

Archives as a Cornerstone of Community Growth:
Developing Community Archives in Brandon, Manitoba

by

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ABSTRACT

In the twentieth century, small communities, particularly in rural areas have struggled to survive. Sustainable growth is particularly difficult because of a population shift from rural Canada to urban centres. Limited population and financial resources are barriers to the growth of small communities. However, the emergence of the knowledge-based economy has enabled some rural communities to leverage local knowledge to increase their economic advantage and community appeal. By collecting local records, a community archives may be able to position itself as an institution that protects local knowledge resources, helps connect residents to related archival and other information elsewhere, and assists in applying these resources to community strategic development initiatives. A city that could benefit from the establishment of community archives and the services they provide is Brandon, Manitoba.

Brandon is Manitoba's second largest city and a major service centre for Southwestern Manitoba. Brandon's place in the changing rural economy is guided largely by a community strategic plan that contains no mention of archives or records management. Part of the reason for the lack of attention to archives and records management in Brandon's strategic plan may be that most community development literature does not draw direct connections between archives and records management and community growth. Another reason for Brandon's lack of archives may be a caricatured vision of the role archives play in society, namely the perception that archives are obscure "dusty" institutions that cater only to a small number of specialist academics. This thesis explores some possible approaches to better integration of archives with communities and engagement of archives with local community development initiatives.

In order to gain insight into the roles archives currently play in society and develop a better understanding of the potential for enhancing these roles this thesis draws on the opinions and experiences of archival and community development professionals obtained through a community archival questionnaire. The thesis concludes by suggesting that a community archives is an institution that forward-looking community planners can use to mobilize past local knowledge to lead their communities into the future.

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INTRODUCTION

Archives have traditionally been perceived as being mired in the past, hardly institutions in which a community interested in its future would invest in. Instead, community planners have directed their attention to developing traditional infrastructure such as roads and bridges that can attract business. In recent decades, knowledge is a resource that has become increasingly important to the development of cities. As a largely intangible resource, knowledge is difficult to conceptualize as something that can be controlled and applied to development initiatives. Archives are rarely seen as building blocks of community growth. However, the perceived value of archives may grow because archival records contain large volumes of knowledge. Therefore, investing in archives may be a step a community can take to develop a reliable source of collective knowledge. This thesis seeks to answer the question: can a community archives be justified on the basis of the contributions it can make to community development?

Archives acquire, preserve and make available records related to the history of people's lives, their families, communities, workplaces, schools, and governing bodies. Taken together, the different types of archives are responsible for the documentary history of society. As sites of regular social interaction between citizens, the merit of archives at the community level in cities seems obvious. However, relatively few communities view the establishment and operation of local archives as a development priority.

In principle, many community planners may agree that preserving their city's history is a worthy endeavour. In practice, protecting a community's history by supporting archives is not always seen as a worthy investment. Many community planners are reluctant to suggest that their city should invest in archives because, although archives might be nice to have, they are not necessarily considered a priority. When a city is busy grappling with potholes and implementing a local recycling program the state of local historical records is not likely to be a primary concern.

While archives have not traditionally been considered major catalysts for growth, recent changes in the way communities are thought to develop may warrant a reconsideration of the roles of archives. The emergence of a knowledge-based and increasingly globalized economy have fundamentally changed the ways in which communities develop. Applying knowledge to enhance existing products in new and innovative ways is becoming an essential step in remaining competitive in the global economy. Many rural communities in particular are struggling to find ways to attract new residents and remain economically competitive, and so some community planners in rural areas have identified participation in the knowledge-based economy as a mechanism for rural sustainability. An example of a community that is becoming increasingly involved in the knowledge-based economy is Brandon, Manitoba.

Unfortunately, lack of access to recorded information can seriously limit the amount of information a community can employ in the knowledge-based economy. The records of a city contain a vast amount of information and represent much of the collective knowledge of the community. Without an archival or records management program, the records and the knowledge they contain may sit unused with many citizens unaware of their existence. However, if records are well managed and placed in a community archives, they can become a widely accessible resource. Used strategically, the collective knowledge contained in a community archives may serve as a support for a community's participation in the knowledge-based economy.

When considering the possible roles of community archives a logical question is: if archives have such great potential value why have they been ignored by community planners? Archives' relative lack of appeal may be partially explained by the prevalence of archival stereotypes. Archives are often thought of as being dusty, boring, confusing places that cater only to a limited clientele of academic researchers. Archivists have had limited success in dispelling such misconceptions. Archives have tended to play a fairly passive role in society and attempts by archivists to enhance their institution's public profiles through public programming and outreach were very limited prior to the 1980s. In an attempt to identify some of the ways in which archives can gain a foothold in community development activities this thesis will examine some community-oriented public programming initiatives archives may undertake.

In order for archives to redefine their role in society and to become more engaged with their communities archivists will need to promote use of their holdings. This thesis suggests that, rather than being passive instruments of little use to a community, archives can play a key role in community development by supporting engagement in the knowledge-based economy. Brandon's community strategic plan presents numerous opportunities for archival participation. This thesis will suggest some ways in which a community archives can take advantage of these opportunities.

The thesis has three chapters. The first chapter will provide background information about the City of Brandon as well as information about Canada's changing rural economy. Brandon has a population of approximately 40,000 and provides services to many of the small towns surrounding it. Brandon began as an agricultural community in the late nineteenth century. It has expanded to become a centre for government, health care, education, retail, and other services for Southwestern Manitoba. In 2005, Brandon developed a community strategic plan outlining goals for the city's future development. Brandon's strategic plan illustrates ways of developing the city culturally, economically, academically, and in other ways. However, an area that is not mentioned in long-term planning for the development of Brandon is archives. Small communities such as Brandon are actively searching for new development strategies, and with the emergence of the knowledge-based economy the establishment of a local archival institution may have the capacity to play a major role in contributing to these strategies.

The second chapter reviews some practical approaches that have enabled archives to evolve beyond their traditionally limited public role and become active participants in community development. Archival literature provides examples of institutions from around the world that illustrate the numerous contributions archives can make to communities. Archives and the records management strategies they employ have the potential to engage citizens with local history, promote education, foster a sense of community inclusion, support local cultural programs, and to develop the local economy. Since archives are capable of making major contributions to community development, there is a significant gap in community development planning in Southwestern Manitoba. Archives elsewhere in the world have undertaken research projects into potential community applications of archives and developed public programming initiatives that respond to local interests and priorities.

The community archives initiative reflects a desire by archives and communities to become more engaged with archival services. In order to better serve their communities, some small archives have undertaken outreach programs that actively seek to engage local citizens. Rather than quietly collecting records and providing service to the traditional limited user groups, some archivists have gone out into their communities to show how archives can be made to work for various local organisations.

The third chapter of the thesis will examine how archives and records management could contribute to the overall development of Brandon. The thesis will recommend creation by Brandon of a public archives that collects and manages records of the City of Brandon, as well as local private collections. Although Brandon already holds some archival materials at institutions such as the Brandon University S.J. McKee Archives and other smaller private institutions, the city does not have a central public archives where people could go to acquire information about their city. Convenient access to records relating to Brandon can contribute directly to achieving the goals of Brandon's community strategic plan by helping the city to tap its knowledge resources.

An examination of the contributions archival and records management programs could make to Brandon will also be provided in the second chapter. Records management can make a major contribution to business and public administration. A comprehensive records management program is necessary if Brandon's municipal government is to comply with the Manitoba *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Personal Health Information Act*. Furthermore, a well-developed records management program can also facilitate the transfer of knowledge between different community organizations in Brandon. For example, City Hall may be able to use records management and archives to collaborate with cultural organizations in Brandon to develop policies that will benefit a range of groups. From the historical perspective, a records management program for Brandon's municipal government is absolutely critical because proper capture and management of young records through effective records management enables archives to acquire a much better organized documentary history. A variety of models for archival programs will be considered in chapter two. The third chapter will conclude by evaluating the potential geographical scope of a community archives in Brandon. Depending on Brandon's relationship with surrounding communities and municipalities, the archives may

function as a community archives, a regional archives, or a centre for archival information for Southwestern Manitoba. However, a regional scope also entails some challenges that may be difficult for a fledgling archival institution to address.

Methodology

Primary research was done in part through circulation of a questionnaire. All data collection procedures, as well as the survey and interview questions used, were formally approved by the University of Manitoba's Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board on 4 December 2007.¹ The community archives questionnaire sought opinions on the concept of community archives, perceptions about the potential uses of archives, and the ability of Brandon to support a city archives. The community archival questionnaire was not intended to obtain scientifically valid quantitative data, but to solicit relevant advice and opinions from those who were prepared to share their thoughts with the author. The responses obtained from the questionnaire were used to draw conclusions and formulate opinions about the existing and perceived roles archives play in community development, as well as the feasibility of the creation of a community archives in Brandon.

Participants in the community archival questionnaire were given the option of having their comments used along with their name and professional designation, or of having their response disassociated from their personal data. Each respondent was assigned a unique identification number for reference purposes. If the respondent wished to remain anonymous his or her response comments are identified by their identification number.

The community archival questionnaire (including a cover letter, informed consent forms and the questionnaire) were mailed to participants during 2008. Sixty-five potential participants were contacted and forty-four responded to the community archival questionnaire. Participants in the questionnaire are archivists and archival advocates and community development professionals primarily from Manitoba. Some participants from outside of Manitoba were selected because they had published articles expressing an interest in community archiving in publications such as the Association of Canadian Archivists' *Archivaria* or the Canadian Historical Association's *Bulletin*. A copy of the questionnaire is included below as the Appendix.

¹ The author and his thesis supervisor have copies of the approved ethics package.

In addition to the survey data collected for this research, numerous secondary sources on archival public programming, community economic development theory and practice, and Brandon's history were consulted. Websites relating to community archives and municipal approaches to archiving and cultural development were also examined.

CHAPTER ONE

BRANDON, ARCHIVES, AND THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

Brandon is an example of a rural community that is developing and driving change in rural Manitoba. The second largest city in the province, Brandon has a population of approximately 40,000 and provides services to around 80,000 in neighbouring areas. Brandon's economy has been based largely on agriculture and industries related to agriculture. Brandon has also served as a major retail and government services centre for much of Western Manitoba. The city has also been an important centre for community development in Western Manitoba. The Brandon University Rural Development Institute provides education and practical advice for development practitioners in the region and around the world. In addition, Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College provide academic, business, trade and other skills that contribute to regional growth. The central position of Brandon as a centre for government, retailers, and education has made Brandon an important influence on the historical growth of Southwestern Manitoba.¹

A brief examination of the history of Brandon sheds some light on the emergence of Brandon as an important regional centre. Following the entry of Manitoba into the Dominion of Canada in 1870, businessmen, professionals, and settlers moved into the province. Many of these new arrivals were from Ontario and had Anglo-Canadian Protestant backgrounds. These people created many of the small, agricultural communities that dot Southern Manitoba today. Brandon began as one such small community. During the spring of 1881 General T.L. Rosser, on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway, established a "divisional point" on the site where Brandon is currently located. For several weeks Brandon was a

¹ City of Brandon, "General Information." *Accessing City Hall*, <http://www.brandon.ca/Main.nsf/Pages+By+ID/416> (accessed 3 August 2009).

community of tents. In September of 1881 the first CPR train arrived in Brandon. The arrival of the railway in Brandon led to a 50 percent reduction in freight rates in materials being delivered to Brandon and contributed to the cessation of steamboat service along the Assiniboine River. Goods and people could now be transported cheaply and quickly to Southwestern Manitoba.²

In 1883 the Brandon settlement was incorporated as a city. Civic offices were established and twelve aldermen were elected from four wards. In 1884 Brandon's importance as a local government centre further rose when it became the head of the county of Brandon, which contained the municipalities Cornwallis, Elton, Daly, Whitehead and Glenwood. Brandon became the judicial centre for the county during 1884 when the Brandon Courthouse was constructed and became the centre of the Western Judicial District of Manitoba. As one of the earliest incorporated cities in Manitoba and a judicial centre Brandon was poised to assume a prominent role in regional government and public service.³

Another noteworthy institution that has enabled Brandon to emerge as a regional centre is Brandon General Hospital (BGH). Opened in 1892, the hospital has provided basic medical care and services to the people of Brandon and the surrounding area. BGH also played a key role in coping with the typhoid and diphtheria epidemics of the 1890s. BGH has since remained an important health care provider in Southwestern Manitoba by providing specialized medical services such as chemotherapy to Manitobans living outside of Winnipeg.⁴

Brandon's incorporation was followed by a period of intense land speculation. During the 1880s Brandon experienced a financial boom, as growing numbers of European immigrants coming to Western Canada used the Brandon CPR station as a jumping-off point for movement into the surrounding region. Brandon's early growth was enhanced because it was the primary centre for marketing grain in Southwestern Manitoba. By 1888 Brandon had developed some industrial activities, including a planing mill, saw mill, flour mill, and two breweries. With the support of thriving local horse and grain markets, Brandon was on its

² W. Leland Clark, *Brandon's Politics and Politicians* (Brandon: Brandon Sun, 1981), pp. 1-13.

³ John Everitt and Christoph Stadel, "Spatial Growth of Brandon" in *Brandon: Geographical Perspectives on the Wheat City*, eds. John Welsted, John Everitt and Christoph Stadel (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1988), pp. 61-88.

⁴ F. Madeline Perry, *BGH – 100: A History of the Brandon General Hospital* (Brandon: Brandon General Hospital, 1983), pp. 1-15.

way to becoming a regional centre in agriculturally based industries.⁵ As Brandon began to develop, the wooden shacks of early Brandonites were replaced by stone and concrete buildings.

Following the expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Southwestern Manitoba and the emergence of small-town grain elevators; Brandon lost some of its importance as a regional centre for wheat distribution. However, buoyant wheat prices and the sheer scale of agricultural expansion in Southwestern Manitoba between 1901 and 1913 meant that even with competition from elevators Brandon was a major centre in the agriculture industry. The diversification of agricultural services offered in Brandon also enabled it to maintain a place of central importance in the agriculture industry. Prior to 1914, products such as seed, agricultural machinery, and binder twine were being marketed in Brandon. The rapid pace of change in Brandon and Southwestern Manitoba meant that the building trades were extremely important during the first quarter of the twentieth century as were banks, loan agencies, and insurance companies. By the beginning of the First World War Brandon had developed a vibrant and diverse economic infrastructure that would help to propel it to the position of a major regional centre.⁶

The First World War and Second World War significantly affected the development of Brandon. In addition to providing people and materials to support the wars, Brandon hosted several programs seen as important to the continuing interests of Canada's war effort. During the First World War Brandon was the location of a detention centre for perceived "enemy aliens." Approximately 1600 people who had immigrated either directly from enemy countries or countries seen as unsympathetic to the British Empire were interned.⁷ During World War II Brandon was a training centre in the British Commonwealth Air Training Program.

During the 1920s automobile ownership in Manitoba was on the rise and enabled Brandon to strengthen its leading position in Southwestern Manitoba. People from surrounding areas were able to travel more readily to Brandon to work and use its services. Geographical research by Everitt and Stadel has demonstrated the importance of Brandon as

⁵ Everitt and Stadel, "Spatial Growth of Brandon," pp. 63-88.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ George Buri, "'Enemies Within Our Gates': Brandon's Alien Detention Centre During the Great War," *Manitoba History* 56 (October 2007): pp. 3-11.

a centre for retail and other services as it attracts commuters from a 160-kilometre radius of the city. Brandon has long been a key service centre in Southwestern Manitoba.⁸

Considering that Brandon has a rich history that has influenced the development of much of Manitoba it is somewhat surprising that so little has been done to protect the community's records. Part of the reason archival records have received such little attention in Brandon may lie in the application of Manitoba's *Heritage Resources Act*, which defines "heritage" primarily in terms of buildings and physical artefacts.⁹ Ironically, a community relying solely on the *Heritage Resources Act* may focus on preserving heritage buildings while neglecting to protect the archival records that document the historical events that made the buildings important to the community's history.

Even without the presence of a community archives some historians have persevered and attempted to tell the story of Brandon. Fred McGuinness and Ken Coates have written several popular accounts of Brandon's history. However, the work of McGuinness, Coates and other local historians seems based primarily on anecdotal evidence and their books lack clear references to source material. Unfortunately, while popular accounts of local history may be interesting, without archival records to support them, their contribution to an understanding of Brandon is limited.

Academic publications by authors such as Gerald Friesen, Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell have provided some extensively researched insights into Brandon's past. A noteworthy feature of academic publications dealing with Brandon history is that the majority of sources used by the authors are located outside of Brandon. Unfortunately, without formal archival programming, the City of Brandon is not well placed to support further popular or academic research into its own history. The dearth of information about what archival material resides in Brandon requires many researchers to go to archives in Winnipeg or farther afield to learn about Brandon's history. In Brandon, researching local history locally is extremely difficult.

Gordon Goldsborough's history of municipal governance in Manitoba shows the potential value of archival records in Brandon. Convention programs and lists of annual

⁸ Alison Gill, "Population Structure and Social Areas" in *Brandon: Geographical Perspectives on the Wheat City*, ed. Welsted, Everitt, and Stadel, pp. 89-104; Christoph Stadel and John Everitt, "Brandon's Role as a Service Centre in Southwestern Manitoba" in *ibid.*, pp. 195-220.

⁹ *Heritage Resources Act*, C.C.S.M., c. H39.1.

resolutions of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) formed much of the basis for Goldsborough's work. Although the Archives of Manitoba retains a relatively large fonds of UMM material, the fonds ends in the 1980s and records for certain years prior to the 1980s are missing. Consequently, Goldsborough began combing through the records of Manitoba municipalities to locate the information he needed to complete his book. Fortune smiled upon Goldsborough, for as he remarked, "a last-minute effort to locate the missing records found a treasure-trove in the City of Brandon's Records Centre, and a dash to Brandon to peruse them turned up reams of new information."¹⁰

A noteworthy feature of Goldsborough's remark is the language of discovery. Only in a last desperate attempt to locate the information necessary to complete his research did Goldsborough stumble upon the records of the City of Brandon. The perception of Brandon as a source of last resort for historical research exemplifies the lack of awareness of the City of Brandon's records due to the absence of proper archival services for them. On a more positive note, Goldsborough's statement suggests that Brandon does have some valuable archival resources. However, Brandon could be doing considerably more to make these resources accessible to researchers and the general public.

In *Walk Towards the Gallows*, a study of the trial and 1899 execution of Hilda Blake, a Brandon woman, Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell assert "clearly, one of the ways a small city achieves 'historicity' is for the past to become seen: mythical and mysterious and real."¹¹ As long as the records that can support historical research and make Brandon's history seem real remain largely hidden in the basement of City Hall and stuffed into out-of-sight storage spaces in Brandon's many small museums, Brandon's history is likely to remain unwritten and little known.

The above description of historical writing related to Brandon is not intended to be disparaging toward the authors. Indeed, some very interesting accounts of Brandon's history have been written even without access to a large supply of local archival material. Rather, examining what is already known about Brandon's history raises questions about what could be known about Brandon's history if proper source material was available in a community

¹⁰ Gordon Goldsborough, *With One Voice: A History of Municipal Governance in Manitoba* (Altona: Friesen Printers, 2008), p. 132.

¹¹ Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell, *Walk Towards the Gallows: The Tragedy of Hilda Blake, Hanged 1899* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 260.

archives. Other cities, such as Toronto, have been the subject of a considerable amount of scholarly work. Toronto also has a well-funded and active archival program that retains the community's history and engages Torontonians with their history through active public programming.¹² Convenient access to archival materials has the potential to facilitate scholarly research into a community.

While supporting scholarly research and historical initiatives are important archival functions, there are many other activities that an archives can facilitate. Presentations at Association of Canadian Archivists' conferences have revealed a broad range of such activities. For instance, archival records are used extensively by authors of historical fiction. Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* is one of the most prominent examples of archival-based Canadian historical fiction. At the 2007 Association of Canadian Archivists' conference authors Helen Humphreys and Michael Redhill discussed the value of archival materials in establishing accurate historical contexts for their fictional works.¹³

As scientists attempt to understand global climate change, the value of meteorological records in archives has also increased. Efforts have been undertaken to identify the frequency and magnitude of ice storms in Canada following the Eastern Ontario and Quebec ice storm of 1998. In Ontario archival data and seed storage is enabling the reforestation of provincial forests. The international Millennium Seed Bank Project is compiling and using archival data to catalogue seeds from the world's plant species. Given the uncertainty surrounding the impacts, human and environmental, of relying on genetically modified grains, the availability of natural plant seeds contributes greatly to a sense of food security.¹⁴

Access to archival documents was critical in responding to Canada's tainted blood tragedy. After several thousand Canadians contracted human immune deficiency virus (HIV) and thousands more contracted Hepatitis C from tainted blood transfusions efforts were initiated to identify who was responsible for the tragedy and how victims would be compensated. Unfortunately, the deficient recordkeeping practices employed by the

¹² City of Toronto, "About the Archives," *City of Toronto Archives*, <http://www.toronto.ca/archives/> (28 August 2009)

¹³ Helen Humphreys and Michael Redhill, "Archives Between Fact and Fiction," Paper presented at the 32nd Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – As Others See Us – Archivists and Society, Kingston, Ontario, 30 June 2007.

¹⁴ H. Auld and S. Fernandez, "Climate Change Adaptation, Lessons from our Archivists: A Meteorologist's Perspective," Paper presented 32nd Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – As Others See Us – Archivists and Society, Kingston, Ontario, 30 June 2007.

Canadian blood system made establishing accountability extremely difficult. Since the tainted blood tragedy, well-kept records have become an important tool for Canadian Blood Services when tracking blood-borne pathogens and preventing their spread.¹⁵

Archives are also playing a critical role in resolving residential school settlements. In 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Aboriginal people for the residential schools and a Settlement Agreement was announced. The Prime Minister's apology and the Settlement were landmark events in the Canadian residential school legacy that occurred after archivists, historians, lawyers, Aboriginal advocates, and others spent years pouring over archival documents outlining the activities that had occurred in the residential schools.¹⁶

Archival records also played a significant role in defining Aboriginal hunting and fishing rights in Atlantic Canada. The rights of Aboriginal people to hunt and fish were established in the Treaties of 1760-1761 and the Supreme Court of Canada held that these rights extended to the ancestors of the Aboriginal people who signed the treaty. Especially with respect to the Atlantic lobster fishery, some non-Aboriginal fishermen felt they were being discriminated against. In an effort to access the hunting and fishing rights established in the Treaties of 1760-1761, a group of Acadians in New Brunswick initiated genealogical research that they hope will prove Métis-Acadian bloodlines. Archival records have become important tools in adjudicating conflicting views on Aboriginal treaty rights.¹⁷

The revolution in the usage of archives has coincided with the establishment of community archives across Canada. For example, the Nanaimo Community Archives in British Columbia and Elgin County Archives in Ontario serve as examples of locally-based archives that were established largely as a result of grassroots lobbying efforts by local citizens. During the 1980s a local sense of community and commitment to archives led to the formation of the Nanaimo Community Archives Society. The initial goal of the Society was to preserve the documentary history of the community of Nanaimo, and to develop a

¹⁵ Cynthia Kent, "Ten Years of Trust: Transforming Canada's Blood System," Paper presented at the 34th Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – Rights Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs, Calgary, Alberta, 17 May 2009.

¹⁶ J. R. Miller, "Archivists, Historians and Residential Schools," Keynote Address presented at the 34th Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – Rights Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs, Calgary, Alberta, 15 May 2009.

¹⁷ Marcel Barriault, "'Becoming' Métis in Acadia: the Search for Aboriginal Bloodlines," Paper presented at the 34th Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – Rights Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs, Calgary, Alberta, 17 May 2009.

strong centre of archival expertise with the ability to serve, advise, and educate sponsors and organizations within the community about archival functions. Furthermore, the local archives could provide a regional base where the knowledge of archivists and archival institutions in the area could be shared.¹⁸

Although the value of archives in protecting the cultural history of Nanaimo was obvious, many members of the community needed to be convinced of other possible positive roles archives could play in Nanaimo. Archival planners sought to strike a balance between providing efficient records management for institutional records, and providing long-term care for records of major cultural value to the community. In 1991 the Nanaimo Community Archives (NCA) was formally created.¹⁹ The ability of community groups to work together toward the common goal of establishing archives in Nanaimo and to promote the uses of archives throughout the community provides an excellent example of how archives can be established through grassroots support and community cooperation.

However, the Nanaimo Community Archives also exposes some of the challenges associated with operating a cooperative archival institution. Each sponsor of a cooperative archives expects a certain level of service from the archives. Unfortunately, if there are multiple sponsoring agencies and few archival staff the archives may be faced with the problem of too many bosses, not enough employees. Ironically, the demands of too many community sponsors may ultimately limit archives' ability to engage with the community in general. Activities such as public programming and public outreach may be neglected if archivists are constantly occupied with the demands of sponsors.

One of the goals that the Nanaimo Community Archives has been unable to achieve is becoming a regional centre for archives in its part of British Columbia. Factors contributing to the limited constituency of the NCA include a loss of public interest in becoming a regional archival centre and that the NCA may simply be too small to take on such a large project.²⁰ The NCA experience exposes some of the challenges of operating local archives

¹⁸ Jane Turner, "Working Cooperatively for a Sustainable Future: Total Archives in Nanaimo," *Archivaria* 39, (Spring 1995): pp. 177-182.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-181

²⁰ Michael Gourlie, "It Takes a Village – Advocating for Community Archives," Paper presented at the 34th Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference – Rights Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs, Calgary, Alberta, 17 May 2009, pp. 7-8.

on a regional scale. Furthermore, archives require resources to develop. Planners of a community archives can have grandiose dreams for their institutions but adequate archival staff and funding are necessary to translate these dreams into reality.

A second example of community archives is the Elgin County Archives (ECA) in Ontario. The ECA has been the official repository of the records of the County of Elgin, created in 1852, and its constituent municipalities. The Elgin County Archives contains both municipal records and private collections documenting Elgin's history. Efforts to create the ECA were initiated in the December 1987 by a group of local heritage organizations called "Heritage Elgin – St. Thomas." At the behest of Heritage Elgin – St. Thomas, the Elgin County Council initiated feasibility studies to determine potential locations for the archives. Unfortunately, financial constraints during the early 1990s meant that the Elgin County Council could not proceed with creating a local archival institution. In the absence of archives, Elgin County's library system began accumulating public and private records with the expectation that an archival institution would eventually be established.

In 1998 efforts to establish the Elgin County Archives were renewed. The "Elgin St. Thomas Archives Association" was formed and began developing community partnerships that would sustain a community archives. Another incentive to develop the ECA was the amalgamation of sixteen Elgin County municipalities into seven municipalities. Many offices of the former municipalities contained extensive records detailing the County's past. Upgrading Elgin County's archival program was seen as a strategy for managing former municipal records. In 2000, the County's Manager of Library Services submitted a report to the Elgin County Council requesting support for the development of a County Archives.

The mandate under which the archives currently operates was established by a County Council by-law in June 2001. The archives was moved to its current facility in November 2002. This mandate was developed when "the County made a commitment to go beyond its public obligations to preserve and provide access to its own records to make this program into a total community resource."²¹ Hence, the Elgin County Archives makes efforts to collect all types of records from all types of people in order to better serve the community and archival users in general. The Elgin County Archives provides a model of a

²¹ Elgin County Archives, "Creating the Archives," *The County of Elgin*, <http://www.elgin.ca/creating.htm> (accessed 9 September 2009).

successful community archives that has been able to serve its constituency and gain enough public recognition to secure sustained funding.²²

The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch is the largest municipal archives in Manitoba. The records of the City of Winnipeg are managed from creation to destruction through the Branch. By combining archival and records management functions the City of Winnipeg has been able to combine the business functions of records management with the traditional historical functions of archives. The City of Winnipeg Archives has collaborated with other local culture and heritage groups on several initiatives, such as the 2008 Artist in Residence program in which filmmaker Paula Kelley used archival records in films detailing Winnipeg's past. Substantial efforts have also been taken to manage and identify archival records in the Taxation/Finance, Sewer and Water and other departments of Winnipeg's municipal government.²³

The activities of the City of Winnipeg Archives have been somewhat hampered by a lack of financial resources and a small staff. Archivists and records managers are constantly occupied with meeting annual line goals and have little time in which to explore potential new uses for their records. Archives can only contribute as much to their community as their funding will allow.²⁴ That said, community archives are not institutions that only large cities can afford to fund.

During the last twenty years numerous small community archives have been established in rural Manitoba. Towns such as Boissevain, Altona, Neepawa, Carberry and St. Claude have established local archives. The development of a community archives in Brandon is not without precedent.

At present, several archives are providing access to archival records in Brandon. The S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University collects the records of the University as well as select private collections from Brandon and rural Manitoba. The Archives of Manitoba retains records related to Brandon created by the provincial government and some private collections relating to organizations and individuals in Brandon. At present, no archival institution dedicated to archiving the City of Brandon's local government records and the

²² Gourlie, "It Takes a Village," pp. 15-17.

²³ City of Winnipeg Records Committee, "2008 Annual Report," *City of Winnipeg*, <http://www.winnipeg.ca/clerks/pdfs/reports/2008RecordsReport.pdf>, (accessed 18 October 2009).

²⁴ Participant 11, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 9 April 2008.

private papers of local citizens or businesses exists in Brandon. While several archival institutions are providing service to Brandon, none of these institutions really have a mandate to archive the community's records.

What is a Community Archives?

A community archives in Brandon, funded mainly by the city government, should contain records of municipal government and private persons and institutions of enduring value that reflect community diversity and protect the best possible range of the community's knowledge resources. A Brandon community archives could also serve as a hub of information for Brandonites and others about records in other national, provincial, university, religious, and foreign archives, to name some examples, and to related libraries, galleries, museums, and historic sites where information about Brandon, or of interest to Brandonites, may be located. The community archives would not only acquire and make available certain records generated largely in and by Brandonites, but also provide direction to other key sources of archival records of interest to them, whether they are about Brandon directly or of some other interest to the researcher. The community archives could also assist local institutions and individuals to better preserve their own archives themselves, as not all such records could be housed in a community archives or would be offered to it. A community archives should support archiving in the community and not be concerned solely with records in the archives itself.

This approach is rooted in the ideal of the distinctive Canadian tradition of "total archives," which called for a comprehensive mandate and breadth of societal or community concern for an archives within its jurisdiction.²⁵ It also reflects ideas espoused by John Holden, an influential cultural theorist in the United Kingdom, who has emphasized the multiple values cultural institutions such as archives have. Holden has identified three main types of societal value cultural institutions have: instrumental, institutional, and intrinsic value. Instrumental value refers to the social and economic impact of culture on society and institutional value is measured by the engagement of cultural organizations with the public. Holden defines intrinsic value as "the set of values that apply to the subjective value of

²⁵ Wilfred I. Smith, "Total Archives: The Canadian Experience," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* ed. Tom Nesmith (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1993), pp. 133-150.

culture intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.”²⁶ John Holden’s definition of intrinsic value differs considerably from that of Canadian archivists, which has traditionally been: “the archival term that is applied to *permanently* valuable records that have qualities and characteristics that make the records in their original form the only archivally acceptable form for preservation.”²⁷ Archivists’ traditional understanding of intrinsic value is of limited use when defining collection and appraisal policies that strive to include the records and perspectives of a community. Holden’s broad and highly subjective interpretation of intrinsic value allows greater flexibility in determining which records in a community should be archived.

Intrinsic value recognizes that the value of records is constructed by society and is continually reconstructed with changing societal conditions. Because of the complex and ever-changing nature of a record’s societal context, creating a single, authoritative description is difficult if not impossible. Users from different backgrounds examining the record in various contexts are likely to interpret the record in a variety of ways. Thus, archivists are unlikely to be able to identify a single value in records that will meet the needs of all users, and indeed, they should instead seek and encourage as wide a range of uses of archives as possible in order to maximize their value to the community.

The recognition of intrinsic value is necessary for the identification of what Holden refers to as institutional value. Unfortunately, a central focus on the instrumental value of archives can reduce the potential personal interaction between archival materials and the public. Although archivists can, and frequently do, champion the value of archives to society, they do not necessarily identify how this value translates into benefits for individual citizens. While archival functions, such as the maintenance of public accountability, may benefit society as a whole, they do not necessarily prompt individual citizens to directly interact with archives. Without direct interactions between users and archives, policies by themselves that encourage the collection of a socially inclusive archival record can have little impact on a community. They will not be successful if many citizens have no notion of what archives are.

²⁶ John Holden, “DEMOS Think Piece: Valuing Culture in the South East,” *DEMOS*, http://www.seeda.co.uk/Publications/Strategy/docs/ValuingCulture_SouthEast.pdf (accessed 11 August 2009).

²⁷ Shauna McRanor, “A Critical Analysis of Intrinsic Value,” *American Archivist* 59, no. 4 (Fall 1996): p. 402.

Public Programming and Community Engagement

Archivists have traditionally maintained a relatively low professional profile. The result has often been limited understanding of the valuable work archives perform.²⁸ Archivists may be able to improve public understanding of archives and archivists by attracting members of the public who were previously unengaged with archives to their institutions through public programming. Archival records, described and preserved by archivists, are often a source of professional and personal pride. Public programming may provide outlets through which archivists can share their enthusiasm for archival records and demonstrate their value to society.²⁹

An archives with a key role in community development activities would require a proactive public programming agenda. Archivists would need to actively seek opportunities to contribute to and make their archives relevant to their constituent community. A community archives may do well to regard public programming as being equally important to traditional archival tasks such as records acquisition, preservation and description. Some of the specific public programming activities a community archives in Brandon could undertake will be discussed throughout this thesis.

The planning of public programming activities may provide a further opportunity for citizen engagement in a community archives as citizens may be able to assist public programming activities. In the United Kingdom, some archivists have suggested that the direction of public programming should be guided by users. Simon Matty, policy advisor for research and evidence at the Museum, Library and Archives Council in the United Kingdom, says that archivists may have reason to be wary of making unilateral decisions regarding the direction of public programming:

Citizens will no longer be content to receive passively services cooked up between the politician (with his/her view of what the public wants) and the professional (with his/her view of what the public needs).³⁰

²⁸ Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives" *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991): pp. 101-113.

²⁹ John W Carlin, "Records Matter: Developing the U. S. National Archives Experience," Address to the International Conference on the Round Table of Archives, Marseilles, France, 14 November 2002.

³⁰ Simon Matty, "Making the case: demonstrating the value of archives to our political masters," Presentation to the National Council on Archives Conference, Birmingham, United Kingdom, 21 February 2006.

In fairness, governments and archivists have sought new ways to make archives valuable to diverse user groups and in the pursuit of diverse goals, but a community archives may well benefit from working more closely than has been typical with its constituent community to identify directions for public programming.

While public outreach is important to the survival of archives, it must be done in tandem with other key archival activities. The balance can be maintained with the help of clear operating policies and procedures. The sheer volume and diversity of records created by the many communities that make up a city mean that collecting everything is an impossible task, as is providing public programming activities that will satisfy all citizens. Archivist Kent Haworth has stated that much of the difficulty facing small archives in terms of processing vast quantities of material and attempting to provide adequate service has arisen as a result of poorly defined or non-existent operating policies. The establishment of a community archives may generate a considerable degree of local enthusiasm with private citizens and organizations dropping off volumes of old records in their desire to contribute to local history. Unfortunately, this enthusiasm may mean that archivists are faced with the challenging task of adequately caring for all types of records while attempting to serve all types of records users. Clearly defined records management and collecting and public access policies are necessary to ensure that archival functions can be pursued at a manageable level.³¹

While archivists are part of their own professional community they are also part of the local community in the city or town whose records they are responsible for keeping. A deeper consideration of the records stored in a community archives and the multitude of functions and values these records represent to different members of the community suggest that a community archives has a variety of potential partners. As an early step, a community archives needs to determine who it is serving in order to deliver effective programming.

Definitions of Community

Defining the community that a community archival institution will serve is a complicated process. For instance, Brandon can be described as a geographical community.

³¹ Kent Haworth, "Local Archives: Challenges and Responsibilities for Archivists," *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-1977): pp. 28-39.

However, the multiple and complex social relations that take place within the geographical boundaries of the city and between its members and those outside its geographical bounds cause the formation of a variety of social identities and communities associated with Brandon. Former Brandonites living elsewhere may still be in close contact with people in Brandon and still feel part of the community. The communities of one kind or another -- such as professional, social, and political ones -- that Brandonites belong to with those living outside the city and who are not former Brandonites are also an aspect of the communities to which Brandon's citizens belong. A Brandon community archives would have to seek ways of serving the various communities in which Brandonites participate. In general, protecting the records generated in Brandon, providing information from them to all who wish to use them, and offering guidance to sources of archival information about Brandon or of interest to Brandonites would address the needs of the complex communities in and related to Brandon.

When defining "community" at the local level, academics from the community development field have acknowledged the multiple layers of identity that are used in constructing people's visions of communities while explaining how these identities are negotiated in the formation of cities. Particularly in the Western Canadian context, Sara Paige Stephens' thesis *Concepts of 'Community' in Community Economic Development: The Social Dynamics of Community-Based Development in Winnipeg's Inner City* provides an overview of definitions of community within the City of Winnipeg. Stephens states "lines of boundary are highly mobile, personal and fluid, making community the site of tension and conflict." While a group of citizens inhabiting a city may join in solidarity to pursue some common goals, these citizens may find they are working at odds with one another over other issues. Identifying some of the issues around which concepts of community are built is an essential component in determining the character of community archives.³²

Since communities are expressed through recognition of commonality between social groups, Stephens states "communities are therefore formed by the creation and expression of boundaries."³³ The boundaries that define communities are based upon diverse activities and

³² Sara Paige Stephens, "Concepts of 'Community' in Community Economic Development: The Social Dynamics of Community-Based Development in Winnipeg's Inner City" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2006), pp. 31-33.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

perceptions. Therefore, a community is not necessarily defined as a city or a town, but as a group of people who are seen as having something in common with one another. This commonality may include geography, culture, social issues, professions or comforts.

Traditionally notions of community have been heavily linked to geographical location. However, improvements in communication technology and globalization have meant, to a certain extent, that social activities within geographic communities have become decentralized. People with different definitions of community from all around the world are able to communicate with one another and share ideas more rapidly than ever before. As a consequence, definitions of community have become more global and more fluid.³⁴

Although the nature of the role geographic location plays in defining community may have changed, cities, towns, and neighbourhoods continue to be important forums where communities are imagined and negotiated. Regular interactions with cultural communities, organizations, families, and neighbours foster a sense of belonging, home, and social location. Stephens also states that maintaining the social relationships upon which lasting communities rely requires constant effort, contact and activity. Many of the activities upon which community are based are centred in a geographical location. People living in close proximity to one another are likely to share a collection of common experiences by virtue of the fact that a common geographic forum exists in which they negotiate their definitions of community.³⁵

Community Economic Development and the Changing Rural Landscape

If archives are to find a central role in a community like Brandon's, situated in a rural setting, archivists will need to understand the key ingredients of such community development as outlined by experts in that area. The individual character of rural communities like Brandon is becoming increasingly important. While global trade and communication have made access to services and markets easier for different rural communities, the particular cultures and histories of communities still give different communities their distinctive character. According to students of these trends, rural

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 49-54.

communities are pursuing methods of development that foster growth in a global economy without abandoning their unique cultural identities.³⁶

David Freshwater has identified some common characteristics among rural communities in North America that, although not meant to be comprehensive, provide a useful tool for understanding the context in which rural communities operate. Many economic development theorists have expressed the belief that urban centres are where real economic growth occurs. Rural centres act as hinterlands to urban centres, providing cities with food and recreational areas for urban dwellers. Urban centres also absorb many new immigrants and people from surrounding rural areas who are seeking employment, education, or economic prosperity. One reason for the perceived economic benefits of living in an urban centre is that, according to Freshwater, rural economies are often driven by the desire to reinvigorate old industries such as agriculture. Urban economies, on the other hand, are dominated by new, rapidly growing industries in which innovation and technology are major drivers of development. While supporting traditional industries is certainly a worthwhile endeavour, too much of a focus on preserving existing industries can restrict the potential for development in an economy that is increasingly dependent on technology, innovation, and the ability to operate in a national, if not global, marketplace. Although economic development is not the only factor driving community development, Freshwater states that there is little chance of a community being able to maintain a meaningful quality of life without a solid economic base.³⁷ A community archives must address this community priority.

Several trends have recently emerged in relation to the migration of rural populations. Generally, the populations of communities that are economically dependent on natural resources, as is the case in many rural areas, have been in decline. This reduction may be attributed to the use of labour-reducing machinery in many resource-based industries. Furthermore, many resource-dependent communities have experienced considerable difficulty in finding new products to export.³⁸ Compared to the rest of Canada, a relatively

³⁶ David Freshwater, "Delusions of Grandeur: The Search for a Vibrant Rural America" in *Building for Success: Exploration of Rural Community and Rural Development* eds. Greg Halseth and Regine Halseth (Brandon: Rural Development Institute, 2004), pp. 29-50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³⁸ Roland Beshiri, et. al., "A population sketch of rural and small town Canada" in *Building for Success*, ed. Halseth and Halseth, pp. 81-110.

large proportion of Manitoba's population lives in rural areas (33.4 percent in Manitoba compared to a national average of 20.6 percent). In Manitoba the segments of rural populations that tend to be the largest are children and seniors. Of particular concern to many rural Manitoban communities is the out-migration of rural youth to urban centres. Young people are seen as essential to the future development of communities and organizations such as the Southwest Regional Round Table have undertaken initiatives to promote rural youth retention by making education and employment opportunities in rural Manitoba more accessible and attractive to young people.³⁹

Rural residents tend to have lower levels of education than their urban counterparts and thus have difficulty seeking employment in urban centres where there is a relatively small demand for low-skill labour. Part of the reason for lower education levels in rural areas may be the result of a lack of access to post-secondary educational institutions. Universities and colleges are typically located in urban centres. Thus rural people are not able to obtain formal education locally. One solution to this difficulty has been the emergence of distance education programs where students in remote locations can take university or college courses over the Internet. Another solution involves rethinking the role of knowledge in community development.⁴⁰

The growing importance of knowledge in economic development is having a major influence on development initiatives. Since the 1980s the idea of the knowledge-based economy has gained considerable popularity. Although providing a single definition for the knowledge-based economy is difficult, there are several features that are common to many views of it. Its essential components are the ability to create, apply, and communicate knowledge. The knowledge-based economy is based on finding ever more innovative ways to produce goods and services. An analogy to explain the application of knowledge in the economy is to consider the value of sand. In a raw, unprocessed form, sand has very little value. However, if the knowledge and technical capacity is present, sand can be processed into glass products or refined into silicon for use in electronics. Thus, the economic value

³⁹ Jennifer de Peuter and Marianne Sorenson, "Rural Manitoba Profile: A Ten-year Census Analysis," *Canadian Rural Partnership: Rural Research and Analysis*, http://www.rural.gc.ca/research/profile/mb_e.phtml (accessed 3 July 2009); "Tyler King, et. al., "Youth Inclusion in Rural Manitoba: Research Report," *Southwest Youth Community Learning Network*, http://swycln.cimnet.ca/cim/72C350_542T22402.dhtm (accessed 3 July 2009).

⁴⁰ Beshiri et. al., pp. 81-110.

lies primary in the knowledge and means needed to convert a low-value raw material into a specialized product.⁴¹ This is not to suggest that knowledge has not had some value in past economies. However, in the knowledge-based economy knowledge is recognized as a primary driver for economic growth.

Many of the trends characterizing the knowledge-based economy are also trends that have emerged in rural development. For example, economic activity is taking place in an increasingly global manner. Multilateral trade agreements, improved communication infrastructure, and falling transportation costs have enabled companies to engage with organizations in other countries in order to take advantage of market opportunities around the world. Companies in the knowledge-based economy must also compete on a global scale. Since access to raw material is declining in importance as a driving factor for growth, knowledge is becoming the new tool organizations employ to obtain market advantages.⁴²

David Freshwater has identified similar trends that have emerged in rural centres. External markets have become increasingly important to rural areas. Low transportation costs and improved capacity for communications have caused many rural markets to expand far beyond the regional level. Consequently, the value of natural resources and the place-specific access to these resources that many rural communities have traditionally benefited from are also becoming less significant. Access to knowledge and skilled workers is beginning to replace access to raw materials as the critical factor driving economic growth. Enhanced transportation and communication capacities have also given rural communities greater access to goods and knowledge that they previously may have had to acquire from urban centres. As a result of the increasing ease with which knowledge and goods can be transported between geographically disparate population centres rural communities can no longer rely upon their traditional staple resources to be the dominant source of their development.⁴³

⁴¹ Randall Morck and Bernard Young, "The Economic Underpinnings of a Knowledge-Based Economy," in *Doing Business in the Knowledge-Based Economy: Facts and Policy Challenges*, eds. Louis A. Lefebvre, Elisabeth Lefebvre, and Pierre Mohnen. (Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), pp. 49-80.

⁴² Surendra Gera, Lee-Sing Clifton, and Keith Newton, "The Emerging Global Knowledge-Based Economy: Trends and Forces," in *ibid.*, pp. 18-25.

⁴³ Freshwater, "Delusions of Grandeur," p. 37; Surendra Gera and Kurt Mang, "The Knowledge-Based Economy: Shifts in Industrial Output," *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques* 24, no. 2 (1998): pp. 149-184.

Skills and education required by employees in growing industries have increased significantly. Knowledge workers are a key to the success of modern economies. Gera, Lee-Sing, and Newton identify three categories of workers in the knowledge-based economy: knowledge workers, data workers, and non-information workers. Knowledge workers are involved in such activities as scientific research, engineering, and professional activities in the social sciences. The tasks a knowledge worker is involved in typically include the manipulation of concepts and the generation of new ideas. Data workers tend to include clerical employees who are responsible for the gathering, use, transmission or other handling of knowledge. Since the 1980s the relative importance of knowledge-oriented occupations in the Canadian economy has increased substantially.⁴⁴ Archivists are among society's knowledge workers (although too often seen as data workers) and a community archives' staff may do well to explain and justify their work in that light.

Community development professionals are charged with the task of providing services to citizens from multiple communities in a single geographic location. One way of serving multiple imagined communities within a geographical community is to develop linkages between communities and identify ways of working together toward common goals. Social capital is a subject that is often referred to by policymakers and community development practitioners when explaining how communities are defined and determining how to pursue socially inclusive development strategies. The basic components of social capital involve a sense of belonging within a community and the desire of community members to share knowledge and personal connections among one another in order to help the community grow collectively. Robert Putnam, a leading advocate of social capital in the United States, defines social capital as "good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit." By working together, people in "the community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbours."⁴⁵ People within a community can share their knowledge and experience with one another to create community-wide networks of information. The

⁴⁴ Gera et. al., "Shifts," pp. 18-25.

⁴⁵ Robert D. Putnam and Kristin A. Goss, introduction to *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, ed. Robert D. Putnam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 3-21.

body of knowledge collected through social capital can then be utilized for economic, social, cultural or any other type of development that the community wishes to pursue.

The application of social capital is a complex process in which community boundaries are in a constant state of renegotiation. Pierre Bourdieu stated that “Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, reintroduces the group. By the same token, it reintroduces the limits of the group.”⁴⁶ Thus, the process of generating social capital through the exchange of information between different partners creates its own boundaries. Community members face limitations in that they most comfortably share their knowledge and personal networks with people they know and with whom they are able to identify.

Robert Putnam has identified two types of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding is the type of social capital that binds groups together and reinforces exclusive identities and homogenous groups. Barbara Aniel has exposed a serious problem with the boundaries existing in the areas in which social capital is exchanged. Mainly, social capital can only be shared among people who already have power in society. Groups such as women and minorities, who have not wielded a great deal of power in society, face great difficulty in establishing strong networks of social capital. What can these people share if they hold little power in society to begin with?⁴⁷ One way that people who have held relatively limited power in society can become stronger is through utilizing bridging social capital. Bridging social capital emphasizes the development of linkages between individual citizens and between separate community organizations.⁴⁸

An analogy to explain the application of social capital in the community development process might be to imagine a city council in a multicultural city. While this hypothetical city council purportedly represents the community as a whole, it may be comprised primarily of business people from a culturally homogenous background. The town council meetings would create bonding social capital in that it brings the same people together and reinforces

⁴⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Slough: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 250.

⁴⁷ Barbara Aniel, *Diverse Communities: The Problem with Social Capital* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1-14.

⁴⁸ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), pp. 19-24.

an identity that excludes people from other cultures and professional backgrounds from participating in the development process. If the same city council were to utilize bridging social capital and pursue a policy of community economic development, it would appear considerably different. The city council using bridging social capital may encourage participation from people with different backgrounds. Thus, a broader segment of the geographical community would be given an opportunity to take part in and benefit from community development processes. Ultimately, this bridging may generate a broader community identity and sense of reciprocity within the community.

The community economic development response to a changing economic landscape focuses on private citizens working in communities to cope with economic change. Citizens are expected to take personal responsibility for their economic situation but are also encouraged to try to improve their social economy. Community economic development is a form of community intervention, as theorist J.M. Fontan asserts:

Progressive initiatives invest the economy with social concerns, in order to weave a socioeconomic fabric that takes social objectives into account with a view to creating new interdependencies and an economic democracy that fosters greater participation and control on the part of the community in the planning and development of their locality.⁴⁹

Thus, community economic development involves a holistic view of community growth that is not focused solely on money. Social, political, cultural, environmental perspectives are integrated with economic perspectives. Also, the economic development process is a means to an assortment of social ends. The social goals that economic development supports are defined by the community to meet the needs of the community.⁵⁰

Knowledge and the ability to apply it in practical and innovative ways is a central feature of community economic development, which is a style of development that focuses on supporting locally based growth and facilitating local social development. Traditional economic development practices were seen as taking place in the community and guided by

⁴⁹ Eric Shragge, "Community Economic Development: Conflicts and Visions," in *Community Economic Development: In Search of Empowerment*, ed. Eric Shragge (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997), pp. 1-18.

⁵⁰ David J.A. Douglas, *Community Economic Development in Canada*, vol. 1 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1994), pp. 22-27.

market forces and some intervention by government. Economic development initiatives within communities have typically been carried out by organizations such as chambers of commerce or other local business organizations. Unfortunately, the development initiatives pursued by these groups have tended to benefit only a limited segment of communities. Marginalized groups may not have the financial resources or experience to take part in existing economic development strategies. A lack of economic development experience is particularly challenging because, while funding programs may be available to assist marginalized groups with development programs, these groups may not be familiar with the processes involved in gaining access to these programs. Thus, both access to money and experience present potential barriers to socially inclusive development.

An analogy to describe the situation of marginalized groups in traditional economic development can be found in Michel Foucault's description of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. The person holding power, the prison guard, is hidden in darkness. This guard sits in a dimly lit guardhouse at the hub of a five-sided structure with tiers of individually lit cells. A single guard is able to control hundreds of prisoners by acquiring information about all aspects of their lives while that guard remains anonymous. Prisoners are unable to see the guard or one another and are unable to communicate or share knowledge. Essentially, the prisoners' lack of knowledge about their surroundings ensures their future captivity in that they are unable to learn about others.⁵¹ However, the panopticon is not monolithic. Business leaders and community planners have initiated efforts to increase transparency in the panopticon. By providing knowledge to previously marginalized community groups, promoters of the knowledge-based economy are attempting to facilitate empowerment.⁵²

In a basic sense, community economic development promotes the dismantling of the panopticon. The cells imprisoning those without access to knowledge are opened, and the panopticon becomes lit in its entirety. As prisoners leave their cells and are able to communicate with one another, they recognize common goals and interests. Once knowledge sharing is introduced into the panopticon, the occupants cease to be prisoners. Knowledge has led to their empowerment. As the former prisoners communicate with one

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. 195-230.

⁵² G. David Miller, "Knowledge-Sharing Institutions: A Movement to Transform Change Agents into Exchange Agents" in *Community Economic Development: In Search of Empowerment*, ed. Eric Shragge, pp. 19-28.

another, they may recognize that they each possess unique skills that they may share with their counterparts. It is meaningful to view a community as a type of panopticon. Different groups within the community are comparable to isolated prisoners whose lack of knowledge is what keeps them shackled. Community economic development strategies can provide the social and information networks to enable different parts of a community to find their own empowerment.⁵³ Community archives can play a significant role in the development of such networks as a major information hub in their communities.

Foucault's notion of knowledge as power suggests that archives could potentially be very important partners in community development. The records kept in a community archives contain vast quantities of information about the day-to-day activities of government and citizens. In the context of community economic development, the knowledge stored in these records represents a substantial community resource. Unfortunately, without an archival institution in which to retain and provide access to these records, much of Brandon's potential knowledge resources may remain unused. If archivists and community development professionals could find some way of identifying and applying the knowledge held in archival records to tasks associated with community development a strong case may be made that archives are integral to the future growth of Brandon.

The pursuit of successful community economic development and archival public programming initiatives both rely upon community engagement. Community economic development programs rely upon broad definitions of community that include a willingness to work collaboratively with other citizens and government in order to be successful. If the social capital that binds communities together is insufficient to prompt local people to work together, then community economic development programs cannot be sustainable.⁵⁴ Similarly, the power of records kept in archives becomes largely symbolic unless people are willing or able to wield it to pursue their interests. In order for an archival institution to become part of a sustainable community economic development scheme, it needs to be engaged with a variety of local citizens. Examining documents such as Brandon's

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 19-28.

⁵⁴ Janette Hartz-Karp and Peter Newman, "The Participative Route to Sustainability," in *Community Voices: Creating Sustainable Spaces*, ed. Sally Paulin (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2006), pp. 28-42.

community strategic plan offers some suggestions as to how archives may become engaged with the citizenry of Brandon.

Shaping Tomorrow Together: Brandon's Community Strategic Plan

While archives can play a variety of roles in community development some sort of formalized definition of these roles in the form of clearly defined policies is necessary. The goals of community developers outlined above and of the citizenry of Brandon are illustrated in *Shaping Tomorrow Together: Brandon's Community Strategic Plan*. Brandon's community strategic plan sets development goals for the City of Brandon and provides some suggestions as to how these goals might be met. Work on the plan began in 2004 when of citizens in Brandon were invited to community involvement model-planning workshops. The planning workshops took place throughout early 2004 and offered citizens the opportunity to discuss their visions for Brandon in the future and how they felt these visions might be realized. In November 2004 the results of the community involvement planning workshops were analyzed and nine priority areas identified. These areas included agriculture, culture and diversity, education, economic development, environmental stewardship, health care, governance, recreation and youth issues.⁵⁵

Although not specifically mentioned, *Shaping Tomorrow Together* contains many of the key features of community economic development noted in the academic literature. Much of the community strategic plan is focused on identifying and building upon local resources, following the "by the community for the community" theme of community economic development. By working together, community organizations can pool their knowledge and resources and act as catalysts for future development in Brandon. *Shaping Tomorrow Together* suggests that by working cooperatively, the citizens of Brandon can bring about changes in their community that will increase Brandon's attractiveness as a place to live and do business.

⁵⁵ City of Brandon Community Strategic Plan Leadership Committee, "Shaping Tomorrow Together," *Brandon's Community Strategic Plan*, [http://www.brandon.ca/main.nsf/e23e545cb880816786256e7f004bbdc2/4f9401c8b49290e7862570c30031f5d/\\$FILE/Detailed%20Community%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](http://www.brandon.ca/main.nsf/e23e545cb880816786256e7f004bbdc2/4f9401c8b49290e7862570c30031f5d/$FILE/Detailed%20Community%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf) In reviewing the development of the Community Strategic Plan it is important to recognize that much of the planning was conducted by volunteers. These volunteers were citizens who had lived in Brandon, appreciated its traditions and heritage, and who wished to see their community prosper and grow. (accessed 3 July 2009).

In order to understand the plan's vision of the future development of Brandon and the implications this vision has for archives, it is important to review each of the nine points identified in the strategic plan. Agriculture has traditionally played a key role in the development of Brandon. In order to foster the future growth of agriculture in Brandon, the strategic plan calls for efforts to identify and define in a more comprehensive manner the existing contributions of agriculture to Brandon. While basic agricultural industries such as Simplot and Maple Leaf are highly visible in Brandon, there are a large number of organizations involved in other aspects of agriculture that are less well known. For instance, agribusiness, organic crop production, farmer's professional organizations and agricultural research companies are all elements of Brandon's agricultural economy. The strategic plan calls for the creation of a comprehensive inventory of local agricultural industries that can then be used in developing education programs and other ways of ensuring that agriculture remains a strong part of the city's economy.⁵⁶

Developing local culture and diversity is another major concern of Brandon's strategic plan. Brandon has created a race-relations network in order to facilitate understanding between different cultural groups in Brandon and to promote greater community cohesion. In order to further Brandon's culture and diversity, the community strategic plan calls for education programs about race relations, networking among local cultural organizations, services that are culturally accessible, workplace diversification, and the celebration and recognition of other cultures.⁵⁷

Education has been identified as an important factor in Brandon's future growth. The plan calls on the community to develop networks among existing local education providers, develop a steering committee to guide the education component of the community strategic plan, market Brandon's educational institutions on a national scale, and ensure that educational programs are developed that meet the needs of future employers, employees, and educational institutions.⁵⁸

Education and training are of major importance to economic development, which is one of the chief concerns of Brandon's strategic planning. To attract new citizens and retain its current population, the city needs to be able to provide jobs and business opportunities.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-14.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 26-35.

Basic tasks involved with economic development include supporting the growth and retention of existing businesses and developing networks between these businesses. Networking and economic growth can be facilitated through the development of a local environment that is friendly to economic development and investment. Major partners involved in the economic growth of Brandon are the municipal, provincial and federal governments. In order to support economic growth, improvements to infrastructure, such as the airport, are also considered important.⁵⁹

The natural environment is becoming an area of interest in Brandon. Environmental protection is an activity that, while requiring some rethinking of old business practices, also offers opportunities for new development and innovation. The most basic step involved in environmentally friendly growth is making citizens aware of environmental issues and demonstrating how these issues can be addressed by the average citizen. The creation of public green space in Brandon is one way of increasing interaction between the citizens of Brandon and the natural environment. The strategic plan calls for initiatives to improve public transportation, explore sources of alternative energy, protect water as a valuable community resource, and find ways of managing solid waste in a way that will cause minimal environmental damage. Business and industry may be able to benefit from environmental initiatives in that the strategic plan calls for the exploration of federal and provincial funding opportunities promoting environmentally friendly innovation.⁶⁰

Provision of health-care for the citizens of Brandon is another concern of the community strategic plan. The main health-care provider for Brandon is the Brandon Regional Health Authority and its development is of critical concern to the strategic plan. The health-care component of Brandon's strategic plan is attentive to the funding challenges facing Canadian health-care institutions and identifies ways of coping with these challenges. Preventing inefficiency and the duplication of health-care records is a challenge facing Brandon's health-care institutions collectively. Accountability is essential to the effective delivery of health-care in that Brandon is seeking people-centred health services that are driven by local needs and that are able to readily provide evidence of their value. In terms of goals within Brandon's existing health-care system, the strategic plan calls for efforts to

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 16-25.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 38-61.

ensure that people working in health-care fields are provided with safe workplaces and are valued and supported.⁶¹

Implementing many of the features of Brandon's strategic plan will require considerable consultation with various levels of government. Municipal governance in particular is highlighted by the strategic plan in finding ways to effectively deliver local government services and to ensure that the delivery of these services is driven by local stakeholders. Government at the city level should keep people informed and engaged with government and local political issues. City Council should strive to implement local laws that will actively reflect community needs and enable local administration to operate effectively. In order to ensure that local needs are being met by government, the strategic plan encourages City Council to promote communication between citizens and government and to create an environment of learning. By encouraging citizens to actively engage with government, City Council hopes to ensure that Brandon's development is guided by true community desires. At the provincial level the strategic plan calls for the government to enact legislation that will enable the efficient delivery of services and implement programs that will facilitate the growth of Manitoba as a whole. Attempts should be made to find ways of delivering federal services through the provincial government.⁶²

Brandon's community strategic plan also recognizes that government and economic opportunities are not the only factors driving community growth. An important consideration in attracting people to and retaining people in Brandon is the recreation, leisure and arts environment in the city. At present, while Brandon contains many groups that are actively involved in recreation leisure and the arts the city does not have a clearly defined policy for working with these groups. City involvement in recreation, leisure and arts could be used to strengthen existing partnerships between community groups. An early step in developing Brandon's recreational and artistic profile is to develop an understanding of what recreation and artistic facilities in Brandon are currently accomplishing and determining what new facilities have the greatest capacity to foster the development of recreation and arts in Brandon. Another suggestion is that a central arts council could be formed in Brandon that would serve the function of advocating for support of arts, leisure and recreation and assist

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 62-65.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 66-77.

these organizations in coordinating local efforts in these areas. Furthermore, the strategic plan suggests that these organizations may form partnerships with the business community in order to improve their funding prospects. Linkages between recreation, leisure and the arts and business could improve funding for arts and recreation and assist artists and recreational groups in developing their public profile.⁶³

In order for Brandon to ensure long-term growth for the City of Brandon and ensure that the community strategic plan meets the needs of future Brandonites, youth are identified as an important concern in community planning for Brandon. Young people will guide the future development of Brandon and community planners have identified strategies for attracting youth to the city and retaining its current youth population as priorities. Much of the effort to retain local youth has involved consulting youth to learn their hopes for the future development of Brandon. These consultations have taken place at events such as Brandon's Youth Forum where local youth were asked to discuss a variety of topics relating to the city's development. Ultimately, by giving youth a voice in future development initiatives, Brandon planners hope to engage young people in the future development of the city.⁶⁴

Overall, an archival institution could contribute to Brandon's community development in a multitude of ways. Looking outside of the stereotypical mindset of archives that focuses mainly on what appears to many, unfortunately, as the limited historical and academic value of records allows a far broader image of community archives to emerge – one in which archives could become a vital part of the community. Although opportunities for archival engagement in community development may not be explored in Brandon's strategic plan, they have been explored elsewhere in the world. Most notably in the United Kingdom, archival institutions have been recasting themselves as important contributors to the community development process. The next chapter of this thesis will examine some of the Canadian and international examples of archives that are attempting to support community development initiatives in order to consider those that might be applicable in Brandon.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 78-91.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 91-93; Ryan Gibson and Kenneth C. Bessant, *One City, One Voice: Report From Youth Forum 1* (Brandon: Rural Development Institute, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO

CONNECTING ARCHIVES WITH A COMMUNITY: POSSIBILITIES IN CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVAL PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The basic principles of community economic development reveal numerous ways in which archives can engage municipalities. A community archives can do so especially by helping people develop and employ skills that enable them to participate in the knowledge-based economy. And to do that, archivists need to explain in their public programming (or outreach) the varied uses of archival holdings. In this way, they may hope to become key participants in developing their communities.

Prior to planning for archival programming at a community archives, archivists may need to focus on developing support for records management for their sponsoring municipal government. Julian Mims describes records as the “lifeblood of local government” and suggests that some offices spend as much as 50 percent of their time retrieving information that has been poorly managed.¹ Continuing the analogy of records as lifeblood, a poor records management system is akin to a body with a faulty heart and anaemic blood. A local records manager or archivist may have to impress on other employees the value of records and the ways in which effective records management can reduce costs and increase efficiency.²

Deficient records management makes good, cost-effective and consistent decision making extremely difficult. If employees are unable to quickly and easily retrieve information to perform their work and store information so that their colleagues are able to access it, the organization is likely to encounter serious inefficiencies. Perhaps most troublesome of all, poor records management can make it difficult for cities and municipalities to provide effective public service. If public employees are unable to locate records or information requested by the public, citizens may lose respect for civic

¹ Julian L. Mims, *Records Management: A Practical Guide for Cities and Counties* (Washington: International City/County Records Management Association, 1996), p. xii.

² Terry Cook, *In the Public Trust: A Strategic Plan for the Archives and Records Management Service of the City of Winnipeg* (Gloucester: Clio Consulting, 1999), 63-65.

government, its officials and their politicians. From a legal standpoint, poor or non-existent municipal records management programs can make compliance with access to information and privacy legislation a nightmare. An organization that cannot account for its own records cannot achieve full public accountability.³

To a certain extent, small city or municipal budgets may render the creation of a records management program impossible. A practical approach to solving the challenge of insufficient funding for a records management program may be the creation of a records management cooperative. A records management cooperative involves a group of participants (organizations, departments, etc.) pooling their resources together in order to purchase professional records management services. Julian Mims has suggested that records management cooperatives can be quite beneficial to organizations that may lack the financial resources necessary to support their own records management initiatives. By facilitating cooperation among multiple local organizations or departments, a records management cooperative enables participants to retain a degree of local control over their records.⁴ Furthermore, by encouraging participants to work together to achieve common records management goals, records management cooperatives have the potential to support the development of social capital.

Ironically, a significant barrier to a community establishing a records cooperative may be the strong sense of localism or independence that can promote their creation. Local government entities often regard one another as rivals rather than colleagues and this can be a major problem in trying to coordinate multiple departments and levels of government into cooperative ventures. A tendency for the assorted professionals involved with records management cooperatives to adhere to strict professional standards and refuse to communicate with one another may also pose problems for cooperatives. Records cooperatives are large entities that require the expertise of many professions, including archivists, records managers, information technology experts and politicians. If a profession essential to the operation of a records management cooperative is unable or unwilling to work with members of other professions, the integrity of the entire cooperative may be

³ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴ Mims, *Practical Guide*, pp. xii-xiii.

jeopardized. Therefore, political and professional infighting has the potential to prevent records management cooperatives from realizing their full potential.⁵

Although records management cooperatives may be difficult to establish, they have the potential to offer many benefits to their participants. A cooperative records management program can offer participants greater access to financial resources and specialized knowledge. Archives and records management programs often cite lack of funding as a central difficulty they face in trying to achieve their mandate. If archives and records management programs were to partner with other programs or organizations, they would have greater access to financial resources. Furthermore, the participating organizations may gain access to greater knowledge resources. For instance, small archives may not be able to afford to hire specialists in archival preservation, much less from other fields such as information technology. Perhaps if a group of smaller organizations pooled some of their resources into a records cooperative each organization would have the ability to provide a handful of workers with specialized knowledge that could be shared with the rest of the cooperative.⁶

In order to avoid some common problems facing records management cooperatives, Julian Mims suggests several criteria that should be met for the cooperative to be successful. Ideally, one central storage location should be defined for the cooperative. Some organizations may balk at the idea of sending their records off-site. The rationale behind storing a cooperative's records in a central location is that the physical and environmental security of the records storage environment can be controlled more easily in a single location than if inactive records are dispersed among their creating offices. Members of a records management cooperative may also need to agree upon the type of technology and software used to manage records and, as a consequence, the information technology sections of some of these organizations may lose some autonomy. In exchange for a measure of autonomy, cooperative purchasing may enable the IT department to purchase better hardware and software than if it operated completely independently. Records management cooperatives are likely to require many such compromises between participants.⁷ In the case of a small

⁵ Julian L. Mims, "Why Records Cooperatives?" *The Information Management Journal* (November/December 2004): pp. 47-52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.

⁷ *Ibid.*

community archival institution, a records cooperative may mean sacrificing some local autonomy over records in order to support the long-term preservation and accessibility of these records.

Convincing employees of a city or municipality to support archives and records management can prove to be a daunting task. In Terry Cook's recommendations to the City of Winnipeg regarding archives he states very emphatically that professionals should be hired. Records management is often associated with the task of filing so administrators may consider it a task that can be easily managed by existing clerical staff. Cook shrewdly states that archives "should never be used as "dumping grounds" for staff in other departments, including City Clerk's, who may have the same classification or salary level, any more than positions of structural engineers or medical doctors working for the City would be so filled."⁸ Put simply, an archives and records management program needs the specialized knowledge of archivists and records managers.⁹

Overall, the potential for increased efficiency and the ability to effectively comply with access to information and privacy law provides a strong case in favour of cities and municipalities investing in records management programs. However, balancing records management with the other concerns of archives can be difficult to do as many organizations have only pursued records and information management programs rather than an archives service. This may be because archives have traditionally been identified with cultural endeavours. However, archives can show that they also offer support to the administrators of their host organizations. While the administrative functions supported by archives are important to government and business, regular citizens tend to be more interested in the cultural value of archives.¹⁰

Unfortunately, archives in cities and towns do not always receive the support they need from local heritage workers. Heritage planners have displayed a tendency to concentrate on preserving the artefacts of a community, such as buildings and neighbourhoods, rather than the records of a community. Likewise, historians have provided relatively little support to the cause of community archives. When writing a local or regional

⁸ Cook, *Trust*, p. 65.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

¹⁰ Sarah Horton, "Social Capital, Government Policy and Public Value: Implications for Archive Service Delivery," *Aslib Proceedings* 58, No. 6 (2006): pp. 502-512.

history, historians may remark that something ought to be done about the state of local records but take little action to remedy the situation themselves. Even though heritage planners and historians may not have provided significant support to archives in the past, they may not have received much guidance from archivists suggesting that support was necessary or how to provide this support.¹¹

The large national and provincial archival institutions in Canada have played a very limited leadership role in encouraging the development of community archives. The primary mandate of federal and provincial archival institutions is typically to manage and retain their own government's records. Consequently, municipal archival work often falls outside of the scope of provincial and federal archival institutions. Therefore, a question arises. If a group of people in a municipality decides that it would like to create an archival institution in their community, who can they turn to for guidance?¹² Instead of complaining about the historical lack of support for archives from municipalities it may be productive to identify where the capacity for archival partnerships with other community groups exists.

In the United Kingdom, the National Council on Archives' Community Archives Development Group (CADG) provides an example of how an archival organization can play a leadership role in the cultivation of relationships between local archivists and archival users that can be beneficial to both groups. The CADG provides an environment in which community-based archives and organizations interested in archives can come together to share opinions and information. The CADG attempts to develop connections between community-based archives and other local organizations and institutions. One of the central functions of the CADG is to provide advice to other community organizations regarding archival matters. In order to promote the uses of community archives members of the CADG have worked with members of the public to identify potential archival initiatives that may be beneficial to a large part of the community. The CADG has worked with people from various parts of society in order to determine how to make archives valuable to a variety of user groups.¹³

¹¹ Carey Isaak, "The History of the City of Regina Archives, 1929-2004" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2004), pp. 13-14.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 1-7.

¹³ Community Archives Development Group, "Community Archives: Terms of Reference," *National Council on Archives*, http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/community_archives/terms_of_reference/ (accessed 12 July 2007)

In addition to improving archival service to their constituent communities, the efforts of the CADG have also allowed community archives to pool resources with other local groups. Multi-organizational community development initiatives are becoming increasingly prominent with the growing popularity of community economic development. The implications of the growing popularity of cooperative initiatives have been extensively researched by Ted K. Bradshaw, who suggests that organizations are able to function at higher levels when they work together and bring an assortment of skill sets and ideas to their activities. Particularly in small communities with limited resources it is useful for community organizations to work together on development projects because each organization participating in the initiative can contribute resources and knowledge¹⁴ Archives and archivists can potentially contribute to multi-organizational development projects by using their holdings and knowledge to support community initiatives in a variety of areas, such as culture, education, history, and social justice.¹⁵

In the United Kingdom, funding cuts to public services have contributed to the desire of archivists to demonstrate their value to society. If archives do not deliver obvious benefits to society, their elimination may seem a logical step in efforts to curb government spending. Increasing governmental scrutiny of the extent to which the public sector is delivering valuable service has meant that archives need to focus more on the outcomes or eventual impact of their services. In essence, rather than merely providing access to public records, small archives in the United Kingdom have felt a need to demonstrate the benefits to society of access to archival records. As a result, many community archives have participated in government agendas that seek to address social and educational issues such as social exclusion and lifelong learning. It is therefore necessary to identify the long-term societal outcomes of archival programs.¹⁶

British scholars John Carey and Kate Oakley have both exposed numerous ways in which cultural institutions, archives included, can provide tangible benefits to their host

¹⁴ Ted K. Bradshaw, "Complex Community Development Projects: Collaboration, Comprehensive Programs, and Community Coalitions In Complex Society," *Community Development Journal* 35, no. 2 (April 2000): pp. 133-145.

¹⁵ Community Archives Development Group, "Community Archives Development Group: Case Studies," *Community Archives Development Group Case Studies*, http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/category_id_62_path_0p6p63p.aspx (accessed 19 July 2007).

¹⁶ Horton, "Social Capital," pp. 502-512.

communities. Archives and other cultural institutions help citizens to develop a sense of community and commonality among one another. This sense of community creates a shared social space in which cordiality, health, and well-being are shared among residents.¹⁷ Furthermore, the National Council on Archives in the United Kingdom has put considerable emphasis on the importance of place in facilitating community inclusion. Archives can bring people together to confront the past. Essentially, cultural institutions generate social capital.

However, community archives can also be sources of considerable local controversy. Researchers may draw conflicting historical narratives from archival records. As keepers of sometimes controversial records, community archivists may find themselves at the centre of divisive issues.¹⁸ Controversy is part of the community experience and archivists cannot avoid controversial subjects if their holdings are to represent their communities. When dealing with controversies, archivists should perhaps strive to provide a broad array of well-contextualized records that can enable users to access alternative perspectives on a particular historical event. By providing researchers with as broad an account of the past as possible community archivists may facilitate dialogue between community members with conflicting interpretations of historical events.

Some archives have been very proactive in creating dialogue around controversial subjects. The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration has identified and presented records that provide context for the discussion of current issues, such as education, taxation and the economy. Library and Archives Canada's Forum on Democracy has used archival records to provide historical context to and encourage discussion of Aboriginal issues, political debate and other topics related to Canadian democracy.¹⁹ By providing historical context to contemporary issues, archives can facilitate informed dialogue between community members with opposing viewpoints.

The sense of being included or excluded from society is closely linked to awareness of personal and community identity. Archives can play a role in defining a community.

¹⁷ John Carey, *What Good are the Arts?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 96-134.

¹⁸ Sarah Tyacke, "Archives in a Wider World: The Culture and Politics of Archives," *Archivaria* 52, (Fall 2001): pp. 1-25; Raimund E. Goerler, "Archives in Controversy: The Press, the Documentaries and the Byrd Archives," *American Archivist* 62, no. 2 (Fall 1999): pp. 307-324.

¹⁹ Christie Carter, "Continuing Issues of Government and Governance," *Vermont State Archives and Records Administration*, <http://vermont-archives.org/govhistory/governance/index.htm> (accessed 1 December 2009); Library and Archives Canada, "LAC Forum on Democracy," *Library and Archives Canada*, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/democracy/index-e.html> (accessed 1 December 2009)

While archives by themselves are not likely to rescue society's disadvantaged from social exclusion and its associated social ills, they can work with other social agencies to create sustainable plans for increasing community inclusion.

One of the principles stated by Lorraine O'Donnell, a historian working in the field of community economic development, is that community-building history projects require the sharing of authority. Therefore, a community archives may be more effective if it is pursued as a multi-organizational initiative. Sharing authority means that stakeholders, whether they be researchers, funding agencies, volunteers, or others, should understand and play roles in the ongoing development of community archival institutions.²⁰ Regrettably, the sharing of authority between stakeholders in a community archives may prove a difficult task to accommodate. Archivists, records managers, historians, teachers, and other professions that may use archives may have their own ideas about what archives are and the role they should play in a community. Historically, the professions may have developed independently from one another and making their professional goals converge in an archiving project may prove difficult.

Compromise does not mean that archivists, or any other professionals for that matter, ought to abandon their professional principles in an effort to satisfy other stakeholders. Rather, caution should be taken to ensure that stakeholders in archives are not clinging so tightly to their own professional dogma that they wring the life out of a community archives project. Some sort of consensus building is necessary for an archives project to be implemented that will serve a broad community rather a few select interest groups within it.

An approach to archiving that could enable small local archives to work cooperatively may be the creation of an archives advisor position. Ontario and Alberta both have archives advisory programs in place. Provincial archival advisors are hired by provincial archival associations to provide archival consultation and advice to archives in the province, regardless of size, and free of charge. An archival advisor is therefore able to provide the specialized knowledge to institutions that may lack the funding to hire a full-time archivist.²¹ Perhaps in the local community context, a type of archives advisor or advisory group could be established at, for example, the proposed Brandon archives to assist local organizations

²⁰ Lorraine O'Donnell, "Community-Building History," *CHA Bulletin* 33, no. 2 (2007): pp. 8-9.

²¹ Archives of Ontario, "Archives Advisor," *Government of Ontario*, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/ENGLISH/about/advisor.htm> (accessed 22 August 2008).

with archiving their records and facilitate strategic planning among the diverse group of institutions and interest groups that may contribute to the formation of a community archival institution. A critical role of an archival advisory service is likely to be ensuring that archival stakeholders are engaged with the community archives and that their opinions about archiving are valued.

The Multiple Contexts of Archival Usage

Archival institutions and records management programming can provide a variety of services to the municipality in which they are located. In many cases, archival institutions can add value to the existing functions of an organization by improving information management practices or providing contextual historical information. One of the greatest benefits of a community archival institution is that it can support archival and records management initiatives within a community for the benefit of local people and organizations.

The study of local history is a pursuit that community archives can certainly support. A strong sense of local history exists in many communities in Western Canada. In *Grass Roots* Heather Robertson presents an extensive historical account of life in five Western Canadian towns. One of Robertson's purposes in writing *Grass Roots* is to address the dearth of widely published historical accounts of life in prairie towns. According to Robertson, outside of the prairies a perception exists that in Western Canada "the towns do not reflect the people who live in them but rather the repetition of technology; prairie towns were one of the first products of Canadian history to be mass produced."²² Although these communities may have been settled in a similar way during the exodus of settlers to the Canadian West, they also developed in their own unique ways.

Gerald Friesen and Barry Potyandi examine the important role history plays at a community level and attempt to build the capacity of Manitobans to write their own local history in *A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History*. Research into community history allows citizens to remember their personal roots in their communities and to better understand how their communities have developed over time. Community history is a form of historical research that is highly engaging to people from a variety of backgrounds.

²²Heather Robertson, *Grass Roots* (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1973), p. 39.

Inhabitants of a town or city may come from different economic, social, cultural or other backgrounds but share a common interest in their history of a particular place.²³

The Nanaimo Community Archives Society (NCAS) is an example of an archival organization that was formed through a strong sense of community and commitment to local history. The goal of the Society is to preserve the documentary history of the community of Nanaimo. The NCAS would also help Nanaimo to develop a strong centre of archival expertise with the ability to serve, advise and educate sponsors and organizations within the community about archival functions.

Although the value of archives in protecting the cultural history of Nanaimo was obvious, many members of the community needed to be convinced of the practical reasons for protecting this history. Archival planners sought to strike a balance between providing efficient records management for institutional records, and providing long-term care for records of major cultural value to the community. John Thomson, the President of the Nanaimo Heritage Advisory Committee, said: "Archives are used by people seeking their roots, by scholars seeking a better understanding of our past, by visitors who seek to understand the importance of their destination and by businesses who seek a viable, economic, innovative, entrepreneurial edge."²⁴ Thomson's statement was realized as a result of the extensive lobbying efforts of local supporters of archives.²⁵ Ultimately, a small group of vocal supporters of the Nanaimo Community Archives was able to convince other community members that a local archives can provide a major community resource.

Another noteworthy feature of the Nanaimo Community Archives is its ability to build the capacity for local historical research. Prior to the establishment of the NCA, historical records were dispersed throughout the community and the location of these records was not always widely known. Conducting historical research in Nanaimo was a difficult undertaking and seemed likely to become even more difficult because many records were stored in locations that lacked the physical and environmental security necessary to ensure their long-term survival. Once the NCA was established it provided a central and secure

²³ Gerald Friesen and Barry Potyondi, *A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1981), pp. 3-21.

²⁴ Jane Turner, "Working Cooperatively for a Sustainable Future: Total Archives in Nanaimo," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), p. 180.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-181

location in which Nanaimo's historical records could be housed. Additionally, as the archives grew, individuals and organizations started to recognize the NCA as a credible organization that could be trusted to care for their records. Hence, organizations such as the local school district and the Nanaimo General Regional Hospital became involved in Nanaimo's archival initiative. Furthermore, the personal networks that developed during the planning of the NCA may facilitate future community partnerships between organizations that previously may have been considered to have had little in common other than the city in which they were based. The NCA has proven itself a sustainable venture because it has generated considerable public support for its services.

While research into community history is undoubtedly an important endeavour, historians such as Jack Granatstein have cautioned that too much microanalysis of history can lead to a fragmentation of national identity. Citizens may start to see themselves as part of a town, city, region, or isolated social group instead of part of a country.²⁶ A community archives seeking to be inclusive of a diverse array of citizens cannot limit its policies to force researchers to adhere to a national narrative. Instead, a community archives may act as a setting where different interpretations of history intersect.

Archives can help to contextualize local events in relation to wider historical trends. For instance, local history may serve to illustrate the manner in which Canada's participation in Second World War affected grain prices and the work operations of prairie agricultural producers. A historical examination of Manitoba Mennonite communities could provide a unique perspective on Canadian immigration and the settlement of Western Canada. If archivists provide appropriate contextual information about local historical records, they may be able to further citizens' understanding of the history of their community as part of wider communities, such as (but not limited to) the Canadian nation.

Enhancing the ability of archives to support local historical initiatives may prove particularly useful to people involved in education. Students, teachers, and archivists all stand to benefit from an increased archival role in education. The emergence of "student-centred" learning has prompted teachers to encourage students to learn about history in new ways. Sharon Cook states, "the new history," mandated by virtually all Ministries of Education, privileges higher-order thinking skills, document analysis, and an understanding

²⁶ J. L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper-Collins, 1998), pp. 72-78.

of the historical process rather than its content.”²⁷ As the goals of curriculums change, teachers are faced with the task of developing new ways of teaching their subjects. Limitations in funding also make it difficult for teachers to purchase educational resources that promote multi-level learning for students with differing skills and abilities within the same classroom. Archives may further assist educators by providing archival resources that are able to engage students on a variety of intellectual levels while simultaneously fostering a greater appreciation for Canada’s history.

In Manitoba Heather Pitcher has responded to the call for greater archival involvement in schools in regard to the holdings of the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (HBCA). Pitcher notes that teachers have expressed interest in using archival documents in the classroom, but face obstacles in doing so such as lack of time. In order to present archival materials in a format that would meet the needs of teachers, Pitcher worked with the HBCA and local educators to develop an educational kit (Edukit) that would provide a practical teaching tool:

- 1) To demonstrate the use and relevance of primary sources held at the HBCA, and...
- 2) To use primary sources relevant to the Aboriginal experience that make history exciting and personal – to make it come alive by establishing personal connections with the documents created.²⁸

The primary objectives outlined for the Edukit would be achieved through classroom activities, handouts and teacher presentations developed from a select group of archival documents. Acknowledging the value of learning strategies traditionally employed in First Nations culture, such as hands on learning and the involvement of family and elders, was another core consideration in the development of the Edukit. Recognizing the validity of multiple methods of learning would teach students that multiple interpretations of the archival material, and of history in a more general sense, are possible.²⁹

A notable element of the construction of the HBCA Edukit was the inclusion of various members of the educational community in the development process. Members of the HBCA were in constant contact, both formal and informal, with teachers and the Manitoba

²⁷ Sharon Anne Cook, "Connecting Archives and the Classroom," *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997): pp. 102-117.

²⁸ Heather Pitcher, "Archives in the Classroom: Reaching Out to Younger Canadians Through Archival Documents" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2005), p. 97.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-98.

Department of Education. Teachers were very receptive to the creation of an Edukit as they were in need of educational resources that fit the Manitoba curriculum and would engage students with Canadian history, especially at young ages. Before students could be taught using archival materials, many of the teachers involved needed to be educated about archives. Although many of the teachers consulted were aware of the existence of the HBCA, most were not familiar with the records it housed or how to use these materials. The educators' lack of exposure to archives is understandable because there were very few educational kits on Manitoba themes available to assist with the introduction of archival records to young people. Pitcher's thesis is a pioneering work.

Student interest in the materials to be included in the Edukit was considered to be of paramount importance. Pitcher strove to find materials that would be interesting and engaging for students. The Edukit was intended to make Manitoba history exciting, and the active intervention of the archivist was essential in making this possible. Instead of being mere custodians of historical documents, Pitcher and the HBCA played an active role in bringing Manitoba's history to life by engaging students with archival documents.³⁰

The Edukit offers significant insight into the potential societal uses for archival institutions. In addition to teaching students about history and how to use primary documents the Edukit was also designed to "address various learning processes such as critical thinking, model building, creating maps, organizing, calculating, comparing, researching, and interpreting."³¹ By encouraging multiple ways of thinking about primary sources, the Edukit hopes to foster a greater appreciation of history. Engaging students with primary documents about their communities also has the potential to cause an important emotional connection with the community. Students using the Edukit can develop a personal tie with their communities because they learn about them using records that contain firsthand accounts of past events.³²

Remembering personal experiences in the history of local communities and Canada may be a unique contribution that older Canadians can make to society. Crista Bradley, an archivist at the University of Regina, suggests that archives may be able to play a special role in the lives of Canadians who are over the age of 55. Serving older Canadians is an

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 112-114.

³¹ Ibid., p. 111.

³² Ibid., pp. 110-115.

important task for archivists because people over the age of 55 are part of the most rapidly growing demographic group in the country. Consequently, older Canadians are becoming an increasingly important group of potential archival users. Following retirement, many Canadians seek activities that they find both meaningful and intellectually engaging. Archives present an excellent environment in which older people can exercise their minds and foster a state of well being. Through innovative public programming, archivists can serve older Canadians in a way that is mutually beneficial to them and archives.³³

Archival institutions can benefit from increased usage by older citizens in several ways. Older archival users may provide money, volunteer time, and records to archival institutions. Canadians over the age of 65 also wield a significant amount of political power. In 1981 voters above the age of 65 represented 13.3 percent of the Canadian population. This number is anticipated to rise to 26 percent by 2031.³⁴ Demographic information relating to age is particularly important in Brandon, where approximately 25 percent of the population was over the age of 55 in 2006.³⁵

Libraries have already identified the importance of older Canadians in garnering support for their institutions by providing public programming that is geared specifically towards older audiences. By providing specialized services to older Canadians, libraries are able to make significant contributions to their lives and therefore be better positioned to justify requests for increased funding. Archives may similarly be in a better position to argue for higher funding if they tailored services to meet the needs of the politically powerful demographic group of older citizens.³⁶

The health of older Canadians may also be improved through their interaction with archives as it may trigger memories of the past. The act of reminiscence can provide therapeutic benefits to older Canadians. Extensive medical research has been conducted into the health benefits of reminiscence. Dr. Robert Butler has suggested that remembering helps people to understand, tolerate, and listen to themselves and others. Reminiscence offers

³³ Crista L. Bradley, "Coming of Age: Specialized Archival Public Programming for Older Canadians" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2005), pp. 65-91.

³⁴ Mark Novak and Lori Campbell, *Aging and Society: A Canadian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2001), p. 299.

³⁵ Statistics Canada, "Community Highlights for Brandon, Manitoba" *Community Profiles*, <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed 18 August 2008).

³⁶ Bradley, "Coming of Age," pp. 68-69.

people an opportunity to re-evaluate their own lives. Introspection and recollection of the past often cause mixed emotional results. Some people may find remembering the past to be a happy and nostalgic experience. Conversely, other memories may cause people to be gripped by feelings of regret and depression. In any case, Dr. Butler argues that remembering past experiences and changing one's perception of the world is a "process which is often normative and often constructive, for I believe that change can occur at any age, including old age."³⁷ Bradley suggests that archives can play a role in facilitating healthy remembrance.³⁸

By providing a location where remembrance of the past is encouraged, archives can create a strong relationship with older Canadians. Because of the volatile emotional responses that can be elicited through reminiscence, remembering is an activity that may be performed most effectively in a group setting. Organizations serving older Canadians can provide environments in which older people can meet and tell stories about their lives. Archives may be able to provide both physical locations where older people may meet to discuss their lives, as well as records that can facilitate the act of remembering. Reading rooms designed to accommodate group audiences and provide an atmosphere suitable for storytelling may encourage older Canadians to engage with archives. In order to trigger memories from the past, archivists may also display selected holdings to older users. For example, historic movies and advertising may assist older Canadians in remembering past life experiences. By providing the means for older Canadians to come together, reminisce about the past, and tell stories, archives may provide therapeutic health benefits to older Canadians.³⁹

The personal knowledge of older Canadians about the past can also be shared with future generations through the telling of oral histories. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has undertaken a project to record some of the oral histories of older citizens. In 1980, the Children and Grandparents Oral History Programme encouraged children to interview their grandparents about the past.⁴⁰ Personal relationships between grandparents and their kin

³⁷ Robert Butler, "Re-Awakening Interests," *Nursing Homes* 10, no. 1 (1961), cited in Bradley, "Coming of Age," pp. 18-19.

³⁸ Bradley, "Coming of Age," p. 84.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-89.

could be developed through the interviews. The ability of children to interview their grandparents about the past also had the potential to provide the children with a sense of historical belonging. Children could learn that they have a personal stake in Canadian history and that their families played a role in building Canada. The relationship created between archives and older Canadians is also important because archives were able to collect the histories as a new group of records with the information about the personal context of their creation. Oral history projects involving older Canadians are valuable as they not only benefit the elderly and archival institutions, but also many users of the archives.

The potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between the elderly and younger archival users is exemplified in the Wise Archive project in Glasgow, Scotland. The Wise Archive project was initiated when Pauline Weinstein, the Project Planner and a professional educationalist specializing in the elderly, and Esther Weinstein, the project Technical Director and a professional records manager, began working to record the memories of elderly people in Glasgow.⁴¹

In the United Kingdom the Ark Youth and Community Project, which focused initially on addressing the problem of social inclusion, eventually involved archives and demonstrated their value in community development work. The Ark Project was set up to establish a community facility which would enhance social, economic, educational and other opportunities for citizens. Ultimately, the Ark Project's goal was to work for the social and economic regeneration of the Welsh town of Tonypany and the surrounding region.⁴² Two initiatives of the Ark project that demonstrated the value of archives in community development are entitled *Home Front Recall* and *Our Mining Heritage*. The *Home Front Recall* project sought to bring about community regeneration by bridging the age gap between younger and older members of the community. The focus of the *Home Front Recall* project was centred around creating a historical record of life in the Rhondda Valleys during the Second World War. Although much has been written about the United Kingdom's combat role in the Second World War, relatively little had been documented about civilian

⁴¹ Community Archives Development Group, "Case-Study No. 7: WISEARCHIVE," *Community Archives Impact Study*, http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/page_id__514_path__0p4p63p62p.aspx (accessed 3 June 2008).

⁴² Community Archives Development Group, "Case-Study No. 1: The Ark Youth & Community Project," *Community Archives Impact Study*, http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/page_id__516_path__0p4p63p62p.aspx (accessed 3 June 2008).

life in the Rhondda Valleys. In order to learn more about life on the home front, youth from Tonypany region gathered this information by interviewing elderly community members about their past experiences.

The second Ark project, *Our Mining Heritage*, sought to gather knowledge about life in mining centres in the South Wales. Of particular importance was developing young people's understanding of the economic downturn in mining from the 1960s to the 1980s. Local historical information was captured using audio and video recording equipment. *Our Mining Heritage* gave young people an opportunity to learn about local history and to develop production skills by working with recording equipment, while older people were able to share their life experiences with the young and to teach them about the historical hardships they had faced.⁴³

The prominent place of concern about social inclusion in both Ark Youth projects is worth noting, especially when considering the possible roles of archival institutions in community economic development. In the case of the Ark Youth projects archives brought people from distinct age, economic and social groups together. By strengthening connections between different segments of the community the projects enabled the creation of bridging social capital. The societal connections nurtured by the projects may prompt the participating communities to pursue future community development projects designed to bring together community members with diverse backgrounds.

In addition to building the capacity for citizens to participate in their communities, archival institutions may be able to assist citizens in becoming more engaged with local government. Archives are linked to democratic processes and citizen participation in government. The National Council on Archives in the United Kingdom asserts that "basic social rights and entitlements to services prove wholly dependent on access to properly preserved, objective records."⁴⁴ For American archival educators Richard Cox and David Wallace, proper management of records is essential to maintaining societal well being as records are used by a variety of people for a multitude of uses. Records are often used to aid human memory and explain a specific event or historical trend. At the same time,

⁴³ Community Archives Development Group, "Case Study No.1."

⁴⁴ National Council on Archives, "British Archives- the Way Forward," *Advocacy and Publications*, <http://www.nca.org.uk/materials/britisharchivesthewayforward.pdf> (accessed 11 August 2009).

destruction of records by some can destroy public memory and conceal government activities. As a result, the issue of trust in relation to recordkeeping has arisen. By creating and preserving accurate records, the state is able to demonstrate a degree of accountability and enable citizens to trust their government. As long as state records exist, citizens will be able to take their government to task for its actions.⁴⁵

Kimberly Barata and her colleagues' work in promoting open government in sub-Saharan Africa reveals the essential role of access to information in democratic government. They argue that "open government is good government."⁴⁶ In order to develop accountability for government records, Barata and her colleagues worked in collaboration with Transparency International and the International Records Management Trust's Rights and Records Institute. The goal of this project was to develop international guidelines for informed civil society and accountability in government. Barata and her colleagues also believe that increasing governmental transparency leads to development of better records management systems in the government since public servants will be conscious that their records could be brought under public scrutiny at any time. Granting citizens access to records created by the state may ultimately increase people's confidence in their government.⁴⁷

While it is important that archivists acquire and preserve well-managed records it is equally important that the public understands how to access these records. The accountability section of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights stresses the importance of citizen education as a key component of accountability. Citizens need to understand how to request and access public information if accountability legislation is to be meaningful.⁴⁸ From 1999-2000 the Rights and Records Institute of the International Records Management Trust held a series of accountability workshops in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to educate people about the public's right to access records and the importance of

⁴⁵ David A. Wallace, "Implausible Deniability: The Politics of Documents in the Iran-Contra Affair and Its Investigations," in *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, eds. Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace (Westport: Quorum Books, 2002), pp. 1-18.

⁴⁶ Kimberly Barata et al. "Information for Accountability Workshops: Their Role in Promoting Access to Information," in *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, eds. Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace (Westport: Quorum Books, 2002), pp. 67-87.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁸ Article 19, "The Public's Right to Know: Principles On Freedom of Information Legislation," *Global Campaign for Free Expression*, <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/standards/righttoknow.pdf> (accessed 11 August 2009).

maintaining transparent recordkeeping practices. The workshops were designed to show public servants and citizens what records they were entitled to view, and to create an environment in which people feel comfortable requesting this information. Archives, as keepers of the public memory, can play a significant role in facilitating access to information.⁴⁹ Barata and her colleagues suggest archives are essential to government transparency and conclude “archives will need to take a more proactive role in access to information and demonstrate that they can make a positive contribution to a fairer and more accountable public life.”⁵⁰

Accountability has long been heralded by Canadian politicians of various political stripes as being essential to effective governance. In practice, however, commitment to accountability may not be quite as strong in the Canadian political system as the speeches of these politicians suggest. In 2006 allegations of misuse of public funds through the federal Sponsorship Program caused serious concern about government accountability. In response to the public outcry about what would become known as the Sponsorship Scandal the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities (the Gomery Commission) was formed. While the commission found that the public was aware of legislation requiring transparent ethical governance by public servants, there was a great deal of public suspicion that the Canadian government merely paid lip service to these laws, and operated without significant public oversight. The commission also found that many ministers and their staff had devised ways of using access to information and privacy (ATIP) legislation to deny requests for public access to government records. One of the most pointed conclusions reached by the commission is that considerable change is required if Canada’s public service is to make openness and accessibility part of the official culture of governance rather than an annoyance.⁵¹ Community archives are unlikely to deal with accountability issues on the same scale as the Gomery Commission, but they do deal with

⁴⁹ Barata et. al., "Information for Accountability Workshops," pp. 67-87.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

⁵¹ Canada, *Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program & Advertising Activities Phase II Report: Restoring Accountability*, Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada. 1 February 2006. (Commissioner: The Honourable Justice John H. Gomery). http://epe.lacbac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pcobcp/commissions/sponsorship/060210/www.gomery.ca/en/phase2report/recommendations/cispaa_report_full.pdf (accessed 11 August 2009).

them as well. The principles of transparency and accountability highlighted by Gomery's findings are applicable at all levels of government.

While archivists may not be directly involved in many of the daily activities of politicians and government departments, archivists and records managers are often responsible for management of the records that provide evidence of the actions of government. Consequently, archivists are drawn into the task of providing access to government records and ensuring that government records in their custody are retained long enough to support accountability purposes.

Manitoba archivist Jacqueline Nicholls analyzes some of the approaches archives can take to balancing ATIP legislation (such as Manitoba's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or FIPPA) with public accountability. Archivists can sometimes be placed in the awkward position of determining whether or not access can be granted under this act to records created in other departments. Can archivists reasonably be expected to understand what might be appropriate access restrictions on technically sensitive or specialized government documentation? Nicholls states that, in determining its access policies, the Archives of Manitoba took the stance that, although an archival repository may be responsible for storing records from various departments, the role of determination of access should be left to the departments that created their records.⁵²

Instead of making actual determinations regarding access requests, archivists can play a role in assisting the public with understanding access to information legislation through the application process. By acting as a guide rather than gatekeeper to ATIP the Archives of Manitoba is able to avoid the highly politicized process of responding to requests for access. As an entity that serves the recordkeeping needs of many departments of the Government of Manitoba, the ability of the Archives of Manitoba to maintain a degree of political neutrality in releases of information is crucial.⁵³ However, the Archives of Manitoba's approach to ATIP legislation may still raise some difficult questions about archives and accountability. For instance, does the inability of archivists to actually grant access to records not diminish their ability to promote accessibility and accountability? Furthermore, if archivists serve as

⁵² Jacqueline M. Nicholls, "'Guide' vs 'Gatekeeper': Information Rights Legislation and the Provincial Archives of Manitoba" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2000), pp. 108-109.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-120.

the intermediaries between government departments and applicants, might a department's decision to refuse access still reflect poorly upon the archives?

Rather than focusing narrowly on responding to access to information requests, many theorists have suggested that government archivists should focus on facilitating the declassification of government records series. Ultimately, declassifying whole series of records would enable citizens to access government records without resorting to cumbersome ATIP legislation. Archivists could use records schedules to identify records series that are unlikely to contain sensitive or confidential information and can be made available to the public on a routine basis. Promoting the routine disclosure of public records is one of the ways archivists can facilitate transparency and open government.⁵⁴ Since the Brandon municipal government must abide by FIPPA, the role of a publicly funded community and municipal government archives for Brandon in regard to administration of this act would also have to be addressed. The model provided by the Archives of Manitoba is one to consider seriously.

While accountability is often an important function of archival institutions, there is also great potential for archives to assist citizens in connecting with government services. The Elgin County Archives is a prime example of a regionally based archival institution that promotes the use of its archival records in the day-to-day activities of its constituency. The Elgin County Archives can be used for traditional purposes such as the study of local history. Genealogical research is supported by the archive through the provision of voter's lists and county directories. The archives also retains records related to municipal decision making in the areas of planning, taxation, public expenditures, social welfare and other government services. Government records retained in the archives are useful in maintaining transparency in government decision-making processes as well as providing reference material on which to base current and future decisions in the county⁵⁵

In addition to supporting government decision making in Elgin County, the Elgin County Archives provides instruction on how archives can be applied practically to the day-to-day activities of citizens. For instance, archival records can be used to research the history of properties in Elgin County. Tax assessment roles and county directories can be researched

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Elgin County Archives, "Using the Archives," *Elgin County Archives Homepage*. <http://www.elgin.ca/using.htm> (accessed 25 July 2008).

in order to identify significant changes that have occurred to a property over time. Learning this history of a property can enable a citizen to obtain information about taxation levels for a particular area, the types of businesses that may have existed on the property and an assortment of other facts. Alternatively, property records can be used to study the environmental history of a particular property. The environmental history of property is useful information when determining where to build a home. For instance, if a chemical plant once operated on a particular piece of land, research into the environmental history of that land would ensure that people do not settle there because of the potential risks to their health. Fire insurance plans and tax assessment rolls can be used to track the uses of a building over time.⁵⁶ Overall, the assortment of archival uses the Elgin County Archives demonstrates suggests that archives can play a role in local planning and development initiatives. As a rapidly growing city, Brandon may likewise benefit from encouraging archives and records management programs to contribute to its development strategies.

Archives and records management can also help an organization to develop economically. The role of archivists and records managers as brokers of information and knowledge may be even more significant as the knowledge-based economy develops. Archives contain massive quantities of information that can add value to existing organizational initiatives. However, archives involved in the area of economic development may require archivists to take a significant intellectual departure from viewing themselves as neutral custodians of records. In the business world some companies have positioned their archives as integral participants in organization-wide business activities. Kevin Manion, Associate Director of Information Services at the Consumer's Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*, has identified archivists as stakeholders in the knowledge-based economy. The value that records can add to business processes at the Consumer's Union is substantial enough that its Information Services section reports to the Senior Director of Strategic Planning and Information Services (SPIS). Archives are not relegated to the role of maintaining inactive records of purely historical value. Instead, archives and records

⁵⁶ Elgin County Archives, "Using the Archives."

management are seen as activities that manage institutional knowledge and understand how to apply this knowledge to enhance the current and future initiatives of the organization.⁵⁷

Strategic Planning and Information Services plays increasingly important support roles in the Consumer Reports organization. Other departments often pose questions related to issues such as project testing, past litigation, staff speeches, past advocacy initiatives and publications. As the central recordkeeping office for *Consumer Reports* SPIS has become a connecting force between departments that sometimes have different functions and expertise. According to Manion, SPIS has developed a reputation as a department where reliable research and information management provide the basis for decision making.⁵⁸

The information resources maintained by SPIS are applied in several key areas of the work on *Consumer Reports*. For instance, the Future Investment Team, which plans future projects and products, relies heavily upon research provided by SPIS. Members of SPIS also work in cross-departmental teams that are mandated with managing organizational risk. Just as an accounting department oversees and audits the financial resources of an organization, SPIS oversees and audits the information resources of *Consumer Reports*. SPIS has developed close working relationships with technical and editorial departments in order to bring together research from all areas of the organization. Because of its participation in core business processes, SPIS has become an integral part of *Consumer Reports*.⁵⁹

Manion concludes that the importance of including archives and records managers in an organization's business activities cannot be understated. Archivists and records managers possess the skills and knowledge to help their organization understand the investment the organization makes in knowledge as well as how to best leverage these knowledge resources within the organization, whether they be human or material. SPIS demonstrates that archives and records management can participate in business functions.⁶⁰ In the context of municipal government, a records management and archival program may be able to bring the corporate knowledge of a city government together in order to better deliver public services. Participation in the knowledge-based economy is based largely on the ability of organizations

⁵⁷ Kevin Manion, "Integrating Archives, Records, and Research," *Information Management* (January/February 2005): pp. 50-56.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

to transmit and apply knowledge quickly and in innovative ways. The notion that archives can support economic development suggests that in addition to the cultural and social contributions archives can make to society, archives also have the potential to support actual economic growth. Economic development is a major goal of Brandon's community strategic plan and the engagement of archivists and records managers may enable Brandon to foster local knowledge-based economic growth.

A project involving tourism and archives launched in 2008 by Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) entitled *Canada's Ocean Playground* provides a specific example of how archives can support economic development. NSARM provided the project with an outline of the history of tourism in Nova Scotia. Several eras of Nova Scotia's documentary history are exhibited in the display. For instance, tourism records from the nineteenth century portray Nova Scotia as a hunter's paradise. In the early twentieth century, Nova Scotia was being marketed as a prime destination for steam ships. From the 1930s onward, Nova Scotia was portrayed as an outdoor person's paradise that was the ideal location for cross-country travel, camping, fishing and other activities. Additional historical context is provided in the website by documentation relating to tourist lodgings, common activities as well as some historical tourism companies. Overall, "Canada's Ocean Playground" provides an extensive documentary overview of the history of the tourism industry in Nova Scotia.⁶¹

The NSARM's *Canada's Ocean Playground* project also draws attention to Nova Scotia's present potential as a tourist destination. Consequently, the Nova Scotia government's investment in archival programming may yield economic development opportunities by attracting tourists to the province. *Canada's Ocean Playground* showcases some of the natural environment, recreational activities and cultural groups that make up Nova Scotia. Thus, the historical examination of tourist activities also provides ideas of what recreational opportunities might be available in Nova Scotia. Additionally, "Canada's Ocean Playground" draws attention to some of the cultural groups and activities in Nova Scotia. Perhaps a similar project could be used to highlight the tourism opportunities in Brandon.

⁶¹ Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, "Canada's Ocean Playground: The Tourism Industry in Nova Scotia, 1870-1970," *Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture, and Heritage*, <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/> (accessed 3 July 2008).

The role of archives in documenting the history of a region need not be constrained to the activities of humans. Documenting the environment is becoming an increasingly common aspect of archival work. Geographers A.J.W. Catchpole and D.W. Moodie have highlighted the value of historical records in learning about global climate trends. Some historical records, such as journals created at Hudson's Bay Company posts, contain details about environmental conditions several hundred years ago. Archival records dealing with the environment could therefore be used to demonstrate long-term environmental trends. Catchpole and Moodie's view that the growing concern about human impact on the natural environment and climate change will likely cause the use of archives by environmental scientists to become more frequent has been borne out.⁶² Although a small community's archival holdings may not contain a great deal that will contribute to discussion of global climate change, there could be much in such an archives that addresses local environmental concerns, whether related to landscape erosion patterns, waste and water management, and environmental impact assessments of local development plans. Also, a local archives can assist the community to locate information held outside the community in other archives and related sources about environmental questions that may affect the community. And as archivist Candace Loewen points out, environmental records may provide the only reliable information about where humans have disposed of hazardous materials. Thus, a community archives may play a key role in keeping an inventory of areas that are too polluted for human habitation.⁶³

The preceding examples are not intended to dictate what programs an archival institution for Brandon must initiate in order to be successful. Instead, they are intended to demonstrate what archives can accomplish. Rather than merely providing storage houses for old records of allegedly little interest to anyone but a few specialist researchers, archives can engage their communities in many ways. The effective application of information is becoming exceedingly important to community planning and, as organizations that manage massive quantities of records and information, archives might also become key players in planning and development.

⁶² A.J.W. Catchpole and D.W. Moodie, "Archives and the Environmental Scientist," *Archivaria* 6 (Summer 1978): pp. 113-136.

⁶³ Candace Loewen, "From Human Neglect to Planetary Survival: New Approaches to the Appraisal of Environmental Records," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92): pp. 87-103.

The following chapter will explore further some of the ways in which Brandon might support projects similar to those identified in this chapter. Local organizations could undertake similar projects in conjunction with archives and demonstrate the value of a community archives in Brandon.

CHAPTER THREE

BUILDING THE CASE FOR COMMUNITY ARCHIVES IN BRANDON

Community Archives Initiatives in Brandon

The notion of establishing an archival institution in Brandon is not new. During the last twenty years the Brandon municipal government established a records management program and there has been some talk of taking steps to protect and make more available its historical records. Unfortunately, beyond talking about historical records Brandon's city council has taken very little meaningful action toward the establishment of a community archives. However, respondents to the community archives questionnaire developed for this thesis agree that the City of Brandon could benefit from the establishment of a community archives and that leadership for the establishment of this archives should come from within Brandon. Several concerned citizens have already risen to the task of trying to establish a municipal archives in the city.

In 2001 Brandon's Tracey Young made a significant effort to establish a local community archives. Young expressed great concern about the gradual decay of Brandon's records as few guidelines were in place to preserve them. As the second largest population centre in Manitoba and with a history spanning more than a century, Young felt that the City of Brandon should be taking action to protect its documentary history.¹ In response to Young's 2001 correspondence, the City of Brandon Records Manager replied that Brandon's key archival records were being retained through the "Retention and Disposition of Municipal Records Regulation" of the *Manitoba Municipal Act*. Unfortunately, *The Municipal Act's* definition of 'archival' is extremely narrow and only records relating to City Council, taxation, cemeteries and licensing are designated as archival.² Brandon's Records

¹ Tracey Young to Municipal Heritage Committee, 27 December 2001, Community Archives File, Records Management Cabinet, City of Brandon Records Office, Document Number 08022005-S038-S0A0.

² The Municipal Act, *Retention and Disposition of Municipal Records Regulation*, Regulation 53/97 states that records of the following nature shall be retained: Minutes, By-laws, Committee Reports, List of Electors, Financial Statements (Audited), General Ledger, Cemetery Site Plan/Plot Register/Index, Operating Licenses, Permits (Lagoon, Water Treatment, Waste Grounds), Assessment Rolls, Tax Collectors Roll, Tax Sale Ledger.

Manager also stated that since public requests for records were relatively rare, investing in archives would not make sense.³

Efforts to establish a community archival institution in Brandon revived in 2007 when the city celebrated its 125th anniversary. Brandon's history and the contributions it has made to the development of Manitoba were central features of the anniversary celebrations. This enthusiasm for local history prompted Brandon's city council to express interest in creating a general museum and archives to protect and display Brandon's history. On March 20, 2007, Councillor Errol Black made a motion to establish a committee to evaluate the feasibility of a general museum and archives.⁴

Brandon's 125th anniversary thus acted as a catalyst for the city's first official effort at archival planning. Richard Cox has conducted extensive research on the establishment of records management and archival programs that reveals that anniversaries often cause organizations or communities to establish such programs. A community may realize that local history is more interesting than previously assumed. Research for an anniversary in older local government records may prompt community planners to see some value in managing the younger, still "active" records of the administration. Thus, a public appetite for archival records may stimulate interest in both archives and records management.⁵

Unfortunately, it is also possible that interest in establishing archives and records management programming may end following the anniversary celebrations. If an organization or community expressed little or no interest in archives prior to an anniversary, there is a chance it may not do so following the anniversary. The *Brandon Sun* reflected that reality when its editors responded to Councillor Black's motion by questioning the long-term value of a city museum and archives. The *Sun* asked, "will Brandon residents be willing to step back into the past day after day, or will they simply tune out the story of their city once they've heard it once or twice?"⁶

³ Brandon Records Manager to Brandon Heritage Department, January 15, 2001, Community Archives File, Records Management Cabinet, City of Brandon Records Office, Document Number 08022005-ZNTK-BAIX.

⁴ Robson Fletcher, "Black receives unanimous support for general museum," *Brandon Sun*, 20 March 2007.

⁵ Richard J. Cox, *A Minor Nuisance Spread Across the Organization: Factors Leading to the Establishment and Support of Records and Information Management Programs* (Pittsburgh: ARMA International Educational Foundation, 2005), pp. 14-15.

⁶ "Do we really need a museum?" *Brandon Sun*, 21 March 2007.

Efforts to establish archives in Brandon following the city's 125th anniversary faltered. In December 2007 the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee recommended that City Council commit \$50,000 to support the regular operations of a General Museum Advisory Committee (GMAC) that would undertake additional work required to plan a general museum and archives.⁷ City Council agreed to the creation of GMAC but declined to provide funding to the committee, prompting one author of a letter to the editor of the *Brandon Sun* to state, "Brandon has a sad and regrettable history of ignoring its own past. For 125 years, Brandon leaders have paid lip service to the past."⁸ In 2007, Brandon's City Council was unwilling to reverse this trend.

Given Brandon City Council's reluctance to fund historical initiatives adequately, the incorporation of the GMAC may ultimately improve Brandon's chances of developing local archives. Collaboration in a museum project may prove to be a highly effective approach to establishing a community archives in Brandon. From a funding perspective, sharing space with a museum may be the most realistic circumstance under which an archival institution could be created in Brandon. And as the late Canadian archival thinker Hugh Taylor suggested, archives are part of a larger group of institutions (such as museums and galleries) that protect society's collective memory in the form of material culture. Simply defined, material culture is any material that has cultural meaning ascribed to it. A combined museum and archives could bring much of Brandon's material culture to a single location.⁹ At the moment, however, Brandon's local government does not yet seem convinced that such an institution could yield practical benefits to the community.

Several respondents to the community archives survey from Brandon expressed the belief that the city administration has not yet been convinced of the value of a community archives. One respondent indicated that although Brandon has a strategic plan this plan contained no provision for archives and that local history "is certainly not a priority with this council"¹⁰ Enthusiasm for the GMAC was also perceived as being limited, as one respondent thought that that body's work was only supported by a few councillors.¹¹

⁷ Councillor Errol Black, *Report to City Council Re: General Museum Advisory Committee*, 30 April 2008.

⁸ Bill McGuire, "Don't dismiss museum proposal," *Brandon Sun*, 26 March 2007.

⁹ Hugh Taylor, "'Heritage' Revisited: Documents as Artefacts in the Context of Museums and Material Culture," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): pp. 8-20.

¹⁰ Participant 63, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 4 February 2008.

¹¹ Tom Mitchell, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 4 April 2008.

Some support was offered for the establishment of the general museum and archives in 2008 when Brandon's historic No. 1 Fire Hall was identified as a potential site for the general museum and archives and City Council allocated \$35,000 to conduct a feasibility study regarding the ability of the fire hall to accommodate a museum and archives. In February 2009, GMAC was incorporated as a non-profit community corporation that will engage in the planning and creation of the general museum and archives. Incorporation has given GMAC greater flexibility in planning a general museum and archives because, as an arms-length organization, GMAC can operate outside of the politics and bureaucracy of City Hall. Errol Black, the chair of GMAC, stated that "the city will still have a presence and representation on the board. But as the thing develops, the representation from the city may be less than it is now."¹² Under GMAC, the establishment of a community archives may be done at arm's length from Brandon's local government. Given City Council's traditional reluctance to support historical initiatives and the sometimes glacial pace of decision making in City Hall, the desire of GMAC to operate at arm's length from the city government is understandable.

However, if properly engaged, Brandon's city government could play a key role in coordinating the creation of a community archives. In 2008 the challenge of managing the City of Brandon's current operational records reached the point where a corporate records management program was created. Several respondents to the community archival questionnaire believed that records management is a rising profession and that growing demands for public accountability mean that organizations will be obliged to devote more resources to it.

The primary objectives of the City of Brandon's current records management program are legislative compliance and to increase organizational efficiencies. Although they are worthy goals, they present a relatively limited vision of the value of records. The importance of records management programs in complying with freedom of information legislation and greater demands for public accountability can overshadow the other potential uses of public records. While the administrative functions supported by records management

¹² Allison Dowd, "Architect's report ready for museum committee," *Brandon Sun*, 24 February 2007.

are important to government and business, citizens tend to be more interested in the cultural value of archives.¹³

Records management and archival functions need not operate in isolation from one another. Indeed, Brian Masschaele, when Archives Advisor of Ontario in 1999, suggested that building an archival program in conjunction with a records management initiative makes sense, after all “why advocate a partial solution when you have an opportunity to build a program to manage all of the archival record?”¹⁴ Masschaele recognized that all records generated by a community are potentially archival and suggested that a community’s records can best be cared for through a combined records management and archival program.

Development of a community archives could easily be dovetailed with Brandon’s existing records and information management program. Once fully implemented, Brandon’s records management program will ensure that the records of the city administration are properly controlled by filing systems and records schedules that provide information about the records’ organizational context and functions. It is much easier to identify the small portion of archival records among properly filed and scheduled records. The archival records could be transferred to the city’s community archives at the end of their period of retention in the city’s government agencies. Once in an archival setting, the archives could be made publicly accessible for the various community development purposes discussed in this thesis.

One approach that has proven effective in obtaining adequate operating resources for an archives from its sponsoring agency has been for archivists and records managers to align their programs with the mission of their host organization. Diane Haglund, Coordinator of the Association for Manitoba Archives, asserts “In my view the member agencies that are most successful in receiving adequate support from their sponsors are those that have found ways for the archives/records management program to contribute directly to the delivery of mission.”¹⁵ If the strategic plan for a City of Brandon archives can be aligned with priorities set out in the community strategic plan, an archival institution may be able to contribute directly to the city’s goals.

¹³ Sarah Horton, “Social Capital, Government Policy and Public Value: Implications for Archive Service Delivery,” *Aslib Proceedings*, 58, No. 6 (2006): p. 505.

¹⁴ Brian Masschaele, “Archives Advisor’s File: A Vision for ‘Total Archives,’” *Off the Record: The Newsletter of the Archives Association of Ontario*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (January 1999): pp. 3-4.

¹⁵ Diane Haglund, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 17 July 2008.

Brandon's community strategic plan, *Shaping Tomorrow Together*, suggests that the City of Brandon prioritize areas such as economic development, education, culture, and environmental stewardship. As was discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, archival institutions throughout Canada and the world have found many ways to engage in these areas of community development. Archives have the ability to add value to community development projects. An archival program for Brandon could enhance existing community initiatives outlined in *Shaping Tomorrow Together*.

Archives and Brandon's Community Strategic Plan

Properly managed and archived, records improve community governance. However, before the City of Brandon's records can be used effectively, they need to be brought under the control of an effective records management program. The city's records contain a wealth of information about the past, present, and anticipated future activities of the municipal government and many local organizations. Unfortunately, the sole criterion guiding records retention for the city has been the retention times set out in the *Municipal Act*. This has given Brandon a basic framework for records management. However, in the interests of establishing effective records management practices, Brandon would do well to come to an understanding of why particular groups of records should be retained. Brandon needs to build on its adherence to the *Municipal Act* by developing plans for long-term retention of records of ongoing operational and community value to the city. Otherwise, it will be severely limiting the utility of its hard-earned and valuable information resources.

In order to prepare its records for archival retention, the City of Brandon needs to adopt a well-thought-out and theoretically sound approach to appraisal and retention. Canadian archival educator Terry Cook's macroappraisal approach to managing government records provides a solid basis for appraisal of records for archival value.¹⁶ In order for macroappraisal to be implemented, a function-based classification system must be applied to City of Brandon records. Implementation of a function-based classification system will require an organizational culture shift for the city administration, which has traditionally classified records by subject. The subject-based approach to records classification has

¹⁶ Terry Cook, "Macroappraisal in theory and practice: Origins, characteristics, and implementation in Canada, 1950-2000," *Archival Science* 5, No. 2-4, (December 2005): pp. 101-161.

several flaws. The most fundamental of which is that subject-based classification places little importance on the actual role a record plays in recording the actions taken by an organization. Using subject-based classification, records are often classified in a way that files them by the subject they are about rather than in relation to the actions or functions that created them.

A function-based approach to records classification not only focuses on the relationship between the business activities and the records these activities produce, but also enables record keeping to respond to administrative change. Whereas changes to the administrative structures of government occur rather suddenly and frequently, changes to the actual functions of government remain fairly limited. Application of a function-based classification scheme therefore allows for a continuous record of how various government departments have supported designated functions and how these functions contribute to overall government mandates.¹⁷

Macroappraisal facilitates a strategic approach to recordkeeping. That is, instead of focusing on specific documents and trying to decipher their individual meaning, macroappraisal focuses on large groupings of records that act together to support institutional functions. Given the rapidly growing volume of recorded information generated and maintained by modern organizations, an approach to appraisal that can manage large quantities of records is quite important. Macroappraisal enables archivists to determine which records are critical to documenting the activities of government as a whole and provides a sound basis for appraisal decisions.¹⁸ Applying macroappraisal to the records of the City of Brandon could therefore provide a solid basis for identifying which records from Brandon's records management program warrant archival retention.

Even in the absence of clear records retention and appraisal strategies, a substantial quantity of potential archival material in City Hall is stored in a section of the Records Office's dead storage referred to as the "library." Material in the "library" includes consultant's reports, departmental strategic plans, rural development theses, research reports, city planning initiatives and a wealth of other records relating to Brandon. Unfortunately, the material in the "library" is not catalogued and its existence is largely unknown by city staff

¹⁷ Library and Archives Canada, *BASCS Guidance*, Products & Services: Government, available at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/government/products-services/007002-2089-e.html>, (accessed 3 July 2009).

¹⁸ Cook, "Macroappraisal," pp. 101-161.

and the general public. While the retention of records in the “library” suggests that the city government recognizes that these records have value, this value remains untapped for community development and benefit because the records are largely inaccessible.

Lack of information about operational records maintained by the City of Brandon adversely affects Brandon’s application of access to information policies. The city's current guidelines on responding to requests for records direct employees to provide access, where possible, without requiring a formal application under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Brandon’s government has expressed a strong commitment to public accountability. Unfortunately, citizens may have little knowledge of what records the City of Brandon currently generates, and even less knowledge of the City’s historical records. Citizens cannot access information unless they know it exists.

An archival and expanded records management program could make records generated by the City of Brandon’s government considerably more accessible to the public. The creation of archival finding aids based on the information in detailed retention schedules could provide a map of Brandon’s information resources. The benefits of describing and making accessible city records may be felt by both the general public and city employees. Brandon’s citizenry would know what records the city government created and how to access them and city employees would have access to a broader understanding of the information resources retained by the city. Archival access could complement Brandon’s open approach to access to information by providing citizens with the tools necessary to identify what information is available for access.

One of the City of Brandon’s traditional reasons for not investing in archives or records management has been an assumption that there is insufficient public demand to justify the costs associated with creating additional tools for accessibility such as finding aids.¹⁹ However, in January 2009, the City of Brandon’s assumptions regarding a lack of interest in its organizations proved false when a conflict between the City of Brandon and the Brandon Chamber of Commerce erupted. According to the Chamber of Commerce, the decision-making processes of city council seemed ad-hoc and demonstrated a lack of a clear

¹⁹ Brandon Records Manager to Brandon Heritage Department, 15 January 2001, Community Archives File, Records Management Cabinet, City of Brandon Records Office, Document Number 08022005-ZNTK-BAIX.

vision for Brandon's future.²⁰ The city's response to the Chamber of Commerce's accusations regarding a lack of vision involved placing and indexing the various departmental strategic plans on a section of the City of Brandon's website where they were easily accessible to the general public. Once information about the city's planning processes became accessible the complaints of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce appeared unfounded. The presence of well-organized and easily accessible records helped the city to effectively address public scrutiny of its operations. It is not yet clear, however, that the city could respond as effectively should more numerous, complex, and varied inquiries arise.

Although local governmental records are an important part of a community archives they should not be the only focus of document collection. A plethora of non-governmental organizations, clubs and other organizations all play a role in constructing the social relationships found in a community. Therefore, an archives striving to represent a geographical community will need to collect records external to the corporate institution of local government. In 1986 Helen Samuels published an approach to records collection called "documentation strategy." It is

A plan formulated to assure the documentation of an ongoing issue, activity or geographical area . . . The strategy is ordinarily designed, promoted, and in part implemented by ongoing mechanism involving records creators, administrators (including archivists), and users. The documentation strategy is carried out through the mutual efforts of many institutions and individuals influencing both the creation of the records and the archival retention of a portion of them. The strategy is refined in response to the changing conditions and viewpoints.²¹

The documentation strategy approach has been endorsed by Richard Cox as an effective way of acquiring records relating to a specific locality.²²

A flaw in Samuels's documentation strategy identified by Terry Cook is that it may lead archives to collect based on subject and theme. Collecting records based on particular subjects is, conceptually, a significant step backwards for archivists and records managers who are increasingly recognizing the importance of function-based classification systems. Alternatively, a documentation strategy may be created that strives to locate private papers of

²⁰ Meyers Norris and Penny and Brandon Chamber of Commerce, *4th Annual Business Climate Survey*, available at: <http://www.brandonchamber.ca/files/Climate%20Survey%20Jan%202009.pdf>, (accessed 3 July 2009).

²¹ Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986): p. 115.

²² Richard J. Cox, *Documenting Localities: A Practical Model for American Archivists and Manuscript Curators* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1996), pp. 35-63.

individuals and organizations that are related to organizational functions.²³ One of the chief benefits to aligning private records collection with the functions of the archives' host institution is that the collection policies are guided, at least in part, by the theoretically sound underpinnings of macroappraisal.²⁴ An effective approach to the documentation strategy for a Brandon community archives may be to align collecting policies with community priorities identified in the community strategic plan.

The potential for archives to contribute to the economic development component of *Shaping Tomorrow Together* may seem at first difficult to establish. An archives may appear to *need* subsidy from the community in order to exist rather than *provide* economic value. Measuring that value is not easy, but it does exist. An archives can contribute to more efficient and cost-effective city government by providing care of and timely access to one of its most valuable resources -- the information resources the city spends very large sums to create each year. Archival materials can support local publishing, education systems (at all levels), news media needs, and tourism and community publicity. Along with local museums, libraries, galleries, and historic sites (all of whose work an archives can support with documentation), an archives is a key part of a group of amenities that make life in a community attractive, and can thus help draw people to a community to visit and to live. A well-used archival institution can attract researchers who then spend money in the community. Brian Masschaele stated that the Elgin County Archives attracts 400-500 patron visits every year. International visitors are also quite common. The benefits to other organizations in Elgin County become most apparent when researchers make multiple visits to the archives. Researchers attracted to Elgin County by the archives spend money in local businesses and contribute to the economic growth of Elgin County as a whole.²⁵

The major economic advantages of a community archives are those that indirectly stimulate economic growth. The concept of the knowledge-based economy is gradually gaining acceptance in Brandon. *Shaping Tomorrow Together* features several major initiatives that facilitate the growth of the knowledge-based economy including strengthening Brandon's education system, diversifying Brandon's economy and developing Brandon's information technology infrastructure. The Brandon Chamber of Commerce's 2009 business

²³ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁴ Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Spring 1992): pp. 181-191.

²⁵ Brian Masschaele, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 3 May 2008.

climate survey identifies a growing need for skilled and educated workers.²⁶ If a community archives were created to act as a repository for local knowledge the archives could potentially foster Brandon's nascent knowledge-based economy.

The City of Brandon facilitates and coordinates local economic development initiatives. If Brandon's local government were to recognize the value of its own records and the knowledge they contain, perhaps these records could foster an approach to economic development that assigns greater value to local knowledge. This will require some effort to inform the community about archives, as implied by the comments of a participant in the community archival questionnaire who also helped to develop *Shaping Tomorrow Together*. This person noted that archives were not included in the community strategic plan because "at this point the [archival] role has been left out because the community did not perceive archiving as a key area of focus. Through the strategy planning process, archiving and data management were not discussed."²⁷ Surprisingly, in spite of the growing importance of information in community economic development, the City of Brandon still sees the management and archiving of its records as being low priority.

One of the key challenges associated with making a business case for records management in general is that, despite much rhetoric to the contrary, many organizations do not see knowledge as a resource. Shelley Sweeney, the University Archivist at the University of Manitoba, stated that often an organization "does not see itself, oddly, as an information generating institution and therefore does not treat its own records as an asset. Staff are used to [working in] chaotic conditions and accept that as the norm."²⁸ Similarly, the City of Brandon also does little to build on existing organizational knowledge, as one employee stated: "Brandon doesn't use archival material to plan for future development or strategies" and "at the present time the City's archival material is stored in filing boxes and for the most part forgotten."²⁹ In an increasingly globalized economy where the knowledge is becoming critical to economic development, the City of Brandon's apathy regarding its own archival records and the knowledge they contain is somewhat perplexing.

²⁶ City of Brandon Community Strategic Plan Leadership Committee. *Shaping Tomorrow Together: An Introduction to Brandon's Community Strategic Plan*. 2005, pp. 1-21.

²⁷ Participant 56, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 24 February 2008.

²⁸ Shelley Sweeney, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 18 March 2008.

²⁹ Sheila Carlisle, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 14 July 2008.

Research by the Canada West Foundation has indicated that acceptance of the knowledge-based economy has been rather slow in Western Canada. While telecommunications infrastructure and technology have been accepted by Western Canadians, relatively little thought seems to have been given to the value of the knowledge this technology and infrastructure is used to transmit.³⁰ Essentially, the capacity for participation in the knowledge-based economy has been developed but not yet utilized. Part of the reason the knowledge based economy has encountered limited acceptance in Western Canada is that knowledge is not recognized as having sufficient value. However, better management of records and the knowledge they contain realizes several operational benefits. Terry Cook estimates that organizations without records management program's employees waste an average of 25 percent of their time attempting to located poorly filed records. Aside from staff time wasted on records retrieval, poorly managed records can seriously undermine public confidence in local government. Citizens making public enquiries at Brandon's City Hall expect prompt and accurate responses. Referring to the nature of public enquiries, a respondent to the community archival questionnaire from City Hall stated that "it's important to be able to have Joe Public ask a question and feel confident that you can find them that answer no matter what the history of the question may entail."³¹ Unfortunately, if the information needed to respond to a public enquiry is lost or difficult to find the public is unlikely to obtain timely or accurate information. One respondent to the community archival questionnaire condemned the City of Brandon's "irresponsible management of information that at times can literally make or break a company, depending on the importance of the information being sought in the mismanaged files."³² Thus, the inability of the City of Brandon to provide quick and accurate access to information can sometimes result in a failure to provide public service to the citizens of Brandon.

The daily operations of City Hall may also benefit from properly managed records, since these records contain the City of Brandon's corporate memory. Brandon's corporate memory is the information and knowledge necessary to perform the strategic goals of the organization. However, without a fully implemented records management and archival

³⁰ Brett Gartner and Loleen Berdhal, "Competitive Mindset: Are Western Canadians Ready to 'Go for Gold'?" in *Going for Gold: The Western Canadian Economy in the International Arena* (November 2008), pp. 7-14.

³¹ Participant 77, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 27 July 2008.

³² Ibid.

program, the city's corporate memory is confused and incomplete. If properly managed, the City of Brandon's corporate memory can support coherent policy development over time, to provide operational precedents, and to protect the city's legal and property rights over time.³³ Essentially, the City of Brandon's records represent a knowledge base that future community growth can be built upon.

A particularly important source of economic development for the City of Brandon is the agriculture industry. As Manitoba's "Wheat City" Brandon's archival institution should feature an agricultural component. Several respondents to the community archival questionnaire also expressed a desire to see the creation of an agricultural archive. In order for agriculture to fit into a community economic development framework and follow a documentation strategy, it needs to be aligned with Brandon's community strategic plan. A goal of *Shaping Tomorrow Together* is to educate Brandonites broadly about agriculture and agribusiness. Archives could support this work by collecting records relating to the development of agriculture in Southwestern Manitoba.

One other approach that may prove effective in capturing a unique local perspective on agriculture and Brandon may be an archival oral history project. Oral history is proving to be an increasingly important element of agricultural archiving. Jones and Osterud have demonstrated that interviews are an effective tool for gaining historical perspective on agriculture. Broadly speaking, North American farm life has experienced significant structural changes over the past century. Capital investments have increased as a result of growing reliance on machinery, the number of farmers has fallen significantly and government policy has come to play an increasingly important role in operational and marketing activities. Understanding the place of local farmers in the vast and ever-changing landscape of the agricultural industry, Jones and Osterud suggest, can be supported by interviews.³⁴

Agricultural archiving can support community economic development goals in several ways. Aaron Purcel has stated that another benefit of oral history is that participants in the interview process are often honoured by the opportunity to recount past experiences

³³ Terry Cook, *In the Public Trust: A Strategic Plan for the Archives and Records Management Services of the City of Winnipeg*, Unpublished Report, 29 November 1999, pp. 29-33.

³⁴ Lu Anne Jones and Nancy Grey Osterud, "Breaking New Ground: Oral History and Agricultural History," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, no. 2 (September 1989): pp. 551-564.

before an engaged audience.³⁵ Consequently, the interaction between interviewer and interviewee may become an opportunity for the generation of social capital. The use of web exhibits by an archival institution in Brandon could allow agricultural records to be accessible to the agricultural region surrounding Brandon. An example of how an online, agriculturally-themed web-exhibit might look is available in the University of Manitoba's *Archives of the Agricultural Experience*.³⁶

Training and employing local residents to assist in the creation of an online agricultural exhibit could give these residents an opportunity to develop their skills with technology. The Government of Manitoba offers several funding initiatives supporting economic and skills development in rural Manitoba. For instance, the *Succeeding Generations* program involves older farmers guiding and assisting younger farmers entering the agricultural profession.³⁷ Perhaps some of the guidance offered by older farmers could be captured through archived interviews that could then be made publicly available. Archiving could therefore become not only a process for capturing historical records, but a key element of capturing and managing the collective knowledge of the local agriculture sector.

The environmental concerns identified in *Shaping Tomorrow Together* are closely related to agriculture. In 2004, as part of developing the Community Strategic Plan the City of Brandon identified the desired future statement "Brandon will be a recognized leader in environmental stewardship."³⁸ In 2007, the City of Brandon released a detailed strategic plan outlining the history of environmental projects in Brandon and plans for future initiatives. Environmental concerns such as the quality of water being discharged into the Assiniboine River, establishment of a local recycling program and responding to global climate change were some of the key concerns identified in the Environment Strategic Plan.³⁹

³⁵ Aaron D. Purcell, "Making the Most of Your Historical Assets," *Information Management*, (January/February 2009): pp. 46-48.

³⁶ Brett Loughheed, "Exhibit Introduction: The Initiative," *Archives of the Agricultural Experience*, available online at <http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/archives/exhibits/agric_exper/index.html>.

³⁷ Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, "Programs and Services," *Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Website*, available online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs/index.html>, (accessed 3 July 2009).

³⁸ Operational Services Division, *Brandon's Environment Strategic Plan*, City of Brandon, October 2007: p. 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-64.

Archives and records management can contribute to the City of Brandon's environmental strategic planning. Leah Sander, an archivist working with environmental records at Library and Archives Canada, states that the value of data relating to the natural environment is increasing as governments are forced to deal with issues such as climate change. Measuring climate change requires accurate long-term data that must span many years in order to demonstrate that the Earth's climate is actually changing. Thus, environmental records can have long-term value and they warrant the attention of archivists and governments.⁴⁰ Archival records related to the environment are demonstrating their worth at a national level, perhaps Brandon could benefit from using archival records to guide local environmental planning.

The broad and ambitious goals of Brandon's environment strategic plan will require a tremendous amount of data collection and processing. Therefore, the sustainability of Brandon's environmental planning will rely, in part, on the quality of records created and retained locally. Environmental records that may be generated locally include environmental site assessments, reports on the environmental impacts of local industry and agriculture, and municipal waste management records. They contain data used to measure changes in the natural environment. Maintaining accurate records about Brandon's natural environment may help to gauge the effectiveness of the City of Brandon's environmental initiatives. An additional benefit of local retention of archival data may also help the knowledge-based economy to gain traction in Brandon by providing source material for environmental research at the local level.

The importance of retaining data relating to the environment has been highlighted in the planning process for the City of Brandon's new public safety building. The location of Brandon's public safety building has been the subject of considerable controversy, much of which has arisen regarding fears that the public safety building would be built on a contaminated land site. Among the sites considered for the location of the new public safety building was an empty lot at 1st Street and Rosser Avenue. Unfortunately for proponents of the 1st and Rosser site, the land at that location has been heavily contaminated by previous owners. A large gasoline spill occurred at the 1st and Rosser site and batteries were abandoned at the site. Improper disposal of batteries can result in significant health hazards

⁴⁰ Leah Sander, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 12 March 2008.

including the release of mercury, cadmium or lead acid. A legacy of environmental neglect had left the land at 1st and Rosser heavily contaminated and unfit for human habitation.⁴¹ The absence of accurate and readily available information about the 1st Street and Rosser Avenue site was politically and financially costly to the City of Brandon's administration. Bluntly stated, proposing to construct Brandon's public safety building on poisonous land is not a move that lends a great deal of credibility to local planners. In light of the controversy regarding the public safety building, community planners in Brandon may do well to consider the future value of a community archives containing accurate and easily accessible environmental records.

Detailed data about the environment can also play a role in Brandon's local emergency response planning. The Manitoba Emergency Measures Act requires local governments to take steps in order to prepare for emergencies. In order to identify and prepare for the emergencies most likely to impact a particular community a process called hazard analysis is used. The method of hazard analysis used by the City of Brandon is the United States Government Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) model. A key notion behind the FEMA model is that if a community has experienced a particular type of emergency in the past the community may experience a similar emergency in the future. The likelihood of a community experiencing a particular type of disaster is determined partly by reviewing the frequency of similar incidents over the last 100 years. In order for a community to implement the measures necessary to prepare for a future disaster the community needs to have a knowledge of its past.⁴² A community archives can retain that knowledge.

Local archives have the potential to make significant contributions to Brandon's education system. Many respondents to the community archival questionnaire identified working with local middle schools and high schools to develop educational programming as a key service an archives could provide. Brandon's community strategic plan cites the importance of the city government working with the Brandon School Division to enhance the

⁴¹ Robson Fletcher, "City revisiting public safety building," *Brandon Sun*, 14 December 2006; Jillian Austin, "City to move fire hall across street," *Brandon Sun*, 14 January 2008.

⁴² Brian Kayes, *City of Brandon Hazards Review and Impact Assessment* (Brandon: City of Brandon, 2008), pp. 11-12.

local education system. A community archives could provide resources for collaboration on this project.

The Brandon School Board (BSB) has been in existence since 1882 and oversees the Brandon School Division, which has grown to contain 22 schools serving the educational needs of Brandon and surrounding area. The BSD has educated thousands of students and played a significant role in shaping the growth of Brandon. Over the years, the BSD has accumulated a large volume of historical records that chart the development of Brandon's education system. Given the large size of the BSD and the central role it has played in the development of Brandon, it may be a worthy partner in a community archives program.

Aside from assisting the proper care of the large volume of potentially archival records retained by the BSD, a community archives could provide operational benefits to the division. Educators are always looking for innovative and advanced educational programming in order to accomplish more for students with inevitably limited resources. In order to support the delivery of quality educational programming with limited resources one of the steps the BSD will take is to develop educational partnerships with local businesses and organizations. Cooperative educational programming can provide opportunities for cost sharing and equip students with locally relevant knowledge. Archives could support the teaching of local history and development of student's research skills.

An innovative precedent for integrating archival records into public school programs has been set in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Portage Collegiate Institute (PCI) has created its own archives and developed for-credit courses in archiving. James Kostuchuk, a teacher at PCI, proposed the creation of a school archives to the PCI Millennium Committee in 2000. The proposal was accepted and in 2001 a course in archives for Grades 11 and 12 was created. Collection and conservation activities began at the PCI Archives in 2002. Creating an archival institution in a classroom setting enables instruction of students to be linked with the ongoing development of the archives. Students participating in the PCI archival class learn some of the basic skills necessary for operating small archives. Each student is required to complete one or two major projects per year as part of the archives course. The archival projects are then used to support the collection, description, arrangement and

accessibility of materials in the PCI Archives.⁴³ Thus, the PCI Archives is able to support both learning and archival objectives.

Archival programming in schools can represent an investment in local education and history. As Kostuchuk observed, “the availability of archival materials in a proper archive stimulates educational programs, research and interest in the community regarding local history.”⁴⁴ Work by students in the PCI archives program has received tremendous public attention. In 2002, a student conducting research for her archival project discovered a collection of approximately 10,000 items related to Yosh Tashiro, a well-known rural Manitoba photographer. As a result of acquiring the Tashiro material, the PCI Archives became the subject of a CTV documentary entitled “Life Through A Lens: The Yosh Tashiro Story.”⁴⁵ Another student published a 20-page history of Portage Collegiate Institute relying solely on materials from the school archives. The Yashiro and PCI history projects are not the products of disinterested students doing the bare minimum to fulfil graduation requirements. Rather, the PCI projects have enabled students to engage with archival resources in creative ways, resulting in the creation of several high-profile research projects. Success at the PCI Archives has been sufficient for Kostuchuk to assert that Manitoba should “have an archive course in EVERY high school.”⁴⁶ If the Brandon School Division were to partner with a community archives, high schools in Brandon could similarly benefit from archival programming.

The response of Marlene Miller at the Girl Guides of Canada, Manitoba Council (GGCMC) Archives, illustrates that the engagement of young people with archives need not be limited to the classroom. The GGCMC Archives employs a number of public programming initiatives designed to foster youth interest in the history of the Guides. Programming at the GGCMC is designed to be both personally relevant and interactive. It usually involves a visit by a company of Guides (a group of less than twelve children) to the archives as a group activity. Archivists and volunteers at the GGCMC Archives prepare 8-12 page historical booklets for each member of the company. Volunteers, often past members

⁴³ Reid Dickie, “Tradition is a Non-Renewable Resource,” in *Manitoba Heritage Success Stories* (Altona: Friesen Printers, 2006), p. 50.

⁴⁴ James Kostuchuk, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 28 June 2008.

⁴⁵ Dickie, “Tradition is a Non-Renewable Resource,” p. 50.

⁴⁶ James Kostuchuk, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 28 June 2008.

of GGCMC, also provide oral histories of Guiding and answer questions about what it was like to be a member of Girl Guides in the past.⁴⁷ The extensive public programming of the GGCMC makes a trip to the archives an engaging and personally relevant activity for Girl Guides.

In the case of the GGCMC Archives, the social capital generated by the organization has enabled it to obtain the resources and volunteers it needs to operate on an ongoing basis. Former Guides donate volunteer time, archival materials, artefacts, and funding to the GGCMC because they feel a strong connection to the Girl Guides organization. If strong social connections can foster the development of the GGCMC archives, perhaps similar connections could be developed at a community level in Brandon, if it housed local club and community group materials, or could help locate them elsewhere.

A strong sense of connection to a community is important to community planners as they struggle to encourage local young people to remain in rural Manitoba. The migration of youth from rural areas to urban centres has become especially pronounced. Large urban centres are thought to provide better employment, educational, cultural and recreational possibilities for youth than their rural counterparts. Consequently, youth retention and community inclusion are becoming increasingly important components of rural community development.

Respondents to the community archival questionnaire identified the sense of inclusion that stems from the common history retained in archives as an important contribution of their organizations. The feelings an archival institution may evoke in a user may support the retention of young people and other citizens. As another respondent stated, “the idea that the past has ‘tangible roots’ enhances the sense of belonging in the community.”⁴⁸ This sense of community inclusion may help rural communities, such as Brandon, to retain the youth population they require to support their future growth

Aside from the direct benefit of an enhanced understanding of local history there can be other contributions archives can make to local education. Projects involving students interviewing older members of the community can generate inter-generational social capital. Students can not only learn about the history of Brandon, but hear it from individuals who

⁴⁷ Marlene Miller, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 10 April 2008.

⁴⁸ Participant 22, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 15 May 2008.

lived through it. The social capital generated by archives can also contribute to the development of “pride, heritage and respect.”⁴⁹ Shelley Sweeney of the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections stated that archives “contribute information to the development of a unique institution, and help foster good feelings about the information with staff and students.”⁵⁰ Participation in the creation and use of an archival institution can thus support a sense of community ownership and inclusion.

Youth inclusion hinges on youth being allowed to participate meaningfully in the development of the community archives. As is the case with any other archival volunteers, youth participants in the community archives will require the training and supervision of archivists in order to ensure that they are handling records properly. Early training in working with archives may equip youth with research skills, knowledge of Brandon’s past, and a genuine sense of belonging in the city. Many youth projects involving archives feature an oral history component in which youth interview older residents of their community to learn about local history. Oral history projects involving inter-generational communication can generate considerable social capital between residents, as was the case with the Ark Youth Projects in the United Kingdom.

Brandon may similarly benefit from engaging older residents with archives. Archival programming may also be able to provide some health benefits to the older citizenry of Brandon. Citizens of Brandon over the age of 65 are an important demographic in Brandon. In 2001 residents above the age of 65 represented 15.9 percent of Brandon’s population. By 2006 this proportion had fallen slightly, to 15.6 percent. On the national scale, the proportion of Canada’s population comprised of individuals age 65 and up is expected to rise 26 percent by 2031.⁵¹ Thus, older citizens already represent a significant proportion of Brandon’s population and this proportion is likely to grow in the future. From a community archival standpoint older citizens of Brandon represent a sizable portion of the community that may be able to benefit from and contribute to archival programming.

By providing a location where they may remember and learn about the past a community archives can create a strong relationship with older citizens. Organizations

⁴⁹ James Kostuchuk, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 28 June 2008.

⁵⁰ Shelley Sweeney, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 18 March 2008.

⁵¹ Mark Novak and Lori Campbell, *Aging and Society: A Canadian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2001), p. 299.

-serving older Canadians, such as Creative Retirement Manitoba and Seniors for Seniors, have created environments in which older people can meet and tell stories about their lives. Archives may provide both physical locations where older people may meet to discuss their lives, as well as records that can facilitate the act of remembering. Crista Bradley suggested that reading rooms designed to accommodate group audiences and provide an atmosphere suitable for storytelling may encourage older Canadians to engage with archives.⁵² Using archival materials and artefacts from a general museum to elicit older resident's memories of the distant past may also benefit a Brandon archives. Given the long absence of municipal archival services in Brandon, much of the contextual information about local records and artefacts that gives them meaning may exist only within the memories of long-term residents. Therefore, the recollections of older Brandonites may be critical to identifying and contextualizing Brandon's archival material. By providing the tools for older Canadians to come together, reminisce about the past, and tell stories, archives can potentially improve older Canadians' lives while enhancing the descriptions of archival records.

In the end, of course, people of all ages can play an important role in preserving Brandon's archival material. Once described and preserved, it can be used to support cultural planning. Cultural planning is becoming an increasingly prominent element of Brandon's community strategic plan. Brandon's Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy (CDDS) recognizes that facilities capable of supporting cultural planning are important to Brandon's future growth. Examples of facilities supporting cultural growth are post-secondary institutions, art galleries and heritage buildings. However, no mention is made of stimulating Brandon's cultural development by protecting and providing access to its documentary history.

Brandon's CDDS called for the creation of an inventory of the city's cultural resources. Brandon's inventory of cultural resources shows that although the city plays an important role in supporting local multicultural and artistic activities, it does very little to support the development of Brandon's historical initiatives. Furthermore, Brandon's culture and heritage organizations seem to have little relationship to one another beyond their geographical location. By neglecting its own heritage assets, the City of Brandon has not taken advantage of what the CDDS refers to as "heritage assets which provide an important

⁵² Bradley, "Coming of Age," pp. 65-91.

link to the past, help to contextualize the present, and offer insight into what the future may bring,”⁵³ A community archives, by collecting and making local records accessible, could provide the documentary resources with which to contextualize Brandon’s existing heritage resources.

Community planners Greg Baeker and Jeanne Hanna promote cultural mapping as a means of leveraging local cultural assets for economic and other community benefits. Essentially, cultural mapping involves identifying existing cultural resources and finding ways of leveraging them for the benefit of the community at large. Cultural mapping has two components: resource mapping and identity mapping. Resource mapping focuses on recording physical cultural resources such as heritage buildings. Identity mapping deals with intangible cultural resources, such as local histories, traditions and values that combine to create a sense of community identity. Cultural resources identified through identity mapping are also those resources that possess what John Holden defines as intrinsic value – that is, the highly personal and subjective value an individual derives from a cultural resource.⁵⁴ Brandon’s inventory of local cultural assets is a valuable cultural resource mapping tool but does little to support local identity mapping.

In some cases, Baeker and Hanna suggest that telling the story of place can be difficult to learn because of information overload. Consolidating this information in coherent ways that enable it to be used for broad community objectives presents a challenge.⁵⁵ From an archival standpoint, Brandon’s cultural resources are stored in people’s basements, in the “dead” storage area of City Hall, and in small community museums that, although they have no archival mandate, do the best they can to protect Brandon’s documentary history. The story of Brandon is a series of partial accounts that have not been bound together. The creation of a central community archival institution could provide context to these accounts. For example, a central archives could facilitate an understanding of how records held at the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum and the Daily House Museum fit into the development of the City of Brandon.

⁵³ City of Brandon Community Services, *Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy*, July 2008, p. 18.

⁵⁴ Greg Baeker and Jeanette Hanna, “Culture, Authenticity, Place: Connecting Cultural Mapping and Place Branding,” *Municipal World*, vol. 119, no. 2 (February 2009): pp. 9-12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

An archival institution by itself will not be able to tell the story of Brandon. However, archives can provide a central access point to primary source material that historians can use to research Brandon's past. Historians have traditionally been one of the primary user groups archives serve. Barry Potyandi and Gerald Friesen have pointed to the inadequacies of traditional community histories that often provide piecemeal accounts of past events using inaccurate and unverifiable facts and providing little historical context.⁵⁶ In fairness to local historians, communities such as Brandon often provide a poor documentary foundation for historical research because their historical records have traditionally been neglected. A community archives could provide a strong foundation for historical research at a local level.

As discussed in chapter two in relation to the Nova Scotia Archives, a community archives could also contribute to Brandon's tourism industry. Many respondents to the community archival questionnaire suggested that archives could enhance local tourism. Given the relatively small number of individuals that typically use archives directly in person, the construction of a community archives is unlikely, in and of itself, to cause Brandon to become a tourism hotspot. However, archives could fit into a local network of organizations that drive cultural tourism. In his research surrounding the North American tourism industry, Steven Thorne found that the number of domestic vacations in Canada involving museums, galleries and historic sites far outnumbered the number of trips involving golfing, theme parks or casino gambling. Therefore, from a tourism perspective, there may be some value to Brandon investing in local cultural infrastructure.⁵⁷

Community development in Brandon depends on attracting tourists and new residents, and retaining existing residents. Planners supportive of community economic development recognize that in the global economy there are employment opportunities all over the world and communities must find new ways of competing to attract new citizens. Culture and heritage are two facets of community planning that enable a community to set itself apart from other population centres.⁵⁸ Simply put, local economic growth has created conditions in which people can live and work in Brandon, but why would they want to? Much of the interest in cultural development stems from the recognition that well developed

⁵⁶ Friesen and Potyandi, *A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History*, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Steven Thorne, "'Place as Product' A Place-Based Approach to Cultural Tourism," *Municipal World*, vol. 119, no. 2 (February 2009): pp. 13-17.

⁵⁸ Baeker and Hanna, "Culture, Authenticity, Place," pp. 9-12.

cultural infrastructure is necessary to retain skilled and educated workers. The CDDS states that in order for Brandon to “remain such a desirable place in which to live, work, play, and do business requires careful planning and attention to those one-of-a-kind features that best define the area and contribute to its overall vitality.”⁵⁹

Effectively presented, the story of Brandon could be used to perform what Baeker and Hanna refer to as “place branding.” Essentially, “place branding” involves using a local cultural inventory to identify some of the cultural elements that can create a unique image of a community. The economic development component of Brandon’s Community Strategic Plan proposes to “develop and actively market Brandon’s unique tourism brand.”⁶⁰ Given the strong connection Baeker and Hanna identify between culture, heritage and place branding. Brandon may benefit from including its past in the local brand.⁶¹

Genealogical research based on a Brandon community archives illustrates Baeker and Hanna's point and could serve well the strategic plan's tourism goals. Researching one's ancestry is becoming a major pastime for a growing number of Canadians and others. The proliferation of websites such as Ancestry.ca and television shows such as "Ancestors in the Attic" have propelled genealogical research into the public spotlight.⁶² Enthusiasm for genealogical research in Brandon is manifest in the Southwest Branch of the Manitoba Genealogical Society (MGS). The Southwest Branch of the MGS has a constituency of 54 municipalities in Southwestern Manitoba. In order to support genealogical research the MGS emphasizes the value of archival materials. A core objective of the MGS is “to collect and preserve local genealogical and historical records and materials.”⁶³ Genealogical and historical records retained in Brandon may be of considerable import to the MGS as they contain a significant amount of information about Brandon’s earliest citizens of European descent.

Brandon’s City Hall currently houses several types of records that could be of use to genealogists. Examples of records supporting genealogical research include property

⁵⁹ City of Brandon Community Services, *Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy*, p. 17.

⁶⁰ City of Brandon, *Shaping Tomorrow Together Plan Summary*, p. 24.

⁶¹ Baeker and Hanna, “Culture, Authenticity, Place,” pp. 9-12.

⁶² Tom Nesmith, “What’s History Got to Do With It?: Reconsidering the Place of Historical Knowledge in Archival Work,” *Archivaria* 57 (Spring 2004): pp. 1-27.

⁶³ Manitoba Genealogical Society, “Manitoba Genealogical Society Homepage,” *Manitoba Genealogical Society*, available at <http://mbgenealogy.com/> (accessed 3 July 2009).

registers, tax registers, voter's lists and city council minutes. These records have been protected from destruction by *The Municipal Act* and date back as far as 1882. The city's oldest historical records are well preserved in a vault in the Records Office of City Hall. However, the accessibility of City Hall's oldest records is significantly hampered by a lack of public awareness of the records' existence. Genealogical records are another example of Brandon retaining archival resources of potential interest to the public but not providing tools to facilitate access to these resources. A community archives could provide publicly accessible finding aids and develop an archival partnership with the MGS in order to serve better the growing genealogical research community.

The value of genealogical records in Brandon may grow as the city increases in size and diversity. As a result of rapid technological and cultural change, Hugh Taylor asserted that "there is every sign that family history is becoming not just a pastime, but a search for personal identity in an era of intensive and rapid change."⁶⁴ Once an agricultural centre populated by European-Canadian Protestants, Brandon has become increasingly multicultural, especially since construction of the Maple Leaf processing plant in Brandon in 1999, which prompted the large-scale immigration of workers from Mexico and El Salvador.⁶⁵ Rapid economic growth has also caused tremendous change in Brandon. Ultimately, the sense of locality and common history that can be retained in archives may become increasingly important to Brandon's residents as their city adapts to the future. In addition, genealogical interests may result in visits to Brandon and surrounding areas from those with Brandon ties who want to see where their forebears lived and worked. The Scottish government has developed its genealogical archival services around just such a program designed to encourage travel to the country. Perhaps a similar initiative could be launched for Brandon and area and for all Manitoba.⁶⁶

Challenges and Solutions

Although archives can provide a multitude of benefits to society through creative public programming the reality is that archives often face major operational limitations that

⁶⁴ Hugh Taylor, "Revisited", pp. 8-20.

⁶⁵ City of Brandon Community Services, *Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy*, p. 17.

⁶⁶ ScotlandsPeople, "ScotlandsPeople: Connecting Generations," *Government of Scotland*, available at: <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/help/index.aspx?r=546&975>, (accessed 16 October 2009).

restrict their ability to engage in more than basic archival functions. Respondents to the community archival questionnaire identified several key difficulties archives face when trying to support their mandates such as lack of public profile, lack of funding and lack of human resources. While the challenges facing archives are significant, there are some steps a community archives in Brandon can take to mitigate them.

Lack of public awareness of archives was a problem cited by several respondents in the community archives questionnaire. Asked about the impediments preventing archival institutions from having a greater impact in their community elicited responses such as “lack of education as to what, where and why there are archives”⁶⁷ and “ignorance by the general public of what archives are and how they can be used is an obstacle.”⁶⁸ Gord Sim at the Brandon Dragoon’s Museum stated that, in order for his institution’s archives to undertake additional roles in the community, “we need more exposure and interest from the public.”⁶⁹ The general public is unlikely to support funding organizations they do not understand, archives included.

Several respondents to the community archival questionnaire suggested that perceptions of archives and records management relative to other public services also present a hurdle to additional funding. For instance, one archivist stated that “Archives and records management have traditionally been marginalized – seen as ‘needy’ or specialist vocations.”⁷⁰ Basically, records management and archival work is perceived as being outside of the regular business of most organizations. One respondent asserted that “ignorance by the general public of what archives are and how they can be used is an obstacle” to archival growth.⁷¹ Another participant stated that a more specific problem associated with lack of public understanding of archives is that “if not taken seriously enough, archives will continue to be a low priority and not considered worthy of financial assistance.”⁷² One way of developing the public profile of archives may be to work with existing community organizations to draw attention to the ways in which historical records are already contributing to community institutions.

⁶⁷ Sheila Carlisle, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 29 July 2008.

⁶⁸ Jacinthe Duval, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 6 February 2008.

⁶⁹ Gord Sim, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 1 April 2008.

⁷⁰ Participant 69, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 17 June 2008..

⁷¹ Jacinthe Duval, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 6 February 2008.

⁷² Participant 77, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 27 July 2008.

An additional benefit to a cooperative approach among local archival stakeholders is that it may help a Brandon archives to obtain some of the resources that other archives stated they were sorely lacking in the community archival questionnaire. Much of Brandon's community strategic plan focuses on finding new ways to leverage existing community resources to stimulate Brandon's future development. Essentially, *Shaping Tomorrow Together* seeks to implement a community economic development model involving a socially inclusive approach that employs innovative ways of building upon Brandon's existing resources. The approach used to identify Brandon's existing community resources is known as community asset mapping. Asset mapping is a highly pragmatic approach to community development that recognizes the limited resources with which many municipalities operate. Instead of focusing on the resources a community lacks to support future projects, asset mapping looks at what resources a community already does have. The process of asset mapping can also be very positive in that participants may discover that their community possesses richer resources than they previously identified. Finally, asset mapping is an inclusive process that involves public, community and private assets.⁷³ An example of asset mapping is the inventory of cultural resources conducted as part of Brandon's Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy.

The emphasis of Brandon's community strategic plan on stimulating development from within the community reflects a strong sense of localism. Brandon's commitment to localism was echoed by many respondents to the community archival questionnaire from Southwestern Manitoba who expressed a desire to keep local historical records and artefacts in the community that created them. Local, grassroots approaches to providing archival access were also preferred. Unfortunately, many communities in Southwestern Manitoba lack the financial and human resources to establish or support archives. Consequently, archival records in Brandon and other communities in Southwestern Manitoba languish because the communities cannot afford to preserve the records or make them accessible to the public. In order to establish and sustain effective archival services, small communities, such as Brandon, may do well to consider cooperative approaches to archiving in which resources are shared and local organizations act as partners in archives. In Brandon, a

⁷³ Shawn Ankenman, *How can you help? Bake a cookie, lend a hand...* (Brandon: Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, 2008) p. 6.

cooperative approach to archiving could involve partnerships between a community archives and existing local organizations.

Many of the archival records in Brandon are held by small, independently-operated organizations. While a wealth of archival material is available, this material is dispersed throughout the city and the provision of access to it is relatively uncoordinated. Brandon's Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and General Museum Advisory Committee could provide a framework through which to coordinate Brandon's archival resources. Sensitivity to localism should be considered when convincing existing organizations to participate in a community archival venture. One respondent to the community archival questionnaire suggested that coordinating the creation of archives should involve "talking about how all parties could benefit from a central archives" and "approaching other smaller archives as equals."⁷⁴ Essentially, developing a collaborative framework for a cooperative archives should involve identifying unique ways in which existing community organizations can actively participate in archiving.

The groundwork for a cooperative archival venture in Brandon could be laid by following up on the asset mapping processes conducted as part of Brandon's Cultural Development and Diversity Strategy. For instance, conducting a survey of local privately held records could offer insight into the possible scope of the community archives' collecting mandate. Between 1987 and 1991 an inventory of archival resources in Southwestern Manitoba was created by the Manitoba Heritage Foundation.⁷⁵ Tom Mitchell, Archivist at the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University, stated that an archival project he wished to undertake was to create a bibliography of archival resources in Southwestern Manitoba. Ideally, such a resource would be placed online in order to make it accessible to the region. Mitchell's version of the archival bibliography could be viewed as an opportunity to map Southwestern Manitoba's archival assets.⁷⁶

Asset mapping processes involve bringing people together around a positive identity and collective cause. Emphasis on uniting behind a collective cause is somewhat divergent from the traditional needs-based approach to community planning. The disadvantage of

⁷⁴ Participant 75, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 11 July 2008.

⁷⁵ Roberta Kempthorne et al. *Inventory of Archival Material in Western Manitoba: Volume 1*. ed. K. S. Coates, J. C. Everitt, and W. R. Morrison (Brandon: Brandon University Press, 1987).

⁷⁶ Tom Mitchell, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey.

relying solely upon needs-based planning is that articulating needs often pits citizens and community organizations against one another. Instead of focusing on a strategic community goal, needs-based planning often devolves into political turf wars with the most vocal stakeholders dominating a project rather than involving the community. Southwestern Manitoba's propensity for localism may provide an ideal environment for the conflicts associated with needs-based planning to arise. Instead of competing for a few key organizational roles, an asset mapping approach would value the unique contributions each community stakeholder could make to an archival institution.⁷⁷

Asset mapping can identify potential stakeholders for an archival project as well as the locations of records that can be archived. Designating community stakeholders in a community archival project involves forming an archival mandate. An archival mandate should define the reason why the archives exists, the manager or personnel responsible for the archives, as well as the roles and responsibilities of archivists, volunteers and other people working at the archives. With respect to the acquisition of archival materials the mandate should specify what records will be collected and the rights of people who donate materials. Guidance as to who can access the archives and under what conditions is also necessary.⁷⁸ Creating an archival mandate can be an exciting process in that it allows community members to imagine the potential an archival institution may have for their community.

Asset mapping is only one step in the process of creating a community archives. The asset mapping process should be accompanied by planning approaches to preserve and make accessible archival records. Archival programming will require the participation of both professionals and local volunteers. Records professionals can ensure that a community archival institution is developed in a systematic fashion according to professionally sanctioned principles. A systematic approach to archival development may be especially important in pursuing a cooperative archival venture in which records from multiple organizations and individuals based on multiple recordkeeping systems are brought together in one institution.

⁷⁷ Ankenman, *How can you help?* p. 10.

⁷⁸ National Archives of Australia, *Keeping it for the Future! How to set up small community archives* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2007), pp. 8-9.

Unfortunately, lack of adequate funding can make hiring archival and records management professionals difficult for small communities. Some small archival institutions have acquired professional archival services on a part-time basis or, where possible, enlisted the aid of an archives advisor. In the case of Brandon, the sheer scale of archival work to be done would likely necessitate the hiring of full-time staff. A part-time archivist cannot address 125 years worth of archival records in need of attention by working a couple of mornings a week. A community archives will require dedicated staff.

While professional archival staff is important to the development of an archival program, the potential contributions of volunteers should not be overlooked. Marlene Miller, an archivist at the Girl Guides of Canada, Manitoba Council Archives, highlighted the importance of working with local support when she said that “small archives operate based on spirit and pride, not financial funding.”⁷⁹ Indeed, many of the organizations in Brandon that currently retain archival records rely partially, if not entirely, on volunteer support in order to operate. The inclusion of local volunteers in archival processes can mobilize local knowledge in pursuit of the community goal of archiving.

Volunteers can provide support in creating archival descriptions, providing contextual information about archival materials and alternative interpretations of archival materials. Extensive use of volunteer support in archival endeavours has manifested itself in the concept of “participatory archiving.” Participatory archiving involves harnessing the knowledge of archival users to create enhanced descriptions and interpretations of existing archival collections.⁸⁰ For instance, a long-term resident of Brandon may be able to provide anecdotal information about a local organization or event. Participatory archiving is still a relatively new concept and may be challenging to implement. The most critical consideration is whether or not participants regularly contribute to a participatory archives and whether or not their contributions are adding value to descriptions.

Further assistance in developing a community archival institution may be obtained through national and provincial archival support networks. At the national level, the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) has taken several steps to assist the development of municipal archives. For example, the ACA has a Municipal Archives Special Interest

⁷⁹ Marlene Miller, “Community Archives Questionnaire,” Survey, 10 April 2008.

⁸⁰ Isto Huvila, “Participatory archive: towards decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualization of records management,” *Archival Science* 8, No. 1 (March 2008): pp. 15-36.

Section (MASIS), which facilitates discussion between municipal archivists and people interested in developing municipal archival programs. A community wishing to establish an archival program may be able to contact MASIS to gain some perspective on the unique challenges facing municipal archives. The ACA has also produced a resource booklet entitled *Municipal Archives* to assist with the development of archival programs.⁸¹

The archival community in Manitoba can also obtain considerable support from the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA). Indeed, many respondents to the community archival questionnaire stated the AMA provides critical support to archives, without which some small archives may not be able to survive. The AMA's Advisory Services Program provides advice on establishing archives and advice on establishing effective organizational policies and procedures. Aside from advice on establishing archives the AMA serves as an excellent networking organization for archivists in Manitoba. Through the AMA's Rural Archives Group the City of Brandon may have an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other community archival organizations in rural Manitoba.

The concepts of asset mapping and cooperative approaches to community development suggest that there may well be merit in a community archives in Brandon partnering with other local cultural institutions. As mentioned earlier, institutions such as The Rooms in Newfoundland have demonstrated the benefits of clustering cultural organisations. In Brandon, the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba and Brandon Public Library are already located in the Towne Centre, a downtown mall. The General Museum Advisory Committee has already stated an intention to create a general museum and archives downtown and perhaps space could be found in the Towne Centre. A clustering of cultural institutions could lead to the creation of a cultural hub in downtown Brandon.

A partnership between a community archives, museum, art gallery and library may also prove beneficial from an operational perspective. The overhead costs of facilities and personnel could be shared between participating institutions. Collectively, the institutions participating in a multi-use cultural facility may be able to pool the necessary funding to obtain the services of professional conservators, computer programming experts, or other personnel smaller institutions may have difficulty affording. Furthermore, a multi-use

⁸¹Association of Canadian Archivists, *Municipal Archives: Promoting Efficiency and Effectiveness* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 2001), pp. 12-14.

facility could facilitate the development of synergies between the professionals working in a multi-use cultural facility. Ultimately, collaboration between libraries, art galleries, museums and archives in Brandon could lead to the creation of a first-rate cultural facility.

Overall, while developing a community archives in Brandon certainly faces many challenges, there are many support groups archival planners can turn to. Utilizing the community economic development practice of coordinating and mobilizing local resources in order to achieve common goals may help to overcome several of the challenges facing community archives.

Regional Implications for a Community Archives in Brandon

Brandon's status as a regional centre in Southwestern Manitoba may mean that a community archives in Brandon could serve a regional constituency in Southwestern Manitoba. When participants in the community archival questionnaire were asked what mandate a Brandon archives should have the responses were varied. A mandate to serve Brandon and Southwestern Manitoba was the most common suggestion, supported by 17 of 44 respondents. An additional 5 respondents supported the notion of an archives serving Brandon and Southwestern Manitoba, but felt that archival service should only be provided to towns and municipalities that were willing to provide meaningful financial support for archival services.

The second most popular mandate, supported by 8 respondents, was for a Brandon archives to collect municipal and private records directly related to Brandon. The fact that all 8 respondents supporting the establishment of an archives with services confined to Brandon were from Southwestern Manitoba is noteworthy. Archival records are connected to community identity and representatives from communities surrounding Brandon seemed to feel that, by transferring their records to an archival institution in Brandon, they would be giving away their local identity. Three respondents from Southwestern Manitoba expressed a willingness to become involved in a community archives in Brandon as long as conditions were in place to ensure that their communities did not lose control over their own records.

Twelve respondents were unwilling to comment on the type of mandate an archives in Brandon should have. Respondents who would not comment often stated that they had insufficient knowledge of Brandon to speak to the community's archival needs or to navigate

Brandon's local political environment. Ultimately, these respondents are revealing that archivists must have a hand on the pulse of the community in order to provide appropriate local archival service.

Overall, responses to the community archival questionnaire reveal how complicated the development of a community and regional archives can be. Issues ranging from practical financial concerns to sense of community are revealed to be at stake when the development of a community archives in Brandon is considered.

Hugh Taylor has suggested there is considerable merit in keeping records close to the geographical area that generated them. With regard to community archives, Taylor suggests "photographs in particular, but also documents, reflected pasts still living in the memory of local residents and therefore had a strong personal appeal that went far beyond a vague nostalgia."⁸² Taylor espouses a type of bioregionalism, in which archival policies are based on geographical and environmental, rather than economic or political, boundaries.

The appeal of Taylor's bioregional conceptualization of archiving was evident in the responses of several respondents to the community archives questionnaire. Several participants from Southwest Manitoba recognized the potential contributions an archival institution could make to their communities but stipulated that such an institution would need to be geographically close for their town to participate. The desire to retain local archival records in the community that generated them is understandable. After all, how can an archival institution support local development if it does not retain records locally?

Although keeping archives local helps them to connect with a sense of community identity, there are practical issues, such as cost, that may make funding a large number of local archives difficult. Archival facilities are costly to operate and maintain and many small communities simply may not be able to afford them. One respondent suggested that archival records from the Brandon region "could be stored in Brandon, until the small communities develop their archival centres. Then, these small town collections could be transferred where they rightfully belong."⁸³ That temporary solution may be difficult to implement, even if area municipalities provided some funding for the care of their records at an archives in Brandon. Other partners may not enter in if one or more can opt out at will, remove their records and

⁸²Taylor, "Revisited," p. 14.

⁸³ Lucille Bazin, "Community Archives Questionnaire," Survey, 19 March 2008.

funding, and leave the remaining partners with the ongoing infrastructure costs that had to be incurred to accommodate the partners' records before any were removed.

Developments in information technology and post-custodial archival theory have reduced the need and desirability of archives to have physical custody of these records. Traditionally, archivists had placed a great deal of stock in accumulating all of the records of a particular creator into comprehensive fonds located in one archives. In practice, acquiring complete fonds is exceedingly difficult as various institutions may hold records generated by a single creator. Consequently, the notion of fonds as a literal physical grouping of records loses much of its meaning. Terry Cook has suggested that, rather than struggling to bring fonds into a single location, archivists may do well to adopt a post-custodial approach to their work. Essentially, archivists working in a post-custodial system should focus more attention on the intellectual control of fonds than the physical control of the records.⁸⁴

Rather than focusing on storing all records in one place, archivists may instead focus on describing all records in a single place. A single archival description may be applied to records in multiple locations and could better explain the context in which the records were created and used. Hence, archivists would not lose sight of the provenance of a group of records even though these records may be spread over considerable distances.⁸⁵ Theories of bioregionalism and post-custodial archiving suggest that if the City of Brandon and neighbouring municipalities did wish to collaborate on a regional archival presence without establishing a common central archival repository, there are sound ways of doing so. Archival stakeholders in Southwestern Manitoba could work together to create more regionalized archival services.

The initial focus of establishing an archives in Brandon should probably be on delivering service to the citizens of Brandon. Because of Brandon's traditional reluctance to manage its records, a community archives may be faced with the daunting task of processing records from the past 125 years. Furthermore, archival processing is only part of the work required to develop a functioning community archives. The City of Brandon has traditionally been reluctant to invest resources in historical initiatives and if City Council were to agree to

⁸⁴ Jeannette A. Bastian, "Taking Custody, Giving Access: A Postcustodial Role for a New Century," *Archivaria* 53 (Spring 2002): p. 89; Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions," *Archivaria* 35 (Winter 1992-93): pp. 24-37.

⁸⁵ Cook, "Concept," pp. 24-37.

support an archives, it would be prudent for the archives to demonstrate quickly its value to that community. Using the city's records to support community economic development initiatives will require a considerable expenditure of resources on public programming. Demonstrating the value of archives to the citizens of Brandon is likely to be a major undertaking and attempting to deliver programming at a regional level may be unrealistic during the archives formative years. Ultimately, the most practical way of operating a community archives in Brandon may be to adhere to the community economic development mantra: "by the community and for the community."

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the potential connections between archives and community development using Brandon, Manitoba as a case study. Archives are not typically considered to be cornerstones of community development. They have tended to be viewed as useful for a limited range of historical purposes that seem to have little to do with a community's pressing current concerns and future hopes and plans. This is an unfortunate caricature of the value of historical research. Lack of a community archives has hindered pursuit of knowledge of Brandon's history. There is significant scope both for further academic and non-academic historical research. Archives can also play an array of new roles in communities -- from addressing environmental concerns to helping to promote tourism. The ability of archives to contribute to community development has thus grown considerably in recent years. The emergence of the knowledge-based economy has the potential to redefine the value of archives and the records they retain. Using knowledge to deliver products and services in innovative ways is becoming a source of competitive advantage. Community planners are increasingly recognizing the value of applying local knowledge to stimulate growth in cities and towns. This thesis examines how a Brandon community archives could support the main objectives community planners have outlined in the city's 2004 community strategic plan.

To do so, the thesis examined community-oriented public programming initiatives by archives in Canada and elsewhere. This revealed the diversity of activities archives can support. The thesis then explored how Brandon might adapt these experiences in developing a community archives. Brandon is facing tremendous change as it becomes more culturally and economically diverse. Brandon's community strategic plan, *Shaping Tomorrow Together*, provides a number of steps that can be taken to help Brandon adapt to change and thrive in the future. Knowledge is a common element of many of Brandon's community strategic plan's initiatives, and archives can play a key role in managing this knowledge. Archives can act as a storehouse and access point to community and wider knowledge – the resource necessary for Brandon to participate in the knowledge-based economy. Ultimately, the potential applications archives can make to Brandon's future growth are limited only by the degree to which Brandonites are willing to employ local and other knowledge for

community development projects.

Community archives must have the support of the local governing council. However, this support may not be easily obtained unless councillors are willing to reconsider the values they typically assign to cultural projects, a category with which archives are likely to be associated. Gord Hume, a City Councillor and Cultural Planner in London, Ontario, states that strong community leadership is necessary for community-based cultural projects to succeed. Hume asserts that community-based cultural projects are possible, but that “we won’t do this by thinking small, allowing council debates to focus on minor flaps instead of major projects, and by having small minds elected to do small things.”¹ Advice from individuals or organizations that have experience working with municipal government and who know how to keep community projects on track would be useful in the process of establishing the archives proposed by this thesis.

This thesis provides a very limited notion of what appraisal in a community archives might entail. Collecting records that truly represent a community is likely to be a difficult task. The very act of selecting which records represent a community is exclusive in that it recognizes some records as being more valuable to a community than others. While archives may strive to include a diverse array of community records the reality is that archives cannot collect everything and the records of some community members will be excluded. Appraisal in community archives is a complex and tremendously important subject, but a subject that fell outside of the scope of this thesis.

This thesis purposely avoids the subject of digital archiving. This is not intended to diminish the importance of digital archiving, which is indeed vital to the future of community archives and any other archives since all archives must address the key and as yet unsolved problem of preserving indefinitely records 'born' or created in electronic form. If this problem is not solved, there simply will not be community or other archives in the digital age. Digitization of records created in other media could play a tremendous role in delivering regional archival service and proving the value of archives to the general public and allowing through Web 2.0 technologies greater public input into (or interaction with) archival activities. Adequately addressing the subject of digital archiving in community archives

¹ Gord Hume, “Canadian Municipal Cultural Planning and Economic Development,” *Municipal World* 118, no. 11 (September 2008): pp. 5-6.

could easily be a separate thesis subject in and of itself. This thesis focuses instead on the underlying rationale for community archives. It must be made convincing for there to be any hope of addressing the digital archiving issues.

Although many in Brandon may still need convincing, community archives could prove to be exceedingly beneficial to the city and surrounding region. The archival records of the City of Brandon, its non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens contain much of the collective knowledge of the community. Community archives have the capacity to act as centres of local knowledge, providing a resource that the citizens of Brandon can use to participate in the knowledge-based economy and support many other aspects of community well being.

Establishing community archives in Brandon need not be perceived as wasting taxpayer dollars on historical files that few people use. Rather, a community archives can enable enterprising Brandonites to harness local knowledge and improve the way they live and work by building on past local experiences. Funding archives with a community economic development mandate should not be a sign that community planners are wallowing aimlessly in the past, but are using existing local knowledge to build for the future.

APPENDIX A

Archives and Community Development Questionnaire

Traditionally, archives have not been viewed as essential components of growing communities. Archives have been viewed as institutions of marginal interest that few people, aside from academic historians and genealogists would use. Contrary to popular belief, archives have the potential to play an integral role not only in documenting the history of their constituent communities, but in community development generally. An archives acting in conjunction with a records management program can enable a community to store its collective knowledge for use in future development initiatives. This knowledge may be used to support tourism, cultural growth, education, and economic development. Knowledge is becoming an increasingly important asset in community development as the knowledge based economy is emerging and community economic development, which in addition to economic growth encourages the development of culture, education, public safety, environmentalism, health care, social inclusiveness and other areas of society. Overall, archives can provide a resource that many members of the community can employ to pursue their own development initiatives. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify your perception and opinions of the role of archives in community development. Your expertise as an archival professional or expert in a field of community development will enable me to further explore and develop the concept of community archiving, based upon what you think of the concept and how you envision it being implemented.

***By **archiving** I mean involvement in the following functions:

Appraisal, which is the process through which collections and individual records are selected for retention in an archives.

Arrangement and Description, which is the process through which archivists prepare records for use by researchers. This includes the creation of finding aids and descriptive information about the records and/or collections, as well as their physical arrangement in archival folders and boxes.

Public Programming, includes the creation of exhibits, displays and website projects, the holding of conferences, as well as other activities that promote both the archives itself and specific records with the archives.

Conservation/Preservation, is the process through which records are given either preventative or restorative attention in order to ensure their continued existence. This work is done by or with the advice of a professional conservator.

***By **records management** I mean involvement in the following functions:

The systematic control of contemporary records maintained in the offices of their creators and for day-to-day use by people in their work.

***By **community archives** I mean:

An archives funded primarily by a government with a mandate to serve that government and the community. A community archives should undertake projects designed to collect the records of the sponsoring institution and the community.

Members of the community could play a key role in community archives, working with professional archivists.

Please be aware that the provision of name and title are optional. This information would, however, be useful in providing context for your comments.

Name of Participant: _____

Position/Title: _____

1. To your knowledge, what roles do archives and records management play in your community and institutions you are involved in, or other communities and institutions elsewhere that you may be aware of?
2. To your knowledge, what impact do archives and records management have in your community and institutions you are involved in, or other communities and institutions elsewhere that you may be aware of?
3. What roles could archives and records management play (and what impact could they have) in your community and institutions in addition to what you now see and identified in questions (1) and (2) above?
4. What would enable the additional roles to be undertaken and their impact to be felt?
5. What would make it difficult to undertake the additional roles and thus experience their impact?
6. How do you think these difficulties (from question 5) might be best addressed?
7. Does your community have a community development plan? Does it include a role for archives and records management? If so, do you know what the role is? If you know, what is that role? If it does not include that role, why do you think it has been left out?
8. Do you know whether your community is in the process of developing or revising a community development plan?
9. Do you see a role for you or institutions you are involved in while supporting the creation or improvement of archives and records management programs in your community and these institution(s)? If so, what role do you think they could play?

10. Do you see a role for other individuals or institutions in supporting the creation or improvement of archives and records management programs in your community and these institution(s)? If so, who are they and what role do you think they could play?
11. Do you favour the creation of a public archives for Brandon that is funded by the city? If so, what mandate should it have? (please check one):
- Archiving of Brandon city government records only?
 - Archiving of Brandon city government records and a wider range of municipal government records from Southwestern Manitoba – if funding from these other municipalities was obtained for archiving their records in the Brandon archives?
 - Only archiving records from non-governmental institutions and private persons related to Brandon?
 - Only archiving records from non-governmental institutions and private persons related to Southwestern Manitoba?
 - Archiving Brandon city government records and records from non-governmental institutions and private persons related to Brandon?
 - Archiving Brandon city government records and records from non-governmental institutions and private persons related to Brandon and Southwestern Manitoba?
 - Other (please elaborate)
12. Do you have suggestions for the creation of other types of archives in the Brandon and Southwestern Manitoba area that could also serve these communities?
13. Are you aware of any archival services to the city and area provided by archives elsewhere – such as the Archives of Manitoba, Library and Archives Canada, and the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections?
14. Do you have suggestions for archival services to the city and area from archives elsewhere - such as the Archives of Manitoba, Library and Archives Canada, and the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections?

Thank you for your participation!

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