

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE CARNIVAL:  
FORCES DETERMINING THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF AN OCCUPATIONAL SUBCULTURE

by

GLORIA LORRAINE MATSKIW

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For Al, Laurel, David and Margaret  
who made this possible

## ABSTRACT

This study is based on a five year period of fieldwork with carnivals at "B" Agricultural Fairs in the province of Manitoba.

The carnival is an enterprise which constitutes part of the mass outdoor amusement industry. As a distinctive work area the carnival can be considered a geographically mobile service center contracted by Fair Administrators to sell outdoor entertainment in the form of mechanical rides, games of chance, live performances, refreshments and souvenirs at a locally scheduled, time-limited community event.

A "distance" is maintained between the carnival personnel and the communities and general public participating in the midway activities. A degree of aversion and occasional hostility is directed toward the "carnies" by the patrons. Through participant-observation and research of literature, I suggest that this contention appears to be the result of two major forces. One is the occupation itself in which the constant mobility, the unconventional work hours and the type of product being marketed (entertainment) are considered suspect because of the threat they pose to the Protestant work ethic. The

second force can be found in the historical background of the circus out of which the carnival has grown. The circus exploitation of customers or "grifting" led to state and provincial fees and fines and the rise of a bad image which continues to influence communities and customers to some extent to this day.

This study has set out to demonstrate that subcultures, like most minority groups, devise their own means of overcoming social and economic disadvantages. Carnival personnel have been compelled to develop a social grouping in which they maintain occupational networks and social aid organizations for their own protection.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: THE CARNIVAL AS A WORKFIELD

#### A) The Problem.

The major focus of this thesis will be on the social and economic conditions which have contributed to the emergence and maintenance of the subculture, and what might be considered a closed society and occupational community, recognized as "the carnival". The carnival as a workfield is not to be confused with the annual Carnival rites celebrated by Latin American and West Indian cultures although many social processes are shared by both systems.

Mass outdoor entertainment, by self-definition, may encompass various amusements from events like horse racing to circus performances to tented evangelical gatherings. More specifically, apparent common features have been used to create separate categories in the industry and therefore horse racing now falls under the heading of "sports", circuses become "theatrical events", while revival

meetings are included in "religious activities". Commonalities shared by the enterprises which are considered the outdoor amusement industry are a combination of food and novelty booths, live shows or displays and, most important, mechanical rides.

In Canada and the United States this multi-million dollar industry ranges from large stationary private and corporate owned Disney-like theme parks occupying hundreds of acres of land and open year round, to smaller provincial, state and regional fairs operating for a few days annually on community-designated recreation lots, and featuring varied attractions, one of which is hired travelling carnivals.

The carnival, as a distinctive work area, can be described as a geographically mobile service industry selling outdoor amusement. Profits are recognized through the promotion of entertainment for customers who actively participate in the recreational operations. This portable amusement park takes the form of mechanical rides, games of chance, sideshow performances and the sale of novelties and food; it is often referred to popularly as a "midway" from its historical origins in America. (See Chapter II for further details.)

Permanent theme parks are large architectural structures that specialize in "shops, restaurants, rides and live entertainment all oriented about themes" (MacKay, 1977:27). Aside from their permanent location, the other major difference is that theme parks do not offer games of chance as part of their entertainment in the same way that carnivals do. "Skill"-testing games may occur in the other types of the outdoor amusement industry, but customer participation usually is based on entertainment only and not competition for reward or "prize" as is the basis of carnival games of chance.

The National Association of Amusement Parks, Pools and Beaches sponsored the research of W. Mangels and the result was a historic record of the amusement industry published in 1952 in which he writes of the game concessions as:

There is, . . . a wide gap between games of skill and games of chance. The courts have many times been called upon to decide whether certain devices constituted skill or chance games. It is conceded that no American amusement park or resort which permits and fosters games of chance can escape public scorn. (Mangels, 1952:191)

Games of skill are traditionally sanctioned. They had their origins as shooting galleries and the ancestry of these last is traced to the medieval bow-and-arrow era when the weapon complex was for both warfare and

protection and still a hunting tool for aristocratic sport and peasant subsistence. Games of chance merely promote the vice of gambling. Most employees of games units in sedentary parks are paid a set wage, while many carnival game operator earnings are based on a minimal salary plus a percentage of the daily "take". Therefore, carnival game operators are generally more aggressive in their customer approach.

MacKay (1977:27) states that stationary sites simply take "the dirty carny atmosphere" out of traditional outdoor amusement. The imputation of "dirty" applies to consumer/seller relationships. Theme parks present "sanitized" family recreation in a congenial well-manicured environment. Their advertising campaigns emphasize contented families, an image their employees are highly trained to promote -- smiles are mandatory.

Mobility, transiency and the social separation between the seller-worker and the buying public may be considered some of the features which have produced a closed carnival community and subculture whose workers are suspect and otherwise excluded by and excluding of the larger society. In Chapter II data will be presented which explores the growth of the "dirty carny" image that has been "sanitized" out

of the other types of outdoor amusement and discusses that particular aspect of the carnival business.

A theme park is a commercial enterprise constructed as a stationary self-contained fantasy town. Customers pay one entry price at the gate and then may participate in any and all amusements without further outlay of money except for refreshments and souvenirs; or in some such enterprises they receive a book of coupons to spend at the entertainments of their choice, once again not incurring further expense except for food and souvenirs. The attitude of patrons at stationary amusement centers is one of high expectations of pleasure for which they are prepared to spend a considerable amount of money.

A carnival, on the other hand, is a hired mobile entertainment center "playing" a "spot" for a scheduled time period. A carnival is only part of a specific event like a fair or festival and does not constitute the entire purpose for the holiday. In many cases customers must lay out money several times at a fair: the gate fee, grandstand entertainment, refreshments, souvenirs, items purchased at independent commercial booths, and individual carnival attractions. Within this highly competitive

atmosphere the "carnies" are transient strangers involved in the direct selling of the intangible product of "fun" and "unnecessary" and even "useless" merchandise -- cheap souvenir items such as plastic spiders bobbing from sticks. These are generally offered as "prizes" to customers who have been encouraged by fast-talking carnival employees to participate in a game of chance for a specified amount of money. Although large expensive items are displayed as the prizes offered, a considerable amount of skill and expense are necessary for the customer to win these "prizes". In order that the customer not leave the booth empty-handed, an inexpensive trinket ("slum") is awarded for effort, but if he/she persists at the game, paying the fee again and again, he may trade his smaller prizes for one of the larger and more expensive awards.

Outdoor amusement in North America is indeed a big business and big business is organized to make a profit. A chairman for the Taft Company, a United States firm supplying the financial backing for several entertainment enterprises in the United States and now partner in Canada's first large theme park, "Wonderland" in Vaughan, Ontario, says of the outdoor amusement industry: "It's a fluffy-sounding

business, but once you get behind the merry-go-round, it's very complex." (Macleans, April 16, 1979:34)

In 1977 a systematic study of the permanent amusement centers in the industry in the United States estimated 127,000 people employed and the total gross revenue at \$1.3 billion, with theme parks contributing 63.9% of this total, themed attractions 20.3% and ride parks 13.7% (Cameron and Bordessa, 1981:12). A precise figure for carnival personnel employed or gross revenues of carnival units is not available.

In order to present a concise view of the outdoor amusement industry, I have constructed a typology on page 8. The hierarchy is based on the gross revenue of each type of amusement. The first three listed in the typology are stationary while the last, the carnival is mobile. Each of the categories in the typology has varying forms within it. This study deals primarily with the last category, that of carnivals. A classification of carnivals is included in the discussion of methodology, pages 11 to 14.

## FIGURE 1

## TYPOLOGY OF OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT INDUSTRY

Type of Amusement	Features
Theme Parks	<p><u>Main Focus:</u> elaborate rides: e.g., underwater submarines; also family oriented live entertainment such as singing groups, bands, dancers.</p> <p><u>Additional Attractions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshments - restaurant atmosphere as well as fast-food outlets.</li> <li>- Souvenir shops.</li> <li>- Novelty exhibits: e.g., historical panoramas, animated cartoon characters.</li> </ul> <p>* Stationary.</p>
Themed Attractions	<p><u>Main Focus:</u> a unifying idea: e.g., sea creatures, reptiles, with performances by the trained animals, also zoo-like exhibits with some effort at an educational level of information.</p> <p><u>Additional Attractions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshments - fast-food outlets primarily, but some restaurant facilities are available.</li> <li>- Souvenir and novelty shops.</li> <li>- Usually some rides.</li> </ul> <p>* Stationary.</p>
Ride Parks	<p><u>Main Focus:</u> a multitude of rides ranging from elaborate thrill types to small "kiddie" units.</p> <p><u>Additional Attractions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshment booths of a fast-food type; may have a restaurant.</li> <li>- Souvenir and novelty shops.</li> </ul> <p>* Stationary.</p>
Carnivals	<p><u>Main Focus:</u> Rides and games of chance.</p> <p><u>Additional Attractions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshments - fast-food service.</li> <li>- Novelty and souvenir booths.</li> <li>- Sideshow exhibits.</li> </ul> <p>* Mobile</p>



The outdoor amusement industry is a highly competitive enterprise with many factors playing roles in its successes or failures. Uncontrollable forces like weather can drastically affect attendance and even ruin a carnival owner in one year. Severe rain or heat curb attendance and in May, 1980, Mount St. Helens volcanic ash covered a festival site prior to set up. Weather affects the economic success of rural agrarian communities which constitute the larger clientele for carnivals. The carnival is a part of the annual rural fair. These ceremonials and festivities are part of the social relations and cultural traditions which compose the solidarity of a community (Wolf, 1966:7; Bennett, 1969:81-85).

Rides are a requisite for financial success. They generally bring in over 50% of the profits\* and are clearly the magnets that amusement business operators use to draw customers. They are expensive machines. The rides manufacturing companies like Zamperla Inc. of East Brunswick, New Jersey, and Chance Manufacturing of Wichita, Kansas (Amusement Business, January 30, 1982) invest millions of dollars

\* Themed attraction parks which do not always offer rides like Reptile Gardens in the Black Hills of South Dakota, focus primarily on numerous elaborate live exhibits and demonstrations to draw their paying customers.

in research and development of their ride-creations. These structures do not sell cheaply -- a standard corkscrew loop (elaborate roller coaster) has a price tag of \$1.2 million (Wittebort, 1977:172). Therefore, experienced labour and mechanical expertise must make up a portion of the industry's employees. They service, operate and transmit to helpers the skills necessary for the smooth functioning of these huge mechanical units. These are but two aspects of the outdoor amusement business and its intricate network. The many enterprises constituting the carnival, the nature of their merchandise and the different worker skills will be further discussed in Chapter III.

#### B) Objectives and Hypothesis.

I shall argue that the carnival has developed to provide social and economic security in the form of an occupational community and subculture for its employees and managers. Because the carnival is a service industry and therefore dependent upon its customers, its interaction with these takes place primarily where the carnival employees carry out their roles as agents of the carnival or as clerks, selling merchandise to the consumers. The "carny"-client relationship is a contradictory one. It is at

once a face-to-face exchange that calls for trust and yet exploits that trust by "profit-taking" for cheap merchandise. A history and a tradition of carnival cheating overshadows this interaction, but the clientele that attends the carnival, buys its rides and games of chance also affects in its turn the nature of the interaction with carnival personnel.

The friction that often results between the transient strangers -- the "carny"/sellers -- and the attending buyers (the local community) has created the image of carnival workers as untrustworthy social outcasts. Therefore, by establishing a closed -- at times almost secret -- social formation of their own, with specific codes, rituals and argot, the carnival members can provide support for each other in their outsider status, and through their solidarity maintain the economic security of an employment network.

This brief study should contribute to the studies of the many subsystems that are integrated into the whole social formation of contemporary North American society.

#### C) Methods of Research.

Specific literature regarding carnivals is scarce and therefore most of the data in this study

has been collected through fieldwork during the months of June, July and August -- the prime carnival season in Manitoba -- for a period of five years from 1977 to 1981. Contact was established with "carnies" through our independent craft enterprise (handmade jewellery) which my family has set up at many Manitoba community fairs.

Over the five years, 1977 to 1981, my family rented space from the local fair administrators in each separate town as an independent commercial booth in the "novelty" category (specifically, jewellery). Returning to the same places each season for several years reinforced our bonds with the carnival personnel. During those years we camped, socialized and conducted our booth with the carnival personnel of the same two carnivals. Thus we were ultimately accepted by the carnival employees as part of their social structure. Many other independent dealers also rented ground space for individual shows in this manner but did not follow the entire geographical circuit with the particular carnival with which they had shared one show "spot". We did move, in Manitoba, with the Canadian carnival directly from Morris to its next spot, Swan River, for example, and with the American unit directly from Portage La

Prairie to Carman. See page 21 for our travel itinerary.

Of these five years, only the last three were carried out with the conscious plan of research in mind, but by this time we were established well enough to know that formal interviewing and questionnaire format would have immediately dissolved any of the relationships that had taken many years to cultivate. Therefore, data was collected through informal conversations and then recorded after the daily stint at our booth. Additional data was collected through a series of over one hundred slides taken at the carnivals. There were also advantages in being a family unit attached to the carnival as the family members contributed information gained through contacts with their own age and sex groups.

In December 1979 I first became aware of the existence of a carnival village in Florida -- a kind of headquarters for carnival personnel, and I visited the state to determine the name of the village and its location. In 1980 I returned and stayed in the village of Gibsonton in December for a period of three and a half weeks during which time a large number of the carnival members were in residence. This allowed me to observe their

interactions from a different perspective, one in which they were the sedentary community members and I was the outsider. Although I did not meet any of the carnival members from the Manitoba circuit during my stay in the village, word did spread of my arrival and one of the members telephoned me. My acceptance in the carnival village was made easier when it was known that I was familiar with the Cammack carnival personnel.

The two carnivals in this study were "B" level carnivals, as graded by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture.\* This category is based on the amount of prize money awarded for livestock competition. (See page 121 for further details.) Prize money awarded at these exhibits is largely funded by the Department of Agriculture grants and depends on the category the fair occupies. The carnival rank is assigned by the Provincial Department of Agriculture based on the rating of the fairs it services, not from any inherent features of its own.

"A" level carnivals, like the Red River Exhibition held in Winnipeg, the largest city in Manitoba, have in excess of forty rides and seventy

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\* Telephone interview, 1980 with Mr. Noton, and personal interview, 1983 with Mr. R. M. Deveson, Manitoba Fair and Exhibition Division, Department of Agriculture.

games and novelty booths. Their showdates are longer than either "B" or "C" carnivals, as they play a single location for at least a week, and can expect an attendance of 300,000 to 350,000 for the time period. A "C" carnival has a maximum of five rides and six game, food and novelty booths. The rides are designed primarily for the adolescent and pre-adolescent age group, sometimes referred to as "kiddie" rides. They are not as large in structure nor as elaborately decorated and are, presumably, cheaper investments. These are the rides one may see in publicity promotions in Winnipeg shopping malls or those of outlying towns. A "C" fair is not eligible for government grants.

The "A" and "C" carnivals were rejected as research possibilities because an "A" level carnival had too large a crew (in excess of three hundred employees), too frequent a turnover of basic labourers (new help was hired in every "spot" although a core group travelled with the unit), and only one "spot" -- the city of Winnipeg -- was played in Manitoba where the research was conducted. There were thus no opportunities to observe similarities or make comparisons with other "A" units. The "C" level minimal carnivals were held mainly at small

village fairs or shopping malls for only one or two days. Their employees were casual labourers who did not continue within the carnival subculture more than one season, nor often even after a particular stand of a couple of days in one location. Moreover, "C" carnivals did not include independent booth dealers as the carnival profits were so small that their managers/owners were usually hostile to any competition that independents might bring. The rides and concessions of a "C" midway generally belong to one owner and perhaps his son or some other such partner. The "C" carnival people consider their work as part-time seasonal employment and travel only short distances from their home base. (The carnival term for someone regularly hired close to home is "forty miler".) Any large trucks used in the summer for hauling their carnival equipment are also their property and become in the winter a means of employment in truck driving. The above carnival typology is based on the Manitoba Department of Agriculture classification of fairs, and fieldwork notes provide the details. The carnivals referred to in this research may receive different classification outside of the Manitoba boundaries.

Two "B" carnivals were considered for the study primarily because of the opportunity to interact



with both of them several times during each Manitoba carnival season. There were many similarities, in equipment, employee numbers, internal cohesiveness and initial ground layout. Their differences were also significant. The two carnivals of this study travelled throughout Canada and the United States but I say them only in the province of Manitoba. One carnival originated on the west coast of Canada, journeyed throughout the western provinces as far east as Manitoba, and performed in three Manitoba towns: Thompson, Morris and Swan River. The second carnival came from the United States. Its rides were housed primarily in Colorado in off-season where the major owner and investor resided. The game and food booths went to Florida in winter because the majority of them belonged to independent dealers who lived in that state.

As will be explained in detail in Chapter III, a carnival of the "B" scale is usually comprised of a major investor who owns the largest and most expensive equipment, i.e. the biggest rides, and several independent concessionaires who may own one or more smaller rides or game, novelty and food booths. The American circuit covered a large part of the central states and the south-eastern seaboard, as well

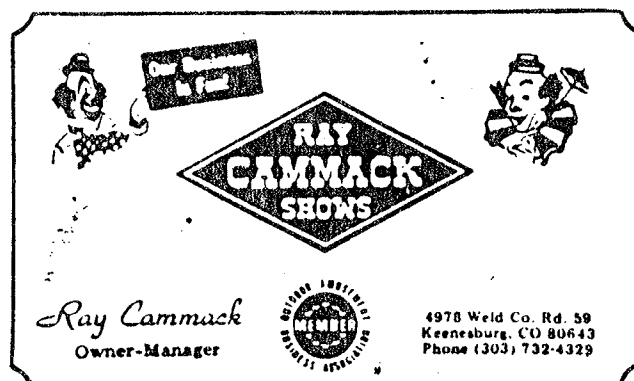
as several "spots" in Canada's prairie provinces. Three stands in Manitoba are: Dauphin, Portage La Prairie and Carman. (See itinerary sample on page 19.)

Climatic conditions in the United States make a longer carnival season possible than in Canada. As a result families who work in American carnivals are "on the road" nine to eleven months of the year. With Canadian carnivals, since the season is considerably shorter, children usually remain in the schools and family life differs from that in the American carnivals. Carnival season in Canada may run for five to six months, May to September or October. During the remainder of the year employees turn to casual labour or draw unemployment benefits.

The particular towns that we eventually settled upon for our own itinerary contracted the two "B" carnivals that are the basis of this study for their annual local fairs. They can be considered a reasonable representation of "B" scale fairs in Manitoba since there are only six such fairs in the province and we participated in five of them.

The hiring of carnivals is done by fair administrators in each town or city. The selection is based on bids submitted by the administrative personnel of various carnivals for the "spot" they

FIGURE 2. ITINERARY OF AMERICAN CARNIVAL, 1979.



1979 ITINERARY		
April 20-29	Battle of the Flowers .....	San Antonio, Texas
May 3-6	PENDING	
May 11-20	Southglenn Mall .....	Denver, Colorado
May 22-26	PENDING	
May 28-June 3	.....	Rapid City, South Dakota
June 5-10	Trinity Athletic Booster Club .....	Dickinson, North Dakota
June 12-18	Fraternal Order of Eagles .....	Bismarck, North Dakota
June 21-24	Bottineau County Fair .....	Bottineau, North Dakota
June 28-30	Dauphin Exhibition .....	Dauphin, Manitoba Canada ✓
July 2-4	Weyburn Exhibition .....	Weyburn, Saskatchewan Canada
July 5-7	Estevan Exhibition .....	Estevan, Saskatchewan Canada
July 8-11	Portage Exhibition .....	Portage la Prairie, Manitoba Canada ✓
July 12-14	Dufferin Exhibition .....	Carman, Manitoba Canada ✓
July 18-21	Melfort Exhibition .....	Melfort, Saskatchewan Canada
July 22-25	Battleford's Exhibition..	North Battleford, Saskatchewan Canada
July 28-Aug. 4	Montana State Fair .....	Great Falls, Montana
Aug. 7-12	Central States Fair .....	Rapid City, South Dakota
Aug. 14-19	Fremont County Fair .....	Riverton, Wyoming
Aug. 24-Sept. 1	Western Idaho State Fair .....	Boise, Idaho
Sept. 3-8	Eastern Idaho State Fair .....	Blackfoot, Idaho
Sept. 10-21	PENDING	
Sept. 22-30	National Dairy Cattle Congress .....	Waterloo, Iowa

## TEXAS DATES TO FOLLOW

The itinerary and scale of the American-based carnival for a six month period from April, 1979 to September, 1979. The Canadian unit personnel did not display printed timetables to my knowledge, but each member was aware of their destinations so perhaps route lists were circulated.

desire. The bid competition is based on a percentage figure -- ten to twenty percent of the carnival financial profit calculated on ticket sales for rides, concessions and sideshows for that "spot". The "spots" are usually located on a circuitous route. The carnival offering the highest bid or "rent" gets the contract for the desired location and if it has provided the community with satisfactory service in the past, mainly in the form of financial gain, it is offered first chance at bids for the following year.

Some of the communities prefer to sign a long term contract with a carnival which may be from three to nine years. The American carnival whose route we covered had a three year Canadian contract, while the "A" carnival in Manitoba -- Conklin Shows -- had a nine year contract with the PNE (Provincial National Exhibition) in Vancouver, Canada. As itineraries are planned well in advance, these commitments for the following year are settled by the last day of the carnival performance in a local spot if everyone is satisfied. The onus is on the carnival to comply with government regulations of safety and insurance coverage in respect to the rides, tents, canopies, food sanitation and most importantly, honest games of chance.

FIGURE 3

FIVE YEAR CHART OF BOOTH DATES  
WITH THE TWO "B" CARNIVALS

Year	Town	Dates	Carnival identity
1977	Portage La Prairie	July 11-13	American
	Carman	July 14-16	American
	Morris	July 20-24	Canadian
1978	Portage La Prairie	July 10-12	American
	Carman	July 13-15	American
	Morris	July 19-23	Canadian
	Swan River	July 27-29	Canadian
1979	Dauphin	June 28-30	American
	Portage La Prairie	July 9-11	American
	Carman	July 12-14	American
	Morris	July 18-22	Canadian
	Swan River	July 26-28	Canadian
1980	Dauphin	June 26-28	American
	Portage La Prairie	July 14-15	American
	Morris	July 16-20	Canadian
	Swan River	July 25-27	Canadian
1981	Morris	July 15-19	Canadian
	Swan River	July 23-25	Canadian

## CHAPTER II

### THE LITERATURE AND CARNIVAL LIFE

In surveying the literature related to this study of carnival people, the following two main categories of materials provide background and functional analysis:

- A) historical resources which establish the origins of carnivals and the development of the image of carnival personnel as untrustworthy undesirable;
- B) socio-cultural accounts which will illustrate the establishment of subcultures and occupational communities and how they function as means of providing security for members through their identification with a cohesive group.

A) Historical Background and the Development of the Problem.

Carnival history can be traced to antiquity. Acrobats and jugglers entertained for a few coins in the market places in the Middle East during ancient

times. By the medieval period in Europe strolling minstrels, food hawkers and novelty peddlars provided their services on market days and festive occasions. (Bryant, 1972:181)

In order to gain an understanding of employment or "work" in the outdoor amusement industry, it is necessary to consider the opposite concept -- "non-work", that is, recreation or leisure activities, the times that interrupt and relieve daily routines and drudgery. Leisure is the activity the customer is pursuing, or the entertainment service he is purchasing, while attending a carnival. British social historians (Ribton-Turner, 1887; Thompson, 1963; Davis, 1966; Pimlott, 1968; Jones, 1971; Malcolmsen, 1973; Bailey, 1978) regard the dividing line between work and leisure as obscure in English pre-industrial culture before the 1830's, that is, before economies were based upon the production of commodities, whether useful for basic human economic needs or for leisure time consumption.

In the Middle Ages, festivals and holidays were closely linked to seasonal activities of the agricultural cycle and were generally celebrated as religious occasions offering homage and thanks to various deities who governed the crops and community

life and welfare. They were times of rest from daily work and were scheduled at frequent intervals during the year. All pleasureable pursuits were encouraged which provided a break in the monotony of daily life and diet. Dancing, feasting, processions of the guilds (in urban centers) and miracle plays attracted itinerant musicians, entertainers, acrobats and jugglers, and itinerant merchants. On many of these occasions civil authorities imposed controls and curfews to curb petty crime and drunkenness.

The medieval fairs of Europe were 'world famous' and still are to historians as the settings in which mercantilism took hold and early capitalism began its fateful development. Carnivals are a part of the founding institutions of capitalism. The mobile carnival began as a medieval institution that has retained until now some of its original features.

Changing attitudes flourished with the Reformation which became more than just a religious struggle. It was part of a broader stream in which other powerful currents moved -- economic, social and political. The growth of commerce gave rise to a powerful middle class made up of business men and



merchants. This produced in America in the early 1800's the itinerant peddler, a quick-thinking East Coast individual who had access to the New England seaports and their multitude of products, and who realized the market potential of the expanding western populations (Wright, [1927], 1965).

The rise of capitalist relations of production (wage labour) and the factory system required the cultivation of new and regular working habits for the working class. In England,

Opposition to . . . holidays came from employers, irrespective of political and religious sympathies, who were affected by the absenteeism and loss of efficiency to which they led. (Pimlott, 1968:26)

Regardless of the development of the factory system, in rural areas fairs and harvest celebrations continued even though the "work ethic" for the workers, if not their employers, came to dominate everywhere. Although Sunday alone was allowed to remain a day of rest, taverns were permitted to operate. These quickly became the centers of entertainment for the workers, featuring gambling, dancing and theatrics until once again a multitude of amusements flourished.

In the midst of these festivities there existed those individuals whose means of survival

became dependent upon selling amusement services for these occasions. In England:

The aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and the hard times of the 1820's had forced thousands of Englishmen into the travelling life, and among them were many who hoped to make a living as entertainers. (Dallas, 1971:9)

Ribton-Turner (1887) says that vagrancy frequently resulted in situations of social oppression in which the labourers were forced to lead a transient existence for subsistence.

. . . a great increase of tramps and vagrants took place from transient circumstances, such as the beginning of the hay season in Middlesex, . . . the hop season in Kent . . . or some local fair or horse race.

(Ribton-Turner, 1887:251)

Fairs in England served as a form of employment in which these transients survived by selling their goods and services.

The emergence of the factory system demanded new standards of discipline for the working class urban dwellers. Market fairs with their transient entertainment and peddlars were regarded as ". . . the antithesis of everything that static industrial, utilitarian society stands for." (Dallas, 1971:3)

Hard work became a virtue and leisure a vice: it was a case of power and profit in place of egalitarian exchanges. Promoted as more acceptable than

travelling carnivals were the stationary amusement parks or "pleasure gardens" that grew up on the outskirts of European cities under merchant control. They provided food, games, displays, wild animal acts and acrobatic performances. Picnic sites where organizational gatherings held annual outings were considered the forerunners of the permanent American amusement parks. Refreshments were sold and there was participation in various competitive activities like bowling and shooting games, while primitive swings and merry-go-rounds provided further entertainment. (Bryant, 1972:181)

Although the permanent amusement sites were already providing a structured and controlled form of entertainment for the city dwellers in America, the more isolated consumers in the rural areas were serviced by a motley variety of travelling showmen. By the late 1800's "Medicine Shows" with cure-all potions, theatrical groups, merchant-peddlers and individual gamblers and adventurers were a familiar part of the frontier landscape. The most highly organized travelling entertainment, however, was the circus. The circus brought epic presentations of physical skill and daring, wild animal acts, clowns, games of chance and a display of exotic novelties and

food for sale. The early shows were small; the animal acts were often the individual effort of a trapper or woodsman exhibiting a trained bear to the curiosity of a frontier town. As interest grew the first lion was imported to American shores in 1716 (Inciardi and Petersen, 1973:592). Other exotic animals followed and soon enough resulted in rudimentary touring menageries. About the mid-1700's acrobatic performers likewise travelled the remote rural areas. In pursuit of higher box office proceeds the two kinds of shows merged in the 19th century:

During the "Hey-Day" of the circus, a period existing roughly in the period between 1880 and 1920, the circus represented an entertainment and even educational extravaganza to a people both physically and psychologically bound to their predominantly rural environment. (Sweet and Habenstein, 1973:584)

But the growth in magnitude of the circus only reflected the urbanization and industrialization of the nation. The westward expansion and railroad construction contributed to further mobility of the circus out to an unlimited audience.

The patterns of relationship between the circus and the various communities gradually became characterized by conflict. Many of the circuses began adopting a marginal practice known collectively as "grifting", and the communities responded by imposing

difficult conditions upon the shows. "Grifting" covers a wide range of activities directed towards the illegal procurement of money from its customers.

. . . shell game, three card monte, cat rack, slum skillo, and a score of alternative games of chance . . . are controlled by footlevers and other mechanical devices, or by the deception of manipulative dexterity.

(Inciardi and Petersen, 1973:591)

The circus exploited the customers in other "grift" activities as well. Short-changing was practiced by some ticket-sellers and concessionaires. The term "Butcher" names those concession agents who overcharged for trinkets that were generally useless; pickpocketing was prevalent.

It is necessary to understand that "grifting" was an important part of the circus operation. It was functional in so far as salaries, operating costs and funds to purchase non-interference from community officials were often met from this source. Therefore, although a circus manager may have reprimanded a "grifter" in front of an irate customer, in actuality "grifting" was encouraged by the management since its returns contributed a substantial part of the circus income. It has been estimated that,

. . . as much as 80 percent of circus profits prior to the turn of the century were derived from confidence outfits and crooked gambling games. (Inciardi and Petersen, 1973:593)

The operators of these games were not paid salaries; they gave ten percent of their "take" to the management. Nor did "grifters" constitute part of the regular personnel of the circus acts or performers (clowns, acrobats, etc.). They were a specialized group of business agents unto themselves. But their dealings simultaneously paid the salaries for the rest of the circus members and tended to tar the performers with the same brush of 'shady reputations'.

. . . members of the profession of circus grifting had little contact with . . . the circus performers with whom they were travelling; they lived and toured in separate quarters and gathered in a common locality during winter seasons.

(Inciardi and Petersen, 1973:593)

The communities countered by imposing difficulties of varying degrees upon the circus, from raising the rental fee of the lot to increasing legal measures of control. Statutory regulations were instituted and created demands upon commercial enterprise in general, but these laws were differentially enforced in regard to the circuses. Their mobility, and thus continual exposure to new localities and new regulations, became their liability. Yet, paradoxically, the circus enjoyed great popularity and maintained its profitable

activities since "grifting" was able to flourish in a mobile setting devoid of permanent ties and duties in its relationship with the hosting communities. Circuses simply changed their identities and appearances before returning to a location which had once taken severe exception to their crooked tactics.

Over time the rural populations acquired more mobility and the communities experienced increasingly sophisticated forms of entertainment which served as competition to the circuses. Some circuses completely folded while others amalgamated into large enterprises under one name. This move forced the big business units to abandon their most overt practices in order to maintain harmonious relationships with the communities to ensure return engagements; corporate success depends to some extent upon the reputation acquired in customer relationships and the quality of merchandise being marketed.

A further transition that occurred in the circus structure involved a basic alteration in its relationship with the community. A sponsorship system developed in which a civic or fraternal organization like the Shriners or Lions contracted the circus for a flat fee or a minimum guarantee and a percentage of

ticket sales. The organization represented a specific charitable project and was then responsible for the location, licencing and any other pertinent obligations (Sweet and Habenstein, 1973:587-90).

This transition characterized the changing relationship between the circus and community officials to one of cooperation in place of conflict. It is a functional economic adaptation; the circus now sells as a package deal under the umbrella of "fund raising" by voluntary organizations. The buying-selling relationship is between the sponsoring organization and the public.

The evolution of the circus brought changes for the "grifter". Games of chance were no longer part of the framework of the circus which now offered only performing acts. "Grifting" then moved to independent ventures in mobile carnivals and fairs. The first American carnival originated with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (Kasson, 1978). The Exposition represented the efforts of various reformers to "provide a model of social order, cohesion, and tranquillity . . . to elevate public taste and reform public conduct" (Kasson, 1973:11) in view of the commercial havoc that urban-industrialization had created.



It was discovered though, that the crowds of visitors wore "a tired, dutiful, melancholy air" (Kasson, 1973:23), and so, grudgingly, "festive elements" were introduced in the form of thrilling rides, colorful peddlars and "varieties of heathen". This recreational area was formally called the "Midway Plaisance" (Kasson, 1973:23), and erected at a safe distance from the cultural exhibits, reflecting the polarity between

. . . the arts that refined and those that merely amused, those that fortified the spirit and those that gratified the senses, . . . those that blessed and those that cursed.  
(Kasson, 1973:23)

To the chagrin of the organizers of the Exposition, the independently owned commercial rides, games and exotic performers were more popular than the cultural exhibits. Kasson (1973:19-21) describes the cultural exhibits:

. . . a stunning ensemble of opulent buildings flanking a formal basin 2,500 feet long, rimmed with colonnades. . . . To the east rising one hundred feet above the lagoon was Daniel Chester French's colossal statue "The Republic", garbed in a Grecian toga and holding aloft an eagle perched on a globe and a liberty cap as symbols of protection and freedom. . . . [Beyond] lay the Peristyle, a series of forty-eight Corinthian columns, one for each of the states and territories, . . . Here was the embodiment of the genteel ideal of culture: "correct" and cosmopolitan, tasteful and urban, dignified and didactic.

But the legacy of the cultural Exposition was its Midway and the resulting stimulation of a new industry -- that of travelling carnival shows designed "not according to the civic values of cultural elites but according to the commercial values of entrepreneurs determined to attract a mass audience." (Kasson, 1973:26)

The transiency of the independent "grifters" in the various carnivals was similar to their careers in the circus: the individual "grifter" simply changed organizations as his act was uncovered. Carnivals inherited not only the "grifters", but also the bad image initially established by the early circuses.

Since the 1970's most large corporate carnivals have been making major efforts to eliminate many of the games and acts that previously exploited the public, for the same economic reasons that circuses dispensed with them. (Amusement Business, 1980-82)

A more detailed discussion of specific "grifting" in carnivals can be found in Chapter III.

In the 1800's circus life in America was rough and violent. Few lodgings were made available to its performers and those inns or hotels that were to be found asked rental fees in advance, then chained their cutlery to the table. Today, nomadic

carnival personnel are seldom able to get hotel or motel accommodations in the towns they service. They sleep in their back-pack tents, in the trucks used to haul the equipment or inside the "joint" (booth) they operate during the day. The following two cases illustrate this point: a motel at which we stayed in one town in Manitoba treated us very well; they knew we were going to be demonstrating silversmithing with the fair, but they also were aware we had been invited by the town's agricultural society. A woman from the Canadian carnival had previously registered at the same motel. She told us that when she came in, after midnight, there were no towels or bedding in her unit. She accepted the conditions without complaint because she didn't want to disturb the management. The following year she hauled a small house trailer behind the truck carrying her equipment. A previous year in that same town, a young man had been refused a room altogether when it was discovered that he was with the carnival.

Fairs have been considered as a disturbance to the social order of a community since medieval times. The illegal activities of some of the early forms of entertainment were responsible in part for this reputation, but the local merchants also

contributed to the disruptive behaviour of the patrons by introducing the sale of intoxicating beverages. Writers like Thomas Hardy have utilized the fairground as a setting to describe the social conditions of their time. The character, John Henchard, in The Mayor of Casterbridge, sold his wife and child after overindulging in alcohol at the local fair. Today "beer gardens" are operated by the local administrators and merchants in some of the towns that host a fair and inevitably the R.C.M.P. must be called upon for assistance most nights.\* The beer gardens are seldom closed down because the local businessmen profit from this venture. But a complaint from a customer about a carnival game, ride or food concession can warrant immediate closure of the particular unit and a lengthy investigation by community authorities which often lasts until the closing day of the fair. (See page 37 for a media report of a customer complaint.)

\*"Beer gardens" have a specific meaning in Manitoba which is different from its historical origin in German-Austrian culture. In Europe they are simply drinking places, indoor or outdoor, comparable to "pubs". In Manitoba, however, they are "temporary taverns" set up by an organization participating in a community event - a fair, a centennial celebration, etc. One of the towns in the study still maintains a beer garden at the fair; one town discontinued it due to the undisciplined behaviour of the inebriated clients; two towns have never had the attraction, to my knowledge; in the fifth town a hotel about 100 yards from the fairground holds its own beer garden periodically.

FIGURE 4. NEWSPAPER REPORT OF A CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

THE TRIBUNE, Wednesday, June 25, 1980 7

# Police to probe midway game

By David O'Brien  
Tribune Staff Writer

Winnipeg police will investigate a game at the Red River Exhibition in which a prize advertised as "large" is the smallest prize offered to winners.

Vice Insp. Bill Heinz said Tuesday an investigation would be conducted following a complaint to The Tribune by a woman who won "large" but ended up with the smallest prize in the game.

Claudette Beauchamp, 27, said she will never return to the Ex after being "ripped off" in an atmosphere that "stinks."

A sign on the game offers players two alternatives: Knock two bowling pins off a platform consecutively in two throws for \$1 and "win choice," or "win large" by knocking down the pins with one ball for 50 cents.

Mrs. Beauchamp said she played the 50-cent game and after succeeding on her fourth attempt, demanded her "large" prize.

The female attendant said "I would only receive a small stuffed animal. (But) she made no attempt to reach for that either and

hand it over. She completely ignored me and went on to other people," Mrs. Beauchamp said.

Finally, the attendant said she could have the smaller prize if she wanted it, she added.

The game had two prizes, the jumbo one called "choice" and the smaller one called "large." Wendy Hall, concessions manager for the Conklin Shows, said the prize paid is "large" because there are four prize sizes available in similar games, small, medium, large and jumbo.

"I'm sorry she (Mrs. Beauchamp) didn't bring it to our attention. We could have explained it to her and helped straighten everything out," Ms. Hall said.

Insp. Heinz said police would investigate for possible fraud or to determine if there was any reluctance to deliver the prize.

A newspaper report of the community response to a customer complaint. Winnipeg Tribune, June 25, 1980.

Sutherland ([1924], 1970) studied behaviour systems in crime and applied his theories to the early travelling American circuses which were the forerunners of carnivals. He sees the growth of their unfavourable image as a product of:

(1) mobility; (2) the circus/carnival takes money out of the community; and (3) community hostility to the circus/carnival is owed to the belief that it corrupts local morals. The hostility was often expressed through the community demanding an exorbitant lot rental fee from the circus as well as payment for any other expenses that could be fabricated. Sutherland suggests that on this basis circus/carnival populations

. . . have undoubtedly been selected . . .  
for that type of life. They have had a  
hard, unsociable life, and they have  
[become] hard, unsociable people.  
(Sutherland, [1924], 1970:18-19)

Sutherland's analysis can be seriously doubted; mobility and economic grounds are the only valid points in his argument. The hostility is a product of the kinds of relations between the circus/carnival, the hiring community and the attending public, the customers. Hostility follows from the mutual distrust between any transient commercial enterprise and its customers, especially in small rural communities that operate daily on a

basis of neighbour and kin reciprocal exchanges. (See Chapter IV for a discussion of the relationships between the carnivals, the communities and the clientele in this study.) The morality issue raised by Sutherland represents as much an ideological view as does his opinion that carnival/circus personnel are "selected for" as "hard unsociable people". Some communities set no better example themselves in their dealings with the mobile amusement units and the patrons of the festivities, and yet Sutherland does not consider these community inhabitants as equally "hard" and "unsociable".

Literature and history have created a somewhat negative but exotic image of the carnival as a refuge of criminals and misfits in society; an image which remains current. The same charges which have been levelled at the "carnies" for centuries may be part of the attraction that keeps crowds returning today. "Carnies" are among those members of society at the receiving end of the prejudices of society that go with class, race and other "discriminations". Law enforcers, as state servants, add to the conflict. They are protective of the local community norms and are notorious for their implacable negative biases against "carnies". This

is evidenced in the carnival personnel's constant fear of being shut down by local authorities or the R.C.M.P. Carnival people avoid arguments with the law or aggressive customers; they know that unpleasant consequences will surely follow. From the one hundred issues of Amusement Business, the carnival newspaper\*, that were examined for this study, it appears that a "token" arrest occurs periodically as a reminder of the economic consequences that follow should someone in the carnival industry be suspected of using illegal games.

In the following case, although the confiscated equipment, games and even money were returned to the carnival after the gambling charges were dismissed, the time period over which they were held (July 2-August 29) covered the major work season; this represents a considerable impediment to if not harrassment of, carnival business operations:

Show owner Fred Britton said three confiscated trailers and their contents, confiscated games, court appearance cash bonds and cash taken from the carnival office wagon were returned. No charges were filed against any Britton staff members during the July 2 raid at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. . . . According to Britton, a meeting with FBI representatives after the hearing [August 29] elicited the promise that the Federal Agency would look into establishment of guidelines for games.

(Amusement Business, September 27, 1980:26)

\* A description of the Amusement Business appears on page 53.



The show owner had no option but to accept this situation. If he had challenged the "error" by suing for losses incurred, he would only have tied up his equipment for a longer period.

The industry obviously stands accused and guilty until proven innocent. Since the information was published in an article in Amusement Business, most carnival personnel will be aware of the steps taken by the authorities. The Amusement Business also cites many examples of pleas from carnival owners for some clear guidelines from authorities as to what constitutes a violation. The following article expresses the frustration felt by one carnival owner regarding a particular state:

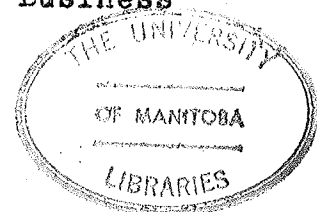
The state started enforcing an old law on the books that states if the element of chance outweighs the element of skill on a game it is considered a gambling device.

The problem is interpretation. One inspector says it's okay, the next one doesn't. . . .

They (the state) seem to be keeping the whole matter very vague and will not issue concrete guidelines for us to follow. I have operated for 18 years with that statute on the books and now I don't know what is right and what is wrong. A violation is considered a misdemeanor, but you can be arrested for running a gambling house and have your equipment confiscated.

One week it's okay, the next, we're criminals. Until I get some direction, I don't know what to do. (Amusement Business, January 10, 1981:21)

Carnival personnel have established an organization known as the Outdoor Amusement Business



Association (OABA) to seek equal treatment under the law and it will challenge discriminatory law enforcement in some states. Unfortunately, the lack of uniformity in regulations from state to state or province to province creates snags for the carnival association and in most cases stalemates are reached instead of solutions.

Carnival personnel, whom Sutherland ( [1924] , 1970) considers "hard" and "unsociable" and thereby "selected for" the life they lead, are experiencing the same frustration of powerlessness that a farmer is when he receives a mere pittance for his cattle while watching meat prices soar in supermarkets, or an assembly line factory worker who draws minimum subsistence wages and then must pay an excessive price for the very finished product on which he worked. In all three cases, "outside agencies" seem to exploit these victims unfairly and are beyond the victims' control.

Inflation has hit carnival concessionaires as severely as it has farmers and factory workers. In 1959 carnival concessionaires could purchase a plush, three-foot-high teddy bear for \$5.00 and offer it as a prize. Today that teddy bear costs \$12.50 while \$5.00 buys only a nine or ten inch

stuffed rabbit. Other sought out prizes [for Bingo games] such as blenders, are too expensive for concessionaires to purchase any longer, and so the quality of prizes has declined. (Amusement Business, June 7, 1980:14) Although gate, ride and game prices have been raised to cover escalating expenses, the rising cost of equipment and fuel has caused many carnivals to consolidate in larger units or to travel shorter distances. Inflation for the carnivals is most visible in the deterioration of the quality of the merchandise that is distributed as prizes.

Every community government charges a carnival various permit fees and rentals for the period it operates in its vicinity. This dates, in fact, from medieval times, and today it remains the basic relationship between community and carnival -- the relationship that most clearly accounts for a level of hostility. A case in point, cited in the Amusement Business (May 31, 1980:24) tells us that thirty-one showmen and fairmen testified for two hours on May 14, 1980, at a hearing in Madison, Wisconsin on the issue of a proposed increase from \$25 to \$135 per ride fee (my italics) for ride permits. The outcome was to table a further meeting to October

for a decision. Among the testimony offered, according to the Executive Director of OABA, was a statement that the carnival industry had already paid more than \$400,000 in fees annually to that state alone.

Inflation and community and state regulations that take a substantial revenue from a service industry by various forms of taxation create hostile relationships, and especially so in an industry already traditionally categorized as dishonest and suspected of marginally legal operations.

B) The Establishment and Functions of Occupational Subcultures.

Early literature which developed the categorized concept of subcultures initially focussed on characteristics from the point of view of the dominant establishment -- from which any "deviation" whether of style or structural function becomes non-normal and even delinquent. Cressey (1970:iii) states that a great deal of "the 'sub' in 'subculture' [has been] taken to mean 'inferior'." Specific occupational groups as well as ethnic and religious groupings, the original subcultures, are now included in the subculture classification. This broadens the

formulations and boundaries of the concept if it does not necessarily clarify it. Much of the published carnival material suggests that "deviancy" and other marginal traits are attributed to the carnival lifestyle: "The Carnival as a Marginally Legal Work Activity", (Easto and Truzzi, 1974); Odd Jobs: The World of Deviant Work, (Miller, 1978); Deviant Behaviour: Occupational and Organizational Bases, (Bryant, 1974).

A subculture has some characteristics in common with the society at large and with other subcultures as well. It also exhibits certain traits which identify it as a particular entity. Carnival personnel cannot help but develop a distinctive subculture that results primarily from their social isolation and nomadic mobility. Carnival work may be regarded as undesirable by "normal" society, but its employees are still a part of the established American and Canadian social formations and the carnival industry and its workers contribute to the pursuit of profits just as any other business firm does.

Within any occupation, the way workers relate to one another and to their work is determined by those who consume and/or profit by the labour and the nature of the job. A particular type of work/

non-work relationship is illustrated in carnival employment -- that of the occupational community. Salaman (1974:19) defines an occupational community as representing

. . . a particular relationship between men's work and the rest of their lives.  
. . . Members of occupational communities are affected by their work in such a way that their non-work lives are permeated by their work relationships, interests and values.  
. . . their work-friends are their friends outside work and their leisure interests and activities are work-based.

Some workers deliberately avoid and reject associations with their place of employment and fellow wage earners once their work day is over; but the opposite is true within the carnival organization. Owing to its mobility and unconventional work hours, the carnival place of employment is also bed, board and recreational site for its employees. When the carnival work day is over, leisure interactions are conducted with fellow workers. Persons outside of carnival people are seldom if ever around because the hours of the carnival work day generally begin at noon and rarely end before 1 a.m. The job hours are not conducive to socializing with the hiring-community inhabitants and this alone promotes social isolation of the "carnies". They have no choice but to accept a fusion of their work

and non-work lives.

When the last customer leaves, the carnival "shuts down", game and show tent flaps are lowered and anchored, generators that operate the rides are stilled, food concession workers wash up their equipment in preparation for the next day, and finally, the main lights are extinguished. The carnival owners, managers and many independent concession owners travel in motor homes or pull house trailers, and usually "gear down" by socializing amongst themselves for approximately an hour before retiring for the night. The remaining hired workers interact in various ways in this, their leisure time, some of which are gambling, drinking and brawling -- activities generally attributed to all carnival personnel and not really distinguishable from the leisure time activities of the rest of the working class.

Many workers sleep in the booths they operate, in the trucks that haul the equipment, or on the ground if weather permits, since most communities are reluctant to rent accommodations to carnival personnel. The "carnies" therefore prefer to sleep in their own "community".

Salaman (1974:20-21) states that an important

distinction must be made between the 'quasi' and the 'true' occupational community. He identifies as 'quasi' occupational communities those resulting from geographical isolation or which are dominated by a single firm or industry. 'True' occupational communities are the result of the features of members' work. Salaman lists three defining components constituting 'true' occupational communities:

- 1) Members . . . see themselves in terms of their occupational role . . . as people with specific qualities, interests and abilities.
- 2) Members . . . share a reference group composed of members of the occupational community.
- 3) Members . . . associate with, and make friends of, other members of their occupation in preference to having friends who are outsiders, and they carry work activities and interests into their non-work lives.

It appears that Salaman considers the 'quasi' community a forced grouping whereas the 'true' community is one in which the members choose to belong. It can be argued though, that numerous employee residential patterns exhibit the characteristics of both types of occupational communities simultaneously. A housing development near a university may list many of its inhabitants



as instructors, students, maintenance staff, clerical staff and other employees of the university which can in this case be considered a "single firm" or "industry". Although this residential pattern may be the result of the features of members' work, it is primarily proximity to that work that unites the members. They share common interests with some of their neighbours and they may seek out other members of their particular reference group in the locality to share their non-work activities. Yet, the residential area is basically only a complex which happens to be close to the university and therefore tends to house many of its employees; it is not necessarily an occupational community.

The carnival, on the other hand, also exhibits all of the characteristics of both of Salaman's types of occupational communities, and exceeds their description by a very distinctive feature. Its geographical mobility can be interpreted as geographical isolation and its single industry is outdoor amusement. At the same time the members' work roles satisfy the three criteria constituting Salaman's 'true' occupational communities while the members are mobile. But, the most important feature which sets out the carnival as an occupational

community is that when the travelling work season is over and the workers return "home", they tend to seek living quarters together within the same settlement. For the people of the Canadian carnival, "home" was primarily in and around Vancouver, focussing on the suburb of Langley, British Columbia. For the American carnival, it was Gibsonton, Florida, a village of carnival people.

Considering the hardship and discomfort of constant mobility, as well as the necessary and sometimes compulsory, confined interaction with fellow workers for periods of six to ten months, why would these same people seek to live as neighbours when their season of work came to a close? Hughes (1958:108) provides one possible answer:

Many of the specific rules of the game of an occupation became comprehensible only when viewed as the almost instinctive attempts of a group of people to cushion themselves against the hazards of their careers.

The "hazards" of a carnival "career" are the constant transiency and irregular work hours which allow little opportunity for lasting relationships to develop with anyone outside of the carnival system. The historical "petty criminal" stigma conferred upon carnival employees further inhibits social contacts.

The "hazards" also include those of social rejection and hostility to which "carnies" are subjected.

The "carnies" seek association, identification and -- most important -- security within their own occupational group. The security can be seen as two-fold: firstly, as Hughes suggests, to "cushion" the members against society's barbs, and secondly, to provide an information network about job opportunities within the carnival workfield. Most hiring is informally conducted over beer amidst familiar faces in local bars during "off season" in these occupational communities. Friends and acquaintances are called upon to provide recommendations thereby establishing not only a reference group which is aware of their colleagues' specific qualities and abilities, but also a chain of obligatory reciprocity. The network that binds the members of the carnival workfield together in an occupational community provides both job and social security for a group of people who have no access to conventional supports of society.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE CARNIVAL

To fully understand the subculture and occupational community of the carnival, it is necessary to view it from three internal perspectives:

- A) the complex network of the outdoor amusement industry;
- B) the organization of work within a carnival system; and,
- C) social relationships among members of the carnival work force.

A) The Complex Network of the Outdoor Amusement Industry.

The outdoor amusement industry as set out in the typology on page 8, is like any other business: the customers view the finished product but behind the scenes are the many intricately interwoven operations upon which the industry

depends and which in turn, the industry supports.

A very important communication network is maintained through a publication entitled Amusement Business established in 1894 and presently being published out of Nashville, Tennessee. The newspaper, popularly called the "Carnies' Bible" by those in the business, functions as a source of information for employment, equipment, insurance, location and routes of various amusement sites and carnivals, births and deaths. It is a veritable 'who's who and where at' for the mass entertainment industry. In catering to this vast industry the periodical encompasses auditoriums, arenas, funparks, fairs, expositions, shopping malls and circuses as well as carnivals, and the administrators, promoters and legislators that interact with and affect the business. It is a weekly newspaper and trade journal which can be subscribed to; it is not readily available on common newsstands. Easto and Truzzi (1974:339) write of the Amusement Business in their carnival research:

. . . the carnival frequently changes its size and content during the working season. It is not unusual for independent ride, show and concession owners to 'book' with, that is join, several different carnivals during a season. The advertisements published weekly in Amusement Business facilitate such moves, and this is one reason for the importance of this periodical in the carnival world.

Much of the material examined in this section (A) has been documented in the Amusement Business, and references will consequently be cited as AB.

Marketing and promotion play a large role in any industry. The key to successful promoting is not how much money is spent, it is knowing the market place and how best to reach and motivate it, whether the product is a stuffed plush toy, a ballet star or an electronic computer. The outdoor amusement business is a composite of many associations, organizations, suppliers and novelty jobbers striving to create a profitable venture. (See page 55 for a calendar listing of organizational meetings published in AB.) Advance sales/promotion workshops are sponsored by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions. Their spring meetings concentrate on what programs work at their respective fairs. Managers of fair committees and insurance agents attend to analyze promotional quirks to help raise the overall proceeds to the participants. For example, the vice president of marketing for a Marine World themed attraction park in California found that renting their park for company picnics in 1980 generated their most successful year ever and he shared this information with the members gathered.

(AB, January 17, 1981:12)

**FIGURE 5**  
**CALENDAR OF OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT**  
**INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION MEETINGS**

**CALENDAR**

**JULY**

**INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF AUDITORIUM MANAGERS.** Annual convention, Olympic Hotel & Park Hilton, Seattle, Wash., 27-31. (Ron Nelson, IAAM, 111 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill., 60601).

**AUGUST**

**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES.** Annual convention & exposition, Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C., 9-13. (ASEA, 1575 Eye St. N.W. Washington, D.C., 20005).

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD SERVICE EXECUTIVES ASSN.** Annual convention Hyatt Regency Hotel, Los Angeles, Calif., 16-21. (Mary Lynne Westervelt, Foodservice Relations Manager, 111 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill., 60601).

**SEPTEMBER**

**INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF AMUSEMENT PARKS & ATTRACTIONS.** Summer meeting, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tenn., 11-13. (IAAPA, 7222 W. Cermak Rd., Ste. 303, N. Riverside, Ill. 60546).

**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS ASSN.** Convention, Bayfront Emerald Beach Holiday, Corpus Christi, Texas, 27-Oct. 2. (IFA, 702 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn., 55403.)

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SHOPPING CENTERS.** Marketing conference, Hotel Bonaventure, Los Angeles, 28-30. (ICSC, 665 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.)

**OCTOBER**

**NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT & CAMPUS ACTIVITIES ASSN.** South Central regional conference, Mayo Hotel, Tulsa, Okla., 4-7. (Larry Markley, POB 10018, L.U. Station, Beaumont, Texas 77710).

**COUNTRY MUSIC ASSN.** Talent Buyers Seminar, Hyatt Regency, Nashville, Tenn., 10-12. (CMA, POB 22299, Nashville, Tenn., 37203).

**NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT & CAMPUS ACTIVITIES ASSN.** Southeast regional conference, DeSoto Hilton, Savannah, Ga., 11-14. (NECAA, Box 11489, Columbia, S.C. 29211.)

**AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TESTING & MATERIALS.** Committee F-24 meeting, Sheraton-Dallas Hotel, Dallas, Texas, 12-15. (Martha Kirkaldy, ASTM, 1916 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19103.)

**NATIONAL ASSN. OF CONCESSIONAIRES.** National convention & trade show, Hyatt Regency, New Orleans, 20-22. (NAC, 35 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60601).

**CONNECTICUT ASSN. OF FAIRS.** Annual convention, Restland Farms, N. Branford, Conn., 25. (Carl H. Bernhardt Jr., 424 Cedar Lane, Cheshire, Conn., 06410.)

**NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT & CAMPUS ACTIVITIES ASSN.** East Coast regional conference, Grossinger's, Liberty, N.Y., 26-29. (NECAA, Box 11489, Columbia, S.C. 29211).

**NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL FAIRS ASSN.** Old York Inn., Bordentown, 29. (Richard Kuhn, Sec., Dept. of Agriculture, John Fitch Plaza, Trenton, N.J. 08625.)

**WASHINGTON STATE FAIRS ASSN.** Annual meeting, Tyee Motor Inn., Olympia, 29-31. (Carline Fisher, Box AB, Moses Lake, Wash.)

**NOVEMBER**

**MASSACHUSETTS AGRICULTURAL FAIRS ASSN.** Annual convention, Governor Carver Motor Inn, Plymouth, Mass., 6-7. (Paul Corson, Topsfield Fair, Box 134, Topsfield, Mass. 01983.)

**WESTERN CHAPTER PA. STATE SHOWMEN'S ASSN.** Annual convention and trade fair, Holiday Inn, New Kensington, Pa., 7-8. (Harry Albacker, 711 Virginia Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa., 15215.)

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN ASSN. OF FAIRS.** Convention, Howard Johnson's, Rapid City, S.D., 13-15. (Mollie Searle, Box 818, Lewistown, Mont. 59457).

**NORTH DAKOTA ASSN. OF FAIRS.** Convention, Holiday Inn, Bismarck, N.D., 15-18. (Frances Vculek, Crete, N.D. 58020).

**INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF AMUSEMENT PARKS & ATTRACTIONS.** Annual convention, Marriott, New Orleans, 20-24. (IAAPA, 7222 W. Cermak Rd., Ste. 303, N. Riverside, Ill., 60546.)

**DECEMBER**

**INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF FAIRS & EXPOSITIONS.** Annual convention, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, 1-4. (IAFE, MPO 985, Springfield, Mo., 65801).

**SHOWMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA.** Annual convention, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, 1-4. (SLA, 300 W. Randolph St., Chicago, Ill., 60606).

**OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT BUSINESS ASSN.** Annual meeting, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, 3. (OABA, 4600 W. 77th St., Minneapolis, Minn., 55435.)

A calendar listing of meetings of organizations and associations affiliated with the outdoor amusement industry, updated and published weekly.  
 (AB, June 21, 1980:2)

An offshoot of the newspaper is the compilation and publication of various directories to assist members of the industry. One is the Directory of North American Fairs and Expositions available by direct mail only from the publishers of AB. The directory is considered a comprehensive, chronological cross-referenced guide to over 2,500 fairs in Canada and the United States and to over 400 Public Expositions, including home and boat shows. The information offered to purchasers includes attendance figures, management personnel to contact, budget advice, type of attractions being offered, and exhibit specifications. The guide was priced at \$29.95 in 1980.

A similar AB publication focussing on long-term engagements as opposed to the short-term fairs is The Funparks Directory, which lists over 1500 Canadian and American amusement facilities. The listing includes only those which have revenue-producing activities such as rides, souvenirs, games and merchandise.

The United States Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus Advisory Board utilizes the AB for contacts and the members making up its organization represent the many interlocking networks of the



entertainment and amusement business: American Express Card representatives, national tour brokers and representatives from airlines, hotels, restaurants, and bartenders guilds. Shopping mall marketing directors often use the AB for contacts when they wish to use amusement operations as publicity promotions. Primarily rides and live entertainment are hired and various carnival owners feel that until the negative media publicity regarding games as gambling devices is altered, a full carnival set up will not occur.

If a previous season has been successful and more money is available it may be invested directly into new rides and more expensive lines of merchandise for both novelty and game concessions and indirectly in more media and promotional ideas. Owing to the mobility of carnivals and the many small rural areas that are visited, publicity and promotions may not be done until the week of the event at which the carnival plays. Individual carnival promotions involve "Midnight Madness" when patrons pay one fee at the gate and ride "free" for the night, usually from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. Another idea is a day of free children's rides, a free senior citizens day and a "date night" when a couple may ride for a single

price. The discounts all apply to gate entry and rides which are the major attraction. Refreshments, games and novelty purchases remain at the regular price.

The future development of facilities at stationary parks is not taken lightly. A study of the site of the Colorado State Fair in Denver was commissioned by the Colorado State Legislature and the Colorado State Fair Commission. A Denver consulting firm of engineers, planners, architects, economists and scientists is providing overall management of the study while Expo-Management Associates is consultant, with expertise in the management of fairs and expositions. (AB, August 9, 1980:18)

Looking at some of the promotional methods used produces more insight into the intricate network. Discount coupons for gate entry to stationary parks are distributed through grocery chains, gas stations, and fast food outlets. In Massachusetts, Paragon Ride Park public relations director presents the following reciprocal exchange:

Another successful promotion this year was a program with Coca-Cola and Burger King. Coke ran 60 spots on several radio stations a week promoting a \$1 discount on Paragon's pay-one-price option to all wearing a Coca-Cola T-shirt.

The T-shirts were available at Burger King at a nominal price. In addition, part of the deal was for Paragon Park ride personnel to wear the Coke T-shirts with Paragon Park printed on the back. It increased our traffic, traffic for Burger King, and was good publicity for Coke! It worked for everyone! (AB, August 9, 1980:15)

Various other production industries are a necessary backbone of the outdoor amusement business. The Pioneer Balloon Company has been manufacturing balloons since 1918. The plant in Ohio produces 600,000 - 1 million balloons a day, five days a week using three shifts. Half of this product is sold to the amusement industry; dart balloon games are one of their biggest game businesses on the midway. The retail cost for a gross of balloons can be as low as one cent each to over \$1 each, depending on the size of the balloon. (AB, May 24, 1980:24)

The National Ticket Company of Shamokin, Pennsylvania, one of the first ticketing firms in the country established in 1898, has joined the ranks of the computer "quick ticket" companies in order to retain a competitive position in the ticket market. It took eight years and an investment of \$200,000 to develop and install the basic computer hardware. The company services a diverse clientele including outdoor and indoor amusements, bus tickets and parking lot receipts. The company operates a unionized plant of

210 employees and maintains a one percent growth rate each year. (AB, June 28, 1980:6)

The transit business strongly affects the amusement industry. The April 1, 1980 New York City transit strike proved that half of the Coney Island Astroland theme park's patrons come by mass transit as business was cut in half the first week of the season. (AB, June 7, 1980:16)

Moving into further developments in the leisuretime markets, Polaroid Camera Corporation lends cameras in Disney parks for refundable deposit by the park patron. Their profits come from the film purchased.

The largest financial investment in the outdoor amusement industry is in the rides. Some of the elaborate rides require a great deal of metal, i.e. Arrow Development Company of California in their Flying Turn ride use 230 tons of .375 wall pipe, twenty-five tons of structural steel and 1,000 cubic foot foundation piers. (AB, May 24, 1980:12) Worlds of Fun, a theme/ride park on the outskirts of Kansas City, services primarily a static population and therefore must rely upon variety in the attractions they offer. They recently added a \$4 million steel roller coaster from Arrow Development Company for a

"high impact" addition and began instituting a regular program of name entertainment to enable their promoters to market the park as an alternative to the movies. They also issue discount promotions to increase repeat visitation. (AB, May 24, 1980:15)

A huge extravaganza trade fair is held each year in February at Gibsonton, Florida, the traditional "carnie" headquarters in the United States. The purpose of this show is to advertise the most recent merchandise, games and rides created for the industry and more than 250 exhibits are seen every year. Carnival owners and independent concessionaires make up a large majority of the attendance since their mobility does not lend itself to regular "shopping" for new merchandise. This is also a time to make new alliances and strengthen old ones.

J. Murphy, chairman of the board of World Wide Amusements and head of Murphy Brothers Exposition, says that the carnival industry has terminal cancer and if it is not corrected that carnivals will die. (AB, September 27, 1980:28) Murphy believes a fair needs a good grandstand (live acts), commercial and agricultural exhibits, and a carnival with community support because this

is generally the prime money-maker for the area. Officials from the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival in Vermont state that over 100,000 people generally attend the festival which costs about \$125,000 to produce. Their main income is from the three carnivals set up around town. (AB, May 24, 1980:11)

In spite of carnivals being a major source of income to the community organizations at which they book, no mention is made by the fair administrations of the jeopardy to which each carnival is subjected if they are not familiar with the legal regulations in each community. And so, besides receiving a percentage of the carnival profits as well as the fees and permits for ride and game units, the communities levy fines for "broken laws" as well.

According to the AB, October 18, 1980, the OABA (Outdoor Amusement Business Association) in the United States not only aids carnival personnel in legal defence but is also seeking legislation to develop clear guidelines in game and ride law enforcement. The Association has twenty-five committees chaired by professional "carnies" and there are thirty-six veteran "carnies" on the Board of Directors. The Executive Director in 1980

stated that ". . . we all agree it is necessary to confront our accusers." The area of regulation lacks uniformity across the states and provinces of North America and many times has a fair share of incompetence, arbitrary fees and impositions at the local level.

The American Recreational Equipment Association holds annual meetings and inspection seminars to educate ride inspectors, park and carnival operators and insurance representatives in safety. An inspection agent for three insurance companies said that some inspectors hesitate to close a show that is unsafe because they are afraid of losing their job, only to have another member at the meeting comment that out of a possible 131 state ride inspectors, forty-one are ride owners and therefore reluctant to close their own business. (AB, October 4, 1980:12)

According to AB, October 18, 1980, Canadian legislation of carnivals has been written by carnival owners who have operating and inspection knowledge. A headline in the August 16, 1980 AB reads, "Canada Clicks for Cammack; Game Laws Draw His Praise." This particular carnival was the American unit referred to in this study. Cammack had praise for the chief games officer in Canada. "He doesn't want any alibis

or flats. You can put up all the hanky panks\* you want." "The main thing, as far as I'm concerned is that they have guidelines, something to live with. They've done it right up there." Cammack voiced the wish for some kind of code or standards in the United States. He said that Manitoba had stiff ride inspections with four inspectors going through the equipment thoroughly. "I think this should take place in all states." (AB, August 16, 1980:27)

The majority of the material discussed in this section (A) refers to the United States. The outdoor amusement business is a much larger industry in the United States owing to climatic and population factors. There it is a year-long enterprise. In Canada, carnivals are considered a part-time business to independent concessionaires and labourers, although carnival owners, especially of "A" units, are involved in permanent park enterprises. Canadian businesses involved in the industry have attended American meetings, organizations and associations and do have representatives in them.

There is a Prairie Fairs Association (PFA) representing Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, which meets annually, as well as a Western Canada Fairs Association (WCFA). The AB does print material

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\* Section B of this chapter describes alibis, flats and hanky panks on page 82.



submitted by these organizations. The Canadian Association of Exhibitions publishes a small newsletter ten times a year out of Toronto, Ontario, entitled Fair Scope. The information in this publication is directed primarily to fair administrators and emphasizes attractions, services and traditional features like 4-H youth activities.

The PNE (Provincial National Exhibition) in Vancouver, British Columbia and the CNE (Canadian National Exhibition) in Toronto, Ontario are the two largest Exhibitions in Canada with average attendance ranging at more than 3½ million at their summer fairs. The PNE Board has recently computerized all its functions and now has sixteen video display terminals spread among various departments and a full time computer programmer on staff. (AB, January 3, 1981) In Canada the Conklin Shows appear to be the major carnival with headquarters in Toronto. The Show has stationary units in parks in heavy tourist areas in Canada like the PNE site in Vancouver and Niagara Falls, Ontario, as well as a road show touring the major Canadian attractions (e.g., Red River Exhibition in Winnipeg, Calgary Stampede, PNE and CNE). The Show also has an American circuit which the owner says he books with the aid of an American carnival

for whom he reciprocates with assistance in Canadian bookings. (AB, January 17, 1981:22)

In 1979 Conklin grossed about \$5 million from rides and games of chance during the twenty-one day CNE in Toronto. CNE garnered \$1.7 million or approximately 35% of the gross. About 1500 people were employed by Conklin for this show. The Conklin Shows appear to have a monopoly on the "A" level Canadian circuit. The "B" level Canadian carnival dealt with in this study received no coverage in the one hundred issues of AB that were surveyed, nor did any other specific Canadian carnival with the exception of a smaller eastern unit sharing a show date at the CNE with the Conklin outfit.

As has been discussed, the outdoor amusement industry is a large and intricate network and yet its smooth functioning appears to suffer due to archaic images of illegal and disreputable operation which stem in part from uneven, unstandardized statutory regulations. Although, according to the AB, the Canadian legislation is more uniform than that of the United States and therefore fewer problems occur, it may actually be that since there are fewer businesses of this nature in Canada there is less need for such extensive regulation, or it may be that there is

simply less documentation of existing problems.

Although this section pertains mainly to the administrative strata of the industry, the negative image conferred upon the carnivals in particular, filters down to the "carnie" labourer who is the major contact with the general public. It is this particular individual at whom the media coverage and barbs of hostility are generally directed, and who experiences it every day.

B) The Organization of Work Within a Carnival System.

Carnival work organization has four divisions which overlap all along the hierarchy:

- (1) At the top there is an owner/administrative strata; generally each of these members owns one or more independent concessions or rides in the carnival and for which he employs labour.
- (2) The "booked" (hired) independents which are those people who own one or more individual rides, shows, games or concessions are next.
- (3) The third division constitutes the performers, "live acts" -- if the carnival is a very large one and desires this type of act for variety, or if the community warrants such shows. This is determined by the ticket sales for each performance.

(4) The final group is that of the workers.

Taking each of the above four categories separately, they are further subdivided. The information provided here is based on related literature and field work with two specific carnivals, and may vary when compared with other such units.

The administrative level usually consists of the owner(s) and his managers who arrange the seasonal circuit through bids they submit to various boards in participating communities. These people decide upon what equipment is necessary, then hire the appropriate independents to provide it. The main "owner(s)" is the individual with the most money invested "up front" in privately owned "big pieces" such as several large rides, often called "spectaculars", a couple of concessions or game "joints" (booths), and the huge trucks required to transport this equipment. Such an investment usually exceeds a million or more dollars. (See the advertisement on page 69 which lists the prices of second-hand equipment.) The carnival often bears the name of the owner or some consolidated form of their names if there is a partnership. (See pages 70 and 71 for advertising material representing the two carnivals

FIGURE 6. ADVERTISEMENT FOR SECOND-HAND RIDES

The following advertisement in the September 19, 1981 issue of Amusement Business is a sample of some of the prices asked for second-hand rides. The party selling the pieces may be acquiring new machinery to replace these particular pieces, or going out of business altogether.

## SHOWMEN'S MARKETPLACE

Fastest Way to Reach Showmen & Concessionaires

Advertising Deadlines (local times)

NASHVILLE (615) 748-8130; Wed. Noon/

NEW YORK (212) 764-7313 Tues. 5 P.M./LOS ANGELES (213) 273-7040

CLARKSVILLE, TENN. Wed. only (615) 648-4796 12 noon to 2 p.m.

# RIDES FOR SALE

4-ABREAST CHANCE

MERRY-GO-ROUND (Newly  
Painted) - \$100,000

CHANCE FLYING BOBS -  
\$125,000

1970 TILT (With Trailer) - \$40,000

1977 SCRAMBLER - \$40,000

1977 LOOP - \$25,000

1977 RED BARN - \$32,000

ITALIAN WHIP - \$35,000

FRENCH GO-KARTS - \$40,000

VENTURE SPACE TOWER -  
\$15,000

ALLAN HERSCHELL HELICOPTER -  
\$8,500

ALLAN HERSCHELL PONY CART -  
\$6,500

ALLAN HERSCHELL TWISTER -  
\$25,000

FLYING COASTER - \$8,500

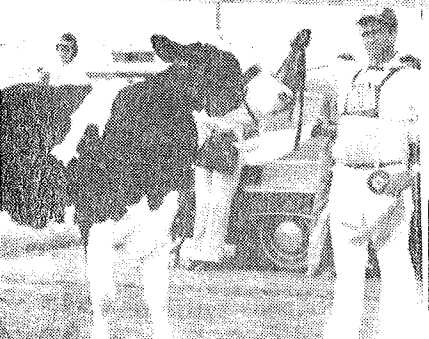
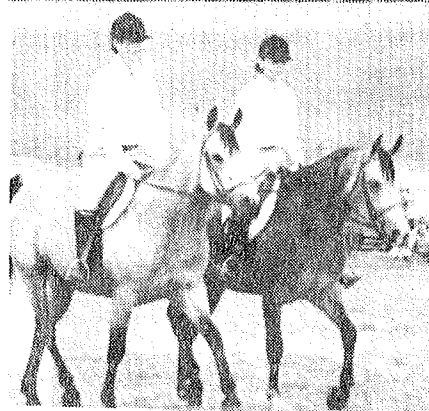
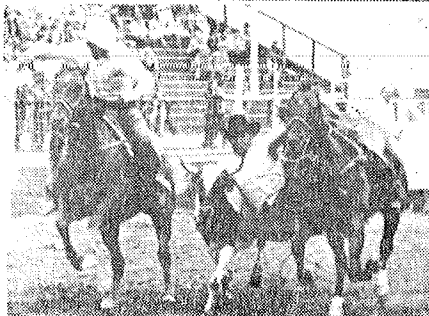
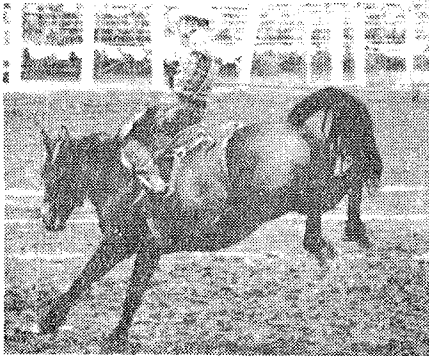
**All Rides In Excellent Condition!  
Available After Labor Day!**

**Contact: BILL HOWARD (609) 522-4829**

**P.O. Box 173, Wildwood, New Jersey 08260**

FIGURE 7. ADVERTISING CIRCULAR FOR MORRIS STAMPEDE.

Below is an advertising circular for the Morris Stampede, July 1979. The carnival being featured is the Canadian M. F. Wagner Shows, whose name appears at the bottom of this article. It is the particular Canadian unit with which this study has been concerned.



## 1979 BIG "M" PARADE WEDNESDAY, JULY 18th 10:00 A.M.

### RODEO EVENTS

Two entirely different shows daily at  
2 P.M. DST and 7 P.M. DST

#### 2:00 P.M. DAILY D.S.T.

- BAREBACK
- STEER WRESTLING
- SADDLE BRONC
- AMATEUR BRONC
- BULL RIDING
- LADIES BARREL RACING
- CALF ROPING

#### 7:00 P.M. DAILY D.S.T.

WORLD FAMOUS CHUCKWAGON RACES  
CHAMPIONSHIP PONY  
CHUCKWAGON RACES

### Thoroughbred Chariot Races

Feature: Suicide Ben Hur Chariots

FREE STAGE

Entertainment extraordinary appearing twice daily.

Dancing on the Grounds  
Wednesday through Saturday evenings.

### EVERY DAY HIGHLIGHTS

- LADIES HOMECRAFTS
- JUNIOR CRAFTS

EXHIBITION BUILDINGS OPEN DAILY

# MIDWAY

M. F. WAGNER SHOWS

FIGURE 8. ADVERTISING CIRCULAR FOR DAUPHIN FAIR.

The material below is taken from the 1979 Dauphin Fair Program pamphlet which advertises the various entertainment scheduled, including the American carnival to which this study has referred, the Ray Cammack Shows.

# DAUPHIN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

# Fair days

**At The Midway**  
*The Ray  
Cammack Shows*

- from Colorado bring
- Fisher's Wild Animals
- Kiddie Land
- Thrill Rides

*All at "America's  
Brightest Midway"*

**(22 rides  
and 50 Concessions)**

# PONY CHUCKWAGON and CHARIOT RACES

**June 28 - 6:00 p.m.**

**June 29 - 4:00 p.m.**

30 wagons run under the  
auspices of the Manitoba  
Pony Chuckwagon  
Association

*Chariots will be competing  
for the Manitoba  
Championship Trophy*

# GRANDSTAND SHOW

*Featuring*

• The Blue Ridge Quartet and Mark Four Band - leaders in business of Country and Gospel Music - from South Carolina.

• The Amazing Scalzo and Company - a magician that does everything humanly possible, a host of birds, rabbits, giant bird and a dog.

• Cook's Comedy Car - Madcap motor mix-up. The funniest automobile act ever - the epitome of joy and laughter for the young and the young-at-heart.

*[June 30 - 9:00 P.M. show will be a complete musical show by the Blue Ridge Quartet and Mark Four].*

in this study.)

The costs of operating a carnival are substantial. Repairs to equipment are costly, as is updating equipment and maintaining safety standards. There are the perennial fines which are doled out to the carnivals for the regulations with which they allegedly have not complied. There are the "payments" made to public officials in order to acquire special privileges in some locations. In a Canadian media report of a recent tax-evasion hearing of the American unit of The Royal American Shows, the following information was released to the public:

An Alberta Supreme Court judge has ruled that documents seized in a Royal American Shows police raid and tendered as exhibits at a hearing here Saturday are not to be made public.

Among the exhibits is believed to be a payoff book. . . . The book contains names of police officers in Edmonton, Calgary, Regina and Winnipeg who allegedly had received cash and merchandise from midway principals. (Winnipeg Free Press, February 21, 1983:4)

Some carnival owners provide a form of bunkhouse for their labour, usually built into the larger rides or perhaps as part of a funhouse attraction. The AB states that showers, closets, air conditioning, T.V. and laundry units are offered employees in some carnivals. These facilities were



not made known to me in the two carnivals in this study, although it is possible that some forms of these services, especially that of a laundry, existed.

During a difficult economic season a carnival owner who has already assembled a fully operating carnival may split the show into as many as three mini-units and book these in smaller towns doing short "jumps" (trips) from one town to another for only one or two days in the hope of recouping losses. The carnival's administration arranges an itinerary as much as a year in advance, but if the first few shows of the season record a deficit or if the economy is severely down, they may start booking these mini-units for small fairs that are along the route later in the season as a precautionary measure.

A sexual division of labour, status and duties exists in most of the carnival subculture and job strata, except for the performer area, where the acts are rated by the profits they bring. The negotiations with community officials are performed primarily by men at the administrative level while the money management and correspondence are traditionally handled by their female partners. Those employed in specific management tasks have been hired for their proven ability and experience

in that particular area.

Some specific tasks at the administrative level include a "lot" man who precedes the carnival to the cities and draws up a floor plan based on the equipment that will be used and the space provided by the community. A carnival traditionally occupies a "U" or horseshoe shape. There are three layers in the set up. The inner layer constitutes the midway attractions -- games, food and rides. This inner layer follows a general layout pattern with the games and food at each open end of the horseshoe leading to the largest and most exciting rides at the center of the horseshoe. In this way the customer must first pass by the food and game units on either side in order to reach the main attraction rides. This ensures that all concessionaires have an equal "shot" at the "mark" (customer). The outer layer is made up of the large truck units and resembles a protective fence, while the middle layer contains the carnival living quarters, cookhouse and personal facilities -- generally considered "off limits" to outsiders.

The "ride supervisor" is another role position in the management level. He is head mechanic and his responsibilities are the maintenance of the rides and

semi-trailer trucks and conforming to the safety regulations of the area. A third important individual is the "concessions manager". Besides assisting in the selection of independent joints hired for the routes, he is responsible for the units operating within the legal framework of each locality. One of the most important members of this administrative personnel is the "Patch" or legal advisor and public liaison person. He "buys off" the complaints whether they are city officials, the local law, or a grieving "mark". Depending on the size of the carnival, one individual may enact all of the above roles at the management level of the hierarchy, and even "belong" to the remaining roles by owning an independent joint, having his wife act as a sword-swallowing performer and his son as a working "roughie" setting up rides. On the other hand, in a very large outfit several individuals may be required to handle one chore like that of "ride supervisor".

The second level in the carnival work organization belongs to the independents. These are the persons who own one or two small units, usually game and/or food concessions and perhaps an occasional small ride or attraction like a funhouse or glass maze. Through informal verbal arrangements, and

occasionally written ones, independents are booked or contracted with larger carnival units for specific lengths of time. Although these may be "handshake" agreements, they are considered legal and binding by the parties involved because employment within the carnival work system depends primarily on network recommendations. Independents may remain with one carnival for the entire season, or book with several different large carnivals in the hope of "striking" the busiest fairs. Most independents will try to stay with one carnival for an entire season as better network relations are established through longer interaction. But if they prefer to travel to certain geographical areas or to be in shows not on the route of one particular carnival, they may book with other carnivals and plan an itinerary of their own. As previously mentioned, sometimes a carnival owner will split his unit up and send mini-carnivals to many locations and therefore cover more territory, especially if there is a two week stretch of time or more in which the major unit is not booked at a large show.

Independents generally pay the carnival administration a percentage of their "take" as well as a basic "booking" fee. In some carnivals, if an

independent wants a particular location in the grounds layout, he/she makes the request to the administration in the form of an additional "cash donation" which may vary depending on the location desired. Independents must arrive to join the main unit of the carnival fully functioning with staff and stock. They are responsible for the hiring of their own workers and the maintenance of their own supplies, i.e. foodstuffs for their refreshment concessions and novelties and toys for the game booths, although the major owner will send a vehicle to pick up these items from a supply depot if the necessity arises.

The performers make up the third group in the carnival work system. This crew consists of the freak exhibits, "girlie" shows or reviews, and thrill spectacles like motorcycle riders. Usually only the very large carnivals will carry along these amusements as they no longer draw large paying audiences. "Live entertainment" has become a more common part of our society than it was in the past. It is easily accessible on a daily basis in urban areas, and movies, television and the more recently sophisticated satellites and video machines provide a great deal of entertainment variety even in isolated

rural localities. But even in those geographical areas where "fundamentalist" churches are very popular two or even three explicit "girlie" shows will play to capacity male audiences every night. Therefore, even small carnivals that play these locations will consider a "girlie" review one of their prime money makers; they book these acts accordingly. (See the advertisement on page 79 offering a "special deal for well-flashed girl show.")

The "special deal" may take the form of eliminating the basic booking fee to the independent show owner, or allowing him to select his location on the grounds layout without paying a cash donation. Since this show is obviously going to be a feature act, the administration is banking on making their share of the profit from the ticket sales to this attraction.

The freak exhibit or "ten-in-one" (referring to ten acts under one tent roof for one price) are diminishing in popularity. According to some "carnies" this is owed to the human rights movements to eliminate "poking fun" at deformed or handicapped human beings. Yet those individuals who were legitimate "freaks" were grateful for their carnival stardom because it provided them with an opportunity to earn an income in spite of their handicaps. Within the carnival social

FIGURE 9. ADVERTISEMENT FOR EXPLICIT GIRL REVIEW.

This advertisement specifically requests an explicit girl review offering preferential treatment.  
 (Amusement Business, September 19, 1981.)

**LARRY'S AMUSEMENTS**

World's Fastest  
 Growing Midway

NEEDS FOR  
 GREAT FAIRS COMING UP

**SURRY CO. FAIR**  
 MT. AIRY, N.C. - SEPT. 21-26  
**DURHAM CO. FAIR**  
 DURHAM, N.C. - SEPT. 28-OCT. 3  
**LANCASTER CO. FAIR**  
 LANCASTER, S.C. - OCT. 5-10  
**LAURENS CO. FAIR**  
 LAURENS, S.C. - OCT. 12-17  
**KERSHAW CO. FAIR**  
 CAMDEN, S.C. - OCT. 19-24

NEED SHOW COOKHOUSE

**SHOWS:** Family-type shows such as Fun House, Glass House, Dark Ride, Illusions, Animals. Special deal for well-flashed Girl Show.

**RIDES:** Any non-conflicting Spectacular or Major such as Trabant, Zipper, Round-Up, etc. *Jim Campi, contact.*

**HELP:** Can always use good ride help. Need help for office-owned concessions.

CALL: L.D. WHEELER

KING, N.C. - SEPT. 14-19 - (919) 983-2028  
 OR 24-HR. ANSWERING SERVICE - (813) 782-8126

**George Hanneford**  
**Please Contact.**

system they received the acceptance and recognition awarded popular entertainers in the larger society. Some performers were trained "freaks" like sword swallows and fire breathers, and several exhibits were contrived, like "headless" women. Fraudulence has contributed to the loss of popularity of this attraction in recent years, but the more remote and "unsophisticated" areas still welcome the "freak" shows.

Thrill spectacles like motorcycle racing along the sides of the walls of a circular structure seven to eight meters in diameter, also seem to have lost their popularity. The customers prefer to pay for amusement they can actively participate in such as games and rides. Specialized motorcycle sports events are now part of the growing entertainment framework available to the general public (cf. also snowmobile racing and the whole gamut of automobile racing from stock cars to experimentals).

The final segment of the carnival work organization is that of the workers -- the majority of the personnel which constitute an operating carnival on tour. These people provide the manual labour without which the carnival would cease to exist. They are divided into four basic groups.



Those most visible to the general public are (1) the ride operators, (2) the "joint" (game) operators, and (3) the food ("grab" joints) and souvenir concession workers and ticket sellers. A "behind the scenes" fourth crew exists within the "middle layer" of the carnival layout who service the carnival staff -- cooks and their helpers who sometimes bear labels like "onion peeler" as opposed to being known by their personal name, and "gofers" who can be called upon to perform any manual tasks from assisting in "setting up" to driving "downtown" to purchase supplies. A few individuals are hired to act as "sticks" -- decoys to attract customers to the game. These may be long established elderly members of the carnival circuit who refuse to retire, or a younger aggressive individual who has not been too visible to the crowds and will not be recognized as a carnival employee.

In larger carnivals the ride operators have a foreman who is responsible for directing and assisting in the setting up and dismantling of the rides. Each ride operator and his relief help are responsible for setting up their own ride. If the unit is a very large and complex structure, the ride foreman will assist and assign others to help as

required. This is a hard and rough part of the job and those workers who are assigned primarily for the "set up and tear down" are called "roughies". Once the unit is erected and operating, the work entails collecting the customers' tickets, making certain they are securely in their seats on the ride, and operating the ride for the scheduled length of time. Very little, if any, verbal interaction occurs between the ride operators and the customers.

The independent owners of concessions and their workers set up their units on assigned spots. If the concession belongs to the owner, it is labelled as an "office owned concession" and hired labourers are responsible for its set up and operation. The game employees are divided into "hanky-pank" operators and "flat" or "alibi" workers. At a "hanky-pank", a prize, however small, is awarded for every effort a customer makes such as dart throwing or picking a numbered bobbing duck from a water trough. A "flat" or "alibi" is a game which is, or is close to being, illegal in that it is almost impossible ever to win anything. Most offer a "prize" for successfully hitting some target. The variations are many and purport to reward "skill". Any "grifting" that occurs is usually done in the context of a "flat"

or "alibi" unit. In a September 27 (1980:21, 28) issue of AB, the following item appeared in which three games were closed and six persons arrested at a Flemington, New Jersey Fair, and charged with "theft by deception".

Nine township officers moved in simultaneously to arrest the game operators of the two ring-toss games and one cork-shooting game. The ring-toss game allegedly offered players the nearly impossible task of fitting a ring over the square base of a cone. Police said the ring would fit snugly if put in place by hand but couldn't be tossed over the square base with a reasonable chance of winning.

Police alleged that the operators held a larger ring in one hand as a come-on and then handed the player a smaller ring to use. The game cost 25 cents per toss or seven tosses for \$1. The cork games involved trying to knock over a heavy cigarette lighter with a cork shot from a gun. Police charged in the investigator's estimation, there was "no way" the cork would knock over the lighter. The game cost 25 cents per shot.

The most crucial concern for carnival owners is a worsening situation regarding games regulation since each state has different laws. (See case reference on page 41.)

Characteristics that are advantageous for game employees are aggressiveness and an ability to "bally" (ballyhoo) -- maintain a persuasive verbal monologue to attract potential customers -- which has long been as much a trademark of the carnival atmosphere as have the dazzling lights, cotton candy

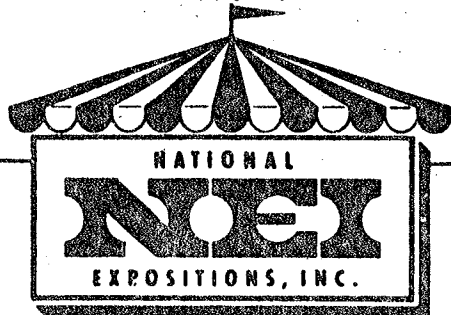
and carousel. As seen in the advertising from the Amusement Business (page 85), bookings of "flats" and "alibis" are declining because they are too expensive for the owner. The Patch has to settle too many disputes from disgruntled customers to make the hiring of such units profitable. There is loss of revenue when these units are closed for inspection and their merchandise confiscated. (cf. pp. 40-41)

The workers who handle food concessions (grab joints) and ride ticket sales are generally women -- wives and girlfriends whose partners are employed elsewhere in the carnival system, although some men also work in these units.

Job advertisements of all types related to outdoor entertainment may be found in the previously described Amusement Business newspaper. In a carnival setting there are always several issues of the subscription publication around. Moreover, most American carnival owners have a headquarters (usually at the International Independent Showmen's Association - IISA) to which the newspaper and other mail for workers may be sent. (The IISA will be more fully discussed in Section C of this chapter.) A truck arrives once a week on the route with the mail, a pre-arranged service by the carnival owners.

FIGURE 10. ADVERTISEMENTS STIPULATING NO "FLATS"  
OR "ALIBIS".

All of the advertisements below stipulate that no "flats" or "alibis" will be hired by their organization. (Amusement Business, February, 1981.)



## NEEDS

**GAMES:** Glass Pitch, Ball Game, Arcade or any non-conflicting Hanky Panks. No Flats or Alibis.

**FOOD:** Cookhouse, Specialty Food Grabs. Popcorn booked.

**SHOWS:** Funhouse, Dark Ride or any family-type shows.

**HELP:** Super Help for Super Rides. Long season.

**PHONE: (412) 335-1166**

P.O. Box 291, New Kensington, Pa. 15068

## JIMMIE CHANOS SHOWS

Opening

APRIL 30 - MAY 9

RICHMOND SQUARE MALL  
RICHMOND, INDIANA

**CONCESSIONS:** Photo, Gold Fish, Diggers, Group Games, Direct Sales, Novelties, Centers and Hanky Panks of all kinds. No Flats or Alibis.

Those Already Booked, Call and Confirm!

NICK CHANOS

513/548-7093-9 a.m.-5 p.m.

## WORLD OF WOLD SHOWS

NOW BOOKING FOR CHICAGO ROUTE

*The Following*

**CONCESSIONS:** Hanky Panks of all kinds. No Flats.

**HELP:** Prefer Ride Help who can drive. Can use wives as ticket sellers. Need Agents for Hanky Panks

**RIDES:** Kiddie Rides and others not conflicting.

Contact: MIKE WOLD  
(813) 681-4373 or 677-7369

after April 14 (312) 338-5455

## MONARCH SHOWS

NOW BOOKING FOR  
ILLINOIS ROUTE  
LAST WEEK OF MAY  
THRU FAIR ROUTE

**CONCESSIONS:** Hanky Panks of all types. No Flats.

**HELP:** Ride Men who drive for all major rides. Wives and friends to sell tickets. Qualified Electrician. Prefer knowledge of Cummins engines.

**CALL: DON KRECHEL**  
WINTER QUARTERS,  
DAYS: (504) 878-9509  
NIGHTS: (504) 345-1942

*Ride Men, Come On In  
To Independence, La.*

C) Social Relationships Among Members of the Carnival Work Force.

"Carnie" solidarity is like an ethnic identity. Although they have their own system of censure through ostracism, verbal disapproval and even physical abuse in extreme situations, seasoned carnival workers know there is no other employment in which they can have as much acceptance and support regardless of personal foibles.

"Carnies" on the road do not have much leisure time and when they do have free time, socializing is limited to workmates. When carnival employees are back at their village in Florida or their community in British Columbia, they participate in similar activities to those described below by Gordon and Anderson (1964:408) for blue-collar workers:

. . . the blue-collar worker differed from his white-collar counterpart in reading fewer books and periodicals, attending fewer movies, lectures, concerts, and theatres, and displaying less interest in artistic and musical pursuits, while spending more time watching television, working on automobiles and going for automobile rides, playing cards, fishing and tavern-visiting.

The owners and independents of the carnivals are also found participating in these same leisure activities with the carnival workers, but for them it may be in order to maintain their employment networks. Beer

drinking sessions seem to have become an institutionalized or ritual behaviour amongst "carnies", for even if it is off-season they spend their leisure hours in local bars gossiping with other "carnies" and consuming beer. This serves also as an informal "interviewing" period for many bookings are discussed and finalized in these sessions. Hence the talking and socializing is of primary importance.

Economic relationships between management and workers are highly informal, and arrangements or bookings of independent concessions or games are often sealed with a verbal agreement and a handshake. Both parties are aware that breaking a contract, even of this informal nature, would be disastrous; once it became common knowledge in this closed society that one or both parties did not honour agreements both business and work reputations would be ruined. But there are some exceptions to every rule. One informant, P, in the American carnival, told me that a particular food concession worker, L, who was noted for his drinking problem, seldom made it to the end of a booking. Nevertheless, one carnival owner always found a spot for L -- in spite of his reputation -- even if it was only putting weiners in buns.

Bryant (1974:10-11) states that:

The alcoholic can operate successfully within the occupational framework of the carnival because a relatively low level of work efficiency will be tolerated there, and there also is a strong respect for personal privacy. The alcoholic laborer will be 'carried' by his carnival co-workers.

Carnival members share certain crises and since their lifestyle can be harsh and unpredictable, these experiences have cemented the members with life-long bonds of loyalty labelled by the ambiguous role of "friendship". The informal fraternization "on the road" becomes an institutionalized reality for members of the carnival subculture. This can be observed in a stylized dress code, jargon, the patronizing of food booths operated by carnival members, and signals for aid known only to the carnival employees.

Gibsonton and the IISA: the "Carnie" Home.

The International Independent Showmen's Association has several chapters throughout the United States, and some international contacts as well. The headquarters are in Gibsonton, Florida, in the carnival village where meetings and trade shows are held annually. In order to keep in contact with job opportunities, kin, mail and all pertinent



carnival activities, one must be a member of IISA and pay annual dues (in 1980) of \$25 per person. Membership is gained by sponsorship by two members of good standing plus proof of being a "carnie" for a full season.

In December, 1980, I spent three weeks at Gibsonton learning as much as I could in that short time. I stayed at a motel frequented by carnival personnel. A small bar and fast-food enterprise were part of the motel unit. My past association with the American carnival in this study served as an introduction and therefore, my acceptance into the community. My position was considered as that of the "wife of a jewellery independent" since it is a male-oriented society, and my claim to being a researcher was not well understood and apparently forgotten or ignored by those to whom I had related this information. The villagers had difficulty in understanding why a married woman was in their community alone and eventually came to terms with this by deciding that I had worked very hard for my husband this last "season" and that he was rewarding me with a holiday. When one "carnie" would introduce me to another, the opening remarks generally were: "Her husband has a jewellery joint in Canada."

From information extended to me during a tour of the Gibsonton IISA chapter, it appears that the organization is open to all levels of carnival personnel. I had been told that my accumulated years would probably count as "full season", but because I couldn't attend regular meetings due to the distance barrier and there were no branches near Winnipeg, membership at this time would be futile.

Other informants in Gibsonton volunteered information that paying members of IISA are guaranteed food, shelter, medical care, retirement care and even burial expenses with interment at Showmen's Rest in nearby Sunset Memory Gardens. The Gibsonton chapter holds meetings every Friday evening during "home" season, lasting from the beginning of November until the end of March, and uniform is compulsory. Aside from a "hat", information as to what constituted a uniform was not made clear to me. Social events are held regularly during the "home" season and solidarity is heavily promoted. (See page 91 for a summary of activities carried out by various chapters, including the Gibsonton IISA).

Several committees carry out the management of the headquarters; they are made up of volunteers. A full-time daily staff of about six is employed to

FIGURE 11. ARTICLE SUMMARIZING SHOWMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

The article below summarizes the activities that the various Showmen's chapters carry out. (Amusement Business, November 15, 1980)

the 20th.

Club offices close April 4.

**MSA.** The first regular meeting of the Miami Showmen's Assn. will be Nov. 3. The first ladies meeting will be on the 5th, followed by a Welcome Home Party on the 8th. Other November events include meetings, 10, 17, and 24, and bingo on the 15th.

December meetings will be held 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29. Christmas activities include a party for needy children on the 20, a party for club members' children on the 21 and a dinner on Christmas Day.

Other December activities include bingo on the 13th and a New Year's Eve dinner and dance.

January activities are meetings, 5, 12, 19, and 26; ladies' installation and party, 6; bingo, 17; president's party, 23.

February's slate includes meetings, 2, 9, 16, and 23, with election of officers at the meeting on the 9th. Other activities include bingo, 14; golf tournament, 19; banquet and ball, 20; open house party, 21 and annual picnic, 22.

March events are meetings, 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30; charity drive dinner, 7; bingo, 21, and Hit the Road party and dance, 28.

**RHSC.** The Royal Hawaiian Showmen's Club will host a cocktail party in Las Vegas on Sunday, Nov. 30, following a 4:30 p.m. meeting.

The Hawaii meeting is scheduled for Dec. 27 at the Outrigger Hotel, followed by a party hosted by Andy Andersen of Rainier Shows. The banquet will be on the evening of the 28th. On New Year's Eve, club president Harry Shore and his wife, Diane, will host a party at the Sheraton Walkiki.

**PSCA.** Pacific Coast Showmen's

Assn., Los Angeles, will kick off its winter social program Monday (Nov. 17) followed by a schedule of events, including the banquet and ball on Tuesday, Dec. 9, said Alex Freedman, PSCA president.

The Nov. 17 event is Homecoming, with a party to be held in the clubrooms starting at 7 p.m. The nominating committee picks its 1981 slate on Monday (24). The clubrooms will be dark from Dec. 1-5, because of the Showmen's League of America and International Assn. of Fairs & Expositions convention in Las Vegas, Nev.

The annual Memorial Services will be held Sunday, Dec. 7, starting at 1 p.m. Lunch will be served in the clubrooms following the ceremonies. The next night (8) past presidents will be honored at the traditional party starting at 7 p.m.

The annual banquet and ball, Freedman said, will be the following night, Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Ambassador Hotel on Wilshire Boulevard. The cocktail hour starts at 6 p.m., followed by dinner, floor shows, and dancing.

Continuing with its December events, the association will hold its annual meeting Monday, the 15th, and elect its 1981 officers. The traditional Christmas Day Dinner will be held Thursday (Dec. 25). All members, families, and friends are invited to attend, Freedman noted.

Moving into 1981, the officers for the year will be installed Monday, Jan. 5. Freedman added that Show Folks of America will hold its annual banquet and ball in San Francisco on Saturday, Jan. 11.

Dates for the fifth annual PSCA Golf Tournament are yet to be set, Freedman concluded.

**IISA.** The International Independent Showmen's Assn. in Gibsonton opens Nov. 3, with the first bingo match set for the 6th. Other November events include a meeting and dance, 14; homecoming barbecue, 16; meeting and dance, 21 and 24.

In December, scheduled events are decorating of the clubhouse, 4; meeting and dance, 5; fashion show and dance, 7; meeting, dance and cakewalk, 12; meeting, dance and nominations, 19; children's Christmas party, 21; packing Christmas baskets and delivery, 23; meeting and dance 26, and New Year's Eve Party, 31.

Meeting and dance evenings in January include the 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th. The meeting on the 30th will include the annual election.

The IISA trade show will run Feb. 4-10, with activity at the club each night. The IISA banquet and ball is scheduled for the 6th, with the installation of officers set for the 9th.

Rounding out February will be a golf tournament, 11; meeting and dance, 13, 20 and 27; and the Miami weekend 21-22.

March events include an appreciation party (invitation only), 1; meeting and dance, 6, 13, 20 and 27 and the Hit the Road Barbecue on

operate the huge department-store sized structure situated on a large lot on the outskirts of the village. The building is obscured from the highway by landscaping, and no identifying markers are visible to direct an outsider to the location. The interior is elaborately decorated and furnished. There are two spacious offices, a huge waiting room, a gymnasium-sized bar/recreation area and a gigantic private meeting hall whose walls are adorned with memorabilia -- at that time the only existing archives (1980).\*

The memorabilia consisted primarily of photographs that dated to the early 1900's of carnival rides, "freaks", "carnies" in various roles, and prominent members of the IISA in the positions they occupied within the organization as well as "on the road". Newspaper and magazine articles and any other media or publicity coverage were framed and mounted on the walls as well.

The carnival solidarity is followed through in their residential patterns, some of which have already been discussed. Various American carnival

\* I suggested to the member accompanying me that an archives should be established before the very elderly "carnies" passed away. I later read in the Amusement Business, to my delight, that such a department had been started.

owners each maintain a large lot in Gibsonton and those employees who have no other permanent residence park their trailers or tents on an allotted parcel of this lot between show dates or off-season, usually rent free. This type of encampment suggests nomadic tribal patterns, especially similar since "carnie" relationships with the outside world like those of the nomads are largely shaped by economic factors. (Weissleder, 1978) But the tribal orientations and social institutions of many of the nomads are more rigid than are those of the carnival subculture. The value of the "lot encampment" for the carnival owner is that it provides a residence for the "carnies" and therefore ensures their availability for the next show, especially if the unit books for eleven months of the year.

In British Columbia, low rent housing is sought by the individuals themselves. The Canadian carnival owner does not provide "quarters" for the employees as he only hires them for six to seven months of the year. Work in "B" level carnivals in Canada is considered part time employment. Most workers find another minimum subsistence job or apply for unemployment insurance until the carnival season begins again in spring. Hence, there is more

organization, solidarity and vertical dependence in the American carnivals than in the Canadian outfits.

In the American carnival if father is "on the road" nine to eleven months of the year, mother and the children generally go as well. If the children are of school age, mother makes one of three choices:

(1) Leave the children with kin for the school term and try to come back for them over summer holidays.

(2) Let the children attend for as many months of the year as possible, then pull them out of school when father goes "on the road" -- usually April to the end of November.

(3) Register the children with a correspondence school and keep the family together all the time.

According to the Amusement Business, occasionally a tutor accompanies a carnival or drops by periodically, as does a "carnie" priest.

From my carnival study, it appears that (2) and (3) are most often selected. Bott ([1957], 1971), in her research of family networks, also found that those families (particularly in the working class) that were mobile a great deal tended to make an effort to maintain nuclear family cohesion. When children in carnival families are of high-school age and choose to advance their studies, they are

usually placed in a boarding school, sent to university, etc. But many carnival children are absorbed into the carnival system from the time they are ten or eleven years of age. Thus the importance of the family in reproducing carnival society and culture over generations is confirmed.

Monsignor R. J. McCarthy, the "carnie" priest referred to above, and Pastor of Holy Family Church, Waterton, New York, follows the carnivals across the United States and Canada. For about twenty years he has been conducting services on midways and was instrumental in Vatican meetings of Apostolates to Nomads. (AB, August 23, 1980:27)

There is little if any difference exhibited between behaviour amongst friends and kin in a carnival society from that of friends and kin in many sedentary communities. The following case in the Florida carnival village may serve as an example: V, a barmaid, was separated from her husband, X, a "carnie". V lived in a motel unit in the village with her three teenage children. One of her children, a son, worked as a bellhop at a resort hotel a few miles away. X had been "on the road" for a few months, but when he was available he always drove his son to work. While he was away the son was able

to get a ride through the operating network of aid within the village, but when X returned he resumed his duty of driving his son. That is the code of the "carnies": you look after your kin. In other words, spouses may separate, but parent-child relations continue. This is a pattern found in most cultures and societies, as is the assistance of friends.

Within the carnival village the solidarity included non-carnival persons who provided service and aid to "carnies". An example is the following case: A birthday party for G, the non-carnival female owner of the motel unit in which I stayed at Gibsonton. The party was being financially sponsored by B, a male "carnie" boarder who permanently occupied the best motel unit on the lot. He paid the rent even when he was "on the road", and the unit was not rented to anyone else. It was considered the 'best' because it was a separate unit located well back in the trees away from the noise and lights of the office and bar. B had the use of the back door of the bar which gave him faster access to the premises instead of walking around the entire complex to the regular entrance. B also used the bar telephone to conduct his carnival arrangements.



The motel keeper was F, sister of G. F, her husband and three children lived on the premises in the office/residence as a favour to G, although they had a trailer of their own a few miles away, which they closed up for the time being. F was 'key keeper', 'money holder', 'mailman', and if a "carnie" was insolvent F fed him and let him sleep on her couch. F's family subsistence could be considered borderline poverty. The "carnie", B, on the other hand, frequently displayed substantial amounts of money, dressed well and doled out funds to those in need (not always "carnies"), although I did not see or hear them asking for aid. This may have been an image B strove to maintain as I was told he was the best "Butcher"\* in the business.

The date of the party was a Sunday when ordinarily the bar did not open until 1 p.m., but that day various individuals -- mostly "carnies" and none of them kin to G -- began appearing from 7 a.m. onward to prepare food, decorate the bar, phone out invitations and even place some of G's favourite records into the juke box. The barmaid J, produced a two-foot high plastic Christmas tree in keeping with the season and requested guests to contribute one dollar bills and sign their name on them. Then

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\* A "Butcher" is a shrewd confidence man. See p. 29.

J pinned the bills to the tree, labelled "G's Tree". Those who had no dollar were given one by someone else. (Later G used this money to purchase Christmas gifts for the bar "orphans" who had no kin and F invited these "orphans" to spend Christmas with her family.)

Throughout the afternoon and evening of the party various individuals dropped by in open-house fashion, the constant number being about thirty people. B took photographs most of the day and later when they were developed, he presented a set to G. He also gave her a small gift of jewellery.

During the party a separate activity was taking place. Business transactions were conducted regarding carnival circuits and verbal hirings, agreements and contracts were finalized. Basic conversation centered around carnival activities and everyone knew each other or at least was aware that they were "carnies".

This study does not intend to suggest that the atmosphere of Gibsonton is one of constant harmony; a utopia it is not -- alcoholism and drugs are a problem, some robberies occur as does some juvenile delinquency. But the inhabitants have devised their own system of censure and policing. For instance,

J (a non-carnival person), the barmaid, is gregarious and sometimes neglects her duties. One day when J was not on duty, several "carny" customers were discussing her laxness when G, the owner, drove into the parking lot. One of the men stated that he was going to let G know of the situation. The others discouraged him saying that G had enough problems just meeting mortgage payments, and nothing further was said. The next day on J's shift, the same "carny" customers who complained the previous day frequented the bar most of the day and kept up a barrage of comments like: "Don't bother ordering lunch, Lefty, unless you're prepared to wait 'til tomorrow," and "Better order two beer at once, no one will notice when your glass is empty." Needless to say, the point was well taken. J made few comments, but her service improved considerably. These same men had willingly collected a fund for the delivery of J's illegitimate baby a few weeks earlier and would probably do so again if the need arose.

Residence patterns of carnival people have already been discussed to some degree. The American carnival village in question is located in an area in the southeastern United States sociologically defined as containing rural poor whites. Perhaps

half of these "carnies" are "transplants" in the sense that they have left their natal communities and moved to this southern area in Florida to maintain carnival connections. But it appeared to me that most "carnies" have come from working class families to begin with, and many of these are of carnival origin.

The "carny" families that travel together automatically utilize every available pair of hands. The owner's son may be found setting up rides; his wife may be selling tickets; and even ten and twelve year olds are baby-sitting or walking dogs of other carnival members. The carnival en route is a communal and family way of life with "carnies". In May, 1980, W. Pedersen, chief electrician for Carnival Time Shows of California was in his 44th year of wiring carnival midways. He also owned some independent attractions. Two of his four children worked with him, one operated his "Pillow" attraction and the other was employed as ride supervisor. The latter also ran a "dark ride", a fun house and two "kiddie rides".\* (AB, May 31, 1980:21) The owner of the

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\* The following is a description of the attractions mentioned above: A "Pillow" is an air-inflated large rubber amusement on which customers, generally children, bounce around in trampoline fashion. A "dark ride" is (continued on page 101)

American carnival in this study employs his son-in-law as show manager, two of his daughters work in the office; a third daughter, along with her husband, operates two concessions. (AB, January 31, 1981:38) Retirement occurs only through choice; many aged "carnies" die "on the road". They may give up difficult chores like setting up rides and be employed as "sticks" (lures) or balloon hawkers, but they are not forced to retire.

Aside from the managers and owner, the Canadian carnival studied here does not have many family units with children. Since the Canadian season is considerably shorter than the American, mother and children do not usually accompany a "carny" father until school has let out for the summer. The majority of the Canadian independents are older members, single or who have no children as part of their liaisons -- at least none accompanying them. Therefore the Canadian carnival is different from the American

(continued from page 100)

one in which the customer is secured into a small car which follows a motorized track into a light-controlled environment and past a series of tableaux -- like a haunted house. "Kiddie rides" are those in which pre-school children do not feel frightened by severe noise or have their physical equilibrium disrupted. "Fun Houses" contain a variety of items like distorting mirrors, noises, gusts of wind, etc. which the customer walks through at his own pace.

unit: it is a less communal or fully social nomadizing outfit. There are more young casual labourers employed with the Canadian carnival who do not put the same emphasis on cohesion and solidarity of the subculture as do American "carnies". There is less warmth amongst fellow workers in the Canadian unit and, interestingly, more violence in their leisure hours.

Any female who desires to work a carnival circuit wisely and quickly forms a unit with a male -- preferably a well-liked and sociable male. If she is a hard worker her social life will be relatively easy. The "carnie" code of ethics involving male/female units is a simple sexist one: if the female partner works hard and does not flirt with other "carnies" (although this is allowed with the "marks"), and behaves like an extension of her male partner, then he is regarded as wise and fortunate to have selected such a mate. Both individuals will be looked upon with high esteem. Seldom are young girls hired on as singles. Rather, male/female couples are considered less trouble. A young man will be less unruly if he has committed himself to one partner. These commitments are considered serious and usually maintained for the entire

season and longer, if each member so chooses. Single workers who wish to "change" partners will usually book with a different carnival the following season if their previous partner has continued to stay in the original or first carnival's employ.

There is some racial discrimination practiced amongst carnival owners and independents hiring workers. In American carnivals you may see the occasional Black and even fewer Mexicans or Puerto Ricans, but not a North American Indian. In Canadian carnivals there are some North American Indians, still fewer Blacks, and no Mexicans. Up to the 1981 date, Oriental or East Indian personnel were not hired by both carnivals. Independents claimed they have enough problems maintaining harmony amongst their staff and customers without asking for more trouble. The attitude conveyed is that the discrimination is not that of management, but rests on the shoulders of the workers and customers.

This chapter has set out to explain that "work" is part of the activity of carnival life whether "on the road" or "at home", and is integrated into that life -- it is not a "job" isolated from home and family life as in urban capitalist society. In this sense, the "carny" community on the road

bears certain resemblances to other nomadic communities, even tribal ones. Then, recognizing this, the hostility between local communities and carnival society recalls also the hostility of prairie farmers and villages toward Hutterite colonies with their closed systems. The relationships between carnivals and hiring communities will be discussed in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER IV

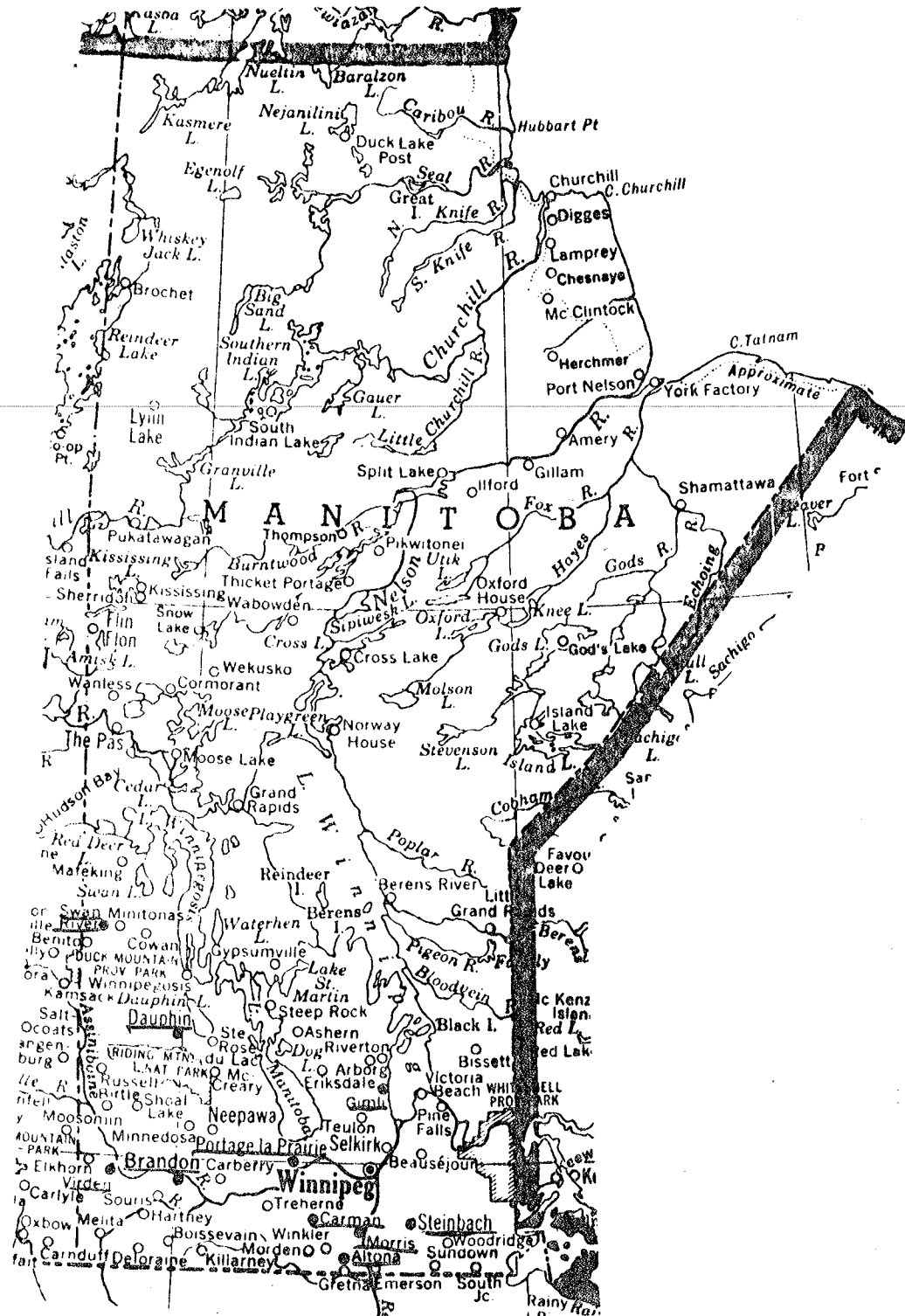
### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CARNIVALS, HIRING COMMUNITIES AND THE PUBLIC

#### A) Carnivals and Communities.

The five Manitoba towns in which the carnival study occurred were the agricultural communities of: Morris, Carman, Portage La Prairie, Dauphin and Swan River. The towns are marked on the map on page 106. The carnivals reception and relations were not the same in all five towns and in order to explain this type of interaction it is necessary to explore the historical backgrounds of the towns -- since the carnivals are not significantly different from each other.

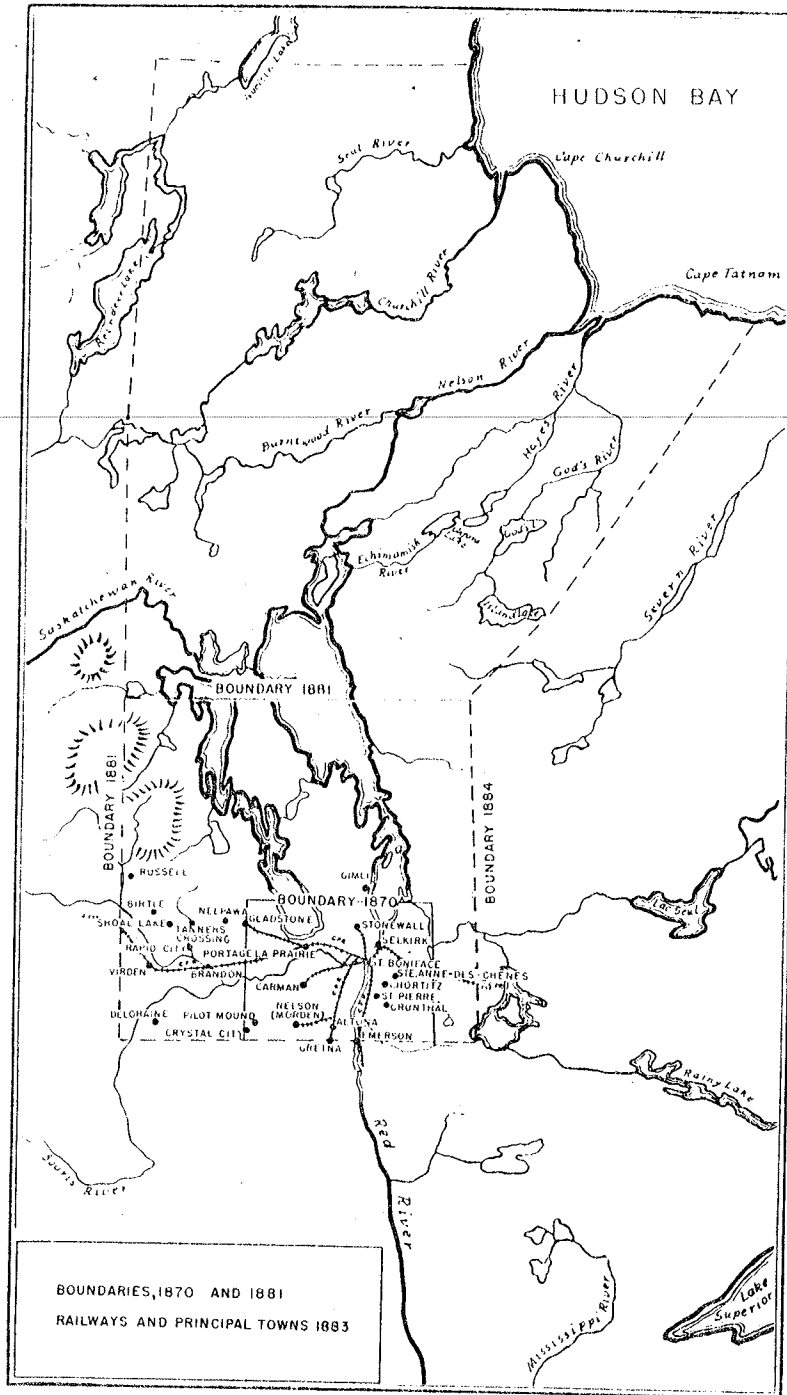
In 1870 Manitoba was initially of "postage stamp" size and settlement concentrated in what is today the central southern area of the province. (See map on page 107). The province grew further northward as space for settlers was required. At first land distribution amongst the English, French and the Natives was the basic issue in Manitoba. The

FIGURE 12. MAP OF MANITOBA DEPICTING AREAS DISCUSSED IN THE STUDY.



(Hammond Wall Map of Canada, 1982)

FIGURE 13. MAP OF MANITOBA DEPICTING THE INITIAL BOUNDARY LINES OF THE PROVINCE AND ITS EVENTUAL EXTENSION.



(Morton, 1957:195)

first settlers to immigrate were British and came from Ontario and the United States in 1871. They sought land with sufficient timber and a water front and hoped it was on or near the route of the developing Pacific Railway. The railway finally passed through Winnipeg in 1881 and created a boom in land values. Those who could not find a suitable site based on these criteria began about 1874 to push north and west and south into lands as yet untouched by the original Red River colonists and French settlers. Morris was founded in 1874. These first Morris area homesteaders claimed some of the most favoured lands in Manitoba. The settlers were distinctive in that they were identifiable by speech and manners as "Canadians" from "Upper Canada". They had come as individuals or in parties which they organized themselves, not as later settlers did.

Moreover, they had come to obtain, without aid or direction, the best individual farm each could find for himself; no townships were reserved for Canadian or British settlers. (Morton, 1957:159)

For the European ethnic groups to follow later, the federal government set aside blocks of land similar to the Indian reservations. Group settlement was begun by the French along the Red

River but the hope of maintaining the south east of the province as wholly French was ended when in 1874 the first Mennonite Reserves were formed here, with the towns of Steinbach and Altona as the Mennonite "capitals". An Icelandic contingent arrived in 1875 and established the town of Gimli as its center (see map, page 106) (Morton, 1957). The colonies grew steadily and the "laying out of the villages and the renewing of the old community ways" was encouraged in 1877 by Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, in order to preserve their distinctive qualities in the new land while committing themselves wholly to it. Local communities were originally organized in parishes around church and school.

The intimate union of faith and tongue, reinforced by clerical policy, ensured the perpetuation of the union of church and school, and of the parish as the organ of local community life. (Morton, 1957:186)

Disputes arose as more settlers came and competition for land began. The Metis, for example, were pushed out within a few years by a variety of pressures of the more powerful and better educated incoming groups. Many of the Metis moved west and north, if not out of Manitoba entirely.

Possession of adjoining land by its members in sufficient density was the basis for survival of the group as a group. (Morton, 1957:188)

The initial conflict lay between ecclesiastical parishes on one hand and the political municipality on the other. A County Municipality Act in 1877 gave the power to the municipalities, as agents of the Province, to raise local revenues for such local improvements as roads and bridges. The parishes and attached villages were then incorporated into municipality structures without interference in their particular community religious and ethnic functions, but subordinate in relation to the taxing power, monopolized by the state. Nevertheless, what is significant for this study is that almost solid blocks of Manitoba settlement began and continue to this day to be dominated by sectarian social regulations of distinctive churches -- e.g., Mennonite, Roman Catholic (French), Anglican (British), Lutheran (Icelandic), Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic, with very different rules as to how hard-working farming and small business families 'should' spend their leisure time and spare cash.

By 1881 Manitoba was awarded an extension of boundaries from its original size. The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway progressed westward from Fortage La Prairie to Brandon, and by 1882 Virden, Pipestone and Oak Lake sprang up along the route

with a further influx of ethnically homogeneous groups of settlers. (Morton, 1957:188-204)

The ethnic concentrations characteristic of Manitoba settlement produced locally cohesive communities that still have considerable weight today. When other communities (especially those of different ethnic or religious identity) established among or near the first settlers creating political and economic competition, they were, and still are, regarded as outsiders and were more or less shunned. The Hutterite colonies on the prairies still experience this antagonism. Some local agricultural communities react with hostility to the competition of the communal mixed farming system practiced by the religious sect and have attempted to use political means to prevent the Hutterites from expanding their land holdings for fear of competition from the large quantities of produce the Hutterites market. The fact that the colonies make a substantial contribution to the local economy by purchasing their agricultural machinery, gas and oil and other dry goods and groceries in nearby towns is not always recognized by neighbouring communities. (Ryan, 1977)

The relationships between the different religious and ethnic communities are thus based on

complex issues, but the friction between local autonomy and continued dominance of traditional ethnic or religious cultural patterns (ideology, family and kinship, language, morals and ethics) and the larger society's mores, e.g., the drinking, dancing, gambling, etc., of a secular society are present especially during carnival and fair days.

Thus, relationships today between communities and outsiders are a reflection of these historical roots.

Early in their settlement histories agricultural communities in Manitoba began holding large annual picnics which soon grew into Agricultural Fairs. These were actively supported by the provincial government. According to the Dufferin Historical Society historical research cited for the Carman Centennial Fair (1979:15),

Every provincial electoral division was entitled to receive grants and a charter for a properly organized Agricultural Society. . . . Organizing an agricultural society would be a sure route to greater prosperity. . . . Prize winning grains and vegetables would be sent from the Provincial to the Dominion Exhibition.

These competitions promoted more local participation and contributed to community solidarity. Entertainment was introduced in the form of carnivals



and grandstand shows of live performers. In recent years in some communities that were close to large urban centers the fairs suffered attendance loss to the more sophisticated forms of entertainment available in the cities. To stimulate greater interest in these local festivals, horse racing, casino gambling and beer gardens became added features. The fairs in these towns then ceased to be primarily festivals of local community interest; they added a dominant interest in commercial enterprise for local profit, and actively sought outside attendance through national advertising. Local organizations in Morris, for example, get a major input of funds for their year-round activities from their shares in the profits of the "Manitoba Stampede". This annual event began as a local municipal agricultural fair and still continues the exhibits and shows for the farmers. But the "Stampede" and the Midway now overshadow the traditional events which interest local people more than strangers.

To aid with the expenses in the maintenance of fairgrounds and to provide further attractions to the public, especially in the larger towns, the Fair Boards have begun to rent out ground space to agents of major industrial corporations and independent

commercial concessionaires. These erect an exhibit booth to demonstrate and/or sell their recreation trailers, agricultural machinery, and even cosmetics along side the novelties of the independent booths. This adds the features of an industrial trade fair at the participating towns. The more isolated and smaller scale rural fairs do not have many such booths.

In June, 1977 we recognized the opportunity available to us for our family hand-crafted jewellery project (a small scale enterprise, more hobby than business) in rural fair exhibits after participating in a large urban exhibit at the Red River Exhibition in Winnipeg. Subsequently we contacted various rural fair boards and they responded with invitations to set up our "independent" booth at their celebrations.

In the course of our five years of setting up our family booth at Manitoba fairs, we experienced different reactions from the communities and the general public. This seemed to depend upon whether our booth was viewed as part of the contingent of commercial independent booths who got their 'ground space' through the Fair Board, or whether we were assumed to be part of the carnival organization. Those who were aware that our exhibit was part of

the Fair Board program to provide a variety of attractions, seemed to regard our booth as contributing to the quality of the fair. Some watched with admiration as my husband demonstrated the craft of silversmithing. This occurred in Portage La Prairie, Dauphin and Swan River.

In two of these towns, Portage La Prairie and Dauphin, the Fair Board assigned us space within an exhibition building where other local and familiar commercial booths and handicrafts were displayed. We were thus separated from the midway altogether. We could have rented outdoor space but felt that we would suffer economically by being associated directly with the carnival in these two towns. It was clear to us that the local community looked upon the carnival trinket and souvenir booths and the prizes as "junk", and reacted very differently to the products displayed in Fair Board sanctioned "exhibits".

I did not see any overt hostility directed towards the carnival people in Portage La Prairie or Dauphin. The carnivals certainly posed no threat to the local business people, but neither did they seem to contribute a great deal to local economies since they did not seem to be well attended in any of the years we were present. The following statement

from the July 7, 1982 Fair Supplement in The Portage Leader newspaper, conveys the attitude of the community to the fair:

Portage Fair has come through many years, including two World Wars, the Depression of the 30's, the turbulent 60's and more, and yet it has retained much of the family flavour that made it such a hit back in 1872.

The fair continues to be considered a family affair, not only because the public comes in family groups to see the exhibits and shows and try the carnival rides, but because sons and grandsons of many of the early directors make up today's Portage La Prairie Fair Board. The Portage Fair is now almost an artifact in contrast to the highly commercialized and diversified Manitoba Stampede at Morris.

In Swan River we requested space beside the midway and appeared to be part of the carnival. But the Fair Administration had advertised our craft display locally and it seemed to us that people approached our booth with more respect than that they showed toward the carnival attractions. In all three of these towns we had been approved by the community Fair Board, but it is not known if all of the attending public were aware of this. We also were "local", that is, Manitoba people -- a question

we were regularly asked. In part this meant that if someone purchased a piece of jewellery and then required some adjustment at a later date, they would not have any difficulty in reaching us by either telephone or mail. But it also meant that we were not transient strangers whose origins and home base, if any, were unknown and questionable. The quality of our merchandise was therefore, not under suspicion, nor were we, and we experienced no apparent hostility from the customers of these three towns.

The Dauphin Agricultural Fair has been held annually since 1896, but, since 1964, it has been vastly overshadowed by the annual Ukrainian Festival, one of the series of major ethnic festivals which Manitoba Tourism has promoted to international fame. Dauphin is located in one of the two areas of Ukrainian settlement concentration in the province. The Dauphin Fair does not receive the same amount of advertising in the local papers that were surveyed as do the other four town fairs. Instead, the major advertising for Dauphin celebrations concentrates on their annual Ukrainian Festival and this event does not contract a carnival. The Dauphin Fair, which does bring in a carnival, occurs at the end of June;

a month later, at the end of July, the Ukrainian Festival is held. This annual ethnic celebration is internationally acclaimed and is held on the fairground site. Accommodations for the Festival are fully booked as much as five months in advance. The Ukrainian Easter Egg decorations are a year-long permanent fixture on the main street light standards, and most of the stores, hotels/motels and restaurants in Dauphin become as "Ukrainian" for the week of the Festival as do the merchants of the town of Morris become "cowboys" for the week of the Stampede.

Therefore, the older and traditional Dauphin Fair is held for the local farming community and continues the festivities established by the early settlers and local chapters of agricultural organizations of the area: the annual meeting of neighbours for a few days of leisure, relaxation and livestock and homecrafts competitions. The carnival is part of this entertainment, primarily in the evening, when the judging of exhibits and farm animals has been completed. The local merchants do not seem to take the same interest in this event as they do in the ethnic festival since they do not profit as much from it. Fewer tourists visit the fair. Many of the local farm people who are the interested

participants return home for the evening; those who have travelled from a farther distance usually bring trailers and camp on the fairgrounds. If they buy food, they get it from the booths on the fairgrounds. Some of these are operated by local community organizations, and compete with the regular carnival "grab joints". It is these 'temporary restaurants' which probably are most directly profitable for Dauphin organizations.

The most southerly towns in the study, those of Carman and Morris, are close to the United States border and to the city of Winnipeg. The publicity for their fairs reaches a population far outside the local inhabitants. Both festivities feature major crowd-drawing events. Morris has the second largest stampede and rodeo in Canada and is the only town in the study to have a beer garden as part of their attraction. Carman presents horse racing, betting and a casino during their fair. The fairs in these two communities are two of the oldest festivities in the province and each initially originated as a regional and community agricultural fair. They are now regarded primarily as a source of revenue for local community organizations.

The week of the Stampede at Morris is considered by the merchants and sponsoring organizations of the town as a period for tourist shopping sprees. There is some resentment expressed toward the competition created by the independent exhibits at the Stampede, many of which offer the same merchandise, whereas a mild contempt is directed at the carnival and its personnel. An article in the July 20, 1977 Valley Leader suggests this competitive contempt in the statement that the "local food" at the Carman Fair was highly acclaimed and served by "cheerful courteous workers, even when the temperatures climbed", although their hamburgers were no different from those of the carnival "grab joints".

The independent commercial concessionaires compete with one another, with the local merchants and with the carnival. They compare their prices with those of their competitors and little "price wars" go on with a regular raising and lowering in "special sales".

At neither Carman nor Morris was our particular family exhibit regarded as unique by the community. The other independent commercial exhibits for these two fairs came mainly from outside of each of the hosting towns. Winnipeg independent



concessionaires are probably the most numerous at the Morris Stampede (Morris is ninety-six km. from Winnipeg). The Morris Fair Board regards the rodeo as the drawing card and an article in the local paper, The Valley Leader, July 27, 1977:1, states that:

Until the initiation of the rodeo and chuckwagon races fourteen years ago, the Morris Annual Fair was a struggling Class "C" Agricultural Fair. Today as a "B" Class fair it attracts some of the finest livestock exhibits in the province.

In an interview with R. M. Deveson, Director of the Department of Agriculture Training Branch (March 29, 1983), I was informed that in order to move from a Class "C" to a Class "B" Agricultural Fair, an exhibition must show that for three consecutive years prior to application for Class "B" listing they have paid out prize money for livestock exhibits amounting to not less than \$3000 per year. (These figures are cited in "Exhibition Grants Regulations", The Canadian Gazette, Part II, September 23, 1964, #18, Volume 98, p. 1114.) Mr. Deveson suggested that in order to qualify for a Class "B" listing, Morris introduced the additional entertainment of the rodeo to attract a larger attendance. In this manner they acquired higher gate receipts as well as

larger percentages from the midways which could then be recycled into outlays of larger prize money and thus achieve the \$3000 per year quota to qualify for a Class "B" status. An additional advantage to having Class "B" listing was that federal financial grants were available to "A" and "B" exhibits in addition to the provincial aid.

The horse racing and betting offered by Carman draws a large crowd of both participants and spectators. The Valley Leader (July 21, 1977) states that "People's faces at the race track were chuckling and smiling whether they won or lost." Then in June of 1978 the newspaper reported that a new feature was being introduced to Manitoba Fairs -- a casino, beginning at Carman. The July 5, 1978 issue of The Valley Leader said that the casino would consist of ten tables of black jack under a marquee tent, the game would be carefully monitored by two local well known members of the community who would also be in charge of accounting procedures.

The following year, the June 13, 1979 issue of the newspaper reported that in order to encourage a higher attendance at their 100th Fair, the Carman and District Chamber of Commerce were looking at the legalities of residents offering "bed and

board" to visitors during the Centennial Fair since all commercial accommodations were already booked. They suggested renting out one's own camper in the backyard and it was thought that farmers with large yards might allow trailer parking.

Morris and Carman Fairs capitalize from a great deal of publicity throughout the province. Several years ago both Dauphin and Portage La Prairie had horse racing and paramutuel betting, but they discontinued these activities. Dauphin did so owing to lack of interest; Portage La Prairie did so, according to Mr. Deveson, because the island on which Portage Fair is held became too crowded with the other fair activities. He said that horse racing is held at Portage La Prairie on two occasions when it is a singular event. Portage La Prairie then introduced a casino in 1981 in the hope of attracting further attendance.

Advertising for the fairs reflects the position of the communities in regard to these functions. Dauphin Fair advertises very little, even locally, and draws their attendance primarily from the surrounding community farms and villages. The Swan River Rodeo and Fair promotes both local and outsider participation. In their newspaper, The

Swan River Star and Times, July 1982, awards were offered for events of interest to their particular kind of patrons. These included testing the skills of northern loggers in "cherry-picking",\* with up to \$600 in prizes. The Canadian carnival offered prizes to rodeo contestants. Attendance at the Swan River Northwest Roundup is large; participants come from the northern regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and make this fair a major event in their summer activities.

The Morris Stampede and Carman Fair advertising is generally province-wide with Morris receiving national publicity as well. It is aimed mainly at encouraging outsiders to come and spend their money on the events and in the towns. Portage La Prairie seems to be a paradox. Although local advertising for the fair is colorful and new events are periodically introduced, attendance is poor. Perhaps the interests of the local population lie elsewhere. There are some differences about the Portage La Prairie population in that several major

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\* "Cherry-picking" is a test of a logger's skill in manipulating a special crane to remove several three-foot high stumps with a diameter of possibly eighteen inches, from a specific checkerboard formation constructed on the ground, and then to replace the stumps again.

federal institutions are located in the town which suggests that its work and business population is less related to local agriculture as a service center than are Carman, Dauphin or even Morris, even though Portage La Prairie is a major market gardening center.

The Manitoba communities on the whole, view their relationship with the carnivals as that of a temporary business partnership, but an annual one, related to a local festival. The carnivals are contracted to perform for a specific period of time. The carnivals set their own prices for their "products" and pay the community a percentage of this "take". The community benefits economically in this way from the presence of the carnival, but the carnival also takes a considerable amount of money out of the community.

B) Carnivals and the Public.

The carnival/public relationship on the fairgrounds varies from that of the community/carnival relationship. The attending patrons have come to "buy" a product -- "fun". In the process of exchange it is the expectations of the public which determine their behaviour in their interactions.

In order to present a concise analysis of the data reflecting the interaction between "carnies" and the public, a table has been constructed on page 127. The table lists seven factors which seem to have influenced the relationships between carnival personnel and carnival patrons. A detailed discussion of each factor will follow.

(1) Major source of gate receipts, and, (2) Rural or urban attendance. These two factors determine whether the clientele are primarily local residents or outsiders. Morris and Carman had both rural and urban participants, but these were principally from areas outside of the town, judging by the filled parking lots, campgrounds and town accommodations as well as by the many 'foreign' licence plates evident on the vehicles. Swan River attracted many patrons from rural points in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and many of the contestants who took part in the pony and chuckwagon section of the rodeo at Morris were also listed in the same events at the Swan River Rodeo. But the local population fully supported and participated in the Swan River event, too. Portage La Prairie and Dauphin drew mainly a small local rural attendance.

FIGURE 14. TABLE 1

FACTORS INFLUENCING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS AND CARNIVAL WORKERS

Factor	Morris	Carman	Portage La Prairie	Dauphin	Swan River
1. Major source of gate receipts.	out-siders	out-siders	locals	locals	out-siders+ locals
2. Rural or Urban attendance	both	both	rural	rural	rural
3. Perceived magnitude of event by local residents.	major	major	major	major	major
4. Type of attendance - daytime	groups family singles couples	groups family singles couples	family units	family units	family singles couples
5. Type of attendance - evening	singles couples	singles couples	singles couples	family singles couples	family singles couples
6. Time of day hostility* most frequently occurs.	day + evening	some- times evening	seldom ever	seldom ever	seldom ever
7. Alcoholic beverages sold on fairgrounds.	yes	no	no	no	no

\* Hostility: primarily verbal exchanges.

(3) Perceived magnitude of event by local residents.

Both Carman and Morris regard their fair and rodeo as a major event because of its commercial value to the community and because of the community effort and planning that goes into putting these exhibitions on each year. Carman draws large crowds of outsiders. Income from the fair includes not only total gate receipts but also a percentage from the casino, the race track, the carnival, and a campground located on the fairground site. A swimming pool is also on the premises. Independent commercial booth space is rented out for a fee.

At Morris, the town "dresses up" in western decorations and advertises "sales" all week. The rodeo, the beer garden and nightly "street dances" on the fairgrounds draw huge crowds of outsiders.

The Swan River community also regards their "Northwest Roundup" as a major event, but emphasis on the event as a commercial venture is not stressed to the degree that it is in the southern area. Nevertheless it follows that the economy of the town will prosper as a result of the influx of participants. The festivity draws attendance from northerly regions like The Pas, Thompson, Flin Flon, Lynn Lake and Gillam in Manitoba and is considered one of the



highlights of the summer for these patrons. It functions to bind together this large and sparsely populated area.

Dauphin appears to regard its fair as a minor local event and although Portage La Prairie strives to make their fair a major event, their efforts appear to be in vain.

Type of attendance - daytime (4) and evening (5).

In all of the towns family units attend mainly during the daytime. At Morris many non-familial excursion groups also attend since bus tours are booked from Winnipeg: senior citizens, handicapped individuals, Parks and Recreation Children's Summer program, convention groups and visiting dignitaries. The Army base at Camp Shilo also sends bus loads of their members, and groups of European tourists frequently attend. Carman receives some bus tours as well. Daytime crowds at Morris and Carman were large since the featured entertainment was scheduled for both afternoon and evening performances. Daytime crowds at Swan River were fairly large since a rodeo performance also occurred in the afternoon.

Portage La Prairie and Dauphin had fairly quiet daytime family attendance. There were equestrian events and other local competitive

activities held during the day at both fairs.

Dauphin also presented a small indoor grandstand show and thrill drivers in demolition derbies.

Portage La Prairie introduced a casino to provide the public with further attractions besides the viewing of local exhibits and exploring the carnival midway with its games and rides.

The evening attendance drew larger crowds in all five towns, since more people arrived after workhours. Morris had the additional attraction of a beer garden and Portage La Prairie offered free admission after 11 p.m., when young adults, primarily men, attended. Dauphin had a mixed attendance in the evening; along with the traditional "young crowd", the rural families who had been involved in the competitive events\* all day now took the time to tour the fairgrounds and participate in the carnival activities. Swan River had families attending with the younger generation in the evening because another rodeo act was scheduled. Although a rodeo was part of the evening activities at Morris, many families chose to attend the afternoon performance. The crowds grew perceptibly rowdy and aggressive in late afternoon and evening. The accessibility of the beer

\*Showing livestock, homecraft competitions, etc.

garden and the change in crowd composition to an influx of young, single adults may have been the factors.

(6) Time of day hostility most frequently occurs;  
(7) Alcoholic beverages sold on fairgrounds. In all five towns any hostility that was apparent occurred primarily in the evening and usually among the "outsider" younger crowd. At Morris, however, the hostility occurred both during daytime and evening attendance, perhaps because of the large number of "outsider" young people attending at all times and the continuous availability of the beer garden. The hostility is here defined as the exhibitions of loud arguments with operators of games of chance on the midway. This usually happened when an expected prize did not materialize. The hostility also occurred more frequently between young adult urban outsiders who usually came in couples or groups. We saw the most frequent incidents of antagonism directed at the carnival personnel in Morris, and occasionally some hostilities in Carman. Swan River, Dauphin and Portage La Prairie seemed to experience the fewest difficulties.

The trouble-makers at Morris were often clearly drunk. Swan River discontinued their beer

garden due to this problem. There was apparently less concern about public drunkenness and small brawls on the Morris fairgrounds than at Swan River, but in either case exploring the problem more deeply is beyond the scope of this paper.

Bennett (1969:84) in his rural study suggests that maintaining the image of community and family solidarity acts as a constraint on the behaviour of local members:

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A few stray tourists may materialize and, in latter years, a few hippy-type teenagers. There is little drinking, and an occasional drunk, but alcohol is not a feature of the day, partly because of laws against transporting it in cars, but perhaps more importantly because of the tradition that the Stampede and Picnic is a family affair, and in Jasper one doesn't drink with "family" present, at least not to excess.

The table suggests that the relationships between the carnival personnel and the public are at least influenced by the type of customers attending the event and the availability of alcohol. Portage La Prairie and Dauphin Fairs attracted principally local rural residents who loyally attended their annual ceremonial and then went home until next year. The Swan River Rodeo drew both rural and outsider populations, but it also served as a unifying festival, bringing the northern members of the province together through events which recognized

their distinctive lifestyles, e.g., "cherry-picking".

In these three towns the primarily rural patrons are attending the fairs mainly for entertainment and seldom take exception to the operations of the carnival personnel. They seem to view the "carnies" as performers. Many "carnies" pride themselves on their ability to "entertain" and practice to develop their "craft", usually a verbal ballyhoo. A carnival informant made the following comment about the rural patrons:

So the man comes up to spend fifty cents to win a teddy bear -- he cannot expect to win one every time . . . and we find that the public as an over-all . . . does not expect to. Most of them come to the carnival or the country fair with the thought of spending so much money. If they win, that's good; if they don't, they don't think nothing about it.  
(Bryant, 1972:188)

Carman and Morris draw a very different crowd. The expectations of these customers, whether rural or urban, seem directed at getting "something" for "nothing" and they are much less repressed; much readier to 'cut loose' than the more repressed rural folk. The availability of alcohol at Morris seems to contribute to the aggressive hostility of some of the patrons. By 11 p.m. most independent concessionaires have closed for the night because of the behaviour of so many patrons, but the carnival

remains open for at least two more hours.

The approach of these customers to the "carnies" begins with a mild hostility at being "robbed" of their money for expensive rides and "rigged" games. A carnival informant, R., told of vigilante-like situations in which three or more men approach a game booth in the evening. While one tries his skill at the game, the other two will harass the "carnie", generally accusing him of manipulating the game. They draw a crowd primarily sympathetic to their cause and then one of the men will remove one of the largest prizes displayed. He claims the men deserve the item since they were being cheated. The crowd which has been witness to this demonstration is called upon periodically to agree with the one-sided verbal tirade and by the end of the "performance", the crowd wholeheartedly supports the customers. The "carnie" has no alternative but to forfeit the prize.

Another carnival informant, G., who owned a dart-balloon game joint said that some patrons while in the process of walking by her booth will pick up the darts and toss them indiscriminately at the balloons, often bursting several, laugh to their companions and just keep on walking.

The hostility appears to stem from an impersonal attitude of "outsider" patrons as they are also transient strangers in competition with other transient strangers. Although the "attacks" on the carnival personnel appear to take on the form of patron contempt for transient strangers marketing a non-useful product, there is an underlying tension that has been produced by many more significant factors -- all aspects of exploitation and exchange between strangers in a particular kind of context.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has been concerned with a description and analysis of those economic and social forces which have given rise to the development of an occupational subculture within that workfield of the outdoor amusement business industry known as the carnival. An examination of those forces, or processes, reveals the development of this subculture.

The carnival is a mobile, even nomadic, work system and community whose members sell the services of a portable amusement center. The commodity that is marketed is the tenuous and illusionary product of "fun", i.e., relief from the usual daily work routine found in rides on giant machines, titillating shows, candy floss treats, and games of chance for tinselly prizes. The quality of the prizes may not always measure up to the expectations of the customer, and the resulting effect in some cases may be that of hostility on the part of the patron directed at the



carnival personnel.

Contributing to the rise of hostility is a historically significant factor which has generally stereotyped the employees of this geographically mobile service industry as untrustworthy and therefore held in low esteem. Much of this classification can be traced to the early growth of commerce and the rise of itinerant peddlars and other forms of travelling entertainment, especially the circus which introduced the illegal practice of "grifting" to exploit customers. The communities reciprocated by demanding high rental fees for the lots and imposing fines for vague regulations which were easily and conveniently misinterpreted by local officials in favour of the communities.

Eventually circus acts could operate successfully only under a local sponsoring organization. Illegal gaming activities transferred to the mobile carnivals where, over time, they were gradually eliminated since the continued imposition of fines proved to be extremely costly to the industry. Unfortunately, the image of the "dishonest carny" was not also eliminated. It still gives rise to expressions of hostility from the public.

Hostility is directed towards the industry,

therefore, due to the nature of the product being "sold" by the carnivals and their history of consumer exploitation. This results in contention at three levels:

- (1) the interpretation of state or provincial regulations;
- (2) attitude of the hiring communities;
- (3) participant expectations.

Hence, three significant factors in understanding the development of the carnival subculture are the historical perspective, the economic character and the social relationships of carnival personnel, hiring communities and the participating public.

A fourth major force in the creation of the carnival subculture is the mobility of the workfield. Outsiders and strangers, especially transient ones taking money out of a community are not offered a particularly warm welcome in a community. The work hours of carnival personnel also do not permit them time and opportunity to make acquaintances outside of their workmates. The carnival personnel have therefore developed a distinctive work culture and group identity in the form of an occupational subculture. Although initial entrance into the occupation entails little more than going "on the

road", being accepted as a member involves the observance of two absolute obligations:

- (1) according personal privacy and anonymity of fellow members; and,
- (2) rendering aid to fellow "carnies".

This occupational subculture through relative isolation (as a result of hours of work, concentrated seasonal base and nomadic working conditions), internal socialization and one-dimensional relation with the public reduces outside threats; it also provides social and economic security for its members.

Legislative action on the part of provincial, state and local governments has played a major role in the maintenance of carnival subcultures. "Carnies" have been compelled to join forces and create organizations not only to act on their behalf but also to provide the necessary social services (IISA in the United States) that the state does not seem to do adequately. Voluntary organizations strengthen group identity while attempting to establish some form of assistance by providing a united front to defend their members and to make changes in order to resolve conflicts. These actions have served to further tighten the bonds linking the carnival members together in their occupational communities.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to demonstrate that subcultures, like most minority groups, must and do devise and implement their own policies in response to, and to overcome, the economic and social disadvantages that the dominant society has imposed upon them.

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