to observe as exotic, inferior others, but not tolerated outside of exhibition in this new space.

Space takes on a deeper meaning when its fundamental dimension and explanatory power is division between the core and the periphery. “Geographical space as a source of explanation affects all historical realities, all spatially defined phenomena, including cities and settlement systems.”¹⁴ Exhibitions were spaces that conveyed messages articulated in a narrative of place and progress. The idea of Winnipeg as a place, a fairly new one, needed a history for the elite to be able to claim this new space as their own.

Academic and popular works on exhibitions are incorporated into the thesis where they are deemed appropriate. Most involve the study of imperialism, exhibits or

¹² Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*. (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1974), 96.

¹³ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. (New York; Cambridge University Press, 1970), 16.

¹⁴ Fernand Braudel, "The Perspectives of the World," *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-16th Century*. Volume 3. Translated by Sian Reynolds. (New York; Harper and Row, 1984), 21.

architecture. None feature exhibitions held in relatively new space, except those popular histories nostalgic for days gone by. The most relevant works have been on studies of imperialism, which began to appear in the 1970s.

Studies of British and French exhibitions of the past, beginning with the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, have consisted of the origins and conceptual developments of such events; their funding, politics and society; imperial displays; human showcases and national profiles.¹⁵ In North America, works focused on social structures and cultural values inherent in the “white city” tendencies of North American exhibitions and their preoccupation with eugenics and imperialism.¹⁶ However, scholars who have studied exhibitions have not sufficiently appreciated the way that exhibitions have provided practical demonstrations of utopias as systems of order. Principal study has been about established centers of power, rather than that of places on the margins, like Winnipeg.

In Canada, such works have been few and far between. However, the literature on Canadian exhibitions explores the national context within which the Winnipeg exhibitions developed. Two major works about exhibitions in Canada are crucial to

¹⁵ See John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London: Cassell and Collier Macmillan Publishers Ltd.), 1977; Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*. (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978); Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” *Reflections*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1979); Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower, and other Mythologies*. (New York: Hill & Wang, 1979); or Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

¹⁶ See John G. Cawelti, “America on Display: The World's Fairs of 1876, 1893, 1933,” in *The Age of Industrialism in America*. (New York: Free Press, 1968); David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*. (Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky University Press, 1976); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy from the 1880s to 1917*. (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 1976); and Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at America's International Expositions, 1876-1916*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984).

understanding the link between the origins of exhibitions and their emulation in the West. One is E.A. Heaman's study on exhibitions in eastern Canadian society during the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Previously seen as too ephemeral a subject for serious study, cultural theory has changed how historians now view exhibitions. Heaman's contention is that many theorists have examined exhibitions as a cross-section of past culture frozen in time, but serious inquiry must examine cause and effect over time. Her work entails an examination of exhibitions, not just as a reflection of culture, but as important historical events in their own right.

Exhibitions, which began as an idea that reflected the social thinking of the day, were designed to provoke action. Put forth was a particular theory of social cohesion, which, however unintentional, had profound consequences in how exhibitions shaped relations among classes. What was new were the political and economic attempts at mass persuasion, which was how political and social elites appealed to the productive powers of the laboring classes during the Victorian Era. Many of these ideas came from Britain and France, where they gradually traversed the Atlantic Ocean to be somewhat imperfectly resurrected in eastern Canada.

Heaman illustrates the gradual devolution of historical agency within exhibitions over time. Emphasis on agriculture declined as exhibitions became more frivolous, giving themselves over to commercialism and the carnivalesque.¹⁸ Exhibitions now symbolized the triumph of a vulgar popular culture that elites condemned. These aspects of exhibitions drowned out the statements of authoritative truth, which were a primary

¹⁷ E.A. Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

purpose of such events. As Heaman puts it, “exhibitions were designed to illustrate relationships of superiority and inferiority and that such a system allows for inquiry into relationships of race and gender.”¹⁹ Women and natives had limited agency at exhibitions. Over-reliance on state initiatives and subsidies defeated the spirit of enterprise that exhibitions were supposed to generate. Allowing the exotic other any agency threatened the category of culture that underlay the system of exhibitions, thereby subverting messages of historical progress and hierarchy of civilizations that they embodied.

The second pertinent work is Keith Walden's *Becoming Modern in Toronto The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*.²⁰ This focuses on the impact of exhibitions on the city of Toronto and the surrounding rural communities, but does not correlate events to a chain of economic dependence that linked Toronto to major world metropolises. Whereas the Paris or London exhibitions can be seen considered primarily as a model created in much older and established world cities, and whereas emulation of that model by North American cities such as San Francisco, Chicago or Toronto can be considered as secondary in comparison, the Winnipeg exhibitions can be considered as emulating these North American cities.

Walden believes that much has been studied at the international and state level of exhibitions, but that much more study is needed at the local level. He emphasized that migration and immigration have caused assumptions about identity to become unglued. This consciousness about identity related to concerns of confidence that exhibitions tried

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁰ Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

to assuage, albeit with limited results, which suited the requirements of corporate capitalist production. The pre-industrial period had been one conditioned by familiarity. “The growth of industrial organization and technology increasingly eroded this situation.”²¹ Undermined were existing social structures as high rates of transience made the confidence in places and in people inherently problematic. Walden’s work shares the premise that exhibitions were “instruments of hegemony, used by elites to generate support for a culture dominated by white, male, middle-class values, and organized increasingly around capitalistic production and the possibilities of consumption thus provided.”²²

Local exhibitions offered a more sustained effort to shape the perceptions of visitors than larger world fairs. Local exhibitions were more concerned with immediate commerce and readily available mass-produced commodities than national identity or manufactured products from distant places. Such events deserve more notice, according to Walden. His particular interest was the impact that exhibitions had on the city as a whole. They are useful for exploring the meaning of modern, urban society because exhibitions were actually highly unstable, “when ordinary structures are dissolved and cultural elements are allowed to interact and combine in ways normally prohibited.”²³ This alludes to the liminal sites that existed between different components of an exhibition.

Not unlike Walden, my criteria in selecting particular themes within the thesis are also subjective. Exhibitions were too eclectic to absorb everything presented. Modernity

²¹ Ibid., 85.

²² Ibid., xiv.

²³ Ibid., xvi.

entailed a sense of flux that was pervasive. "The exhibition impulse was inspired by a desire to coax stability through popular assent rather than coercion, ...driven by a need to make principles of order visible and obvious, by a confidence that individuals so instructed would be more willing and able to regulate themselves."²⁴

According to Walden, exhibitions were flawed as a mechanism of order because of the contradiction of exhibitory purposes. While wanting to impress a system of beliefs and normalization, the intent of elites was to break down established habits, values, and conceptions of the past. People were now required to adapt to constant change. The liminal sites of exhibitions counter-posed the traditional and the new. It was contested space. "Adapting to changing circumstances was a slow, tentative, cumulative process that occurred more at the ground level than at heights of intellectual abstraction."²⁵ With the sensory overload and the expectations of discontinuous spectacles that exhibitions afforded, there were many possibilities to become and be modern.

There are a few works available that are local. Grant MacEwen's popular history of exhibitions, *Agriculture on Parade*, gives the impression that exhibitions in Winnipeg were failures.²⁶ Agricultural exhibitions on Brandon, studied by Ken Coates and Fred McGuinness, were also informative. The organizing of exhibitions in smaller centres like Brandon encountered similar difficulties to that experienced in Winnipeg. Though their

²⁴ Ibid., 334.

²⁵ Ibid., 338.

²⁶ Grant MacEwen, *Agriculture on Parade: The Stories of the Fairs and Exhibitions of Western Canada*. (Toronto: T. H. Best Printing Co., Limited, 1950). No bibliography was provided, but enough knowledge was imparted to discover the origins of MacEwen's sources. Consisting of several pages of useful information, this work is central to understanding the importance of the agricultural component of exhibitions.

central purpose was to promote agricultural excellence, Brandon residents were not truly interested in livestock and grain shows and farmers also wanted to experience other aspects of exhibition.²⁷ David C. Jones' work focuses on the midway and the shortcomings of locals judging exhibits. Exhibition organizers had little choice but to include the chaotic aspects of the midway to draw visitors and participants. Jones also shows the rapid and uncoordinated growth of educative agencies.²⁸ The impression we are left with, however, is that a more current interpretation is required, given the present expansion of knowledge and technology available today.

Winnipeg, the new "gateway to the West" was an extension of eastern Canadian entities, who were themselves dependent on a chain of ideas and capital originating elsewhere. Whereas Walden focused primarily on the local, the thesis presents Winnipeg exhibitions in a larger context to better understand the internal and external factors of the growth of this metropolis. The local exhibition provided insights into domestic developments and reduced complex sets of social relations, and economic, scientific and cultural interactions to one vast display. However, local exhibitions and their original ideas were already present on a much larger scale. The local entailed lauding the progress and achievements of the city, whereas in a larger context, urban space was used for aspirations of the state and its own place in the global order of power and influence.

The study of exhibitions is more than a story of glory or of heritage. Exhibitions of this era were mercenary and ideological and their creators' views and values were

²⁷ Ken Coates and Fred McGuiness, *An Affectionate History of Brandon's Agricultural Exhibitions: Pride of the Land*. (Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers Ltd., 1985), 6-11.

²⁸ David C. Jones, *Midways, Judges, and Smooth-Tongued Fakirs: The Illustrated Story of Country Fairs in the Prairie West*. (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983), 137.

imposed on others. Exhibitions challenged moral and religious notions of days past by vying for the hearts and minds of the masses, while catering to the upper and middle classes' sense of national superiority and racial genius, and projecting their subsequent influence and developments right into our present.

Theory and Argument

The process of modernization extended the structure of the state to reconstruct western Canadian society. Exhibitions were one vehicle through which the industrializing and urbanizing impulses of modernization undermined dissent and particularism by ideologically tying all classes, and previously distant communities, to a national culture and social life. Nationalism was the psychological naturalization of politically determined geographical boundaries, which consolidated all groups into discrete national units. By such means, both states and their metropolises tightened their grip on their subjects and space, while extending their economic reach trans-continently.

The argument is that exhibition provides an excellent means to show how the problem of order was transformed into one of culture. The themes of class and identity, of domination or subjugation, and of master narrative and modernity all follow the periodization of the thesis. The initial period, from 1870 to 1885, focuses on the efforts of an emergent bourgeoisie, supported by the national state, and how it endeavored to control this new space and established governing and cultural institutions. The period from 1885 to 1900 shows Winnipeg's success as an entrepot to attract immigration and investment for industrialization and commercial agricultural production. The final period, from 1900 to 1915, focuses on the establishment of a fetishized commodity and

consumption, on the liminality of contested space, and on the pinnacle of exhibitions in Winnipeg and their eventual devolution by 1915. The life of the exhibition, its humble beginnings, growth, and decline all coincide with these social transformations and are developed in three chapters.

To ensure Winnipeg's success and that of its bourgeoisie, the identity of others needed to be limited. More specifically, an exhibition afforded the opportunity for this dominant middle class to culturally express itself through its actions, rhetorical strategies, and technologies of knowledge and of display, and to exclude the culture of others. Michel Foucault has argued that various disciplinary discourses have contributed to the emergence of human subjectivity in the west. His work on various institutions and his constitution of the self are of interest. The object was the individual. However, as a subject, the individual could not be separated from the creation of the social sphere. The social sphere not only ordered behavior in terms of rewards or punishment, but also conferred status.²⁹

Similarly, this thesis sees the identity of the self within society as key in the emergence of modernity. An individual was part of a group, but which one? Some groups were inclusive while others were not. A pedagogy prevailed which largely determined such concerns. Foucault wrote extensively on the use of hierarchical observation. Such a degree of classification is not practical for many social interactions, but entirely feasible for dividing people according to type. The thesis will also explore how exhibitions delineated a master narrative of progress, whose function was to display all the attributes valued by a new capitalist order in the West. The social function, rituals and meanings of

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. (London: Tavistock, 1970).

exhibitions were closely related to overt and implicit Victorian values that were essential to the ideology, world-view, social identity and historical continuity of the dominant English culture.

Foucault's examination of the self and collectivity is but one example of relevant works which provide the larger context in which the thesis resides. For example, the metropolitan thesis advocated by J. M. S. Careless is still a useful model to understand the economic developments during this era. The growth of cities addressed a central truth about Canada's urban past, because metropolitan power "could be exercised quite directly over great regional sweeps of countryside, with much less mediation or internal competition."³⁰ Sources will show over time, how Winnipeg acquired power by establishing an entrepot structure that attracted industry, which in turn fostered more economic activity. Metropolitan power was also exercised through the presentation of culture and ideas.

A central question of the modern has been the disruptive effects of capitalism on existing culture and social relations. Revisionists and contemporary modernists like Marshall Berman are concerned by the unstable socio-cultural substitutes produced by capitalism itself. Berman proposed that such substitutes, initially seen as solid, "melted into air".³¹ The contention within the thesis is that not all such socio-cultural constructions vanished into thin air, but rather replaced aspects of production with those of consumption as primary expressions of capitalist culture.

³⁰ J.M.S. Careless, "Metropolis and Region: The Interplay between City and Region in Canadian History before 1914," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, Vol. 3 (February, 1979), 89-110.

³¹ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. (New York: Penguin, 1988).

The definition of culture here is twofold. On the one hand, the analysis of the process of representation is conceived when the production of classifications and exclusions constitute the social and conceptual configurations proper to a time and place. Structures of the social world are not a given, but rather structures produced historically by inter-connected practices of political, social and economical constructs. The traditional social realm is transformed, or in this case “becoming modern” when differentiation in representation reflects or distorts reality. On the other hand, to study cultural expression through the action of a public event is to study processes by which meaning is constructed. Representations, practices and appropriation are all notions, which are socially determined and give meaning to our world, sometimes in contradictory ways.

Victor Turner claimed that the space of a city took on a sense of liminality through visual performance. This space “becomes a text to be read or a space to enter in order to retreat from and subsequently reflect on the social order and cultural significance of a city's moments of transition.”³² The de-centering sense of change appeared as an instrumental intent to control, but often was a vanishing order of things that needed to be taken into account before disappearing from awareness. Turner describes ritual as a device, where anything can or should happen, especially at the liminal sites he describes. Repetition and order disguise the unformed chaos underlying culture. The ritual ends when an observer crosses back to reality, once the performance or exhibition is over.

As part of the invention of tradition, social cohesion could be accomplished “by instilling a series of values, beliefs, and behavior of different members of a society and

³² Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*. (New York: Performing Arts Journal, Inc., 1986), 99-107.

legitimizing the authority of a sovereign or nation.”³³ The decline of bourgeois liberalism saw the emergence of the hegemony of a cultural archetype form of city that relegated social questions to the background and focused on developing a new culture that transcended cultural traditions.

The tacit consent of the masses, however, was not a given outside of exhibition. Imperialist expansion and the establishment of a new capitalist order in the West provoked resistance from Winnipeg's working-class. In the context of the exhibitions, resistance concerning the exhibitions' operations and purposes, which contradicted its message of progress and corporate efficiency, will be shown. The intent is also to show how state expansion marginalized other groups, re-created space and history over time, allowed an emerging urban middle class to dominate this process by using exhibitions as one vehicle to subordinate others to their way of seeing things and how resistance and accommodation were central to such an experience.

Sources

Primary sources are accessible at various archives within the city of Winnipeg. For example, the City of Winnipeg Archives houses the City of Winnipeg Council minutes and records of special committees, bylaws and correspondence which reveal links among the city, the Board of Trade, and the Exhibition Board and Association. Land acquisitions and financial appropriations for exhibitions are fully documented.

³³ Eric Habermas and Terence Ranger, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Berger. (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1989), Introduction.

Manuscript collections contain exhibition pamphlets that feature commercial advertising, prizes to be won and a list of attractions and displays.

Sources in the Archives of Manitoba include photographic collections, personal memoirs and letters as well as various types of mass communication. If an exhibition can offer us a sort of window into the past, photographs can supply us with images of that past. Written sources are available in the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration and the Canadian Pacific Railroad Event collections, and significantly, the papers of Charles Napier Bell. Bell, who was the manager for the majority of the Winnipeg exhibitions, as well as an amateur historian and President of the Scientific and Historical Society of Manitoba.

The Legislative Library has both rural and urban newspapers. The symbiotic relationship that existed between the urban and rural components of exhibitions is evident in such sources. The opposing views of the rural *Farmer's Advocate* versus the urban perspective of the *Commercial*, which expounded the businessman's view, and *The Voice*, which aired labor's concerns, provide a running account in full view of the public of the failures and successes of various exhibitions over time. Most often, such representations were the only vehicle and agency available for dissenting voices, played out in the daily pages of city newspapers. Governmental records also concern funding and advertising for immigration purposes as they related to exhibitions. On a larger scale, records show the movement of exhibition personnel and the organization of national and regional exhibition associations.

Secondary sources consist of academic works relating to or about exhibitions. These sources provide the contextual content to ground the theoretical and practical

purposes of such events. Besides providing historiographical discussion and argument, the internal and external forces of growth and development in Winnipeg may be better understood. The history of an idea in the aftermath of Enlightenment developed into a model that could be emulated and utilized, albeit imperfectly. An exhibition was the most visible vehicle to display all that capitalism had to offer.

SETTING THE STAGE: ORDER AND EARLY EXHIBITIONS

Introduction

This chapter examines the role of early exhibitions from 1870 to 1885 in claiming the North West for eastern Canadian capitalist expansion. The expansion of eastern Canada was not just political and economic, but cultural as well. And just as the political and economic expansion did not proceed smoothly or without challenge, the cultural incorporation of the West was neither easy nor automatic. It also entailed the speculation and strategies of free traders in Winnipeg as they related to exhibitions. These merchants were the foremost advocates of exhibitions for their community.

This chapter examines the role of these exhibitions in the political, economic, and cultural acquisition of the West, and questions why were early initiatives subject to such limited results? Exhibitions were the appeal by which social, business, and political elites could realize their aspirations for regional dominance. The concept of exhibitions, already in practice elsewhere, would provide a model for western initiatives. The potential to become the recognized gateway to this new West was a problem that the bourgeoisie needed to solve.

Following the aspirations of these community leaders, and how they placed such emphasis on holding these exhibitions, may show us why such events were to become so essential in shaping this new place. Winnipeg's position as the centre needed to be assured. The challenge was to bring together successfully all the components required to

hold an exhibition. The presence of force and the image of order was seen as necessary to quell any resistance to progress. Winnipeg's most ardent boosters, the bourgeoisie, also needed to contend with hinterland initiatives that sought decentralized and local control of their own exhibitions. The expansionist programmes of larger metropolitan exhibitions, which endeavored to slot Manitoba into their larger categorizations of economic development were problematic as well. The provincial government seemed unable or unwilling to counter local decentralization or the external metropolitan concentration of Manitoba's exhibitionary needs. Subsequently, this new place's initial attempt to organize and successfully hold exhibitions encountered serious challenges and faltering progress.

The Problem of Order

Centered in Toronto and other parts of the Dominion, a powerful expansionist movement had begun in 1856. By 1867, one of Confederation's central purposes was the acquisition of the North West, which for most concerned groups meant economic expansion and settlement. The concept of a new, large agricultural area buying goods and services from the East, thereby stimulating economic growth in Eastern Canada was extremely appealing. After the American Civil War, with the North victorious, Britain withdrew almost all British troops from the Dominion of Canada in 1871, also distancing itself from the Dominion's sectional disputes. The Washington Treaty of 1871 largely resolved such issues as the fenian raids, the purchase of Alaska, and trade and fishery disagreements. With the dramatic entry of Manitoba into Confederation in 1870, the Dominion government had started planning an orderly settlement of the North West.

Previously, fishing and hunting, rice-gathering, sugar-making, trading voyages and the spreading out of winter-trapping grounds gave rhythm to the movements of Plains and Woods Indians.¹ For centuries, these had been the elements of order. But a new order was in the making. The Wolseley Expedition of 1870 quelled immediate fears after the 1869 Red River Resistance. At the time of Wolseley's Expedition, the population of Fort Garry consisted of only five hundred people, and "Indians and half-breeds outnumbered the whites and males outnumbered women."² The frontier was not yet a secure haven for new settlers.

According to Colonel Wolseley, his militia's expedition to Fort Garry was the beginning of a bright era for this region. At a dinner given in his honor at Montreal, Wolseley stated "In my opinion, the future granary of the British Empire is destined to become the home of millions."³ Two things were required to develop every natural element of wealth and agricultural prosperity: a population and railroad communication to the outside world. The emigrants which were to populate the province should come from Canada rather than England. "The winters are more severe, and it requires Canadian experience to enable settlers to prepare for them."⁴

By 1872, a study of existing conditions in the North West, conducted by Captain Louis Frasse, commander of the Manitoba Provincial Police, had suggested the creation

¹ L. R. Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*. (Montreal, 1819) Translated by Claude Le Gras, 324.

² Grant MacEwen, *Agriculture on Parade*. (Toronto: T.H. Best Printing Co., 1950), 35.

³ *Manitoban*, October 22, 1870, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of a mounted constabulary to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald.⁵ Macdonald incorporated this idea within National Policy objectives. Nineteenth-century ruling classes in England believed that social regulation civilized industrial and rural classes. Such ideas could be applied in the colonies, with greater paternal vigor and force towards natives and other groups and classes.⁶

The persistent image and symbol of the North West Mounted Police, presiding over huge tracts of land and scattered populations, was a powerful measure of national authority. Many of the "Mounties" were initially appointed as a result of influence rather than merit. Middle-class prejudices towards other races and cultures were evident during recruitment.⁷ These self-declared, avid imperialists were protecting outposts of Empire and became very popular as time progressed. The perceptions of this mobile, paramilitary force grew to mythic proportions, enabling its members to subdue most dissention.

During the Victorian Era, social Darwinism extolled the superiority of Anglo-Saxons. New arrivals to this once traditional community brought with them nationalist sentiments and strong emotional attachments to the institutions they had left behind. The bilingual antecedents of earlier settlement were not as yet a major concern. As a consequence of the compelling requirements of progress and perceived threats to the

⁵ W.R. Morrison, *Policing the Empire: Government Authority and Control, 1830-1940*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 92.

⁶ K.M. Haig, *Colonel J.B. Mitchell, for whom a Winnipeg school is named*. (Winnipeg, 1956), 4. A biographical sketch on the Epic march of the Mounties on the cover, this article was first published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on the opening of the J.B. Mitchell Junior High School, October 2, 1956.

⁷ R.C. Macleod, *The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1905: Law Enforcement and Social Order in the Canadian North-West*. (Ph. D thesis, Duke University, 1971), 52.

establishment of institutions previously enjoyed elsewhere, new arrivals sometimes replaced logic and rationality with symbols and myths.⁸

Reassurance that a new social order would emerge was primary if the dominant culture hoped to implement the mechanisms of a rapidly expanding, coordinated and compartmentalized state. As an essential element of National Policy, the symbol of the “Mounted” satisfied emotional appetites more than political or historical reality. Many members of this force and of the Wolseley Expedition would rise to an elevated status in this new emerging urban society as time progressed. In the Victorian mind, a soldier outranked a policeman.⁹ The most significant transformation of the modern era would replace previous existing orders into an all-encompassing hegemonic culture that inevitably closed this new frontier.

This agricultural settlement perceived itself as an oasis of moral and spiritual values. The repeated efforts of different religious groups to Christianize “half-civilized” elements to eliminate so-called barbarism were often futile. Such negative images of the North West needed to change for successful settlement and economic expansion. In 1871, newcomers wanted a positive image to emerge, dispelling the mid-nineteenth century perception of this frontier as a dangerous wasteland. Order was needed to overcome roaming bands of Indians and rebellious Métis. Exhibitions could advertise and promote the agricultural potential of the North West.

An image representing an unspoiled wilderness could dissuade many fears. A romantic landscape could be viewed in its natural state before civilization spoiled this

⁸ Keith Walden, *Visions of Order*. (Toronto: Butterworth and Company, 1982), 30.

⁹ W.H. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*. (London: Yale University Press, 1969), 309.

pristine environment. Victorian optimism regarding the potential for Christianity also became an issue. Resistance and non-conformity to a this new order would yield no benefits for the “exotic other”.

Late nineteenth-century assumptions, primarily mechanisms by which people make sense of their world, even if inherently mythical, were crucial to this community’s sense of place and self. Core myths are generally appropriated by elites to reinforce claims to power and privilege because they are central to the structure of social belief and authority. Colonizing a new frontier was like a new beginning. No previous culture here had been founded so completely on the inherently competitive aspects of industrialism and urbanization than this emerging middle class, recreated in this wilderness.

However, the establishment of order and the assertion of authority was not merely a military or a constitutional achievement. The articulation of a public culture that rooted the dominant class and its interests deeply into the history of British civilization of the North West was required. A historical narrative linked Selkirk’s settlers to this agricultural society and its subsequent commercial economy also tied the North West into a larger empire. Similarly, the promotion of agricultural societies and exhibitions demonstrated the equivalence of products from the North West with the older economy of central Canada and North America in general.

The Formation of Agricultural and Exhibition Societies

On October 4, 1871, the first agricultural exhibition was planned in conjunction with the formation of the Manitoba Agricultural Society. The model was the system of agricultural and industrial exhibitions that had existed in central Canada since the 1840s.

A bureaucracy, formed prior to Confederation, included a minister of agriculture, boards of agriculture, and of arts and manufactures. Aside from political and economic propaganda, exhibitions had become the appeal by which social and political elites could realize their aspirations.¹⁰ Enlightenment and Victorian ideals of reason, property, and publicity were bolstered by the concept of exhibitions. This precedent provided a model for western initiatives.

After 1867, control of agricultural societies and mechanic institutes became the purview of provincial governments. The organizers of exhibitions needed the consent of the executive branch of government to create an event in the public sphere. Once authorized, such events generated public opinion and were simultaneously elitist and democratic. Elective executives of agricultural societies did have responsibilities towards their members, but the objective was for improved agricultural standards and practices to trickle down to change the backward thinking of the lower classes.

The first wave of settlement saw the creation of a plethora of agricultural societies in various parts of Manitoba. The frustration of creating a central, public site to visibly convey the order of things so as to instruct, socially control, and convert the masses into efficient producers and consumers for marketing purposes was challenging. Winnipeg itself had to compete with other aspiring communities, such as Selkirk and Saint Boniface, for example. As this seemingly empty space was filled, secondary provincial centres such as Brandon and numerous rural communities would also hold exhibitions.

Directors had been confirmed at the first full meeting of the Manitoba Provincial Agricultural Association on August 19, 1871. A committee was struck to draft by-laws,

¹⁰ E. A. Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 4-5.

prize lists and other organizational concerns. The list of directors included notables like Donald Smith, Alexander Begg, and A.G.B. Bannatyne, for example. Many were prominent businessmen, civic officials and politicians.¹¹ They appointed themselves to executive, finance and visitor committees. Since agriculture was becoming the primary sector of the provincial economy, these businessmen had the most self-interest at stake in its success. This society's first secretary and manager was Charles Napier Bell, who arrived here as a private in the Wolseley Expedition.¹² Bell would hold various occupations relating to exhibitions in Winnipeg.

The members of the Manitoba Provincial Agricultural Society were overly optimistic about the exhibition even taking place. Nevertheless, the executive committee fashioned a code of rules and regulations, and decided that the event would take place on grounds near Fort Garry, where outbuildings had been selected for show purposes.¹³ All participants were to become members of the Association, and anything at all could be submitted for adjudication and recognition. This itself was an admission of the paucity of products for exhibition. At this stage of economic development, subsidies for the organization of exhibitions depended on subscription fees. No government grants were available until suitable facilities had been constructed and until public interest in the exhibition was evident. Until then, government grants would be few and far between.

The press congratulated the Provincial Agricultural Society of Manitoba on the results of its annual meeting, which was held at the Opera House in Winnipeg on June 8, 1872. "The attendance was very large and enthusiastic, and 168 members were enrolled

¹¹ *Manitoban*, August 19, 1871, 2.

¹² MacEwen, 36.

¹³ *Manitoban*, September 9, 1871, 2.

on the spot, at \$2.50 each. Members have confidence in the future of the Society; a confidence justly inspired by the proposal to elect the Hon. Donald A. Smith”¹⁴ as their new president. Such interest had been lacking the previous year.

Smith, representing the Hudson's Bay Company, was a large landholder and his self-interest coincided with those of other members. Initial objectors to Smith's election were subdued as other prominent members claimed no politics should tarnish the Society's image. The outgoing president, George B. Spencer, in his speech to members at the annual meeting, reported some contention between county societies and the Provincial Agricultural Association. The symbiotic nature of settlement made for fierce competition. The Legislature provided grants only to County Agricultural Societies at this point. Spencer suggested that “as an improvement, that they should all (counties), instead of scattering their energies, unite with us, heart and hand, in getting up a Provincial Society and Provincial Exhibition worthy of the name.”¹⁵

The following month, the Society met to consider holding an exhibition. A preliminary meeting, called by Smith in his office, resolved “to call a meeting of all the directors of the Provincial Association, and at the same time to invite the directors of the various Country Societies to be present. The new president specified that full attendance is requested.”¹⁶ A meeting of the Provincial Society, in January 1873 reveals that members had the ability to nominate county directors. Once elected, however, these directors were not bound by the direction of the Society, but rather by their own

¹⁴ Ibid., October 14, 1871, 2.

¹⁵ Ibid., June 8, 1872, 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., July 20, 1872, 2.

associations, and so had little reason not to compete against all others.¹⁷ The Provincial Society held sway over the composition of exhibition organizers, but did not control any provincial purse strings. Notwithstanding many drawbacks, the exhibition held in October of 1872 had avoided a deficit. The Provincial Society's president, Donald Smith, had personally "guaranteed in advance \$1000 expected from the government, without which no exhibition would have been held."¹⁸

Locally, emerging communities created their own Boards of Trade. In March of 1873, some merchants suggested that the possibility of sharing a Board of Trade, fashioned after the Provincial Agricultural Association, be considered. Again, the attempt was made to incorporate and subordinate all town and county boards to the direction of a Provincial Board of Trade.¹⁹ Seeing as how many prominent merchants, traders, and importers were not represented, the newly formed Winnipeg Board of Trade abandoned the idea. Attempts to maintain a municipal Board of Trade had continually eluded organizers because of disputes among members. Entrepreneurs generally were more preoccupied with establishing themselves and their corporate interests. Places of business began to reflect the potential of progress. The foundations of a dominant culture were in process and Winnipeg "was already displaying aspects of metropolitan dominance over a widening Manitoba hinterland."²⁰

A Board of Trade was a necessary element in promoting a city's image and future prospects. Members claimed that politics were not entertained within such organizations,

¹⁷ Ibid., January 25, 1873, 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., March 1, 1873, 4.

²⁰ J. M. S. Careless, "The Development of the Winnipeg Business Community, 1870-1890," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Series IV, 8 (1970), 242.

but private and public interests were often blurred as individual members used their affiliations to these associations to gain favors. C.N. Bell was an example of how industrious such individuals were. Bell himself owned substantial property. After being discharged from Wolseley's Expeditionary Force in 1871, he worked for Alexander Begg in his warehouse. In 1878, he was a custom's officer. He would become intimately involved in the social and economic circles of urban society. For thirty years, he was the Secretary of both the Winnipeg Grain Exchange and the Board of Trade, and involved with various aspects of Winnipeg exhibitions.²¹ The Historical and Scientific Society, for example, was incorporated in June of 1879 by charter members such as Charles N. Bell, Alexander Begg and George Bryce. They were also responsible for much of the popular history and literary productions of their day. These members were also founders of the first circulating library in Winnipeg, which opened in 1883.²²

There was no shortage of conflicting interests. New arrivals, who had barely set roots in the community and continued to move westward from Ontario, were already familiar with the machinations of self-interested parties in this era of blatant patronage. Prominent businessmen, who were also involved in politics, were large landholders, or had military antecedents, and the first opportunity to speculate and plan. Newer arrivals who settled in rural communities did likewise. Tillers of the soil during this period had more choices than those who would follow later in the 1890s. Nowhere was first advantage more obvious than in the public sphere.

²¹ *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, May 7, 1926, 15. See also Archives of Manitoba, *Bell Papers* (MG14-C23), Box 1-3.

²² Archives of Manitoba, *Bryce Papers*. (MG14-C15).

Boards of Trade and Agricultural Societies were part of a process of influence and of legitimacy. By organizing outside of the legislature, members of an aspiring bourgeoisie could shape and direct economic and social expectations. The Hon. A.G. B. Bannatyne, for example, was both the president of the Board of Trade and the president of the newly formed Manitoba Agricultural and Industrial Society. This new association's first venture was to send exhibits from Manitoba to the Dominion Agricultural Exhibition in Ottawa.²³

Not everyone agreed with the fact that members of the Board of Trade were responsible for managing many aspects of the exhibition. The editor of one newspaper thought the members had enough problems operating the Board of Trade, never mind the exhibition. "It ain't a nickel's worth of good for any of our merchants to try to run a Board of Trade when their business antecedents are so very limited in this particular respect."²⁴ What was alluded to was that a more distinguished group of members could do a better job of it.

Contention also existed between the Provincial Government and the Provincial Agricultural Society. Dissatisfaction was voiced concerning the transference of wealth and population from one province to another. "Such a process can no more make the country prosperous, than changing money from one pocket to another.... And without the ascension of a large outside population to replace those who have left,"²⁵ many opportunities for those who had just arrived were spoken for. The allusion was towards the lack of immigration and the half-hearted efforts of the province. The Society expected

²³ *Winnipeg Daily Times*, June 14, 1879, 3.

²⁴ *Quiz*, April 1, 1879, 2.

²⁵ *Winnipeg Daily Times*, July 1, 1879, 1.

a grant to ship exhibits to the Dominion Exhibition in Ottawa in 1879. When accusations were raised that the grant was not forthcoming, Premier Norquay suggested that the province was quite capable of “taking sole charge of the project. The responsibility for successfully displaying provincial products will rest with the government, and not the Agricultural Society.”²⁶

In 1881, Dufferin Park was the site selected to become the permanent home of Winnipeg exhibitions. A building had been erected for purposes of storing exhibits, but this was mostly for livestock. Other products and manufactures would be displayed in the Musical Pavilion.²⁷ Dufferin Park, which was still privately owned, also erected a grandstand. Winnipeg was to be the host of the Provincial Exhibition in Manitoba from the fourth of October through to the sixth in 1881.²⁸ Organizers frantically assembled to meet the challenge. Previous experiences and better planning saw a drastic improvement in Winnipeg's ability to do so. Obviously, the ability to hold an agricultural exhibition annually was problematic. The lack of coordination in controlling aspects of exhibition infrastructure and competition from other places were a constant challenge to those who meant to have the historic Red River community transform into a modern city and metropolis.

Early Exhibitions

The first attempt to hold an exhibition in 1871 proved to be a challenge. Two elements prevented the exhibition from being a success. To attract as many participants

²⁶ Ibid., July 17, 1879, 2.

²⁷ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, September 6, 1881, 1.

²⁸ Ibid., October 3, 1881, 1.

as possible, the event was not held before the harvest season. By October, however, torrents of rain turned all plans into a sea of mud and disappointment. The second problem was the Fenian raid on a provincial post.²⁹ Order still eluded this community in 1871. Parishes mustered arms to repel the invaders. Both exhibitors and participants were distracted by the raid and the weather discouraged attendance. As a result, the Association appealed to the province to cover a deficit of \$459.95, but was rejected.³⁰

The main problem was not so much the weather as the conflict with the harvesting season and the ability of organizers to attract enough farmers to participate and provide products. Suitable buildings on an acceptable site had yet to be provided. But even had the weather been favorable and suitable buildings erected, success would still have been limited. Some exhibits were awarded prizes, but the majority of show categories had no exhibits.³¹ Getting their products to initial exhibitions and its mass audience was a cost incurred by participants.

In 1872, the Provincial Agricultural and Industrial Society of Manitoba held its First Annual Exhibition on the second and third of October.³² Its programme listed many agricultural and domestic categories eligible for prize money. Organizers hoped that emulating prize-winners would ensure a higher quality product for show and ultimately for market. But without other attractions, it was questionable whether interest in the display of livestock and everyday domestic products would continue to hold the attention of audiences.

²⁹ *Manitoban*, October 14, 1871, 2.

³⁰ MacEwen, 36-37.

³¹ *Manitoban*, October 14, 1871, 2.

³² City of Winnipeg Archives and Records. "Museum Collection", MU12. 1872 Programme of the Provincial Agricultural and Industrial Society of Manitoba.

The Northern Pacific Railway offered to ship specimens of the best quality to the Minnesota State Fair in September with no cost to the exhibitors.³³ Of course, exhibitors had to get such products to Winnipeg first to be judged before the offer could be taken up. This strategy by the railroad was to be temporary. The ability to hold exhibitions needed to provoke action from many different quarters. Railway companies were avid boosters of exhibitions. They provided their own exhibits at many local and international exhibitions.

The alternatives to exhibiting locally were numerous. Railroads companies, larger urban centres like Toronto, for example, and governments all had a stake in showing other marketplaces the best they had to offer. The objectives of the National Policy had set the pace of any development. The Department of Agriculture in Ottawa issued a public notice regarding an upcoming Vienna Exhibition in 1873. Through Her Majesty's Committee, entrusted with the management of the Exhibition of Colonial Productions, exhibitors were to defray all costs and meet all deadlines for adjudication.³⁴ Only large and wealthy organizations could afford to do this. For those hosting an exhibition, it was an opportunity, but that opportunity was also some other place's competition. An example of such competition was the Selkirk County Agricultural Society, which held its First Annual Exhibition in 1875. Its programme shows an increase in prize money and the amount of advertising.³⁵

³³ Ibid., August 10, 1872, 2.

³⁴ *Manitoban*, February 22, 1873, 4.

³⁵ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records. "Museum Collection", MU12. 1875 Programme of the Selkirk County Agricultural Society.

Exhibitions were an opportunity for emerging retail and commercial outlets to reach a wider market. Marketing techniques and the arrangement of displays became more important to overcome competition. Side by side, traditional, agricultural exhibits were displayed with urban, commercial products and services. The provincial government now had regulations in place for the conduct of exhibitions and judges had permission to compete in events other than the ones they judged and even award a prize for things not even on the prize list.³⁶ The point here is that exhibition officials had advantages that other competitors did not have. Such advantages would later lead to waning public participation in competitions.

The directors of the Provincial Agricultural Society voted to hold the Provincial Exhibition in Portage la Prairie in 1875. Winnipeg citizens caused such an uproar that the vote was reconsidered and the exhibition was re-scheduled for Winnipeg.³⁷ The prime or superior products exhibited, which garnered prizes, were selected by the Centennial Exhibition Committee and were to be shown at the Philadelphia Exhibition later that year.³⁸

Exhibition organizers continued to provoke action among participants and exhibitors regarding product standards and exhibit samples, but were not always successful. "Manitoba will have no reason to look back with pride on the exhibit of her natural and industrial products of '78. Our people have not apparently roused themselves to the necessity of individual exertion to make the annual exhibition of our Province a success." Although such comments were not meant to disparage the efforts of farmers

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Standard*, August 28, 1875, 2.

³⁸ Ibid., October 23, 1875, 3.

and manufacturers, “all they require is proper encouragement to prove that they are not behind their *confreres* in the older provinces and the United States.”³⁹

Some community leaders, however, were not about to waste their time waiting on the possibility of a local exhibition. Alexander Begg and A.G.B. Bannatyne were both involved in overseeing exhibits destined for exhibitions elsewhere. Begg and Walter N. Nurse were partners in a printing company in 1879. Begg was also partners with A. G. B. Bannatyne.⁴⁰ The free traders or merchants who had founded Winnipeg were all familiar with each other. Public notices were circulated, which urged farmers to submit particular products by given dates.

In 1880, for example, such a notice requested a list of duplicate exhibits to be first displayed in Winnipeg. Of the best products, one set would be packed and transported to London. The “Honorable A.G.B. Bannatyne, having consented to take charge of an exhibit to be sent to Great Britain, will make a selection from our fall shows and send the same forward to Ottawa in October.”⁴¹ Such an undertaking could only be accomplished by those who could well afford the time and cost of such activities.

Begg, on the other hand, was to accompany the second set of exhibits to the Toronto Exhibition and then the Montreal Exhibition. “In the case of Toronto the directors of the Industrial Association in that city have agreed to assist to the extent of \$500 towards defraying the expenses of collecting and forwarding samples from Manitoba. In Montreal a special building is being erected for Manitoba, and as this Exposition takes the form of the Dominion Exhibition, the Ottawa Government have

³⁹ *Manitoba Gazette*, October 12, 1878, 4.

⁴⁰ Peel Bibliographies, University of Manitoba, Dafoe Library (Card 1), 6-9.

⁴¹ Archives of Manitoba, “The Manitoba Exhibits of 1880”, (MG14), A2.

agreed to assist in sending forward 'Products' from this Province."⁴² Such philanthropy on the part of Begg and Bannatyne would yield long-term benefits.

Shipping exhibits to other cities did not guarantee success. Host cities monopolized space, communications and timetables. Canadian exhibits had been displayed abroad since 1851.⁴³ In 1866, Red River produce was part of the Canadian display at the Paris Exhibition.⁴⁴ There was a world of difference between what Red River, Canada, and Paris had on display. Parisians, no doubt, were oblivious as to where these displays were from. Such was also the case in August of 1886, when Manitoba, along with Canadian displays, showed their exhibits at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London. A report dated January 1, 1887, by Walter R. Nursey, who was the province's representative for exhibits in London at that time, to the Minister of Agriculture of Manitoba, noted how ignorant English people were of the fact that Canada existed, never mind Manitoba.⁴⁵ Canadian products were dwarfed and seemingly lost amid the vast array of displays from all points of the empire. Manitoba's displays consisted of canned goods, such as condensed milk in butter cans, hams, and long grasses.⁴⁶

Glorified accounts of successful exhibits as compared to others were often justifications for the grants received. A host city of an exhibition always captured the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Stuart Murray, "Canadian Participation and Representation at the 1851 London Great Exhibition and the 1855 Paris Exposition Universelle." *Histoire Sociale* 32, no. 63 (2000) : 1-22.

⁴⁴ Archives of Manitoba, "District of Assiniboia Council Minutes", June 16, 1866 (MG2), B1.

⁴⁵ Ibid., "The Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London, 1886", (GR1518-G964), 3.

⁴⁶ Legislative Library of Manitoba, "Manitoba Department of Agriculture: Collections. The Indian and Colonial Exhibition", (1886), London, 22080.

lion's share of benefits. An exhibition or exhibits of a place brought recognition. In an era of major growth, the exhibition phenomenon was rolling across the North American landscape. In Manitoba, secondary centres like Brandon and Portage la Prairie were hosting more exhibitions with more emphasis on the rural aspects of life on the prairie. Winnipeg interests saw these other exhibitions as opponents, who drew participants, exhibits, and attention away from their own efforts.

As exhibitions grew in proportion to population and the economy, the hinterland was readied for settlement. As progress continued, editorials repeatedly emphasized how the white race was spreading across the landscape. "As this advances to completion, the Indian must recede. The manifest destiny of the Indian now is to disappear."⁴⁷ Further west, indications were that the Métis resented the oncoming flood of emigrants from Ontario. In the process of colonizing and civilizing Canada's newly acquired colony, earlier arrivals to these lands needed to be controlled, lest they disrupt the flow of trade and peace of the mind of present and future settlers.

Regardless of conflict, the idea of exhibitions and their potential gave the host city and its citizens an image of what they could become. Many external factors and the weather still hampered efforts to stand out and capitalize on mass spectacles. Local fairs and other exhibitions competed with Winnipeg's objective to become a major distribution centre. The efforts of members of the Legislature, Boards of Trade, of societies and associations, and of participants and visitors would eventually yield better results. Speculation fueled the emerging middle class in Winnipeg to position itself for the

⁴⁷ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, September 6, 1881, 1.

potential influx of immigrants, an expansion of trade and economic benefits, and of emerging as a metropolis on the coattails of progress.

Great strides were being taken to raise the standards of exhibits at exhibitions. Displays began to resemble those from elsewhere, no doubt due to the success of past experiences or those of exhibitions elsewhere. Hosting the Provincial Exhibition in Winnipeg in 1881, for example, was an opportunity to show not only displays of livestock, crops, manufactures and various other products, but of the infrastructure of organizations making this happen. The creation of societies, associations, and boards were part of the process. A new order could not influence the weather to co-operate, however. Like the toss of a coin, the weather inhibited the transportation of exhibits and visitors.

Initially, the arrangement of displays attracted audiences. The last minute details of opening day were nearing completion as “the inside departments having been all arranged in the Pavilion by about noon, the judges getting through their onerous duties during the afternoon, and the public admitted in the evening.”⁴⁸ The involvement of the Canadian Pacific Railway and important exhibits from elsewhere bolstered the viewing of familiar products. Minerals and native crafts accentuated display space. Other displays such as ladies work, books, and advertizing exhibits were local in nature. Such techniques temporarily accented the viewing of common products. Audiences would later demand more novel displays and curiosities to garner their attention.

A new feature consisted of an attraction that exhibition boards found to be a banal form of entertainment. The Johnny Jones Entourage, a roaming spectacle in itself, was

⁴⁸ Ibid., October 5, 1881, 1.

one such example. The appeal of curiosity, surprise, and games of chance was an extremely seductive, shadowy product of such forms of entertainment. Jones displayed a sea lion, a monkey, and an exhibit of shells and fish. Jones's intention had been "to show a talking oyster, but the animal got out of its cage one night."⁴⁹

Due to weather, outside activities were limited. Many exhibits of livestock and farm implements were absent and prize lists were replete with awards going to canine, preserved fruit, vegetable crops, domestic products, as well as poultry displays.⁵⁰ While organizers saw such exhibits as holding the most interest, it was Jones who stole the show. Participants were rewarded for competing and setting standards for progress. Visitors may not have been aware of this. What was mostly observed was what they saw every day outside of exhibition.

Among themselves, exhibitors and organizers still had concerns regarding the competition of local and foreign exhibits. Judges were nominated by local societies or associations. One visitor, out of personal interest, wanted "to ask the judges by what standard of excellence they made their awards, some of which were so contrary to English notions as to appear to be simply absurd."⁵¹ The problem was that judges were not conveying to exhibitors any standards, except the absolute discretion of awarding a prize. Committees did accept such complaints or insights, feeling somewhat obligated to act lest such happenings continued to draw the attention of future visitors and competitors.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., October 6, 1881, 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., October 7, 1881, 1.

The exhibition was a limited success, which was more than could be expected. At the end of the exhibition, gate receipts were \$1,322.00 above expenses.⁵² This surplus did not reflect the benefits derived from holding an exhibition. The local economy provided lodging, meals, merchandising and business transactions, garnering tangible benefits. The intangible was obvious. The organizational, strategic, and informative standards achieved through competition could lead to emulation, influence immigration, and give legitimacy to the actions of interested parties. Whatever was recognized as being progress now had no choice but to go forward at a rapid pace.

Progress was seen in the ambition displayed by the participants themselves. The stimulation of competitive rivalry between local, provincial or state exhibitions was part of a perception that such opportunities were a natural, progressive virtue. However, no sooner had limited success been recognized, than the next few years would be ones of depression. For Winnipeg to project its image far and wide, the Provincial Exhibition needed to be permanently held in Winnipeg.⁵³

Future hopes focused on the possibility of hosting the Dominion Exhibition in 1885 along with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. A failed Provincial Exhibition in Portage la Prairie in 1883 and the absence of one in 1884 fueled a debate on governmental patronage and on non-agricultural displays.⁵⁴ Exhibition organizers in Winnipeg had suggested that citizens should manage, through the committees of their association, all future exhibitions held in Winnipeg themselves. Provincial Exhibitions should not be determined by the provincial Department of Agriculture. Wrestling such a

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *Commercial*, January 29, 1883, 348.

⁵⁴ Ibid., May 27, 1884, 688.

mandate from a provincial government, however, was not possible. This was the case not only for the Provincial Exhibition but also when playing the host for the Dominion, Canadian, or Western Canadian Exhibitions. In the 1880s, St. Boniface had successfully held several such events, while Winnipeg was unable to muster enough interest or funding. The francophone community had been established for some time and was competing with the merchants across the Red River.⁵⁵

Thus far, not unlike settlement, early exhibitions were sparse, scattered, and had garnered limited success. A second Métis rebellion in Saskatchewan did not raise too much anxiety in the city. Now distant from a “half breed outbreak”, past fears of trade becoming paralyzed were fading. The primary concern was towards more immigration. Through modern communication, potential settlers may become aware of such unrest, and be dissuaded from immigrating until such obstacles were dealt with. It was noted in editorials of the day that if history was any judge, past rebellion could be seen as a benefit. “Winnipeg was only an unknown village until the rebellion of 1869 brought it into notice, and stimulated emigration to the province.”⁵⁶ This second rebellion, further west, and its conclusion in 1885, drew any other resistance to the mass appropriation of land and space to a final conclusion. The burning effigy of Louis Riel, the former leader of this society, became a symbol of conquest for the new prevailing order.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Archives of Manitoba, “Les Francophones dans le monde des affaires de Winnipeg, 1874-1920” *Francophone Business Community*. (MG10), F5.

⁵⁶ *Commercial*, April 7, 1884, 548.

⁵⁷ Archives of Manitoba, “Events”, Photograph 145, N9582 (July, 1885).

Conclusion

Wolseley's expedition and subsequently the North West Mounted Police were other concepts from elsewhere that had garnered results, often with paternalistic rigor. With legend and myth following in their wake, these representations of order also became part of the West, always present at public gatherings and moments of unrest. There are many footprints left behind by members of these forces which show the links they had to this community and elsewhere. Once secured, the priorities of population growth and railroad communication were first and foremost in the minds of those already now here. The first wave of subsequent arrivals, mostly from eastern Canada and points of empire, needed time to settle in. Their baggage also included the institutional and cultural attachments of places left behind.

The first exhibitions were humble indeed. Seemingly endless conflict arose concerning the formation of various societies and associations related to exhibitions. Normally the purview of provincial governments, exhibition organizers sought to wrest control of its direction and also fought among themselves. The speculation and anticipation of what was to come when progress came knocking was an opportunity for many elites to hold their own and for an aspiring urban middle-class to control all of it. Fortune and fame could be realized.

However, a symbiotic relationship existed between the urban and rural components of this potential metropolis and its hinterland. A plethora of new and existing rural communities, aside from other competing interests, created their own societies and associations. They had their own fairs and exhibitions and resisted being usurped by machinations of urban design. These rural settlers were well aware of the aspirations of

their city cousins. Exhibition organizers were continually frustrated, not only by competing interests, but by the hesitancy of the city's own citizens when it came to paying for the privilege of holding an exhibition.

In spite of such frustration, the proponents of exhibitions continued the preparatory work needed should the occasion arise that an exhibition be held. Such events were being held after the harvest. By October, the rain poured on audiences and turned the exhibition grounds into a sea of mud. A revision of their strategy would become necessary as this state of affairs continued to dampen the prospects of a successful event.

Exhibits were also needed at other exhibitions for display. Sample exhibits were gathered, packed, and transported to larger urban exhibitions. This was necessary for promoting the area and its potential. But local products and their message were often overshadowed by larger concerns and the agendas of exhibition organizers elsewhere. Nevertheless, an exhibition was the best way to promote immigration, agriculture, manufactures and future industry. As time progressed, organizers would learn from past experiences and their exposure to how other exhibitions were managed.

Perhaps such limited results were due to its proponents not adhering to the model. The idea for this model was from Europe, across the Atlantic, and utilized to suit the needs of eastern Canadian exhibitions. If this model was somehow imperfect when replicated, according to Heaman in *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*,⁵⁸ would it not follow that once again this model, from Toronto, would also be somewhat imperfect as it crossed the Canadian Shield? Humble or not, these initial efforts seemed necessary to set the stage for successful local exhibitions.

⁵⁸ Heaman, Chapter 1.

THE MANAGEMENT OF EXHIBITIONS: 1885 – 1900

Introduction

Initially, Winnipeg was preoccupied with problems of order and security, of settlement, and of a given period in which to independently control more of its decisions regarding future speculation and growth. The frustration was due to knowing that dramatic change was coming and not being prepared. Immigration would only continue for a certain period. An urban population does not consist of farmers. The agricultural products which farmers produced and the means for them to do so were essential for the city to progress in every respect.

The previous period experienced a problem of order. Resolution had come with the quelling of a rebellion at each end of the period 1870 to 1885, as well as the fending off of Fenian raids. Having brought an element of order and relegated the natives and Métis to the margins, Ottawa suggested that Winnipeg could celebrate the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway by hosting the 1886 Dominion Exhibition and receiving the federal grant that went along with it. The city, however, could not yet provide suitable facilities. Winnipeg had already made several efforts to organize an exhibition without success. To do so would require the growth of population, of manufactures and industry, and the formation of a successful exhibition association.

International exhibitions, initiated in 1851 when Queen Victoria opened a World Fair in London, were emulated worldwide over time in some form or other. Large,

successful exhibitions at the state level produced various local versions of exhibitions with corporate agendas. The fair in Toronto in 1846 can be regarded as the parent of the Canadian National Exhibition, much as the Toronto Industrial became the blueprint for the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition.

The mismanagement of exhibitions was forever an issue. Winnipeg's past failures due to the weather, timing, funding, organization or lack of interest still frustrated many exhibition organizers. Another concern was the morals of not only audiences or competitors, but also of those who managed, judged, or directed these events. The timing of the event was a constant bone of contention between exhibitors and exhibition organizers. Organizers depended on a successful harvest for displays, while the weather refused to cooperate once this was accomplished. A more professional class of judges and organizers themselves was needed to pull everything together.

The coordination, or lack thereof, of transporting exhibits, exhibitors and visitors frustrated the efforts of exhibition organizers. Winnipeg lacked accommodations for all of these participants. Railroad companies had to contribute in order to alleviate such concerns and members of the public themselves had to be encouraged to take in visitors. While organizers sought huge audiences, the resolution of these concerns eluded them. In the late 1890's, a larger group of prominent elites became involved in the management of Winnipeg exhibitions. With a new strategy, they undertook to resolve these matters. It dawned on the Exhibition Association that they could not control every aspect of exhibition and that the contribution and inclusion of farmers, agricultural societies, the elites of their community, and the public itself were all required for success.

The management of exhibitions needed to develop a strategy that yielded results. Local organizers were concerned about government control, which necessarily came with grants and the award of hosting an exhibition consistent with the objectives of the government in question. The primary concern, however, was the lack of immigration. A combined effort by all levels of government, interest groups, and by exhibitions themselves would be needed to resolve this problem.

The exhibition itself continued to grow in spite of past disappointing experiences. Past efforts were cumulative in nature. The production of agricultural products would vary and increase over time. The completion of the railroad and a vigorous campaign to lure immigrant farmers and cheap labor was in progress. No ground would be gained without a second wave of immigration. The growth of manufactures was linked to having a pool of cheap labor. Previous settlers had been from eastern Canada or from points of empire and were well versed in negotiating their welfare. An epidemic of labor unrest plagued the business community.

Exhibits needed to be presented at more distant venues in order for Manitoba to be recognized. Coordination was required to organize exhibits for exhibitions in eastern Canada, abroad, and south of the border. In turn, Winnipeg could expect potential exhibitors from other areas to also come to Winnipeg and compete. This competition would compel local exhibitors to raise the quality of their products. More than just a trade convention or a fair of curiosities and amusements, the exhibition was to be a vehicle by which many lessons could be taught to its exhibitors, competitors and visitors, and hopefully learned as well.

Unfortunately, many attractions and exhibits had become commonplace for many visitors to the exhibition. The country was replete with such events, propagating an exhibitionary culture that demanded new and novel exhibits and distractions. An aggressive strategy with a celebratory dimension was entertained by exhibition organizers. Hosting celebratory events under the aegis of different levels of government were much sought after, but without the political agendas they often required. The noise, fireworks and reference to past military victories all contributed to a grand finale at exhibitions that became a drawing card for large audiences and for instilling future generations with a sense of patriotism.

The Management of Exhibitions

A wiser Exhibition Association endeavored to resolve many of the concerns which had been plaguing the progress of the exhibition. A more coordinated and comprehensive programme was to be initiated. The preparatory work and expertise from other exhibitions would be a step in the right direction. The crowds expected were to be better managed and the time of the exhibition and its priorities were to be modified. An attempt to bring all possible resources to bear on the future success of the exhibition was under way.

Whether it was on the Board of Trade, Board of Commerce, committee or directorship, the same names appear on the Board of the Exhibition Association. Reading like a social register, notables like J. H. Ashdown had the designation of President, while C. N. Bell was nominated as Secretary or Treasurer.¹ Recognition of a national identity

¹ *Commercial*, February 8, 1887, 397.

and a consciousness by the commercial elite with its influential connections elsewhere helped Winnipeg gain a definite advantage in 1886. Such links were exhibited in the political dealings that allocated patronage and public services through “ties of clientage in economics transactions that distributed contracts, purchases, and investment from the center.”² Whether in leading mercantile houses or prime financial circles, ambitions and allegiances were maintained among commercial elites. The status conferred by military rank, of commercial success, or of political influence has always garnered privileges.

On a smaller scale, even Winnipeg’s aspiring elite formed such allegiances. Whether through marriages, ties of military comradeship from earlier historical periods, or through formal school or college affiliations, favored individuals were appointed to posts or interlocking directorships.³ Those interconnections were manifest in the way that agricultural and industrial exhibitions were undertaken with the formation of an association, whose executive would appoint suitable directors to manage various aspects of the event. With such ties in place by 1886, the ambitions of Winnipeg’s commercial elite gained support for a headquarters that oversaw the grading of all western wheat, the building of other branch railways for the Canadian Pacific Railway, and a monopoly on through-traffic from the federal government that made Winnipeg a virtual gateway to the West.⁴ Support did not, however, mean control. Winnipeg was now positioned to make

² J.M.S. Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada before 1914*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 67.

³ Donald E. Davis, “The Metropolitan Thesis and the Writing of Canadian Urban History”, *Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine*, XIV, (October, 1985), 95-113.

⁴ Careless, 87.

more headway regarding its objectives. Within a few more years, newcomers would flock to both urban and rural destinations.

Winnipeg's Board of Trade was not enamored with discriminatory freight rates by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. In response, a strategy was initiated to send representatives to other provinces and approach the Dominion Government with their concerns, seeking relief from "the burden of railway monopoly under which the province suffers."⁵ This initiative would garner results within a few years, but only in consideration of lower fares and rates to ensure that exhibits, exhibitors, and visitors could attend the exhibition. When these began to substantially increase in future, the railroads realized that it was more profitable to leave things as they were.

Prior to 1890, exhibitions were held sporadically. By 1889, exhibition organizers realized that a celebratory aspect attached to the exhibition would attract larger crowds. This would convince Winnipeggers that such events could prove to be of "considerable commercial value to the city, and the citizens would be amply repaid for the time and money given to the enterprise."⁶

A successful event needed the leading business element of the community to predominate when it came to a better exhibition. As the business journal, the *Commercial* expounded, "If we are to have an exhibition, let it be one which will do to the city and province something which cannot be said of any other exhibition previously held."⁷ To that end, businessmen formed a new Exhibition Association. While stockholders in the Exhibition Association did not expect to realize a profit, their ability to invest and direct

⁵ *Commercial*, February 8, 1887, 395.

⁶ *Ibid.*, February 10, 1890, 478.

⁷ *Ibid.*, February 24, 1890, 540.

the economic and cultural future of the community left them at a decided advantage. Often, the time spent towards organizing themselves and exhibitions was about all that was contributed. Long- term objectives were to be realized.

The Association's objective at the local level was normalization, where even free time was to be a model for compliance, respectability, and the aspirations of social advance, in particular for lower middle and working class adolescents. Not unlike eastern Canadian exhibitions, grants themselves were allocated with similar objectives in mind. Various grants often decided if an exhibition would take place in a particular location. For example, such grants supported public sporting events and boys' clubs by promoting active participation as an antidote to spectatorism and gambling.⁸ Such an extension of power over popular culture delineates a relationship between physical identity and hegemony.

With the incipient development of a hinterland, the city began to focus again on an exhibition. Mayor Alfred Pearson convened a meeting in 1890 to discuss the possibility of holding an annual exhibition, with the assistance of the provincial government and free freight rates offered by the Canadian Pacific Railway for exhibits.⁹ Whereas a bylaw was rejected by ratepayers in 1890 to subsidize an exhibition, a \$30,000 interim appropriation was passed for 1891 by the city council.¹⁰ Had the ratepayers approved the previous exhibition by-law, "Winnipeg could have had the Provincial

⁸ Douglas A. Brown, " 'Aggressive, Progressive, and Up-to Date': The Sports Program at Toronto's Industrial Exhibition, 1879-1910," *Sport History Review* 32, no. 2 (2001): 79-109.

⁹ MacEwen, 38.

¹⁰ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg By-Law", No. 1149 (1890), Vol.1, Table 2, xlvii.

Agricultural Exhibition located here for ten successive years for a consideration of \$10,000, to be paid by the Provincial Government.”¹¹ Despite the failure to pass a by-law, the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition Association applied for an act of incorporation of its charter by the Manitoba Legislature.¹² Exhibition organizers would no longer allow the scepticism of ratepayers to direct their efforts. The time was ripe to entertain more pressing concerns regarding the success of the exhibition.

Expertise and tried methods from elsewhere were now being entertained regarding the management of exhibitions. For some years now, the experience of representatives who had arranged and transported exhibits across the Dominion, the United States, and abroad could combine their knowledge with the experience of organizers from larger exhibitions. A model fashioned somewhat like the Toronto Industrial Exhibition was suggested; a logical precedent since the West was to be a platform from which the East could industrialize.

Like other exhibitions, even as far as Sherbrooke, Quebec, organizers tried to keep the management of exhibitions out of government control. The Dominion or provincial governments had different agendas than their municipal counterparts. The expenditures involved, “together with the political patronage from which they seem to be inseparable, should be excuse enough for their being entirely severed from government control.”¹³ What governments wanted was control, but not the responsibility. In spite of such rhetoric, grants were more than welcome and patronage was not limited to the political arena.

¹¹ *Commercial*, July 7, 1890, 965.

¹² *Ibid.*, February 9, 1891, 522.

¹³ *Farmer's Advocate*, February 1, 1890, 45.

The Association's charter permitted the provincial government to appoint a representative, who along with shareholders, would then elect exhibition officers and directors from among themselves. "The proposition to have representatives from each agricultural society in the province, however, will be in some degree modified, if the system adopted by the Toronto Industrial is adhered to, as proposed."¹⁴ Corporate sponsors favored this strategy. The Canadian Pacific, the Manitoba Northwestern, and the Northern Pacific railroad companies were now offering to transport exhibits to and from the exhibition free of charge. Low passenger rates were offered and numerous contributions added to the prize lists.¹⁵

The organization's strategy of appealing to a larger audience finally took hold. Should the proposed by-law pass, the intent was to ask for a special Act of Parliament to regulate representation, which would be granted to various associations across the province, thereby ensuring provincial grants. Such societies would appoint representatives, who in turn would elect officers and directors from among themselves. "This will prevent any sectional or local predominance and give the Association the benefit of the views of the best men in the province and make the Board more thoroughly representative than it could by any other means be made."¹⁶ As well, the "Winnipeg city council is entitled to representation upon and takes an active part in the affairs of the association, owing to the intimate relations which exist between the council and the association."¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., May 5, 1891, 137.

¹⁵ *Commercial*, August 10, 1891, 1155.

¹⁶ *Farmer's Advocate*, January 13, 1891, 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., February 4, 1892, 514.

The fact was that the city needed the cooperation of entities such as Cattle-breeder Associations or the Dairymen's and Poultry Associations, for example, to assure the success of the agricultural component of the exhibition. Otherwise, the city could never hope to expand the exhibitions to include the industrial component of urban exhibitions. The municipal elections of 1891 proved favorable to the Association's efforts. "Winnipeg is to be congratulated on the fact that there are so few citizens opposed to progress. The exhibition is now an assured fact, and the site will be a little north of the junction of the Selkirk branch and the main line of the C.P.R., about two miles north of Main street."¹⁸ The city had purchased seventy-five acres from the Dominion government and the Exhibition Association merely held the land in trust for the city; it did not have any authority to borrow money.¹⁹

By 1892, many alterations to the site were made. This was an indication of growth itself. Streets were closed off and more buildings were erected. A recurring problem was fire, as materials at the time were extremely susceptible. A grandstand had to be built almost every season. In July of 1892, an electric streetcar line went right to the grounds. "The Mayor, Councilors and Officers of the Board of Trade displayed their fearlessness by being first to ride the electric wonders."²⁰ City officials were enthusiastic and ratepayers now looked forward to this annual event, as the city's hinterland grew proportionately with the city's expansion. Although exhibitions themselves were rarely profitable in financial terms, the city reaped an array of fees. Licenses were required for

¹⁸ Ibid., July 19, 1891, 1.

¹⁹ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg By-laws", Vol. 1, No. 1237 (1891).

²⁰ MacEwen, 40.

almost any attraction, for each tent and exhibits as well. Traveling circuses, for example, were charged \$200 a day for their licenses.²¹

Management and Agriculture

The mismanagement of exhibitions was a symptom of what happens when an attempt is made to manage agriculture in an urban landscape. This was especially so given the urban and rural symbiotic relationship which existed at this time. Neither the urban or rural components of this newly formed society yet dominated the other. The expansion of the Dominion, the affairs of the province, and the metropolis status that Winnipeg vied for would be not accomplished without agriculture. Holding the event during harvest season was an obvious error, since agriculture still dominated the exhibition. "One thing has been clearly demonstrated," the *Farmer's Advocate* opined, "Winnipeg should hold her exhibition in July, not September or October, and this lesson may be worth more to us than the difference there might have been in gate receipts with the weather more favorable."²²

Whether the meddling of politicians, the incompetence of local judging, or the constant control sought by exhibition executives, all of these concerns from the farmers' perspective on urban exhibitions were unsavory and often deemed immoral. "In judging, in all departments, decided preference should be given to the system of employing single expert judges instead of the usual custom of appointing three local men, one of whom usually does the judging while he throws the responsibility of his decisions upon the

²¹ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg By-laws", Vol. 1, No. 50, xli.

²² *Farmer's Advocate*, March 2, 1890, 80.

other two.”²³ One never really knew what self-interest or expertise followed such appointments at the official level of exhibitions.

Much scorn was heaped upon the timeless preoccupation with humanity’s vices. An exhibition was simply another opportunity to capitalize on the amusements afforded whenever people congregated. “What remains for the directors to do is to see that the attractions are of an inoffensive nature, and to entirely prohibit all gambling, betting or games of chance, and upon no excuse whatever to allow intoxicants, no matter how mild a nature, to be sold or even brought upon the ground.”²⁴ Organizers did not want to alienate their country cousins. More was needed, however, to attract larger audiences.

It was becoming evident was that a lack of coordination existed within the infrastructure of the exhibition itself. The promise to include other provincial societies and their representatives, however, rang hollow. “The proposition to have representatives from each agricultural society in the province, however, will be to some degree modified, if the system adopted by the Toronto Industrial is adhered to, as proposed.”²⁵ Such about-face proposals were commonplace as organizers continued to manipulate the shape of exhibitions. “Be that as it may, the present directors are all capable business men, and thoroughly in earnest in making the exhibition a success.”²⁶ It is no wonder that so many other potential participants distrusted the motives and proposals submitted by the Exhibition Association’s executive.

²³ Ibid., 80.

²⁴ Ibid., March 2, 1890, 80.

²⁵ Ibid., July 19, 1891, 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

The lack of input by other agricultural societies was evident as time progressed. Conflicts between directors and potential exhibitors developed as well. The construction of suitable buildings for cattle continued to be a bone of contention. The Exhibition Association's executive constantly attacked the suggestions of exhibitors in the press. But farmers were willing to be patient as they expected changes to be forthcoming. "It is too soon to condemn, as wise men often change their minds and mend their way."²⁷

These men had certainly not been wise in the past when it had come to deciding an appropriate date on which to hold an exhibition. The agricultural component of exhibitions was primary in order for Winnipeg to expand its manufacturing base and industrialize. For a number of years, farmers had expounded the view that exhibitions should be held in July. "Just before the commencement of the harvest is a time at which the farmers could ungrudgingly devote a few days to a matter of this kind. It is also a quiet season of the year for the business community."²⁸ In 1891, after the qualified success of the first exhibition, Winnipeg and numerous rural exhibitions finally adopted this suggestion.²⁹ Exhibits from this summer exhibition could then be gathered and sent on to similar events in the east. It was entirely the responsibility of organizers that this time adjustment was only being entertained in 1891. Urbanites were always rather presuming what a farmer should do in his apparently free time.

The benefits of exhibition were perhaps not evident to farmers. "Looking at it from a physiological and psychological point of view, the week's relaxation from the farm is time well spent; and the cost of the trip is as nothing to the value of the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Commercial*, October 5, 1891, 55.

²⁹ *Farmer's Advocate*, November 23, 1891, 424.

experience.”³⁰ Considering the “tedious monotony of such comparative isolation”, what these country folk needed was “a week at Winnipeg, amidst the hurly-burly of the Industrial Fair, is the best tonic for a despondent farmer.”³¹ On the other hand, no mention was made as to what city folk should do to alleviate their own chronic condition.

Unfortunately, a world of difference was emerging as the city lost touch with the realities of colonization and its agricultural past. One such example was a petition to the Dominion Government requesting a few buffalo from Lord Strathcona’s Silver Height’s herd, which were to be donated for preservation in Banff Park. The hope was “to secure to the city in perpetuity a remnant of the noble herds that once roamed untrammelled over the western plains.”³² Four head of bison were corralled in a corner of the Exhibition Park. “Their condition became so wretched that in a short time that the authorities were compelled to lay a plank floor in the pen and visitors to the exhibition will see them slipping about on it, broiling in the hot sun... and that whomever is responsible for their dismal condition, commend them to the attention of the society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.”³³

Management and the City

Not only did farmers scorn their urban counterparts, but the urban populace also criticized exhibition organizers. This was evident in the failure of Winnipeg’s Exhibition Association and local politicians to convince ratepayers to allow the appropriation of

³⁰ *Town Topics*, July 8, 1899, 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² *Ibid.*, July 16, 1898, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

public funds to subsidize such endeavors. In spite of many efforts by exhibition organizers, politicians and the media, this was apparently no easy task.

It was clear that the leadership of the business community, the municipal government, and other elites were not in touch with the citizenry. The true position of ratepayers was obvious, as the city council, which managed the exhibition committee, also attempted to append the issuance of debentures totaling \$30,000 for the procurement of a site and the erection of buildings to an appropriation to cover operational costs for an event. Such tactics often led to the defeat of proposed by-laws. Citizens were not amused with the machinations and aspirations of its elite.

The Exhibition Association proceeded to incorporate itself into a permanent organization as many more prominent businessmen joined its ranks. With such notables as J.H. Ashdown as the Association's president, Stephen Nairn as vice-president, C.N. Bell as secretary, and J.H. Brock as treasurer, pressure was brought to bear on the city council. Many other notables held directorships, such as Captain Williams, Captain Swinford, J.B. Somerset, D.L. McIntyre, J.R. Sutherland, G.F. Galt, L.A. Hamilton, I.M. Ross, D. Smith, D.E. Sprague, F.W. Thompson and S.J. Thompson.³⁴ The exhibition's executive and directors came to consist of members of Winnipeg's elite. The reason given for the local prominence of the organization's executive members now was that it gave the association more status and facilitated preparatory work. The importance of exhibitions were now recognized.

While the focus was clearly on the ensuing millenium, the organization needed to include the province as a whole if success was to be realized. The lack of

³⁴ *Morning Telegram*, July 11, 1899, 3.

accommodations during the exhibition was also a concern. All citizens were urged to take in as many visitors as possible during exhibition week. City Council and the Exhibition Board were urged to address these concerns. Lack of accommodation could well dissuade visitors from staying during exhibition week.³⁵ Coupled with the cost of transportation, finding suitable accommodations could be debilitating. A more comprehensive strategy would be required to alleviate such concerns.

Management and the Media

The boosterist press was not immune to criticism. “The personnel of the committee was calculated to give visitors the impression that the city and its affairs are controlled exclusively by the newspapers, while, as a matter of fact, the newspapers are published by their proprietors pour passé le temp - to kill time – when they are not busy investing their surplus capital or counting up their profits.”³⁶ *Town Topics*, a critic of the city’s elite at times, raised concerns that the larger papers avoided.

The major newspapers were not always willing to point out the shortcomings of exhibition organizers, perhaps because the interests of their owners were similar to those of the exhibition’s board of directors. Instead, *Town Topics* took on that responsibility. “Now, however, that Exhibition days are here, it may be as well to give the management to understand that no inefficient arrangements for getting passengers from the Fair

³⁵ *Town Topics*, August 26, 1899, 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, July 16, 1899, 1.

grounds will again be tolerated. It was a scandal... that should not have marred the pleasure of our visitors.”³⁷

Battles were fought in the editorial pages of daily newspapers and journals. These representations of the exhibition had different audiences. When mismanagement was not reported, *Town Topics*, for example, did not shy away from reporting contentious issues “even if other journals have their mouths stuffed by dollars worth of tickets niggardly doled out to keep them in good humor.”³⁸ This journal was a representation that concerned the activities of society’s middle class, which mostly featured social events and horseflesh.

Immigration and Exhibitions Elsewhere

The first wave of settlement consisted of settlers who were well informed on the machinations of business versus labor. A second wave of immigration would perhaps consist of less informed and resourceful settlers, more amenable to the goals of the business community. “The first difficulty to be met is the lack of a surplus population in our towns and cities, which would furnish the cheap labor so readily obtained in cities of the east.”³⁹

The provincial government was accused of not spending enough resources on immigration and on promoting Manitoba’s exhibits and interests elsewhere, especially at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition being held in London in 1886. “Every province in the Dominion has already sent commissioners, who are now arranging exhibits of their

³⁷ Ibid., 3.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Commercial*, March 23, 1886, 532.

respective provinces for the opening of the exhibition, while Manitoba has not yet decided on sending a representative.”⁴⁰ There was really no excuse for this, except perhaps if the exhibits were not worthy of transport.

Canadian products were grouped together at such exhibitions and were not designated by province. Products were “patronizingly looked after by agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway and some landed corporations, who will use them to allure immigrants to homes hundred of miles west of the province, and from whom Manitoba will derive no practical benefit.”⁴¹ It was up to organizers to ensure that representatives would be prepared to press their advantage when presenting exhibits from Winnipeg and Manitoba in general. Larger interests in eastern Canada still dominated the representation of the North West.

Due to the lack of immigration, which hampered economic growth, exhibitions were relegated to holding sporadic events. There was no exhibition in 1884 due to the weather and a poor harvest. A study, apparently conducted by the editor of the *Commercial*, showed that “settlement is scattered, traveling expenses high, and many of the farmers are unable to afford the cost of bringing their exhibits and spending several days time attending the exhibition.”⁴² This was not news to the readership.

Advocates of immigration were particular about which immigrants were suitable for settlement here. They saw themselves as fortunate, thus far, on the class of immigrants that they had already gained. “Our immigrants are mostly British subjects, or the better class of those who leave Europe. Socialists, Anarchists, boycotters and

⁴⁰ Ibid., May 4, 1886, 653.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., October 6, 1886, 26.

dynamiters, who flow into the United States along with the semi-civilized masses from Italy, Hungary, Bohemia and other parts of the Old World, seldom find their way into this country.”⁴³

No matter how much advertising exhibits were given at eastern exhibitions, the railway monopoly and memories of resistance still tarnished the image of the North West in the newspapers from elsewhere, which affected immigration. While the North West Mounted Police were legendary in the popular press, the notorious rebellions of the recent past were not so easily dismissed.⁴⁴ Monopolies headquartered in eastern Canada were not about to relinquish their control of space and of objectives when it came to exhibition time.

The Exhibition

In 1976, Richard H. Painter, who had worked for the Canada Department of Agriculture for forty-two years and became familiar with the power dynamics of exhibitions, stated that he believed agricultural fairs and exhibitions furnished invigorating competition. “A fair is a cross section of life. The urge to excel is inherent in most people and competition is the life of business. Fair day was an achievement day and there was no better time and place to estimate community advancement.”⁴⁵ An exhibition was both a public demonstration and a competition.

⁴³ Ibid., September 3, 1888, 1259.

⁴⁴ Ibid., October 17, 1887, 68.

⁴⁵ Archives of Manitoba, “Events”, Richard H. Painter Papers, (MG9 A84),1. This folio is only several pages.

The focus was on raising the standards of agricultural production for competition and mass production locally by showing audiences and competitors the then most advanced knowledge and technologies. Competition forced breeders, for example, to either keep up with evolving standards or market inferior products. The idea was to indoctrinate migrants and newcomers from abroad to realize that past breeding methods and accepted practices were no longer productive for evolving markets

The Provincial Exhibition of 1886 was held in St. Boniface. The general fare of exhibits at this time included cattle and sheep, plum sauce, canned honey, samples of native tobacco, as well as an array of agricultural products and a few manufactured goods. For example, the Blackwood Brothers had various aerated waters and ciders exhibited and the Redwood Brewery displayed numerous ales, porters, and lager beers.⁴⁶ Local manufactures were few and parent companies had yet to establish outlets in the city. This would dramatically change over time.

The first Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition was held from September 28 to October 3 in 1891. Much effort had been expended in trying to assure its success and a site was determined.⁴⁷ The advertisement did not make the front page. Manufacturers did not feature prominently until the turn of the century. Nevertheless, there was entertainment as opposed to amusement. Instruction was similar to other previous local exhibitions, where quality of stock and domestic products were graded and rewarded as an example for others to emulate.

In the 1890's, the Winnipeg Exhibition added a programme of sports and amusements during exhibition week. This included "Caledonian sports, balloon

⁴⁶ *Commercial*, October 5, 1866, 36.

⁴⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, September 28, 1891, 5.

ascension, musical programme, lacrosse, ball, bicycle and other games and contests, dog races, horse races, military sports, school drill, gymnastic exhibition.”⁴⁸ The city’s rural counterparts were again considered. “The people throughout the country have not the same opportunity for recreation and amusement that those of the city enjoy. The programme of amusements will give them an opportunity of gratifying their desires in this direction, while such a program will not interfere with the exhibition.”⁴⁹

The midway and the sports and amusement programme were not then considered as part of the exhibition. The reality was that without such distractions, visitors would be hard pressed to continue to attend in large numbers. The event would have been only in the interests of business if this had been the case. One had to consider the source from which such comments were made. Competition alone, which produced more non-winners than otherwise, would not draw audiences to this event.

Profits were realized as crowds grew and curiosities abounded. In 1894, for example, tribal people from elsewhere were attractions. South Sea Islanders, who were real artists and actors, were little more than “savages” in the eyes of spectators.⁵⁰ Here was an insight into the Darwinistic beliefs of the dominant culture. The lower classes must have seen themselves as fortunate with their lot in life when considering what they saw before them now. In spite of intricate artifacts and cultural performances, these specimens were still savages, uncivilized, and considered dangerous to a degree.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., June 6, 1892, 999.

⁴⁹ Ibid., July 24, 1893, 1206.

⁵⁰ Archives of Manitoba, “Events”, N8594 (August 10, 1894), 90.

⁵¹ *Manitoba Morning Free Press*, August 10, 1894, 1. See also Raibmon Paige, “Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka’wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago’s World Fair,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81 (2000), 157-190.

Exhibitions popularized anthropological findings as the science of man that reached the public had a distinct hierarchical message and served a hegemonic function. The intellectual, political and business leaders' efforts to establish a consensus about their priorities and their vision of progress as it pertained to racial dominance and economic growth were reflected. Different cultures were something to observe but not necessarily to tolerate outside of exhibition.

In 1897, the idea of creating a celebration of sorts as a drawing card yielded better results. Combining a spectacle with fireworks proved to be successful. The spectacle recreated past military victories as theatre, with the fireworks topping off a grand finale. "One of the great drawing cards of the Fair was the 'Siege of Algiers', a magnificent spectacle and display of fireworks."⁵² In 1898, the success of this feature led organizers to present a similar attraction. "This year the directors have secured as a piece de resistance...the great spectacle of the 'Relief of Lucknow', describing the most thrilling incidents of the great Indian mutiny."⁵³ Such displays became a common theme at future exhibitions. There was no doubt to observers as to who the victors were.

Country folk were observed by their urban counterparts as they attended exhibition week. "They come... behold them crowd our busy streets, our healthy country cousins. Tis good to see their faces bright, their laughter is a tonic to city folk who suffer from a tired feeling chronic."⁵⁴ This observation was not a glowing endorsement for an urban existence. What was seen by these visitors was otherworldly, while for residents of

⁵² *The Voice*, July 3, 1897, 3.

⁵³ *Town Topics*, July 9, 1898, 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, July 16, 1898, 1.

the city, what was on display had already become commonplace. The desire for novelty and thrills was more urban than rural.

A variety of attractions were now commonplace as the strategy to lure even larger crowds garnered success. Special features included cake walks, coon dances, piccanniny songs, a donkey circus, the parachuting acrobats of a Russian troupe and a Virginia state colonel band, as well as representations of ancient Roman chariot races. The pièce de resistance in 1899 was the Battle of Manila Bay with a special pyrotechnic battle of fireworks.⁵⁵ A plethora of activities were created to fill up a whole week's worth of exhibition.

Farmers had more to concern themselves about than just attending the exhibition. Ideology aside, farmers were expected to meet competitive standards.⁵⁶ If they could not meet those standards, they were not be able to compete at the exhibition or in the marketplace. "The Indian Head and Brandon Experimental Farms have on exhibition one of the finest displays of all kinds of cereals that have ever been shown in Winnipeg."⁵⁷ These exhibits, which showed superior fertility and productiveness, were an example of what was possible with newly applied science technologies. By 1899, breeders, for example, "were becoming tired of annual trips, as many breeders now recognized they had to have pretty good stock to compete with the animals now shown at the fair."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., July 16, 1898, 7.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey M. Taylor, *Fashioning farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925*. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), passim.

⁵⁷ *Morning Telegram*, July 10, 1898, 6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., July 12, 1898, 3.

The first official function of this exhibition was the directors' luncheon, at which Premier Greenway spoke. The Provincial Government had granted \$30,000 to the Exhibition Board in 1898.⁵⁹ The exhibition was seen as a vehicle, which no other agency could accomplish in regards to imbuing farmers with larger ideas. The governor-general and his wife, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, were touring the west by special train and were scheduled to arrive on July 12, 1898.

Each day of the exhibition was to be designated for different groups even if all could not attend. The first day was Opening Day with Children's Day on the second. Aside from man-eating crocodiles, the boys largely favored the finale. "The fireworks in the evening with the realistic presentation of war in all its awful colors was another feature which the rising generation expressed itself as emphatically delighted with and a martial fever was engendered in the breast of half the boys present who then and there solemnly avowed the fixed determination to enter the army."⁶⁰ There was no elaboration on whether this was to leave the farm or the city. The police were kept very busy in preventing those who thought the exhibition was free from entering the grounds. "Five young men were arrested and summarily tried by acting magistrate, Alderman Bell."⁶¹

The third day was Farmers' Day. The focus was on horses, cows, and dairy products. An ongoing concern was that many farmers were not raising cows even though markets were very amenable to dairy products. More attention, by both rural and urban attendees, however, focused on horseflesh and racing. The stock parade was a display of agricultural stock. A large portion of prizes given out during the exhibition occurred at

⁵⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁰ *Morning Telegram*, July 13, 1898, 2.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the track and grandstand. In 1898, twelve thousand paid admissions viewed the stock parade, a number judged low because of the heat.⁶²

The fourth day was Citizens' Day. There was no distinction as to the throngs of visitors who marveled at the displays of wares present. By 1898, many companies from the east and abroad had established outlets or agencies in Winnipeg. Other countries were now touring Canada with their own products and services. During exhibition week, the advertisement pages of local papers were crammed. Almost anything could be procured, from insurance to farm implements, finished leather goods, manufactured items like soap and spirits, breeding animals and stuffed fowl, and a plethora of other mentionables which would eventually find themselves on display at one exhibition or another.⁶³

The fifth day was reserved for our neighbors to the south. American Day saw admissions swell as these visitors became attractions themselves. It was noted that the "sporting proclivities of the Americans proved a bonanza for the proprietors of the different games of chance, every one of which did a roaring business."⁶⁴ American Day had been a feature calculated to promote immigration and cultivate friendly and trade relations. The directors of the exhibition, who held a banquet that evening, honoring the minister of the interior, Clifford Sifton, were praised for their efforts.

Although directors were not the executive, they represented the interests of the city. A toast was proposed to the city council and the exhibition directors, who were "so closely associated as to be synonymous."⁶⁵ Here was an indication of how the middle

⁶² Ibid., July 14, 1898, 2.

⁶³ *Morning Telegram*, July 15, 1898, 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid., July 16, 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

class was now pervasive in almost every aspect of community development. Individual members, like Charles N. Bell for example, were on numerous boards and company executive rosters.

Ladies' Day came last, on the final day of the exhibition in 1898. The attendance was low, however, and it was suggested that perhaps more ladies in the future could be "induced to leave their usual weekend domestic duties to visit or perhaps re-visit the exhibition."⁶⁶ Aside from merely attending exhibitions, women did have some agency. In domestic categories, women competed for prizes, whether it was for canned goods, knitted articles, or baked goods, for example. Both rural and urban women were exhibitors and performed various tasks at such events.⁶⁷

Growing gate receipts were often touted as the yardstick by which organizers claimed success. In 1891, about 7,000 paying customers were admitted through the gates, but 1,000 non-paying guests had jumped the fence.⁶⁸ Obviously, many people did not have the means to pay for their admission or the ability to appropriate such. As time progressed, exhibitions became more loaded with tantology as organizers became more sophisticated. By 1896, attendance had reached 40,000 and prize money now exceeded \$16,000.⁶⁹ New buildings were again added by borrowing \$30,000, payable over thirty

⁶⁶ Ibid., July 18, 1898, 2.

⁶⁷ E.A. Heaman, "Taking the World by Show: Canadian Women as Exhibitors to 1900," *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1997): 599-631. See also David C. Jones, "'From Babies to Buttonholes': Woman's Work at Agricultural Fairs" *Alberta History* 29, no. 4 (1981): 26-32.

⁶⁸ MacEwen, 39.

⁶⁹ MacEwen, 42.

years, from the Imperial Bank.⁷⁰ The event continued to enjoy some financial success, but critics had begun to accuse the Exhibition Board of losing sight of the educational purposes of the exhibition since 1893.

Over \$14,000 was taken in by the grandstand in 1899, most of which went to farmers as cash prizes. "It is clearly evident that a society that gives away this much every year to encourage agriculture, the fine arts, etc., is no small factor in building up the industries of the country."⁷¹ Even more exhibits were on hand in spite of the fact that the railway companies were now charging a rate on them. Unlike in 1895, when gate receipts were \$8,000, admissions now garnered more than \$26,000. These figures "almost staggered the directors in contemplating as to future development."⁷²

The exhibition had become the most influential agency to promote the province. The exhibition not only represented the development of the province, but was a reflection of the progress of the region, in educational, agricultural, and commercial interests. The columns of daily newspapers reported many exhibits that touched on aspects of both rural and urban life.

Whereas lawyers, doctors, real estate developers and such sought seats as councilors, businessmen were more inclined to participate on the Board of Trade rather than in civic government. Exhibitions themselves needed to prod the sporadic and half-hearted participation of community members. Newspapers were avid proponents when it came to instilling competition. Often, competing was a futile exercise as "a few whose

⁷⁰ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg Council Minutes", Vol. 1 (1264), 125.

⁷¹ *Morning Telegram*, July 10, 1899, 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, July 11, 1899, 1.

wealth enabled them to bag all the prizes.”⁷³ Many winners were not local and even provincial governments entered exhibits from their experimental farms.

The university had a powerful role in the administration of an exhibition as well. Judging became seemingly more professional and norms dictated the end product. The clash between town and city, with their multi-faceted societies, often frustrated efforts by the provincial government as well. Class barriers became more pronounced as an emerging urban, middle class dominated the affairs of the exhibition. Only city ladies judged art work, for it was said that “rural people were unconsciously complementary to their personal friends” and that “unless young women of this generation are taken in hand speedily, plain sewing rank among the lost arts.”⁷⁴ No one questioned whether city ladies still possessed these qualities.

By 1898, the exhibition was indeed a significant social and economical institution. As the turn of the century approached, new machinery such as steam tractors and grain separators, for example, were displayed. The exhibition’s midway, however, now resembled the midways of other cities.⁷⁵ Proportionately, so did country fairs throughout the hinterland. Aside from the usual fare, there rose a concern over the increased presence of sideshows and a growing interest in the midway.⁷⁶

The immoral effect of midway attractions were continually expounded by governments, lawmen and reformers. Tents concealed giggling girls, people in various stages of deformity, games of chance or shady practices created to separate a citizen from

⁷³ *Manitoba Morning Free Press*, July 14, 1898, 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁵ Archives of Manitoba. “Exhibitions”, N9345 (1898), 33.

⁷⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, July 15, 1898, 1.

his hard-earned dollar. Midways were viewed as a banal form of entertainment. Exhibitions and fairs had created sub-cultures that relied on such events for their livelihood just as the poorer segment of society took full advantage of picking the crowd's pockets.

Conclusion

What was evident was that a breakthrough had occurred in Winnipeg. The time was ripe for the city to show what it now was able to accomplish. The first wave of migration and immigration had settled and was secure enough with the presence of the North West Mounted Police representing monarch and country and ever present at important public functions such as the exhibition. This place was becoming theirs. It was a place that replicated from points of empire with bonds of culture, history, and power.

For Winnipeg, a transition was taking place. Urban and rural development had been simultaneous. Before the 1880's, growth had been sporadic. Since 1885, a massive strategic propaganda and advertising campaign by the Dominion, Province, and city and other entities attempted to lure settlers to Manitoba. By the 1890's, a full generation of English migrants had established Winnipeg's political, commercial, and cultural life. Now, a hinterland was emerging and Winnipeg was a growing metropolis.

The twentieth century dawned with a growing malaise about exhibitions generally. Many newcomers to the West still remembered such events held in various forms from where they had migrated. Expectations were high and failures fell on the shoulders of organizers. The editorial pages of numerous newspapers also lambasted promoters for the attractions they procured in the interest of drawing a crowd. For young

and old alike, frequenting the midways and participating in games of chance were forms of escapism. In the context of exhibitions, the allure of glittering lights and the cacophony of voices and sights to see were often willful and much sought after distractions.

Pedagogical problems recurred – such as how to teach those who did not feel compelled to learn new lessons, how to dissuade those who falsely believed they already knew, and how to ensure that experts themselves knew which lessons to teach to whom. The campaign to assert Winnipeg's dominance over its hinterland required a display of the products of its economy. The consumptive nature of a developing exhibitionary culture reduced the undeveloped to the status of exotic other.

Whereas this phase of growth included the coming of the railroad, the installation of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and a new wave of immigration, for example, the advent of a new century would also bring forth new challenges and expectations for exhibition organizers. The focus on industrial rather than agricultural concerns would further delineate the center from the hinterland. A reality which would include more expectations from producers with new, efficient technologies, the advent of motor cars which would change the dynamics of time and distance for both visitors and exhibitors, and the extreme conditions of depression and two World Wars would all have their impact on the function and purposes of exhibitions.

BECOMING A WHITE CITY: 1900 - 1915

The Winnipeg Industrial is an educational institution and the one object and aim of the Directors is to present the lessons of the Fair in the broadest and clearest light, that the greatest benefits may be secured by the people who visit it, and by those who through ingenuity, skill and industry, have produced new or superior lines for introduction to the public. Believing that it is necessary to amuse as well as instruct, to provide for the serious and business side, the Board has always furnished and will continue to do so, feature exhibits to attract attention.

Winnipeg Industrial Manifesto, 1905

Introduction

This place, no longer recognized as Red River, no longer in fear of Fenian raids or rebellions, and soon to relegate the French and other minorities to the margins of society as well, was becoming modern. The symbiotic relationship that existed between the urban and the rural during the settlement process was becoming less pronounced and shifted in favor of the city. Since the late 1890's, the hinterland had taken a more defined shape as immigration increased and a second wave of newcomers began to make their way to the prairies. These newcomers were expected to learn whose place this was, and to emulate

those who came before them. The managers and board of directors of exhibitions had this in mind as their objective when forming their manifesto.

From 1900 to 1915, the space within exhibitions still provided an efficient vehicle to display power relations. Within the remnants of empire, and links to previous settlers, this space was taking on a more definitive shape, one that would extend throughout this new West. Extending their influence over popular entertainment zones of seeing humans on displays, exhibitions had also transformed non-white peoples into object lessons of evolutionary theory. Eventually, the buffer zone between the exposition and the midway eroded, as a constituted order of things took hold, which rendered much of the world as metonymically present, subordinated to the gaze of the dominating white, middle-class and male eye of metropolitan forces. A continuity then, whereas hereditary and superiority beliefs continued to influence the deep cleavages rendered during this past. A prevailing pedagogy, then, was instrumental for those who saw such enterprise as their burden in constructing their own "white city".

Vision, the most prolific of the human senses, was inundated and stimulated for crowds to respond to the glories of mass production, consumption, and seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake. Although agriculture continued to be a traditional component of exhibitions in Winnipeg, organizers and exhibitors now displayed more ordered objects and lessons for their audiences. The focus was shifting from production and industry to an emphasis on consumer goods and the pursuit of leisure in constructed environments. The expanding role of government agencies taught audiences with their own displays. With urban growth the symbiotic relationship between urban and rural interests were becoming muted. Because of successful competition from second-order centres, like

Brandon for example, Winnipeg exhibitions gradually placed less emphasis on themes of agriculture.

Consumption was emerging as the signifying currency of exhibition. It consisted of arranging displays of manufacturing goods and products. A shift occurred, from the processes of production to the consumption of products. Divested of the marks of their labor, manufactured products signified the productive and coordinating power of capital and the Dominion. Technical instruction of the masses through exhibition transformed the products of the working and laboring classes into fetishized commodities. An earlier progressivist taxonomy based on stages of production became subordinated to the dominating influence of principles of classification based on nations and the supra-national constructs of empires and races. Space was needed to realize such constructs.

Exhibitions provided the space required, and were thus physical manifestations of wealthy, pretentious, intimidating and formidably endowed symbols of this era's self-absorption. Besides celebrating historical events, creating commercial trade routes and investment opportunities, exhibitions were also an opportunity for a visible unity of the social and economic lives of a host city. They influenced generations of urban planners and were evanescent glimpses of an imagined and constructed world. Such events featured the largest gatherings of people in public. For most of these visitors, something novel or unorthodox was expected. The masses were no longer gathering to gaze at pumpkins, cattle, or farm machinery. The ideas of progress required innovation, education, and various avenues of distraction to lure audiences to exhibitions. As this exhibitionary culture realized its purposes, even the attraction of automobiles and flying machines would become commonplace.

The decline of exhibition after 1910 was not failure, but rather success. From rather humble beginnings and high expectations, to a concerted effort to set the stage for exhibitions in Winnipeg, the success derived from this last phase of exhibition was not at first apparent to those who continued to expound the purposes of exhibition. What was not evident was that its purposes were being realized. Over time, this place emerged as a white city, a bustling metropolis in control of its core and periphery and near unfettered access to a more productive hinterland.

As a vehicle of progress and of institutionalization, aspects of exhibitions past had not faded away, but were in fact present at different venues behind various facades throughout the city's landscape. Like fragments of a core, the monumental facades of governing agencies and the panoramic display of products at commercial venues, the institutes of learning, libraries, and museums, for example, were testimony enough to show that the purposes of exhibition in Winnipeg had largely been accomplished. With obligations of empire and Dominion, exhibition grounds would be utilized to accommodate the exigencies of war economies. Nostalgia and the constant need for distraction would later revive a different form of exhibition.

The Ordering of Space

Representations existed which strove for legitimization and authority over competing collective ones. The convergence of technological optimism with "cultural despair" and of "the worship of progress with nostalgia"¹ denoted a persistence in modern thought since the Enlightenment. For the city, like the state, freedom had become

¹ Arthur M. Meltzer, Jerry Wienberger and M. Richard Zinman, ed., *History and the Idea of Progress*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 227-28.

valued through competition and conflict. Appropriation was not only for urban space by institutions and Victorian residences, but also in the form of borrowed ideas from elsewhere. One exhibition held in one place, physically solid until razed to the ground at its end, simply drifted to another place of urban space and time, never really disappearing, but lingering over a city's ambitions until the next "really big show" began anew. The last event became a referent for the next one as exhibitions competed for influence and power.

Since 1886, concepts and ideas borrowed from other exhibitions, including experienced staff, were now commonplace. In their attention to culture, however, organizers believed imitation was no longer enough. The concern over ideas for drawing more visitors was complicated with the dramatic growth of cities. As migrants from rural areas relocated to major cities in the hope of capitalizing on employment opportunities and on the promise which progress claimed to hold, "compartmentalization was sought as real fears of public disorder became a major concern for genteel society."² It became a logistical challenge to construct a small city within a city to warehouse the array of displays and to accommodate increasing attendance.³ Order was needed to regulate the crowds.

The reality was that farmers and agriculture in general were no longer the purview of this metropolis. Other exhibitions held in places like Calgary, Prince Albert, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Brandon and Portage la Prairie were now competing for their own destiny. As a result, Winnipeg continued to fashion its programme in ways to

² Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace Q. Company, 1938), 19.

³ John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London: Cassell and Collier Macmillan Publishers Ltd. , 1977), Appendix.

draw larger crowds with horse racing prizes and other unorthodox features of agricultural pastimes, like horses jumping over automobiles, for example.⁴ More space was appropriated to accommodate this transformation.

In 1910, Exhibition Week was extended to ten days from the previous seven days. The importance of exhibitions and their purposes seemed to evade the city's inhabitants. "Winnipeggers who are not directly in touch with the Western trade of this city or the constant influx of agricultural products from the fertile prairie empire tributary to Winnipeg, are apt to lose sight of the real and educational interest which is really the backbone of the Exhibition, instead of its purely sporting and amusing features."⁵ It was evident as to why they were distracted, given the drawing cards of exhibitions.

The ostentation of imposing facades, majestic vistas of architecture and their contents within, which formed a technology of vision, served not to atomize or disperse a crowd but rather to regulate it, and doing so by rendering the crowd visible to itself made the crowd part of the spectacle. Galleries afforded a superior vantage point from which the layout of the whole and the activities of others could be observed. Certain venues developed the construction of viewing positions. Ascension balloons were a regular feature at many exhibitions. To see and be seen, to survey the whole and yet be under surveillance was to transform the crowd into a constantly surveyed, self-regulated, self-watching and consistently orderly public at such events; a society watching over itself. The exhibition can be seen as perfecting a self-monitoring system of looking, where

⁴ *Town Topics*, July 24, 1909, 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, June 4, 1910, 1.

subject and object positions could be exchanged, as the crowd regulated itself - a site of sight accessible to all.

Exhibitions also led the way in sponsoring displays of architectural projects for the improvement of social conditions in areas of health, sanitation, education and welfare. In short, these were akin to promissory notes that the engines of progress would be harnessed for the general good. Increasingly under the influence of modernism, exhibitions and their rhetoric of progress translated into utopian statements about the future. Promised were solutions to social tensions once progress had reached the point where benefits could be realized. "Much has been said, and rightly so, of the value of the Industrial as an educator and as a powerful agent for immigration, but the social aspect of the fair should not be overlooked."⁶

The social aspect of the exhibition, however, should not be confused with the momentary interaction and merriment of the occasion. "The great beauty of the exhibition and a great deal of the value to the people, is as a holiday maker and a socializer. It is the white man's pot latch of the prairie."⁷ This version of "pot latch" was not one of sharing freely. There was always a cost or price tag attached to whatever was associated with such events.

For many, the exhibitions were distractions, not solutions for society's ills. Ruling groups, now visibly middle-class, with more urbane ideas and extensive relationships from elsewhere as time progressed, were not fearful as they once were. As a consequence of transforming the masses to their way of thinking, an urban, commercial culture emerged with antecedents of popular culture, well beyond the reach of moral economy.

⁶ Ibid., May 30, 1903, 11.

⁷ *The Voice*, July 28, 1905, 6.

Official culture was publicly limited to erecting monuments in the centre of cities, but this space was strategic and definitive -- the centre was ordered.⁸

Supranational, state and urban centers created space at the center of cities, reflecting how such space educated and pacified the masses. High and popular culture abutted each other in a zone, a form of middle ground, where official culture managed to persuade and absorb the mass's contention within the life of the exhibition. Seemingly, mechanical invention had diminished class differences by overturning the traditional relationship between the utility of an object and its monetary value. Becoming modern was acceptance of a social system where significant inequalities in income endured despite the growing quality emerging in merchandise. Distracted by the promise of physical survival with comfort, the laboring classes unknowingly increased upper-and middle class incomes in the democratization of luxuries. Vision, projected outwards, was unable to see itself as a human commodity. The belief in progress's promises of a life of luxury and leisure caused a blindness to society's pressing needs, with a superficial and surreal face on the city.

Former exhibition sites left traces in the physical landscape of urban space in host cities, such as public facilities, cultural institutions, and controlling technologies that socialized the crowds. Through an exhibition's influence, cities eventually met some of their social obligations, even before the state recognized its own. Like the space on which an exhibition was held, money and prestige paid for high culture and used power and

⁸ Iain Chambers, "The Obscured Metropolis," *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*. (December 1985), 2.

influence to get governments to pay for the rest.⁹ The city, although superflously sanitized, authoritarian, and a tribute to power and hierarchy in the order of things, was given an ideal type of city form of its own meaning and carefully focused variety through incorporation.

Winnipeg continued to aggressively assert itself as the premier metropolis of the West. "The rightful and only place for the Winnipeg Industrial is as the sun around which the Brandon Exhibition and the other lesser Exhibitions of the West shall revolve as a planetary system." That a farmer "would be content to go to the one nearest to him, is a ridiculous idea."¹⁰ The notion that Winnipeg be considered to have parity with Brandon or Portage la Prairie exhibitions was considered to be patently absurd.

This space had been assigned as an instructional venue, as well as a place to exercise leisure for rural visitors. "The farmers of the West come to the Exhibition for their annual holiday excursion, to pick up information of value, to do business, and to be amused; and the people of Winnipeg go to the Exhibition mainly to be amused."¹¹ What was not amusing, however, was the doubling of admission tickets in 1909. The fees charged to circuses were also doubled. This "pot latch" was indeed becoming something else.

⁹ Glen L. Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy from the 1880's to 1917*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1976), Chapter 2.

¹⁰ *Town Topics*, July 25, 1908, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 10, 1909, 1.

Pedagogic Relations

Exhibitions constructed settings that reinforced prevailing notions of cultural hierarchy. At exhibitions, foreign peoples were exploited and minorities were excluded from decision-making. Where they were visible, it was in selected or segregated areas. A new era, losing itself in pleasure and fantasy, would emerge in a more contemporary phase, initiated by the rhetoric of racial supremacy.

Exhibitions, in developing a new pedagogic relation between the state and the masses, had also subdued the specter of the crowd. Visitors had been preconditioned to modes of deportment in order to be admitted to public events. Within the realm of civil society then, a set of pedagogic relations had helped to form a new public, one inscribed in relations of sight and vision. Prior to the exhibitionary era, such a formation had found its way to smaller, public events. A concerted attack on popular fairs, associated with riots, carnivalesque aggression and the display of curiosities at sideshows, were perceived as impediments to the rationalizing influence of exhibitionary forms. Afterwards, the mechanization of fairs had brought entertainment more into line with the values of industrial society, testimony to the virtues of progress.¹² The midway became a relatively routine ingredient in the new world of leisure. Fairs became more tolerated and safer, and in due course a subject of nostalgia and revival.

The site for changes in conduct was mostly the middle ground between the exposition and the fair. This buffer zone was where two cultures abutted, formed a region of accommodation between official and popular cultures, with the former seeking to

¹² Tony Bennett, C. Mercer and J. Woolacott, ed., "Popular Culture and the turn to Gramsci," *Popular Culture and Social Relations*. (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986), Introduction.

convert the latter to more worthwhile pursuits, or at best to moderate their extremes. The midway or fair was a product initiated by popular showmen and private traders, who were eager to exploit the market which exhibitions supplied. They consisted of an *ad hoc* mélange of both new mechanical rides and the more traditional freak shows, which frequently mocked the pretensions of the exposition they adjoined. Relations between expositions and amusement zones led officials to attempt to regulate such differences. They largely failed to do so, as evidenced by the absence of major expositions and the presence of midways with us today. Strategies for short-term requirements were more influential than long-term ones.

Exhibitions during this period were successful in responding to short-term ideological requirements in particular. As a shift occurred from the processes of production to the products themselves, the productive and coordinated power of capital and state were put forth. The earlier progressivist taxonomy based on stages of production was eventually subordinated to the dominating influence in principles of classification based on nations and the supranational constructs of empires and races. Such principles subsequently developed into that of separate pavilions for participating countries or their captive colonies.

Following an innovation of the Centennial Exhibition held at Philadelphia in 1876, such pavilions were typically zoned into racial groups.¹³ The Latin, Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon, American and also Oriental groups were the most favored classifications, while black and aboriginal peoples of conquered territories were denied any space of their own. These marginalized groups were represented as “subordinate adjuncts to the

¹³ James D. McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition of Philadelphia*. (Chicago, St. Louis, 1876).

imperial displays of major powers in their white cities.”¹⁴ These developments at exhibitions transferred the rhetoric of progress from relations between stages of production to relations between races and nations by super-imposing the associations of the former onto the latter.

The pretensions of status also influenced the middle-class obsession with lineage and heredity, linked to inheritance strategies. Sharp distinctions were developed as even the lower, white classes elevated themselves, when differences in appearance needed explanation. The rhetoric of progress, evolutionary theory and other disciplining arts associations provided the state with an illusion for an answer and the city within the city (the exhibition) presented near naked men and women as representations of explanation. Centuries old status, as an impersonal characteristic, was transferred to all citizens. Legitimized by the state and the city, racism had the effect of locating preferred audiences at the top of the exhibitionary structure in the order of things, a supranational and urban construct. Viewed in this way, such representations that were exposition displays in human form were hardly less grotesque than the midway curiosities.

The stories of state and of founding cultures diminished the agency of diverse peoples, whose histories were subsumed in a master narrative. Besides being an exhibition manager, Charles N. Bell was an amateur historian, whose prevailing view of the “Seven Oaks Massacre” was an example of such invention.¹⁵ No doubt Bell's perception of his past garnered advantages for his present. The imperial and nationalistic nuances of this story, in the form of a pageant, acted out in public performance, became

¹⁴ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at America's International Expositions, 1876-1916*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 4.

¹⁵ Owram, 6.

reality. Somehow, it was difficult to envisage Lord Selkirk as a pioneer, especially the first in Western Canada.¹⁶

Exhibition existed as a microcosm of its metropolis and hinterland, both mutually dependent. The scientific lessons did better for commercial purposes than for social ones. A participant or a visitor could learn to prepare exhibits or be introduced to product lines, spurring production and demand. The city took its lessons to the hinterland, through provincial agencies, which featured conforming messages with their exhibits, for example, of electricity and baby clinics.¹⁷ Exhibition circulars were a form of subtle coercion that “not only instructed Canadians across Manitoba and the North West, but was also a means of assimilating and educating the inferior ways of immigrants.”¹⁸

Some exhibits were propaganda with which scientific, charter groups approached the masses, seeking knowledge while conveying that they already knew what was. The battle constantly engaged women to be champions of life, health, and hygiene. By joining temperance groups, they might maintain the virtues of country- living, which purported to render mankind more receptive to God. However, no evidence exists that any perfect children were ever conceived. Similar to youth groups' near indoctrination at agricultural camps, such clinics advocated a tune-up for all children by professionals in health care. It probably seemed as if the doctors were gods.

¹⁶ Owram, 9.

¹⁷ Archives of Manitoba, “Exhibitions”, (N1224), 18.

¹⁸ Norwest Farmer, July 20, 1915, 670.

Technologies of Vision

Spectators at exhibitions were expected to study type and, through emulation, enhance their products to a state of scientific and systematic perfection. "Thousands upon thousands will throng to Western Canada's exhibition, and they will see things that are worth seeing."¹⁹ Agricultural fairs and exhibitions are one of the oldest manifestations of marketing techniques. As the industrialization of agriculture progressed over time, so did entries of equipment, implements and of agencies for purposes of administrative control.

In 1908, as the city itself was on display, the public was asked to beautify their property. In a circular letter distributed by the Winnipeg Development and Industrial Board, citizens and business owners were asked to "decorate your homes, your shop, your delivery rigs, your automobile, your warehouses, factory or business block" during exhibition week. The city's wholesale, manufacturing, and retail interests were offering prizes, thereby classifying even space outside of the exhibition grounds. A rather blunt declaration stated, "Let us not stand aside and talk about things that ought to be done to make Trade Week a success. Get into line and make Exhibition week this year the biggest, best and busiest ever. PUSH! If you can't push, PULL! If you can't pull please get out of the way."²⁰

The advent of electrical power also shed new light on the way exhibitions influenced the alteration of how products and entertainment were represented. Electrical power had transformed production rates and diversification, lowered prices, and provided

¹⁹ *Grain Grower's Guide*, June 28, 1911, 7.

²⁰ *Town Topics*, July 11, 1908, 1.

a new spark for products of leisure and fantasy.²¹ Paris, the city of light, in 1900 used electrical lighting on a massive scale during the exhibition. Emerging from the dark and gritty early modern flicker of gaslight, the exhibition could now be extended well into the night.

Such innovation, soon available even in Winnipeg, would dramatically transform the landscape of exhibitions. Visitors were dazzled by falling rainbows, cascading fountains and by spotlights. The unrelenting glare of light now elevated ordinary merchandise to a new level. Covering up unpleasant sights, light extended a technology of vision by providing a powerful imagery repeatedly overwhelming the viewer.²² The unattractive and dull workplaces, public spaces and commercial venues were allowed an exotic escape. Instead of correcting problems, another layer of technology buried them.

Consumption

The more Winnipeg grew and developed, the more exhibitions here began to resemble those held elsewhere. Such events often mirrored each other when presenting recent innovations concerning products of scientific knowledge and technical refinement, as lessons which could revolutionize daily life on a grander scale. By the 1900's, the preoccupation with instructing the masses altered its theme somewhat. The emphasis on the tools of production was past and the focus turned primarily on products and entertainment for tourists. The sensual pleasure of products of consumption triumphed over the abstract intellectual enjoyment of contemplating the progress of knowledge.

²¹ Michel Corday, "La Force à L'Exposition," *Revue de Paris*. (January 15, 1900), 439.

²² Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 26.

The significance of mass consumption was made in a visibly concrete and concentrated fashion.²³ The sheer emphasis on merchandizing appealed to the fantasies of consumers. An inverted fantasy provided commerce with a substitution of subjective images for external reality. Corruptive in nature, such reality was a sales pitch in disguise. Cultural change at this point was inherent as the concerns for physical survival now transformed into desiring a more comfortable and satisfying lifestyle. Whereas art and religion used to provide ways of expressing desire, now visitors could appropriate such longings through commodities.²⁴ The exposition part of the exhibition became an abstract form of midway for its products. In a fabulous world of pleasure, comfort and amusement, consumption subsumed other facets of culture.

As population in the city grew, more leisure space for the urban public was in demand. Using the exhibition grounds for recreational purposes outside of exhibition, however, was not permitted. This was in spite of the fact that these grounds had been “bought and maintained by public money,” but its gates “were securely locked.”²⁵ The exhibition grounds themselves had become a valuable piece of property. Social interaction here was restricted for display.

Exhibition expositions had become the model for future department stores and corporate advertising. Price tags were now affixed to products. This practice was in turn replicated by department stores. Significant was the loss of haggling over prices seen in earlier retail shops. This entailed a whole new set of social interactions. Verbal exchanges

²³ Rosalind H. Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 58-60.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 64-70.

²⁵ *Town Topics*, May 16, 1908, 1.

were replaced by passive responses, the dictum being, if you have to ask, you can't afford it. The effect was of taming aggressive feelings towards others by encouraging desire towards products.²⁶ Visitors were civilized for proper comportment in the new, modern urban spaces of commerce. Exhibitionary practice was thus transferred to everyday reality. This was also a form of social psychology towards the controlled environments of emerging commercial institutions, some of which, like the Hudson's Bay Company and Eaton's, were almost empires themselves.

Manufacturing and industrial interests sought the loyalty of retailers and the general public when it came to growth, for such would not be accomplished without their support. "These industries cannot be built up if we persist in the unpatriotic policy of sending Winnipeg money out of the town to build up the factories of Eastern Canada or the United States. Loyalty to home interests will cost you nothing except a moment's thought when making your purchases."²⁷ On more than one occasion, much of the advertising for exhibitions was now printed in Eastern Canada. There were no more special rates.²⁸

While concerns were voiced about the loyalty to the city, it was the rural component of the exhibition that made sacrifices when it came to advertising. "For years Exhibition advertising matter was printed free by the country press; until finally the Western Canada Press Association at its annual meeting took this matter up and decided

²⁶ Michael B. Miller, *Le Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 34.

²⁷ *Town Topics*, August 2, 1902, 1.

²⁸ *The Voice*, July 12, 1912, 1.

on a low rate which could be demanded.”²⁹ Like the former free rates of passage for exhibitors and their exhibits, the realization of profits subsumed the original purposes of exhibition. Exhibition press banquets had become a regular affair which was an invitation to both the visiting country press and the city press. Only one-third of the country press had actually been invited and the president and manager of the exhibition did not even attend.³⁰

The sale of automobiles was an indicator of the growing wealth of some Winnipeggers. Automobile racing was now a feature at exhibitions, but potential dealers were hesitant to invest in this commodity as they “could not be convinced that machines costing nearly as much as a house and lot would be saleable in this city... which had passed through so much financial depression and was even then as poor as Job’s turkey, was the last place in the world to try and sell a purely pleasure article with such a high price attached to it.”³¹

Nevertheless, Joseph Maw, McCulloch & Boswell, the Canada Cycle and Motor Company, and later the Dominion Automobile Company were all busily trying to meet the demand for this expensive product. In 1911, the current site of the exhibition was considered inappropriate to accommodate exhibits and the crowds that flocked to this annual event. A new site, possibly in Kildonan Park, was under consideration.³² Popular displays now featured automobiles and the possibility of electricity in Winnipeg was illustrated in the Home Sweet Home building. Many manufactured exhibits on display

²⁹ *Town Topics*, May 9, 1903, 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1907, 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³² *Ibid.*, July 29, 1911, 5.

were indigenous to the area. Of particular interest were the exhibits produced by children from the Manual Training schools.³³

Devoid of any truly artistic construction, exhibitions disregarded the logic of art for that of fantasy. Publicizing products took on a surreal aspect as dynamic illusions of traveling across the world became techniques of displaying products.³⁴ More modern technological innovations, such as photography and cinema, gave visitors who likely would never visit such places a taste of them. Mechanical ingenuity was transformed into a form of truthfulness about peoples and places. Audiences were enthralled when observing flying machines and military reproductions. "Among the many important and new features of great drawing power upon all classes will be the aeroplane flights of Walter Brookins, the world famous aviator, and the specially magnificent fireworks display, which will be a reproduction of the great Coronation naval review at Spithead."³⁵

The contrast of interiors and exteriors in North America presented a dualism, emitted first in exhibition, and emulated by multiple institutions within the city. Exteriors were monumental, emphasizing tradition, order and control. Interiors were crowded with people and products. Commercialism amplified, justified and legitimized such contrasts.³⁶ In contrast to European exhibitions, American cities expanded on the idea of midways on a grand scale, becoming the most popular and appealing feature of future

³³ Ibid., 14.

³⁴ Keith Regular, "On Public Display." *Alberta History* 34, no. 1 (1986), 1-10.

³⁵ *Town Topics*, July 8, 1911, 1.

³⁶ John G. Cawelti, "America on Display: The World's Fairs of 1876, 1893, and 1933," *The Age of Industrialism in America: Essays in Social Structure and Current Values*. Edited by F.C. Jaher. (New York: Free Press, 1968), 317-63.

exhibitions. Coney Island, one of the earliest amusement parks, for example. Enlightenment would be further displaced by taking pleasure in pleasure itself.³⁷

Entertainment settings synthesized the exhibition and the midway, constructing an informal public face on the event. Places such as Atlantic City and Coney Island attest to this development. Official culture still reserved judgment here, as it had in Europe, on the midway. The messages of progress and the exhibitions of cities and their beautification had accomplished major influences in industrial design, civic order, and in forming a new urban identity for its upper-and middle classes.

There were two realities being played out concerning these exhibitions. The link to agriculture was perceived to having been usurped by urbanites. The precarious male/female ratio of rural society was a growing concern. Young girls, for example, who came to the city exhibitions were apparently seduced by consumption -- all the gay streamers, pretty shop windows, theatres and moving pictures which "planted the seed of discontent which lead them to desert the old haunts and come to the city to live".³⁸ Agricultural spokesmen objected to non-traditional forms of entertainment featuring farm animals. "Such is the judgment of some city men in regard to exhibitions - they prefer some silly entertainment or blood-curdling stunt that should not be considered in a civilized country."³⁹ However, it was obvious visitors wanted more than machinery, horses or pumpkins to look at. By 1913, standards of material achievements and

³⁷ E. McCullough, *World's Fair Midways: An Affectionate Account of American Amusement Areas*. (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), Chapters 3 and 4.

³⁸ *Grain Grower's Guide*, June 26, 1912, 13.

³⁹ *Farmer's Advocate*, March 6, 1913, 330.

conspicuous consumption were already similar to Toronto.⁴⁰ Exhibition gave one last glimpse of empire.⁴¹

The Decline of Exhibitions

The Exhibition Board and the City of Winnipeg still had to wrangle public funds to settle its deficits. In 1901, the C.P.R. withdrew its “free freight” gratuity for exhibitors and their exhibits. The forty per cent flat rate was then, surprisingly, picked up by the city itself.⁴² The Board of Trade certainly did not want anything to obstruct the next exhibition, seeing as how they had only just declared a holiday in honor of a visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Accommodations left a lot to be desired by visitors during exhibition week. Once again, the public was asked to resolve concerns that would obstruct attendance. “Our citizens have been asked to open their homes during exhibition week -- requested to communicate with the exhibition management if they have any vacant rooms or any facilities for lodging strangers.”⁴³

By 1902, other political actors stepped into the limelight. At the Exhibition Association's annual meeting, its president, F.W. Thompson, whose family owned various printing and manufacturing concerns, saw the exhibition as “a school to the agriculturalist, a study to the mechanic and artisan, and a magnificent advertising medium to the whole Canadian North West and a great source of pleasure and profit for

⁴⁰ *Town Topics*, December 13, 1913, 3.

⁴¹ Archives of Manitoba, “Events”, (May, 1913), 328.

⁴² City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, “City of Winnipeg Council Minutes” (February, 1901), 687.

⁴³ *Town Topics*, June 12, 1902, 1.

everyone.”⁴⁴ But troubles arose concerning those so-called profits. Both the media and the public continually decried the use of public funds. This concern arose in spite of councilors sitting as representatives on the Exhibition Board, Special Committees, and on the Board of Trade. An auditor from the Exhibition Association even worked in concert with the city auditor.⁴⁵

Strikes became a common occurrence, just prior to exhibition time, for both the Canadian National Railroad and city streetcar railway operators.⁴⁶ Workers utilized what leverage they had to pry what they could from the public purse before other interests emptied it. Decision-makers sat on Boards that controlled the municipal corporation, which largely determined the character of the city.⁴⁷ The city was appropriating massive sums to build edifices and a tax structure. An “almost magical transformation” occurred as the pioneer landscape now afforded a view of “stately buildings and modern conveniences.”⁴⁸

Of national import was the hosting of the Dominion Exhibition. Representing the Dominion as host had been an event only Toronto had thus far been able to accomplish. Winnipeg vied for such an opportunity. “The only other fair in the Dominion which has a national character is the Toronto Fair, ... but no man looking for a home could refuse to

⁴⁴ MacEwen, 42.

⁴⁵ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, “City of Winnipeg Council Minutes” (Volume 3, (1902), 1588.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1540. The Canadian National Railroad did not recognize the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees Union.

⁴⁷ Alan A.F. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*. This work is replete with examples of the social and business networks of this era.

⁴⁸ *Town Topics*, May 30, 1903, 1.

believe what his eyes tell him at the Exhibition.”⁴⁹ In 1904, Winnipeg did indeed hold the prestigious Dominion Exhibition. The president of the C. P. R., Sir William Van Horne, during the inaugural address, proclaimed that Winnipeg “will in thirty-five or forty years -- in the lifetime of many who heard his words -- be the largest city in Canada.”⁵⁰

Although such claims were exaggerated, appropriations and incentives to attend exhibitions grew exponentially. In 1904, the Board announced \$100,000 in prizes and attendance rose to 210,000 visitors. A \$50,000 debt was approved to rearrange and add-on to existing buildings.⁵¹ Such improvements were clear indications of municipal progress and civic development. As the admission receipts continued to grow, however, so did the number of attendees who did not pay. During a bull fight held as an attraction, “it would have taken all the mounted men now in camp at the grounds to have kept the crowd in its proper place, so determined were they to see that for which they did not pay.”⁵² The cost of admission had also grown.

The management of exhibitions continued to receive criticism of certain ongoing practices. “The exhibition authorities recognize the privilege of those who pay admission to wager money, but there their consideration stops. They receive a fee from the bookmakers.” However, receipts “from the bettors put more cash into the coffers of the

⁴⁹ *Town Topics*, July 18, 1903, 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1904, 1.

⁵¹ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, “City of Winnipeg Council Minutes”, (May 16, 1904), 3023.

⁵² *Town Topics*, August 6, 1904, 9.

association than do bookmakers' fees."⁵³ Exhibition management was also severely criticized for incurring debts when attendance reached peak levels.

Extravagance, patronage and unaccountability seemed pervasive throughout officialdom. The exhibition was no exception. For example, Charles N. Bell had resigned as exhibition manager in 1906 and A. W. Bell stepped into his position. C. N. Bell, however, became the Secretary of the Board of Trade as the city wrote off a \$40,000 debt for the Exhibition Association.⁵⁴ For the moral majority, such patronage and unaccountability was shameful. "As a collection of lewdness and discord, filth and crookedness, it deserves the palm."⁵⁵

"Dr. Bell undoubtedly improved the exhibition in many ways, but he has quite a bit to learn of the circus business -- as applied to the platform performances." The focus on drawing large audiences required that amusements and theatre satisfied expectations, but after the Ringling Brothers' three-ring and platform circus, "the acts offered on the platform at the exhibition were wholly unsatisfying."⁵⁶ An Exhibitionary Board, solely under the control of city management, would eventually be responsible for all aspects of the exhibition and its grounds were managed by the Board of Control as many former stockholders and interested parties distanced themselves from such criticism and responsibility.

Dissatisfaction did not alter the purposes of exhibition. By 1907, the City of Winnipeg had transferred the exhibition grounds to the Board of Control from the

⁵³ *Town Topics*, August 5, 1905, 1.

⁵⁴ *Farmer's Advocate*, August 11, 1905, 3.

⁵⁵ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg Council Minutes", (Volume 6, 1905), 96.

⁵⁶ *Town Topics*, August 4, 1906, 11.

Exhibition Association, who had neglected the site and buildings.⁵⁷ As featured attractions continued to get more modern, such as a motor car competition in 1908 and heavier-than-air machines in 1910, the Exhibition Association was retreating from responsibility as the city inherited its debt problems.⁵⁸

Agricultural displays became secondary as new products and distractions transformed the exhibition. Live stock exhibits, which had been the best feature of the agricultural component of exhibitions, were mismanaged. Accommodations for exhibitors were in disrepair and no longer viable in the opinion of exhibitors. "If you ventured into a manufacturing building, or in fact into any building, and spoke to exhibitors, almost the invariable query was: Is there any management to this thing? If so, I have not been able to find it."⁵⁹

Amidst all of these changes, Winnipeg intended to hold an International Exposition in 1914. Praise from across the border helped to convey the image of Winnipeg as a metropolis on the move. A half-million dollar debt was appropriated in anticipation of the Selkirk Centennial of 1912 and the Canadian International Exposition of 1914.⁶⁰ New buildings, such as a Science and Arts Centre and a Manufacturer's Hall, and lighting, power and health exhibits were all developed. As time progressed, the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition's purposes began to focus more on consumption and instilling in a concrete sense of whose place this new space now was.

⁵⁷ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg Council Minutes", (Volume 7, 1907), 149.

⁵⁸ Ibid., "By-Laws", No. 1009 (1908) and No. 386 (1910).

⁵⁹ *The Dominion*, October, 1910, 29.

⁶⁰ City of Winnipeg Archives and Records, "City of Winnipeg Council Minutes", (Volume 15, 1914), 383-441.

By 1913, the traditional agricultural exhibits and their venues were all but deserted. "It was most unfair to the exhibitors, as the horses and cattle had been carefully prepared and made a splendid showing, with no one to look at them."⁶¹ The scarcity of the crowds had plenty to do with having nothing new to gaze at. The Dominion Exhibition was held in Brandon this year and the Stampede in Calgary was becoming quite popular to the people in agriculture.

Since 1900, the Canadian Pacific Railroad had utilized specially equipped train cars to tour Western Canada for the purpose of bringing the latest agricultural methods to farmers. Agricultural colleges had failed to make any significant progress in this regard.⁶² The colleges tried institutes and short courses, but still without the desired result. What did succeed were the lectures given aboard agricultural special trains, which were delivered at 197 stations across Western Canada. In conjunction with agricultural colleges, the railroad was able to reach more farmers than any particular venue ever could, except for the exhibition.

Criticism continued to mount as time progressed. Many excuses were put forward as attractions and crowds experienced a diminishing capacity. Differing opinions were voiced about the malaise that exhibitions were experiencing. While on the one hand "newspapers of course proclaim it as the finest given in Winnipeg, some go to the exact opposite extreme and say it was the worst."⁶³ Reality soon set in for exhibition organizers as complaints of mismanagement persisted. No vouchers, receipts or accountability could be had, however. The shift from an amorphous Exhibition Board and

⁶¹ *Town Topics*, July 16, 1913, 5.

⁶² *The Voice*, September 11, 1913, 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, September 11, 1913, 8.

Association to one of municipal function was a foregone conclusion. The Dominion and province had always washed their hands of such matters. The city was ultimately responsible. A transfer of management to the Board of Control and subsequent civic resolutions are essentially all that remains regarding proof of improprieties. Some of the past is often lost, or seemingly misplaced, from public gaze.

This state of affairs involving the exhibition was to be expected as it reflected events outside of exhibition. Urban reformers wanted the state to assure better health protection, regulation of working conditions for women and children. Rural reformers wanted curbs on the power of capital and debated whether controls could be achieved through regulation or public ownership. In the end, resistance was subdued by a popular municipal reform called commission government. History appeared to be repeating itself as exhibition organizers now sought a by-law to appropriate half of a million dollars to procure a new site and suitable buildings.⁶⁴

For those fortunate enough not to be association members, the experience differed. In 1976, a Mr. Davidson recollected his experience at the 1914 Dominion Exhibition. The prize-winning essay-writer received an all-expense-paid trip to the exhibition. His description regarding displays of machinery and consumer goods, and particularly personal insights into the human side of exhibition show us the corporative aspect embedded in the purposes of exhibition.⁶⁵

Impending decline loomed as war and depression, not to mention drought and major dislocations, which would alter the rural landscape and end exhibition for Winnipeg. Different opinions over a new site was the least of it. By 1914, Winnipeg had

⁶⁴ Ibid., August 16, 1912, 8.

⁶⁵ Archives of Manitoba, "Exhibitions", (N1228, 1914), 1.

become a highly differentiated community, both physically and socially. This is more understandable if, when placing social differentiation and its relationship to spatial distribution in the context of changing technology, the city can be viewed as an artifact influenced by exhibition.

Even rural fairs experienced changes. The proliferation of automobiles after 1914 affected attendance. Prior to this period, non-resident exhibitors and visitors “stayed for the duration of the exhibition, but now they are mostly spectators, in town for the day.”⁶⁶ The lure of horse races, games of chance and the midway became the most popular elements of an exhibition. The majority of people who attended exhibitions were “more interested in frivolity than instruction, so that the impression which remains is often one flavored with the odor of the midway, the racing stables, the fireworks and the blah.”⁶⁷ Exhibitions were held sporadically after 1914, but were not anywhere near what they had been.

The City Council now drew much criticism when it allowed monetary grants to the Industrial Bureau, whose purpose had been to advertise Winnipeg. At issue was whether the public should bankroll what were essentially business concerns. Exhibition fever no longer prevailed and it remained to be proven that an increase in population increased any wages, “nor has a wide experience elsewhere tended to show that poverty and unemployment decrease as cities get bigger.”⁶⁸ People were too preoccupied with the consequences of war to worry about the aspirations of the city’s middle-class concerns.

⁶⁶ *Farm and Ranch Review*, December 5, 1921, 5.

⁶⁷ *The Western Producer*, August 14, 1927, 4.

⁶⁸ *The Voice*, September 24, 1915, 1.

The postwar drought and a deep depression after the 1920's ruined agricultural societies and dessicated souls. The triumph of false sophistication and mindless excitement had raised expectations, only to find out that it belonged to those who had benefited the most from exhibitions. There are barely traces left of the declining years of the exhibition in Winnipeg. An attempt at revival in the 1930's and in 1947 saw appropriation by-laws fail. The original concept of exhibition disappeared and the only glimpse of that past now resided in the midway. Except for resistance to the exhibition's operations and the grandiose claims of corporate efficiency, exhibitions had largely achieved their purposes.

Conclusion

Socio-political motives dominated exhibitions during this period and also how objects on display conveyed coded messages to their audiences. As a public arena, private interests endeavored to convert the masses to their way of thinking and to entrench the dominant culture's sense of history as well. Examined were scenes behind the facades and advertisements, platforms of rhetoric, and forms of social relations in both the metropolis and the hinterland.

The politics of class and a pedagogy based on Darwinism pervaded this last phase of exhibitions in Winnipeg. Exhibitions created environments where an individual's autonomy was subordinated by objects consumed or admired. These events were indeed living encyclopedias and simulacra of industrial technology that consisted of a vast list of appropriations and a huge assemblage of serial processes. Many such examples could be seen within the representations of sources in the exhibits displayed over time. Capturing

the past essence of exhibition required gathering fragments and traces of past agency, from the top down and from the bottom up.

This era saw Winnipeg become modern by functioning as a gateway city. The public cultural performances of the dominant culture showed us their response to perceived threats; by retaining traces of association of a historical past. Conquest and appropriation was a past occurrence, which could be made to disappear by changing the topographical landscape of places and inventing memories of the past.

The power to make illusions changed direction. Travel had made visitors more cosmopolitan. Exhibitions floated away while fairs followed a magic future, leaving the purified presence of city centres for the suburbs. After the 1930's, such events ceased to have significance for an already established order of things. The economic development and expansion of modern cities had mostly reached their pinnacle of growth. Problems were still present and some were resolved. Whatever exhibitions had seemingly accomplished by the end of this era, much of it had begun to fade away.

What remains is the midway, seen then as an American institution, which fleeced respectable city and country folks. The midway was constantly attacked by country zealots, social gospellers and purity movements until 1920. Afterwards, the challenge to the pre-war value system saw the attractions with less contempt. While the parents had been preoccupied with the lessons of exhibition, the midway had triumphed through the eyes of children, who were converted to the glitter and glare of otherworldliness. The essentials of speed, laughter, hot dogs and ice cream survived while all that was solid appeared to have vanished into air, but in fact was still there, behind veils of the shifting and contingent truths of reality.

CONCLUSION

This study has traced the evolution of agricultural and industrial exhibitions in Winnipeg from 1870 to 1915. Such annual rituals offer us a window that permits us to see into the past. Outside of exhibition, the themes of conquest, immigration, the formation of a hinterland, economic development and the emergence of a business-based elite were presented. Within exhibition, both behind the scenes and in front of the public, the themes focused on key elements such as agriculture, boosterism, entertainment, industrialization and cultural hegemony.

Exhibitions were epistemological representations for this newly settled society. Such representations each tell us a story about the values and aspirations of both individuals and groups. These stories delineated a master narrative of place, power and progress. At times, some of these stories have held mythical elements in the interests of historical continuity. The point is that every time we tell a story, we are sure that we are remembering it accurately. In fact, every time we tell it, we change it a little - we shape it. We punch it up and tighten it a bit, much like a script.

The thesis began with an overview of exhibitions and the ideological construction of the West as a utopian region. An attempt was made to explain the agents advancing this ideology, the interests of national and local state initiatives, and the class that controlled its evolving institutions. Scholars who have studied exhibitions have not sufficiently appreciated the way that exhibitions have provided practical demonstrations of utopias as systems of order. Most studies have focused on established centers of power

rather than places on the margins like Winnipeg. Local exhibitions were explored within a national context as they developed.

The shaping of this new order had everything to do with identity; which became a major factor of belonging and of economic circumstances. Through a rhetoric of progress, a pedagogic ordering of this new society was constructed. This determined who belonged and how many benefits an individual or group received. It determined who would become the exotic other. Essentially, becoming modern shaped identities, which inevitably became limited. The belief here is that many elements of past exhibitions did not vanish, but rather migrated to other places, within both the urban landscape and the hinterland. The representations of exhibitions were of what everyday life was and what it would become, over time.

Fairs were the initial form of exhibitions. They were organized with one primary aim -- to promote Winnipeg. Simultaneously, the idea was to generate propaganda to expand trade and to lure immigrants as well as visitors to the city. The focus was clearly on the resource and industrial potential of the city and its hinterland and the lower middle and artisan classes were the desired audiences for educational exhibits. The masses were drawn to participate in agricultural competitions, to view or construct commercial and industrial displays, and to revel in the thrills and curiosities of the midway.

The second chapter examined early exhibitions between 1870 and 1885 and how its advocates struggled for control and the problem of order. The exertions of Winnipeg's bourgeoisie, in establishing and controlling exhibitions was neither automatic nor uncontested. Winnipeg's boosters needed to contend with hinterland initiatives that sought decentralized and local control of exhibitions and exhibitionary culture, with the

expansionist programs of larger metropolitan exhibitions that endeavored to slot Manitoba into their larger categorizations of economic development, and with a provincial government that seemed unable or unwilling to counter both the local decentralization or the external metropolitan concentration of Manitoba's exhibitionary needs. Consequently, from the beginning, with the coincidental formation of a new province and its agricultural society, exhibitions encountered serious obstacles and faltering progress.

The establishment of order and the assertion of authority was not merely a military or a constitutional achievement. It also required the articulation of a public culture that rooted the dominant class and its interests deeply into the history of British civilization of the North West. Doing so required the elaboration of a historical narrative that linked the Selkirk Settlers with the development of an agricultural society and a commercial economy tying the North West into a larger empire. That narrative was developed in literary productions, like those of Bryce and Begg. But it also took form in the promotion of agricultural societies and exhibitions that demonstrated the equivalence of the products of the new West with the older economy of central Canada and the rest of North America. Where the literary construction of the West's progress advanced substantially in the years after Confederation, its exhibitionary construction suffered from contending interests.

The third chapter, from 1885-1900, presented a closed frontier with a problem of order transformed into a problem of culture. The management and directors of exhibitions had a clear sense of agency when it came to using pedagogy within exhibitions. A second wave of immigration consisting of less than desirable settlers

needed to be addressed. With technologies of order, vision, and of knowledge, exhibition organizers were finally able to realize their expectations. But as time progressed, there was a gradual turn away from agricultural themes to more industrial displays and the profitability of entertainment. Because of competition from second-order centres within Manitoba such as Brandon, for example, Winnipeg could no longer support a primarily agricultural theme in its exhibitions. As this new metropolis was emerging, and its hinterland became more captive, urban residents demanded more than livestock and produce displays.

As mass appeal for exhibitions increased, education became increasingly prioritized as educationalists gradually focused their attention to the population previously considered outside of this realm. As time progressed, exhibitions became grander, giving credence to the adage "what the eye sees, the heart craves". Such events were soon dubbed as "Industrial Exhibitions" as their focus turned to the industrial and resource potential of both the city and its hinterland. Between 1878 and 1914, however, anthropological displays included the use of phrenology, which reinforced a white, superior and therefore privileged belonging.

The fourth chapter, from 1900 to 1915, shows how technology transformed many aspects of this society and largely determined the stylistic outlook of exhibitions and their devolution. Progress, when associated with this technology, led to the gauging and measurement of moral, cultural and social aspects of society. By 1900, the masses were referred to as being the true beneficiaries of learning. Their lessons were deemed vital for the survival of Western civilization. The growth of working class consciousness appears to have provoked exhibition organizers into action on the educational front.

By now, exhibitions had established a genre that allowed a society to identify itself with its progress. Within a positivist dialectic, which was present in the rational of exhibitions for governments, industry and the arts, progress dictated the glory of the future. And although exhibitions did not transform economies, they played a role in reinforcing their patterns of development. Even more relevant, cultural osmosis began to set in. Many things on display at exhibitions were becoming a part of everyday life. Original aspects of exhibitions had evolved into industries or institutions themselves.

The public was now familiar with the display techniques of museums and department stores. As the progressive era gradually faded, exhibitions became virtual theme parks of consumption and imperialism. Organizers sought out recently conquered peoples for human village displays, not only as entertainment, but also to depict a lower manufacturing and civilized order. After 1914, however, such displays would become difficult to justify. But the die had been cast. Exhibitions had served as linked sites for the development of new disciplines and their discursive formations, which contributed to the delineation of a master narrative.

In conclusion, not unlike the asylum, clinic or prison, exhibitions can be considered as institutional articulations of power and knowledge relations. These elements of exhibition seemingly vanished. In fact, the component parts of exhibition had become industries in themselves. Can a metaphoric similarity be drawn from this past for the present? Past hopes and aspirations were pinned on a rhetoric of progress which held the belief that the future would be glorious. Today, progress and aspirations seem to be pinned on more technology and hope pitted against insurmountable odds. The only popular, visible remnants of past exhibitions which seem to have survived have been the

abstractions and distractions of the midway. Today, audiences are gambling their futures on the roll of a dice, a spin of the wheel or luck itself. We may now be forced to take a better look to see what we have become.

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