PATROLLING WINNIPEG "ACCORDING TO ORDER":
A SOCIAL HISTORY OF POLICING
IN A PRAIRIE CITY,
1874-1900

by

Megan Kozminski

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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Abstract

With the founding of the Winnipeg police force in 1874, urban policing commenced in the frontier city. Beginning as a small force of three men, the police force developed alongside the emergent city to become a powerful extension of local government. The purpose of the force was to maintain law and order and policing primarily entailed the surveillance of, and the accumulation of knowledge on, the urban population and environment. Members of the late nineteenth-century force worked closely with local elites, leaders, city council and the broader community to regulate morals offences, the sex trade, property crime and the disorderly activities and behaviour of the city's inhabitants. The various duties performed by officers, the daily hazards of life on the beat, and the challenging circumstances and conditions of life on the force meant that a policeman’s shoes were not the easiest to fill. Most policemen, however, successfully upheld the interests of the liberal state on the streets of the city. They did so by enforcing unequal standards of order according to prevailing notions of gender, class, race and ethnicity.

The unique social and cultural landscape of the city prompted police work that was discretionary and reactive as members of the force participated in the process of identity formation on the urban frontier. The identification and categorization of the urban populace largely relied on the measurement of “respectability” and reputation; consequently, the police targeted “notorious” urban characters and “usual suspects”, thereby contributing to the definition and solidification of the boundary that evolved between local “citizens” and “criminals”. Although the anxieties, suspicions, resistance and changing identity of the local population ensured that the policing process remained
inherently incomplete, the Winnipeg police force had a powerful and lasting impact upon
the social fabric and development of the city. Furthermore, the nature, role and character
of the emergent centre's police force represents the distinct experience of urban policing
in the prairie west, a testimonial that has heretofore been largely overlooked.
Acknowledgements

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I am most indebted to my advisor, Tamara Myers, for initially encouraging me to investigate the records of the Winnipeg police, and for her tremendous advice and guidance throughout the project. For their assistance with proof-reading, I sincerely thank Sheilah Campbell and Rachel Rapaport Beck. For the ongoing support provided by my parents, I remain deeply appreciative.
Introduction

The Winnipeg Police Museum celebrates the legacy of the Winnipeg police force and offers a striking and powerful tribute to the history of policing in the city. The museum houses a plethora of records and artefacts including a stimulating array of police log books, uniforms, weapons, badges, bicycles and other vehicles. The material culture produced by the police and represented by displays, photographs and police mannequins commemorates the heritage of police service in Winnipeg and emphasizes “the dangers faced by officers in the line of duty.”¹ The relics of the Winnipeg police force, however, are not only loaded with meaning, they remain shrouded in mystery and ambiguity. Indeed, a visit to the Police Museum raises more questions than answers: Was the police force as formidable and commanding as the historical re-creation and celebration of policing would suggest? How did the presence of the police force impact upon the rise and population of the city? And similarly, how did the historical development of the city influence policing? These questions, as well as others, spurred my scholarly investigation into the early history of the Winnipeg police force.

The surviving records of the Winnipeg police and its overseers, shaped by members of the force and the activities and interests of the urban community, provide a window through which to observe the social conditions and environment of the early metropolis. Thus, a historical exploration of the work and identity of the Winnipeg police force promises to contribute to a greater understanding of late nineteenth-century life in the prairie city. More specifically, the objectives of this study are three-fold: to

¹ According to the informational pamphlet compiled and printed by the Winnipeg Police Museum and Historical Society.
strengthen the existing historiography on urban policing in the Canadian west; to
acknowledge and utilize a set of, as of yet, under explored records created by an
important branch of civic administration; and to both complement and explain aspects of
the popularized and commemorated version of police history exhibited at the Winnipeg
Police Museum.

**Historiography**

A significant amount of literature from Ontario and the Maritimes has focused on
the rise of cities and the significant and diverse role played by police in the history of
such development. Legal historians such as Greg Marquis, Nicholas Rogers, John
Weaver and Micheal McCulloch have produced a breadth of literature testifying to the
influence of urban police forces upon law, order and the social dynamics of various
urban centres, including: Toronto, Hamilton, Saint John, Charlottetown and Quebec
City.\(^2\) The same critical exploration of policing has, as of yet, not been applied to the
cities of the west.

It appears that Canadian legal history fell victim to the "men in red" decades ago
and remains to be rescued. The exploration, celebration, and commemoration (as well as
subsequent de-glorification) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has predominated the
history of policing in the west; however, the Mounties were not the "sole representatives"

\(^2\) Greg Marquis has explored the urban police forces of Toronto, Saint John and
Charlottetown and has only recently turned his attention to the Vancouver police. Nicholas
Rogers has also researched the Toronto force, and John Weaver has done extensive work on the
Hamilton police force. Several historians, including Micheal McCulloch, have also worked on
police forces in Quebec. See bibliography for full citations.
of law and order on the nineteenth-century Canadian frontier. The police forces of western towns and cities also represented the spread of law and order across the nation, though their significance has been largely overshadowed and under explored.

A decade ago, legal historian R.C. Macleod declared that there existed “almost no studies of crime and law enforcement in western Canadian towns and cities.” When the histories of police forces in the west have been written, too often they have been completed by the forces themselves. In a more recent review of the historical treatment of urban policing in Canada, Jerry Ross notes that there remain several police departments in the west that lack academic treatment, and that academic efforts are necessary to counterbalance the “official” histories produced by, or in cooperation with, individual police departments. Scholarly investigation into municipal police forces and policing activities in the west, and more specifically Winnipeg, is therefore necessary for two distinct reasons: to unify the disparate approaches and historiographies that have, thus far, come to define the regions of eastern and western Canada; and to offset the predominance of departmentally produced histories of western police forces.

The historiography of urban policing in Canada can be divided into three different approaches: the commemorative or celebratory history, the overview, and the case study.

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3 Fred Stenson suggests that the RCMP were “the sole representatives of Canadian law and order” in his recent publication RCMP: the march west (Nepean: GAPC Entertainment Inc., 1999) which is based on a television documentary special The North-West Mounted Police: The Great March (1999).


The historical profiles of police departments in Canada that have been compiled, produced or authored by the respective departments focus on the composition, size, and general character and identity of specific police forces. These histories are often "organized according to the regimes of various chiefs and make liberal use of anecdotes." Compiled for the purposes of celebration or commemoration, institutionally sponsored police histories tend to offer little insight into police-community relations or the social dynamics of the urban environment, which influenced much of the daily work of constables. Most of the profiles of municipal police forces in western Canada have been compiled by dedicated police officers and retirees, and two such histories have been written on the Winnipeg police force. Similar in style and utility to many of the histories written by, and for, police departments across the country, these histories offer limited insight into the rich social history of the Winnipeg force.

Social, legal and urban historians are primarily responsible for most of the overviews and case studies of urban policing. By way of a comprehensive overview, academics have considered the evolution of policing over time; and by way of case studies, they have detailed and explored the experiences of a specific force, in a

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particular time and place. Overviews that explore the history of policing tend to reveal trends, patterns or details regarding the activities of police forces and the role of police work across decades or centuries. As part of *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, V.A.C. Gatrell’s work provides an exemplary synopsis of the creation and social functioning of the “policeman-state” in Britain in the nineteenth century.

Recognizing the increase of state control over criminal justice during this period, Gatrell suggests that “law was the means and order the primary objective of this enterprise,” which attempted to practice regulation over increasingly numerous aspects of society.  

He examines the work of police constables as an extension of the authoritative “policeman-state,” and concludes that anxiety about social change, as well as fear of the lawlessness of the masses in developing urban and industrial societies, predominantly directed police initiatives.

An important overview of the social history of police and policing in the United States also focuses upon the significance of “the policeman” as a representative of the increasingly centralized state. Though the shape, model and social functioning of urban police forces in America went through stages of noticeable transformation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, police in American cities were, at all times, “at

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the front line of the formal, urban social control system."\textsuperscript{10} The conception of and desire for order in urban America, however, was not simply a top-town phenomenon:\textsuperscript{11}

...urban dwellers across class and ethnic boundaries wanted a modicum of urban order and seized on evolving urban police departments as one way of achieving this order.\textsuperscript{12}

British and American historians have also produced overviews that focus upon the relationships between public order, the police and the so-called "dangerous classes" of the nineteenth century. Gatrell suggests that categorization of the growing population of poor in Britain as "criminals" allowed public fear and elitist anxiety about change, disorder, and lawlessness of the urban poor to be displaced back onto that very population.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, in \textit{Policing the Urban Underworld}, David R. Johnson analyzes the interaction between policemen and criminals, focusing on the ways in which criminals shaped police behaviour in urban America. Johnson attests to the growing dependence on police to regulate order and tension within modernizing American cities, at the same time recognizing the tension that such dependence furthered.\textsuperscript{14}

Within Canada, historians have only begun to explore the relationships between police, citizens, and the forces of urban growth and change. Allan Greer provides an

\begin{footnotes}
\item[10] Ibid., 10.
\item[11] Ibid., 108-128.
\item[13] Gatrell, 244-246.
\end{footnotes}
overview of policing in Canada within both rural and urban contexts, focusing primarily upon the police as the strong arm of the increasing powerful state. Greer suggests that the police forces of the mid and late nineteenth century displaced the self-regulating practices, rituals and rules of “popular law” which had previously existed in communities. Greg Marquis also offers a brief historical overview of municipal policing in Canada, focusing on aspects of both change and continuity over the last century and a half. Marquis suggests that the most obvious continuity remains “the ultimately coercive nature of the state and its local agents” and that such authority remains also “the most basic characteristic of police occupational culture.” Marquis makes another important historiographical contribution with Policing Canada’s Century, a cooperative venture between the Osgoode Society and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CAFP). This monograph overviews the history and development of policing in the twentieth century by focusing on the personalities, controversies and ongoing issues of Canadian policing and the CAFP. Written from an admittedly top-down perspective, however, this study encourages further scholarship on the topic.

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16 Ibid., 18.


18 Ibid., 24.

The majority of social histories written on policing in both Canada and the US are case studies which have concentrated on certain themes: the social role of police and policing within particular urban environments, the identity of police forces and police culture, and the social welfare responsibilities of police within cities. One case study on urban policing in nineteenth-century America suggests that changing attitudes toward urban growth influenced citizen’s sensitivity towards perceived instability or disorder. 

According to Jeffrey Adler, rapid or uneven growth and change frightened urban residents; their fears were then directed at the population whose presence on the street represented dislocation or the unknown. The statutory definition of vagrancy was broadened to encompass, and facilitate regulation of, all seemingly dangerous vagrants, “demons” and “scoundrels” who threatened the public order and economic success of the city. At the front lines in the “general war on undesirables” in St. Louis were the municipal police, who were empowered with broad discretionary capabilities.

Nicholas Rogers’ analysis of policing in Toronto focuses upon the challenges that accompanied the local development of urban policing in light of competing political and social forces. He discusses the growing presence and increased responsibilities of the police in civilian life over time, and their role in the cultivation of the city as “Toronto the Good.” Rogers suggests that the Toronto municipal police force was primarily a coercive agency of moral reform, referring to it as a “task force for a new


21 Ibid., 25.

respectability." Michael McCulloch similarly examines the nature of policing and the social role of the force during the mid nineteenth century. McCulloch, however, concludes that police functions were directed more towards social welfare than social control. He also downplays the importance of the emerging class society and associates the nature and the role of policing more with the changing urban conditions of Quebec City.

Some of the best explorations of the social role of policing within specific urban contexts are Greg Marquis’ work on the Saint John police force and the history of policing in the Maritimes. Marquis proves to be one of the few historians who recognizes the importance of the relationship between the police and the citizens of urban centres. Though he confirms that the most important function of the Saint John force was the surveillance of plebian community life, Marquis concludes that constables remained relatively flexible in their positions of law enforcement duties in order to gain a degree of community acceptance. Police in the Maritimes utilized both “hard” and “soft” technologies of control to ensure, in the least, a degree of support for their role within the community. In “Working Men in Uniform,” Marquis applies similar

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23 Ibid., 136.


25 Ibid., 109.


27 Ibid., 59.

28 Ibid., 94 and 96.
analysis to the Toronto police force of the early twentieth century. Recognized as “workers, community residents and family men,” the background and individual characteristics of the Toronto constables contributed to a rough and inward-looking police culture and to an ambiguously defined class position within the urban community.29

The composition, conduct and social role of the Hamilton city police force during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has also been the focus of historical investigation. John Weaver suggests that despite expectations of the Hamilton force to serve as domestic missionaries, most constables were indifferent towards their duties of moral regulation.30 Tension in the force, apathy, lack of training and education, and unstable, varied, and sensitive vocational challenges resulted in less than vigorous enforcement activity on the part of most constables. Weaver concludes that the performance of coercive and regulatory functions over the urban population was relatively ineffective and inconsistent in Hamilton, as in several other Canadian cities.31 In his analysis of the Toronto police “as a social service,” however, Marquis finds the coercive operations of the force far more developed and prevalent than the welfare functions.32

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Recently, historians have begun to explore how notions of gender, class and ethnicity have influenced the history of policing and regulation in Canadian and American cities. In her study of urban policing in early nineteenth-century Montreal, Mary Anne Poutanen observes that the coercive activities of the police force largely targeted “the homeless, the whore, the drunkard and the disorderly” women who inhabited the city.\(^{33}\) Empowered by broadly defined vagrancy laws and in cooperation with the local court of Petty Sessions, the Montreal police used personal discretion in the “vagging” of loose, idle, inebriated, disreputable, insane or aggressive women in public spaces. The Montreal police asserted the power of the local patriarchal state over the activities of women, ensuring that the public streets became an increasingly male domain.\(^{34}\)

Considering that the vast majority of police officers were male during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, feminist historians have recognized that gender significantly influenced urban policing. In her exploration “Women Policing Women,” Tamara Myers reveals how the introduction of patrol women and policewomen after the turn of the century shaped the work and targets of policing in Montreal.\(^{35}\) In the experiences of male and female officers, policing, criminality and forms and sources of resistance took on distinct meaning and expression.

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\(^{34}\) Ibid., 47.

Both Myers and Poutanen find policing to be a highly gendered activity; an idea echoed in several case studies concerning the policing of tramps, boys, the poor and the “dangerous classes” of both American and Canadian cities. In Antebellum St. Louis, during the city’s reign as “the great urban centre” of the American west, Jeffrey Adler observes that “although both men and women belonged to the dangerous class, the label had gender-specific meanings.”\(^3\) Male vagrants were perceived by local authorities and the urban community as threatening criminals who could potentially inflict severe damage upon the economic success of the city; while female vagrants more directly “challenged the moral and social stability of the community.”\(^3\) Fallen women were considered extremely dangerous because their presence was thought to correlate with crime, violence, disorder as well as the immorality of the urban centre.\(^3\)

The historical treatment of vagrants and tramps was also significantly influenced by class notions of order and “respectability.” James Pitsula has noted that the anti-tramp campaign sponsored by middle class philanthropists in Toronto during the 1880s and 1890s was a direct response to the social and symbolic threat posed by the increasing number of idle, transient men in the city.\(^3\) Ignoring the realities of unemployment during the period, a labour test was devised to assess the character of tramps and distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor. Pitsula indicates that police work


\(^3\) Ibid., 740.

\(^3\) Ibid., 744.

aligned with the initiatives of charity organizations to enforce the “law of work” on the deviating, floating population of tramps in late nineteenth-century Toronto.\footnote{Ibid., 132.}

During the same period, the middle class members of Halifax society imposed similar class-based notions of order and respectability on the urban poor.\footnote{See Jim Philips, “Poverty, Unemployment, and the Administration of the Criminal Law: Vagrancy Laws in Halifax, 1864-1890” in Essays in the History of Canadian Law, Volume III – Nova Scotia, eds. Philip Girard and Jim Phillips (Toronto: The Osgoode Society, 1990), 128-162.} Jim Phillips observes that the incidence of incarceration for vagrancy correlated with economic conditions in the Maritime city. Though the vagrancy laws that were used to discipline the working class were perceived as increasingly inadequate, they remained “an important tool in the control of the non-conformist and the unemployed.”\footnote{Ibid., 152-153.}

Sources, methodology and approach

Many of the surviving records of the Winnipeg police force which are housed at the Winnipeg Police Museum remain under explored. This study hopes to flesh out the vivid details of the force’s regulatory activities and unravel the history of policing in the prairie city. To this end, three types of source material created by the police force are explored: the Winnipeg police occurrence reports, robbery reports and arrest reports.\footnote{Additional archival material created by, or in concert with, the Winnipeg police force includes the proceedings of the Winnipeg Police Court as well as personal records created by individual police magistrates. These sources, held by the Archives of Manitoba, could further elucidate the history of policing in the city; however, they could not be explored within the scope of this project.}
These documents offer insight into the purpose and nature of police work and the identity and character of the force and the "policed" population on the urban frontier.

The occurrence reports of the municipal police served as the daily log books of constables' activities on the beat during the late nineteenth century. They relay the details of incidences and observations of beat patrol, as well as the complaints and requests of community members. Each occurrence report identifies the officers involved, the date and duration of police duty, and the persons involved in the "occurrence" or offence. This set of record books provides the view from the beat as communicated and recorded by individual police officers.

The robbery report log books produced by the force pertain to the incidence of property crime in the city from 1883 to 1899. These reports, created by the police but instigated by community members, expose the intersection of community interests with policing operations. An examination of the over two thousand selected robbery reports reveals the following information: the name and address of the complainant or victim of the property crime; the date and nature of the offence; a description and the value of the property involved; an identification, description or list of persons suspected; and the results of the police investigation or the outcome of the case. Many of the details

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44 The surviving occurrence reports date from 1878 to 1883 and 1886 to 1888. During the latter years, however, the occurrence reports change format. Rather than recording constables' duty reports, they log the reports and requests of community members and detail the police force's response to such requests. Jack Templeman, curator of the Winnipeg Police Museum, suggests that the occurrence reports shifted in nature when officers began carrying personal log books on duty. Unfortunately, no personal logs created by individual officers during the period have survived in local archival repositories.

45 The years of robbery reports selected for the purposes of this study were those that best corresponded with the available years of the occurrence reports and arrests reports of the police: 1883, 1886, 1889, 1893, 1896, and 1899.
included in the robbery reports testify to the suspicions, fears and intolerant attitudes of the police and community members and attest to broader aspects of community and class relations within the city.

The third and final type of source material located at the Police Museum and included within this study are arrest report log books. Produced by officers on station duty, these reports identify dates of arrests, prisoners arrested, and the nature of, or reason for, arrests. The belongings of persons arrested are identified and the signatures of prisoners are included. The arrests reports offer less descriptive material on the nature of policing activities than the two sources previously mentioned; however, the summary nature of the log books offer significant insight into the “policed” population of the city and lend well to preliminary quantitative analysis.

The communications logged by the municipal government pertaining to police work, the organization and make up of the force, and the role of policing within the city complement the valuable information offered by the occurrence, robbery and arrest reports. The letters, complaints, reports and correspondence officially logged as “Council Communications” are held by City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Centre. In addition to these communications, one local newspaper was consulted, the Winnipeg Daily Times, in order to gauge how the local press reported on the police force and policing activities during the period.

Before proceeding, the nature of the records created by the police that are inclusive to this study deserve further consideration. Some understanding of the social construction of historical records is an important aspect of archival research, especially with respect to “closed” organizational records such as those of police forces and
regulatory agencies. The records created by social organizations are both “fundamentally self-conscious and self-interested.” Archival theorist Ciaran Trace suggests that such records function as a form of social control and that it is important to recognize the proactive nature of record-keeping by organizations, the socialized behaviour that lends itself to the creation of records, the dichotomy between the use and purpose of records, and the role of the audience in the shaping of the record.

Winnipeg policemen oriented themselves to the keeping of record books with presumptions as to the purpose and the intended audience of their reports. The occurrence and robbery reports served, at least in part, as an explanation and justification of police activities to fellow colleagues, the chief and higher civic authorities. The entries of officers were influenced not only by the actual occurrence or offence in question and the expectation of audience, but also by the nature of the preceding reports made in the log by other officers. In the case of robbery reports, community members contributed to the creation of the police records. It seems likely, however, that the formula of information prompted by the robbery log books, and the prior experiences of officers with the recording of complaints, predominately shaped how these reports were constructed by policemen.

The records of the Winnipeg force both supported and represented the activities of the police organization in the city. The consensus of archival theorists remains that “what records represent is a persuasive version of the socially organized character of an

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organization's operations, regardless of what the actual order is, indeed perhaps independently of what the actual order is.\textsuperscript{48} As a researcher, I hoped to remain conscious of the mediated nature of the source material and information gathered for the purposes of this study. Rather than impeding the research and analysis, I can only hope that the manner in which the records of the police have been "persuasive" will serve to further represent and clarify the nature of policing and police work within Winnipeg's history.

The goal of this thesis is to explore the social history of the Winnipeg police force, the nature and role of policing during the late nineteenth century, the intersection of police work with the diverse urban community, and the identity of the "policed" population of the city. The history of urban policing in Canada and broader themes related to crime, law, order, social and moral regulation, governance, power, identity and modernity largely direct exploration and facilitate analysis of the topic. The first chapter acquaints the reader with the context of the thesis topic, focusing primarily on the rise of the city and the development, purpose, and role of the Winnipeg police force and urban policing in the late nineteenth century. While the city reveals itself to be disorderly, the question remains: does it live up to its reputation as a hub of western wickedness? The interests of powerful leaders, community members and successive chiefs of police, and perceptions of urban danger and disorder impacted upon police work in a real and lasting way. Evidence suggests that the Winnipeg police force primarily laboured to maintain

\textsuperscript{48} See Ciaran B. Trace's synopsis of Harold Garfinkel's article "What is Ethnomethodology?" in "What is Recorded is Never Simply 'What Happened',," 11.
order and “respectability” in the changing city, and to protect the reputation of the great “gateway to the west.”

The second chapter explores the profile, culture and identity of Winnipeg policemen and the police labour force in the late nineteenth century. The struggles of becoming a municipal police officer are weighed against the hazards associated with police work in the city during the period, and are brought into focus through the exploration of a “day in the life” of a Winnipeg police constable. How did municipal policemen balance their responsibilities as officers of the state with their roles as members of the urban community? The life of a Winnipeg police officer within modernizing society proves to be a demanding, isolating and contradictory one.

The final chapter focuses on the “policed” population of the city and the aligning of police work with the suspicions of local citizens. Patterns of community suspicion and surveillance that were recorded in the reports of the Winnipeg police suggest that many Winnipeggers were eager to participate in the ordering and categorizing of the urban population. To some degree, policing was a cooperative activity between the police force and the local community; gauging reputation and constructing criminality were at the forefront of their shared objectives. Class, gender, ethnicity and notions of “respectability,” however, largely determined membership in the privileged community who policed the city, and the identity of “criminal” persons and groups who were the consistent targets of suspicion, policing and regulation.

This study attempts to utilize a case-based approach to present a balanced historical examination of the policing of urban society during the first quarter century of Winnipeg’s development. Rooted in social history, the exploration that follows attempts
to consider "both sides of the coin;" the purpose, nature and character of police work and the Winnipeg force, as well as the effect of policing upon the local population. While there is limited value in measuring each specific success or failure of municipal policing, it is important to view the policing of the city as an ongoing process – a process which remains the foundation for the continued regulation of Winnipeg society to the present day. The process sustains itself by remaining inherently incomplete; the continued resistance of society ensures that “attempts” at social control are never fully realized. The notion of policing as a cyclical process is best described as: “attempt-incompleteness-attempt.”

In Winnipeg, certain factors weighed more heavily upon the process than others; gender and identity formation, for example, were defining features of local society and largely shaped the character and nature of policing during the period. Ultimately, social change proves to have had the most significant effect on the policing process within the emergent urban centre; together, the police and the urban population navigated the transformations of late Victorian society on the western Canadian frontier.

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49 In the conclusion of Foucault and the Law: Towards a Sociology of Law as Governance (London: Pluto Press, 1994), Alan Hunt and Gary Wickham explore the sociology of law as governance with respect to police work. They suggest that all instances of policing contain elements of attempt and elements of incompleteness or failure, and that policing thus evolves into a cycle of “attempt-incompleteness/failure-attempt.”
Chapter 1

Policing and the rise of the city

Sensational descriptions of frontier towns and cities often emphasize the lawless nature of the “wild west,” and depict law enforcement officers as the “brave defenders” of peace, order and good government.\(^1\) Though it was the most prominent urban centre in the Canadian west during the late nineteenth century, the city of Winnipeg also had a reputation for being “wild” and “wicked.”\(^2\) Unflattering images of the city were presented in prominent Toronto newspapers: headlines raged “Wicked Winnipeg Wallows in Vice” and “Social Evil Runs Riot in Winnipeg.”\(^3\) The so-called untamed environment of emergent cities prompted the establishment and growth of commanding disciplinary forces whose authority could check wickedness, violence and vice. This chapter concerns the form that such a force took in Winnipeg, Canada’s gateway city to the west.

What follows is an exploration of the context, purpose, and role of policing in late nineteenth-century Winnipeg. Much to the author’s dismay (and perhaps the reader’s), there is little evidence to support clichés of Winnipeg as an uncontrollable or widely uninhibited city in its early days. For the most part, what the municipal police “bravely


\(^3\) Headlines printed in the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Globe* are explored by Alan Artibise in *Winnipeg: a social history*, 258-259.
defended" within the urban centre were middle and upper class ideals of order and morality. Winnipeg political leaders, elites, reformers and the "respectable" classes aspired to construct a successful and reputable urban centre and policing primarily represented these interests. The operation of the police force under Chief D.B. Murray testifies to the struggles of local citizens to influence policing in the city and reveals the legacy of Chief Murray's police force as an efficient and powerful extension of local government. Yet the role of the Winnipeg force during the period was not limited to coercive activities. In the absence of an extensive network of local charity and welfare organizations, policing encompassed social service functions. Late nineteenth-century police officers addressed the basic needs of a limited assortment of destitute persons; however, the performance of social services was also a self-serving exercise that provided the force with an additional means of surveillance and further legitimized their presence within the community.

The rise of the city and the origins of the Winnipeg police force

A prominent American sociologist and historian of policing has suggested that "it is essential that the history of the city provide the first and most dominant framework within which to analyze the police." The founding of the Winnipeg police force corresponded with the rise and incorporation of the city in 1874; yet policing of the frontier population significantly preceded the late nineteenth century. The project of

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“creating order” in the west began with Rupert’s Land in 1835. Situated within the District of Assiniboia, the Red River settlement was governed by English legal transplants and the Hudson’s Bay Company charter. The Company’s principal representative, Sir George Simpson, as well as Scottish and other “respectable settlers” believed that the maintenance of law and order in the settlement required powerful military policing. The first regular police force in the colony was a volunteer corps modelled after the British Army; however, this military force was replaced after ten years by a small force of constables and volunteer watchmen. The shift towards a more traditional common law constabulary was a significant one, as Robert H. Baker argues:

The abandonment of a pseudo-military structure for a common law model indicated the reception of an English common structure... with the same emphasis on authority as coming both from the Crown... and from the support of the community.

Despite the implementation of British law and the short-lived presence of a military police force, the population of Red River increasingly “conceived of both governance and law in largely local terms” during the colonial period.

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6 Ibid., 211.

7 Ibid., 223.


9 Baker, 225.

10 Ibid., 244-245.
The nineteenth-century development of the Red River settlement and the village of Fort Garry proceeded rather modestly. The town of Winnipeg, however, was firmly established by 1870.\textsuperscript{11} In the short period following Manitoba’s entry into Confederation and preceding the incorporation of the city of Winnipeg, a police force known as Manitoba’s Mounted Constabulary Force maintained law and order in the province.\textsuperscript{12} The force’s attention was predominantly directed towards the town of Winnipeg, which sustained the greatest concentration of the province’s population. Subsequent to civic incorporation in 1873, a municipal police force gained jurisdiction over the city and the provincial mounted force was significantly diminished in size.\textsuperscript{13} Several members of the provincial force sought positions with the Winnipeg force; the first chief of police, John Ingram, was appointed based upon his reputation with the Manitoba Provincial Police.

A variety of factors contributed to the initial rise and development of Canadian cities such as Winnipeg: industrial and commercial expansion, the spread of agricultural and transportation technologies, and population growth and immigration.\textsuperscript{14} The establishment of permanent municipal police forces correlated with these factors and

\textsuperscript{11} Based on Alan Artibise’s discussion of the rise of the city in \textit{Winnipeg: a social history}, 9-18.

\textsuperscript{12} Originally referred to as the \textit{Mounted Constabulary Force}, the force underwent several name changes from \textit{Provincial Police Force} to \textit{Manitoba Provincial Police}. See Templeman, \textit{From Force to Service}, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{13} The Manitoba Provincial Police remained a small mounted force and was eventually absorbed by the RCMP. See Templeman, 10.

with the incorporation of cities and towns during the same period. Similar to the early police forces of urban centres in Ontario and the Maritimes, the organization of the Winnipeg police force was part of the “municipal revolution... that brought responsible government and local control to urban ratepayers.”

Alan Artibise notes that the eager participation of individuals and groups in local government, industry, economy and the community significantly impacted urbanization and the growth, shape and character of prairie cities in particular. The anxious desire of local leaders and community members to establish law and order in the city of Winnipeg was apparent from the start. The founding of a municipal police force in 1874 was one of city council’s earliest orders of business: by-laws no. 4 and no.10 relate to the appointment of the first chief of police and police constables in the city. The chief of police was in command of the constables, yet city council retained control over the municipal police force as a whole. Within a year of the founding of the Winnipeg police, the force increased in size to five constables (in addition to the chief), and the officers were uniformed and armed with badges, batons, whistles, “wrist-snappers” and revolvers. The police force developed alongside the flourishing city during the late nineteenth century, swelling to a size of forty-five in 1884, and later levelling off at around thirty full-time constables by the turn of the century.

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16 Artibise, “In Pursuit of Growth,” 120.

17 City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Centre [hereafter referred to as CWAR], City Clerk, Minutes of Council (February 26, 1874; March 9, 1874).

18 Templeman, 11-13.
Many historians have credited the London Metropolitan Police as the model for Canadian municipal police forces such as Winnipeg’s. Greg Marquis notes, however, that in terms of governance, urban forces of nineteenth-century British North America more closely resembled England’s borough forces which were under local political supervision. Management of the Winnipeg police force originally lay in the hands of the Licence and Police Committee of city council.

Police commission boards were adopted throughout Canada and the United States in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in the attempt to reduce police forces’ vulnerability to political interests. In 1883, the Winnipeg Board of Police Commissioners (comprised of the mayor, the judge of the county court, a police magistrate and a recording secretary) was founded and empowered with administration of the force. While the board was responsible for all decisions concerning the administration of the police force, they also had to maintain “a working, harmonious relationship with the city’s elected assembly.”

In spite of the independent character of the Winnipeg Board of Police Commissioners, as an extension of the municipal government the police force remained susceptible to local politics, power struggles, and the metropolitan ambitions of local elites. Though the force remained small in size throughout much of the late nineteenth-

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20 Marquis, Policing Canada’s Century, 27.
21 Robert Hutchison, A Century of Service, 15.
22 Rogers, 123.
century, it “quickly became the most important branch of civic administration.” Alan Artibise notes that in the interest of maintaining order, other civic issues fell to the wayside. In 1887, the city budget allocated $17 000 to the police and only $2810 for public health.

As the “metropolitan ambitions of Winnipeg were far more sophisticated than those of other western towns and cities,” the desire to develop respectable, well-ordered urban living conditions was also amplified. The need to control the peoples of the city was further influenced by the extent and nature of population growth during the period. At the time of its incorporation, Winnipeg consisted of approximately 2000 people, who were predominantly French, English, Aboriginal and Métis. By 1880, the population had approximately tripled, and by 1886, it had grown to over 20,000. The city’s inhabitants numbered approximately 40,000 by the turn of the century.

The nature of the city’s growth was also significant; natural population increase was largely limited by a shortage of women and immigration was the major determinant of expansion for most of the period. The largest group of immigrants who came to Winnipeg were Protestants born in Great Britain and Ontario. A significant number of Jews, Scandinavians, Germans, Italians and eastern Europeans also immigrated to the city, yet they remained outnumbered by the dominant Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic

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24 Artibise, Winnipeg: a social history, 225.

25 Ibid., 13.

26 Based on Winnipeg population statistics as provided by Alan Artibise in Winnipeg: An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1977), 40.
population. Alan Artibise notes that “ethnic pluralism was not even contemplated during this period” and that it was the intention of the British to dominate the city from the beginning. The character of the city was further influenced by the large floating population, which predominantly consisted of single men in search of work.

Winnipeg evolved into one of Canada’s most ethnically, culturally and socially diverse metropolitan centres during the late nineteenth century. The combination of immigrants, labourers, transients and strangers that descended on the city contributed to its profile as a “wild west” frontier town and to local elite’s anxious desire to order and control the diverse population. While there exists a common tendency to associate the rise of cities and population growth with the spread of crime, in his study of nineteenth-century Boston, historian Roger Lane concludes that “this particular anti-urban myth is unfounded.” Lane suggests that the growth of cities has a “civilizing” effect; as the population of the city increases, the proportion of crime decreases.

Lane’s observations lend well to analysis of late nineteenth-century Winnipeg. There was a five-fold increase in the population of the city between 1879 and 1889, yet the number of arrests increased by only one-third. (See Table 1) Similarly, between 1889

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28 Ibid., 42.


31 Lane, 158.
and 1899 the population approximately doubled yet reported crime remained relatively uniform. Hence, as the population of the city increased in the late nineteenth century, the proportion of crime to growth decreased. The variety of factors that influenced this trend will not be thoroughly explored herein; rather, these statistics are offered to demonstrate that Winnipeg’s reputation as a “wild” city, and the social anxieties of elites, reformers and middle classes that emerged during the period, were relatively unfounded. As suggested by Lane, the “anti-urban” perception of criminal activity as a consequence of civic growth seems largely based in myth.

Table 1: Population growth and arrests in Winnipeg, 1879-1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1879</th>
<th>1889</th>
<th>1899</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>4113</td>
<td>2132</td>
<td>40112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of arrests</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>1137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: Alan Artibise, Winnipeg: a social history of urban growth, 1874-1914 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975); Annual report of the chief of police for 1879 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880)]; Winnipeg police arrest reports [Winnipeg Police Museum, Arrest reports (1889, 1899)].

The history of urban policing in Canada and on the frontier, the founding and incorporation of cities, the structures of municipal administration and the character of urban growth provide an important context for an investigation into the history of Winnipeg and its police force. The social environment of the prairie city provided a

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32 Winnipeg population statistics based on “City Assessment Office figures” identified by Alan Artibise in Winnipeg: a social history, 130.
unique framework for policing and regulation during the period and local conditions significantly influenced the development and character of the Winnipeg police force.

**Policing crime and maintaining order**

The history of crime is [also] always about how public fears about change and disorder were displaced on to ‘criminals’, even when criminals were inappropriate objects of those fears... Historians might profitably remind themselves that the history of crime is a grim subject, not because it is about crime, but because it is about power.  

Late nineteenth-century Winnipeg politicians, businesspeople, moral reformers, religious leaders and community members exhibited great concern over crime and criminal activity within the urban centre. Local petitioners consistently tried to influence policy-makers, especially with respect to the “ordering” of the community. For example, pressure from religious leaders forced the Licence and Police Committee to make serious “promises,” which they ultimately had difficulty fulfilling. In March of 1883, a letter signed by Rev. J.B. Silcox, Rev. George Bryce and others reminded city council that the committee’s promise to clear out the houses of prostitution in the city remained an empty one:

...a serious scandal to the city exists, in the houses of ill-fame... These houses are not only an annoyance to those residing near them, but are hotbeds of crime in the city, being a resort of the hardened classes of criminals brought together by the rapid growth of this city.... A promise was made on behalf of the late Licence and Police Committee that after the 31st of March, these houses would be cleared out. That promise seems now to be forgotten.  

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33 Gatrell, 246.

34 WARC, Council Communications, no. 3212 (March 1883).
Additional letters to city council reveal other community members’ concerns regarding the various criminal types that were “infesting” their neighbourhoods, and testify to the continual pressure applied to council, the Licence and Police Committee, and the Winnipeg police force to root out all sources of offence and disorder from within the urban centre.35

Maintaining control over frontier society and satisfying the powerful interests of local residents largely directed the policies and laws enacted by city council during Winnipeg’s first quarter century. Facilitating the policing and regulating of the expanding urban community were a series of by-laws passed by city council. For the most part, by-laws pertaining to licensing, nuisances, streets and public spaces most directly affected the role of the police force. Though a civic license inspector was appointed to monitor the business and leisure activities of proprietors, trades people and the broader community, the early police force was responsible for the day-to-day enforcement of licensing by-laws. The police laid charges for such activities as “Teaming without Licence,” “Keeping a boarding house without a licence” or “Running billiard tables without a licence.”36 In May of 1879, one Constable described arresting a man for “Farming without a licence.”37

35 WARC, Council Communications, no. 4447 (October 27, 1886), no. 1170 (May 27, 1889).

36 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1013.5 (January 24, 1877).

37 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 3, 1879).
Working together with the city engineer's office, the police were responsible for the maintenance of street and sidewalk safety as well; enforcing by-laws pertaining to the obstruction of sidewalks, dangerous building practises or materials near streets and sidewalks, and "furious" driving of bicycles or drays. The early police force also worked alongside city scavengers in the implementation of by-laws concerning public nuisances. The police records reveal that officers were actively involved in detecting and reporting sites of stagnant water, smelly water closets and dead animals.38

From its very inception, however, the predominant activity of the Winnipeg police force was the monitoring of public order and morality. Morality offences, however, were not specifically defined by a municipal by-law until the turn of the century. The "By-law of the City of Winnipeg relating to Public Morals," pertaining to begging, drunkenness, vagrancy, insulting language, gambling, prostitution and "indecency" was passed on May 8, 1899 as by-law No. 1599.39 It vaguely identified a wide variety of indecent, immoral and disorderly activities and empowered the police and courts with the ability to penalize offenders. Ultimately the by-law formally decreed the moral policies that the police had been actively enforcing throughout the preceding quarter century.

38 WARC, Council Communications register, Series I: 1874-1881; WPM, Occurrence reports (1879, 1880).
39 By-laws of the city of Winnipeg, 1874-1899 (Winnipeg: The Stovel Company, 1900).
The Winnipeg police imposed morality upon the civic population primarily through the regulation of activities related to alcohol, prostitution and public behaviour.\textsuperscript{40} Police primarily arrested people for public drunkenness, though many were removed from hotels, saloons, or private residences as well. A handful of offenders each year were even charged with being “Drunk in the police station.”\textsuperscript{41} Records available for selected years during the late nineteenth century reveal that drunk and disorderly offences prompted the majority of arrests made by the Winnipeg police. The percentage of alcohol-related offences ranged from approximately 45\% in 1879 to close to 60\% in 1889 and 1899. (See Table 2) The local press often made light of the propensity for local citizens to drink and the resulting police action. In November of 1881, the Winnipeg Daily Times reported that:

James Coffey started off for church last evening, but on the road met a friend, so he got drunk instead. A constable came along soon after and finding James too dizzy to walk obtained a cab and gave him a drive to the station.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange note that municipal police forces across the nation actively “imposed morality” by focusing on public order violations in Making good: law and moral regulation in Canada, 1867-1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 28.

\textsuperscript{41} For example, in 1889 six arrest reports cited “Drunk in the police station” as the offence [WPM, Arrest reports (February 20, 1889; February 28, 1889; March 19, 1889; April 17, 1889, May 6, 1889; June 11, 1889)].

\textsuperscript{42} Manitoba Legislative Library [hereafter referred to as MLL], Winnipeg Daily Times (November 7, 1881).
Table 2: Offences committed in the city of Winnipeg, 1879-1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1879</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>1889</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>1899</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drunk / drunk &amp; disorderly</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhabiting, frequenting or keeping house of ill fame</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft/larceny</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagrancy/loitering</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of arrests</td>
<td>656</td>
<td></td>
<td>938</td>
<td></td>
<td>1137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Annual report of the chief of police for 1879 [CWAR, Council Communications, no.1796.5 (January 8, 1880)]; Winnipeg police arrest reports [WPM, Arrest reports (1889, 1899)].

The police also made consistent efforts to regulate prostitution within the city throughout the period. Arrests were frequently made for inhabiting, frequenting, visiting or keeping houses of ill fame (or disorderly houses). Rather than arresting individual offenders, however, the police often conducted raids on houses of ill fame and “pulled” all of the inhabitants at one time. For example, in November of 1880 Constable Archibald reports that he “went in company with Chief Murray and other members of the

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43 Selected years based on records available. Statistics for 1879 are based on annual reports of the chief of police [CWAR, Council Communications, no.1796.5 (January 8, 1880)]. Statistics for 1889 based on arrest reports of the Winnipeg police [WPM, Arrest reports (January 1, 1889 to December 31, 1889)]. Statistics for July to December of 1899 also based on arrest reports of police [WPM, Arrest reports, (July 1, 1899 to December 31, 1899], though yearly totals of specific offences were approximated based on the 6 month period of records available.

44 The “Miscellaneous” category included in Table 2 encompasses a broad range of by-law infractions, weapon offences and various petty offences policed within the city.
police force at 8:30 to assist in pulling the Houses out west." The struggle to curb prostitution in the city seemed more prominent in certain years than in others. Likely in reflection of the boom in the economy and the heightening of public fervour around the issue, arrests made for prostitution-related offences amounted to around one-quarter of the total offences in 1879, compared to less than ten percent of total arrests made in 1889 and 1899. (See Table 2) The role of Chief D.B. Murray in the campaign against the local sex trade during the late 1870s and early 1880s was also significant, and will be explored later in this chapter.

Unlike alcohol- and prostitution-related arrests, the incidence of other types of offences was more erratic. Though they jumped between 1876 and 1879, the arrests statistics for assault and vagrancy remained relatively unchanged for most of the period. Property crime exhibited a rather consistent increase and surpassed prostitution-related arrests in 1889 to become the second largest category of offence.

Several factors suggest that the policing of public order offences in Winnipeg was significantly influenced by class. In his annual reports of 1879 and 1880, Chief Murray identified the trade or occupation of all persons arrested. The reports reveal that approximately one-half of all persons arrested each year were labourers and prostitutes. Trades people and farmers combined to account for approximately one-fifth of the total yearly arrests made by the police, and less than one-tenth of all persons arrested were identified as vagrants, unemployed, bookkeepers, clerks, boarding house and hotel

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46 WPM, Occurrence reports (November 25, 1880).
keepers and professionals. Most interestingly, in the same year that Chief Murray
detailed the occupations of persons arrested, the local press made light of the habits of
some local workers. The Winnipeg Daily Times suggested that the disorderly behaviour
of community members was the common result of a week’s worth of work: “The fun-
loving mechanic, and other artisans, with a week’s pay in their pockets are apt to regard
the end of the week as a fitting time for a spree.”

While persons at the lower end of the socio-economic scale comprised the
majority of arrests for moral offences (and were the targets of the local press), the middle
class and elite were predominantly involved in by-law infractions. Local businesspeople
consistently received warnings from the police or the city engineer’s office for
obstructing streets and sidewalks with goods, building materials or waste. Prominent
businessmen and community leaders, such as J.H. Ashdown, were consistently identified
in police reports for by-law infractions, though apparently no charges were laid against
such offenders. A communication from May of 1884 notes that bad examples were set
by several “wealthy and influential” parties in the city, representing Canada Pacific
Railway Company, Rutherford and Company, and Minning and Gillespie. In contrast to
these powerful offenders, the poor and underprivileged were consistently more amenable
to the warnings of city officials:

47 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 1013.5 (January 24, 1877), no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880).
48 Unfortunately, these records only relate to two consecutive years and additional
information of the occupation of persons arrested during the period remains unavailable. Yet the
small glimpse into the occupations of the accused provides some indication of the class of
persons who most commonly warranted police attention.
49 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (April 15, 1879).
The larger number of poor people, who had built shanties on the street, have obeyed your orders, but in nearly all cases where the parties are wealthy or influential, they have either neglected or refused to pay attention to the matter.\textsuperscript{51}

The ethnicity or background of community members also seems to have had an affect on policing initiatives. During the earliest years of the city’s history, the police perceived the activities and behaviours of the local Métis population as most offensive and threatening to urban order. The annual reports of the chief of police for 1879 and 1880 cite “half breed” as the most common nationality of persons arrested, despite the growing diversity of the city’s population.\textsuperscript{52} Americans and English speaking Canadians were also frequently detained, followed closely by Irish persons. Furthermore, the arrest books of the police reveal that several persons arrested were unable to sign their name and substituted an “x” in place of a signature. While those arrested for alcohol-related offences may have been too intoxicated to sign, others were likely unable to sign in English or were illiterate.

The primary purpose of the Winnipeg police force was to maintain order in a city undergoing significant change. While the police were involved in regulating a wide variety of infractions and offences, patterns of arrest suggest that certain segments of society were perceived to be more “criminal” than others. Most offences were alcohol-related and the most common offenders were labourers and tradesmen; clearly the leisurely activities of the working class instilled some sense of fear in the police,

\textsuperscript{50} WPM, Occurrence reports (1879).

\textsuperscript{51} WARC, Council Communications, no. 4084 (May 1884).

\textsuperscript{52} WARC, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880), no. 2120b (January 27, 1881).
municipal government and the "respectable" classes of society. Furthermore, notions of public order, morality and sexuality were inextricably linked during the period. Despite police efforts to curb the local sex trade, the regulation of prostitution ultimately proved difficult.

Successive chiefs of police who served during the late nineteenth century played a significant role in the local struggle against crime and disorder. Interested in satisfying local politicians and community leaders as well as instituting their own visions of order, chiefs were responsible for spearheading local police campaigns against offences related to drinking, prostitution, theft or gambling. One chief in particular, David B. Murray, most significantly influenced the character and nature of policing activities during the late nineteenth century.

Chief D. B. Murray's Winnipeg police force

The development and functioning of Canadian municipal police forces during the late nineteenth century was "almost dependent solely on the vision of the police chief and his ability to operationalize that vision."53 As chief of the Winnipeg police for over a dozen years, D.B. Murray's interests, goals, and personal vision largely impacted upon the force and the broader social and legal environment of the frontier city. Murray's vision of order reflected the interests of the politicians, elites and reformers who vied for his attention and under his command the Winnipeg police force evolved into an efficient,

stable and powerful regulatory body. Taking the city's alleged “wickedness” to heart, Murray struggled to reform the reputation of the police force and urban community members, and by consequence, of the city as a whole.

D.B. Murray began his service as a constable with the Winnipeg police in March of 1874 at the age of twenty-eight. Before his appointment to the force, Murray was employed as a school teacher in his province of origin, Nova Scotia. From the start, Constable Murray saw himself as a capable and responsible municipal officer. In his application letter for the position of Chief Murray stated: “I have been on the Police Force of the City of Winnipeg since it was first organized and I trust my actions will beare testimony on my behalf.”

Murray applied for the position of chief the same day that the first chief of police, John S. Ingram, submitted his resignation. Chief Ingram’s service with the Winnipeg police force was a short and contentious one. Constable Murray (later Chief Murray) seems to have played a significant role in the events that led up to Ingram’s suspension and eventual resignation as chief. Aware of their chief’s abusive habits and indulgence in the local sex trade, Murray and a fellow constable filed a formal complaint with city council against Ingram in May 1875. When the charge against Ingram was dismissed, Murray and his fellow constable submitted their resignations from the force, which city council refused to accept. Determined to remove Ingram as their chief, several weeks later the two constables barged into a local house of prostitution and found Chief Ingram

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54 Hutchison, 10. Murray was of Scottish descent and was an adherent of the Church of England according to the Census of Canada, 1881 [National Archives of Canada (hereafter referred to as NAC), Census of Canada, 1881 (courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba)].
"in a state of undress." 56 Ingram was charged with frequenting a house of ill-fame, and was later convicted, fined and suspended from his position as chief. Constable Murray served in the period between Ingram’s suspension and his resignation, and was officially instituted as Chief of Police on July 1, 1875.

Murray took to the position of chief naturally. Immediately assuming bureaucratic responsibility for the force, he submitted his first official correspondence to city council on the very day that his promotion took effect.

Having lately been elected by you to the position of Chief of the Police Force of this City, and being anxious to fulfill the duties of my office to the best of my ability I have therefore after mature reflection considered that the better way would be for me to present you with a short sketch of my views on the regulating of the force under my command and also for the better protection of the city. 57

Chief Murray’s letter outlined his vision for the force and made several applications to city council.

One of Chief Murray’s more revealing initial requests to council pertained to the extent of his control over the force. Murray suggested that the selection, appointment, and suspension of officers should be solely his so as to make the force “complete in subordination and discipline.” 58 Although city council retained control over the appointment process, they did allow Murray to make recommendations with regards to candidates and they seem to have consistently honoured those recommendations.

55 WARC, Council Communications, no. 311 (June 14, 1875).
56 Templeman, 12.
57 WARC, Council Communications, no. 330 (July 1, 1875).
58 WARC, Council Communications, no. 330 (July 1, 1875).
Shortly thereafter, Chief Murray made another significant application to council. Reporting that under his command the force was “in a very satisfactory and efficient state,” he submitted a request for an increase in pay:

Your Chief of Police finds that the salary attached to his office is not sufficient to support him in the necessary requirements of life, and would respectfully ask for an addition. He is however ready and willing to act in whatever capacity and perform whatever duties your Honourable Body may see fit to impose on him.\(^{59}\)

Granting his request, city council awarded Chief Murray with an increase in salary as well as responsibility; in addition to serving as Chief of Police, Murray became the Licence, Health and Fire Inspector for the city.\(^{60}\)

Won over by Chief Murray’s keen interest in the city, the police force and local law and order, Winnipeg city council continued to respond favourably to many of his proposals and requests. Murray remained dedicated to implementing his vision of order having made significant early headway in his position as chief. In the summer of 1876, he submitted a list of fifteen “Rules and Regulations of the Police Force of the City of Winnipeg” for the approval of council. (See Appendix) He suggested that such a code was necessary in order to educate, guide and inform officers as to their duties and

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\(^{59}\) WARC, Council Communications, no. 415.5 (October 8, 1875).

\(^{60}\) While it is unclear when city council officially appointed Murray as Licence, Health and Fire Inspector (or how long he remained in that post), a letter dating from May of 1876 recognizes his responsibilities as such [WARC, Council Communications, no. 745.5 (May 8, 1876)].
responsibilities. Once adopted, Murray suggested that the rules be printed in pamphlet form and distributed to the members of the police force.\textsuperscript{61}

Murray’s rules and regulations demanded that each police officer be “civil to all persons of every rank and class” and “shall devote his whole time and attention to the Police Service.” Furthermore, any officers guilty of smoking on duty, disobedience, drunkenness, insolence in word or manner, violence, coarse language or behaviour, or neglect of duty became liable to immediate dismissal. Nicholas Rogers observes that the conduct of Toronto constables was to be similarly disciplined and moral:

 Constables were supposed to lead exemplary lives, both on and off the beat, whether in uniform or not. The practise of drinking, in particular was thought so disreputable and calculated to lower the efficiency and respectability of the police force.\textsuperscript{62}

Murray’s code of police conduct represented a major attempt on his behalf to mould the ordinary constables of the Winnipeg force into role models for the broader community. Recognizing that the predominance of offences policed within the city related to moral behaviour, Murray demanded that members of the police force serve as exemplary urban professionals and morally upstanding community members, as well as responsible, impartial officers of the law. Such a police force could, in turn, blanket the population of the city with lessons in order, morality and respectability.

During his reign as chief, Murray was determined to reform the police into a competent, efficient, and disciplined force. Officers were instructed in drills including

\textsuperscript{61} It is unclear whether the rules drawn up by Chief Murray were officially printed or distributed by city council during the period; no remaining copy of such exists in the Winnipeg Police Museum or the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Centre.

\textsuperscript{62} Rogers, 127.
“Setting Up, Saluting, marching in Slow and Quick time, the Manual of arms... also revolver exercise.”63 Regardless of their age, members of the force were expected to remain in strong and commanding physical condition. Murray also instituted a formal beat system that officers regularly patrolled on a daily and nightly basis. According to the annual report of the chief of police for the year of 1879, there were four geographically-defined sections of the city to be patrolled; “From Logan Street Point Douglas to the City Hall. From the City Hall to Portage Avenue, from Portage Avenue to Scott Street, and from Scott Street to Fort Garry.”64 The following year, the city was reorganized into three sections: “From Railway Depot, Point Douglas to Portage Avenue,” “From Portage Avenue to the Canada Pacific Hotel,” and “From Main to Hargrave St on Portage Avenue, and from Portage Avenue to St. Mary Street on Fort Street.”65 By 1883, Chief Murray had also instituted a formal ranking system within the department and had officially designated officers as inspectors, sergeants, or constables.66

Chief Murray was generally satisfied with the performance and character of the members of his force and applauded their efforts to city council on several occasions: “I beg to acknowledge the assistance of the men under my command and commend their

63 Annual report of the chief of police for 1879 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880)].

64 Annual report of the chief of police for 1879 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880)].

65 Annual Report of the chief of police for 1880 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 2120b (January 27, 1881)].

66 Police officers were initially identified by rank and name in Henderson’s Directory in 1883.
conduct and general willingness to do well." Though Murray expressed confidence in the work of the force, the number of policemen at his disposal remained a serious and ongoing concern. Applications regarding the size of the Winnipeg force were included in many of his letters to city council during the period. As the size of the city increased, Murray’s convictions deepened; he desired that a powerful force be permanently assembled to combat the disorderly and dangerous population of transient men, “criminal classes” and prostitutes at large in the city. The size of the police force, however, increased by only small increments, with the exception of the boom period of the early 1880s. The continued applications of Chief Murray suggest that the presence of a sizable and commanding force of men was part of his vision of order for the city, and that this aspiration was never fully realized.

Furthermore, Chief Murray’s vision for the police force included suitable headquarters. The status of the Winnipeg Police Station was an ongoing source of contention between Murray and city council. Chief Murray vigorously campaigned for city council’s attention to the status and conditions of the police station. He called for additional blankets and repairs to the building, stating that the poor ventilation was endangering the health of those inhabiting the station: “I consider the present means of accommodation insufficient and injurious... especially during the summer months.” Murray also declared that an enlargement to the station house and improved cell facilities were necessary to accommodate the growing number of female and male prisoners arrested daily, and to protect the health of the prisoners in light of the extreme climate.

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67 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1013.5 (January 24, 1877).

68 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1643 (June 16, 1879).
Eventually the pleas of the chief spurred a city council initiative to construct a new station house and by the end of 1883 the police force had headquarters that were more suitable to their needs, as well as those of the chief.

Constantly perpetuating his role as the local representative of law and order, Chief Murray made regular reports to city council on broad issues that concerned the police force and the “state” of the city. Murray made significant efforts to alert council to emerging social problems within Winnipeg, and often suggested means of regulating such change. In January of 1877, he warned that the small Winnipeg force would be soon overwhelmed with work “as the construction of the Railroad is likely to bring men of all classes” to the region. Murray reported that Winnipeg was the home to “all the criminal classes” and recommended that a covert police service be subsidized by the city to provide a “more perfect means for ferreting out the culprits.” Several months later, requesting that more men be appointed to the force, Murray observed that “owing to the rapid growth and increasing population of the city the last year... we have now in our midst many of that class who require the most vigilant attention of the Police.”

Furthermore, Murray identified the spread of prostitution as an issue of most pressing significance and warned of the threat of houses of ill-fame to the order and morality of the city centre:

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69 WARC, Council Communications, no.1013.5 (January 24, 1877).

70 WARC, Council Communications, no. 2201.5 (April 11, 1881).

71 WARC, Council Communications, no.2408 (October 31, 1881).
In the first place it encourages and fasters intemperance of the lowest grade which so largely obstructs the moral, social and business prospects... Secondly, it provides a hiding place for criminals of all grades... Thirdly, it proves a rendezvous for all kinds of thieves,Gamblers and idlers who prowl around the city for the purpose of decoying their victims to these Houses for the purpose of duping and robbing them of their property and hard earnings.72

Murray continued, "The removal of such evil demands vigorous action. How shall it be removed? By rooting it out at once." The declarations of the chief testify to his obvious frustration with the flourishing sex trade and his determination to "stamp out this evil." Consequently, arrest reports for the Winnipeg police reveal that raids on houses of ill-fame were at an all time high during Murray's reign as chief.73

In addition to his campaign against prostitution, Murray was determined to curb other disorderly conduct that was pervasive in the city. Murray campaigned to pass several municipal by-laws that dealt with specific sources of urban disorder. In response to the police force's frustration with local pawn dealers, the chief petitioned city council to officially regulate the dealings of pawn shop owners and second hand dealers.74 To assist the police in catching and punishing unruly neighbourhood boys who were breaking windows, Murray requested that a by-law be passed prohibiting persons from having catapults in their possession.75 Similarly, the activities carried out by a number of coffee shops and refreshment rooms on Sundays prompted Murray to recommend that a

72 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880).

73 Specifically, the arrest statistics for 1879 and 1880 are significantly higher than those in 1889 and 1899 [CWAR, Council Communications, no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880), no. 2120b (January 27, 1881); WPM, Arrest reports (January 1, 1889 to December 31, 1889)].

74 WARC, Council Communications, no. 2798 (August 7, 1882).

75 WARC, Council Communications, no. 320 (October 22, 1886).
specific municipal law be passed in August of 1882 to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath. Within a year, likely by no coincidence, by-law no. 240 was passed by Winnipeg city council concerning appropriate observation of the Sabbath.

In his high profile position of influence and having taken a personal interest in the morality of the city, Murray made himself an easy and attractive target of public condemnation. In 1878, charges surfaced accusing Murray of neglecting his civic duties in pursuit of business interests in several local hotels, which he carried out under his wife’s name. “In the interest of justice and fair play”, several community members protested the involvement of the chief of police and licence inspector in any local business ventures. These accusations were preceded by claims by several residents that the chief was frequently intoxicated while on duty and abusive to local residents. Calling for a full investigation into the chief’s activities, the same complainant who protested Murray’s involvement in the hotel business attempted to discredit his upstanding reputation:

That David B. Murray Chief of Police of the city of Winnipeg has at various times within the last six months... been drunk and disorderly and unfit for the discharge of his duty as such Chief of Police... the said David B. Murray has at times been violent and abusive to some of our peaceable citizens and has assaulted and beat them and in at least one instance threatened the life of and attempted to injure a peaceable citizen.

Attacks on Murray’s personal character and his activities as Chief came under increasing scrutiny and criticism towards the end of his thirteen-year career with the force. In 1885, Chief Murray was criticized by a well-known lawyer for his conduct and

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76 WARC, Council Communications, no. 2798 (August 7, 1882).
77 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1419 (July 29, 1878).
demeanour in Police Court. Forced to defend himself before his peers at city council, Murray wrote a scathing letter describing the lawyer as “the legal champion of prostitutes, theaves and vagrants,” and portraying himself as a respectable, impartial servant of the law. Murray not only shrugged off the lawyer’s accusations, he counter-attacked: “I represent law and order. He is the representative champion of exactly the reverse.” In 1886, the Board of Police Commissioners investigated an allegation that Murray was receiving bribery money from keepers of houses of ill-fame and gambling establishments. The Board concluded, however, that there was no merit to the claims.

Chief Murray struggled to become and remain chief and to sustain the respect of city council, the License and Police Committee, the Board of Police Commissioners and the broader community. Murray’s vision and struggle for order appears to have been both a personal one and a response to the pressure from various local interests; he vigorously led a crusade against transients, the criminal classes, prostitution, and all other sources of disorder on behalf of elites, the middles classes, concerned religious leaders and prominent reformers. Nonetheless, Murray failed to drive prostitution out of the city or significantly diminish local criminal activity (which was rather minimal to begin with); however, he did solidify the police force as a powerful and lasting local institution, providing the city with, in the least, the appearance of respectability, order and urban success. The accomplishment of this goal provided the police force with reliable tools of social regulation; a legacy that carried the force and its successive chiefs well into the twentieth century.

78 WARC, Council Communications, no. 4877 (March 21, 1885).

79 WARC, Council Communications, no. 108 (April 5, 1886).
While the majority of late nineteenth-century police work under Chief Murray and his successors was primarily concerned with disorder and "criminal" behaviour, the role of the Winnipeg police force was not strictly limited to law enforcement activities. A significant variety of social services were provided by the early municipal police force which further characterize the historic role of policing in the city of Winnipeg.

The social service functions of policing

Early Canadian police forces functioned in the era preceding the rise of social service agencies. As a result, urban policing across the country was forced to encompass various social functions and the Winnipeg police force was no exception. Though social services for the underprivileged ran secondary to urban police forces' coercive operations during the period, Greg Marquis notes that they remained an integral part of policing activities throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.80

The social service most commonly provided by the Winnipeg police force was the recovery of missing or lost children. Parents and concerned family members approached the police and provided them with details concerning missing children with surprising regularity. In 1886 the police were involved in the search for or recovery of up to ten children per month. In one report, the complainant Norman Mathew reported a neighbourhood child named Gertie Hooper lost from 14 Ellen Street; "Gertie is tastefully

dressed and gets lost frequently and is four years of age.” Children registered as missing or lost generally ranged in age from sixteen months to thirteen years, and almost all were located and safely returned home.82

Children were found roaming the streets by police officers or concerned residents quite regularly, and were brought to the station until the location of the child’s family or home was determined. For example, in April 1886 Constable McCharles reported that he found a little boy about three years of age wandering in front of the police station on James Street. The boy was eventually escorted home to his parents who lived on Patrick St.83 In another report, a little girl found on the street was brought to the station by a concerned resident, Miss Fraser. To Miss Fraser’s and the recording officer’s surprise, the little girl revealed herself to be the daughter of a Winnipeg policeman. Officer Madden’s daughter was immediately escorted home by Officer Leach.84

In addition to children, the Winnipeg force was called upon to assist missing or lost adults; reports of missing husbands, wives, or grown children were often brought to the attention of the police. Mrs. Flett of St. Andrew’s reported losing her twenty-one year old daughter to the city in November of 1886: “Caroline Flett came to town about 2

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81 WPM, Occurrence report (April 5, 1886).

82 WPM, Occurrence reports (1886, 1887). On July 25 1886, Robert Bourne reported that his young boy of sixteen months was lost. The police report indicates that the child was located after three hours of having gone missing. On July 26 1887, the occurrence report reads that Joseph Poole a “Coloured boy about 13 years old Came to station saying that he could not find his way home”. Police reports reveal that several children were reported found by their parents before they could be found by the police.

83 WPM, Occurrence reports (April 17, 1886).

84 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 19, 1886).
months ago with the intention of returning home soon after but has not yet returned.”

During beat patrol, police officers often aided lost or disoriented men and women found on the streets. On June 8 1879, Constable Grady helped a man “who had lost his way in the dark.” Similarly, in July of 1880 Constable Archibald “brought a blind man to the station” who was lost and disoriented.

The early police force of Winnipeg provided general services related to the health and welfare of the urban community as well. Many officers on the beat dealt with requests for directions or an escort to the residences or offices of local doctors. Seriously ill or incapacitated community members often relied on the police to gain their admittance to the local hospital. For example, in January of 1887 a phone call from the Rossin House alerted the police to a very sick man residing at that location. In response, police Sergeant McCharles received permission to admit the man to the hospital and helped to arrange a ride for him. The reports indicate that the sick man desperately required the help of the police as “he had no funds or any friends in the city.”

Winnipeg police officers were also required to deal with many community members who were believed or known to be mentally ill. In June 1880, one constable describes going to the hospital by order of the Sergeant to retrieve a mentally ill patient by the name of Davis. Upon returning to the police station with Davis, the constable

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85 WPM, Occurrence reports (November 4, 1886).
86 WPM, Occurrence reports (June 8, 1879).
87 WPM, Occurrence reports (July 14, 1880).
88 WPM, Occurrence reports (January 28, 1887).
charged him with “Being Luney.”

The majority of persons suffering from “insanity” during the period were charged by the police and locked up in the provincial gaol.

Members of the force were regularly involved in delivering health notices, as well as summons to appear in Court and special notices of city council. Occasionally, constables were also responsible for delivering provisions to institutions and families in need. In March of 1879, Constable Lawler describes distributing bread to the Winnipeg General Hospital (60 loaves), St. Boniface Hospital (40 loaves) and eight families (10 loaves each).

In the annual police report of 1876, the chief of police notes that the charitable and delivery responsibilities of the police force consumed a significant portion of their time: “as sometimes they have to go from one extreme end of the city to the other to perform the work.”

The police station house served as an important community resource during the late nineteenth century. The occurrence reports of the police reveal that the station occasionally served as a shelter or layover destination for transients, travelers, and tramps, as well as the poor and homeless. Though Greg Marquis notes that nineteenth-century Canadian police stations were primarily used “to shelter the respectable transient on his way through… in search of work,” it appears that a variety of characters and circumstances prompted the Winnipeg police to provide temporary lodgings.

The Winnipeg force exercised discretion when it came to accommodating destitute as well as

88 WPM, Occurrence reports (June 17, 1880).

89 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 28, 1879).

90 WARC, Council Communications, no.1013.5 (January 24, 1877).

91 Marquis, “Power from the Street,” 32; WPM, Occurrence reports (1879, 1880).
respectable lodgers in the station, exhibiting compassion for many of those who turned to them for shelter and protection. In July of 1879, Constable McGowan reported that he “gave a traveler lodging in one of the rooms he come from the Baie St Paul and has no money.”\textsuperscript{93} Later that year, Constable McLaren reported that:

…there was two Half Bread Wimen came to the station at 9pm and told me that they were strangers in the place and had know money to pay for there lodging and there was two men chasing them they appeared frightened so I put them in for the Knight.\textsuperscript{94}

Despite some of their efforts, the presence, condition, and large number of urban poor eventually overwhelmed the police force and the city during the period.\textsuperscript{95} Though the police occasionally hosted the destitute or needy in the station house over an evening, such efforts ultimately provided little benefit to the larger population of dispossessed members within urban society.

Petitions to city council reveal that the benevolent labours of the Winnipeg police were not sufficient in the eyes of the broader community. The Knights of Labor made several complaints to council during the late 1880s regarding the large number of immigrants who were refused into the immigrant sheds and “turned away from the police station without aid.”\textsuperscript{96} Appealing to city council and the police force’s sense of piety, the Knights of Labour insisted that: “In a civilized community, boasting itself as belonging

\textsuperscript{93} WPM, Occurrence reports (July 10, 1879).

\textsuperscript{94} WPM, Occurrence reports (October 8, 1879).

\textsuperscript{95} Randolph Rostecki notes that the significant population of urban poor in Winnipeg became apparent by the early 1880s. See “The growth of Winnipeg, 1870-1886” (Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1980), 5.

\textsuperscript{96} WARC, Council Communications, no. 1019 (1889).
to the Christian religion ... it is a positive disgrace and shame to the City that persons should be compelled to wander the streets.”

The social service functions performed by members of the local force suggest that their status as police officers was complemented by their role as welfare agents. The majority of policemen, however, had a narrow view of their responsibilities as such. When it came to domestic violence and family matters considered to be inherently “private”, the police consistently disregarded requests for assistance. The force was often called upon to settle domestic disputes by wives, neighbours, mothers and children. In response to many of these cases, constables reported that they repeatedly arrived too late to be effective. In December of 1879 Constable Grady reported that there was a domestic row reported in the flats “but as usual we were late.”

Police responses to domestic issues rarely resulted in any arrests or police action, especially when the dispute was non alcohol-related: “Mrs McKenzie sent for the police about 10 am when we got there all was quiet she complained of her husband ill using her she wanted us to arrest him but he was sober.” Another police report indicated that a “half breed woman complained that her husband had threatened to beat her” but that the constable “could not arrest him as he was not drunk.” Generally police officers exhibited an aversion to “interfering” in domestic life, regardless of the potential hazard

97 WARC, Council Communications, no. 1019 (1889).
98 WPM, Occurrence reports (December 5, 1879).
99 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 9, 1879).
100 WPM, Occurrence reports (June 25, 1880).
posed by the parties involved. On November 30 1880 Constable Archibald reported:
“...was called to James Adams where it was said he was abusing his wife braking
furniture and raising a general disturbance but... I thought it best not to interfere.”101

Reports of abuse that were registered at the police station also occasionally
concerned children. A report pertaining to a boy who was temporarily in the care of the
police at the station house reads: “He wont go home he says his mother beats him.”102
Another report made by a concerned community member indicated that a local Jewish
woman “in the habit of beating her child is doing so unmercilessly at the present time,”
and requested that the police take immediate action. In cases of family abuse, even those
in which officers witnessed disturbances first hand and children were involved, the police
offered guidance more often than they took action. For example, in December 1879 the
daughter of Mr. H. Patton turned to the police for help with a family dispute. In
response, the officers involved passed on some friendly advice:

H. Pattons daughter at 1230 reported that her father was drunk and
abusing her mother and the rest of the family. John and I went to the
house and all was quiet but when we went in, things took a fresh start and
they all joined in the chorus calling each other liars we gave them a few
words of advice and retired from the scene.103

Members of the community not only looked to the police force for protection
from abuse, they sought out discipline for their family members. Husbands, wives,
mothers and fathers made requests to the police to lock up their violent, disorderly or
uncontrollable family members. On April 9 1886, Mr. Alexander McRae asked the

101 WPM, Occurrence reports (November 30, 1880).
102 WPM, Occurrence reports (October 6, 1879).
103 WPM, Occurrence reports (December 19, 1879).
police to lock up his son because he “stays out at night.” Ten days later, Mr. McRae brought his son down to the station to be locked up as he was “refusing to go to school and acting smart.” In August of 1887, the report of a desperate wife alerted the police to her unruly husband:

...her husband has been a drunk for the last week that he abuses her and does not work to support her she having a child a few months old to look after. That he goes about with prostitutes and she wishes him looked after if it possibly can be done.

In keeping with their general practise of non-involvement, the police offered only guidance to the majority of community members who looked to them to discipline their unruly family members.

Though the Winnipeg police participated in a variety of social service activities, they were barely effective in “serving” the needs of the diverse urban population. Constrained by patriarchal notions about privacy and the family, officers neglected to police domestic violence, despite repeated requests for assistance from the local population. Ultimately, the only social services successfully performed by the police during the period were those that served to maintain a larger “web of police legitimation” within the city. Maintaining, in the least, a reputation for caring, compassion and assistance offered some justification for the authoritative role of the police within the urban community. On some level, this effort was successful; with no other options or

104 WPM, Occurrence reports (April 9, 1886).
105 WPM, Occurrence reports (April 19, 1886).
106 WPM, Occurrence reports (August 26, 1887).
107 Marquis, “The Police as a Social Service,” 357.
services available to them, community members continued to look to the force for assistance.

Conclusion: Policing and the rise of the city

The powerful and diverse role of the Winnipeg police force is reflected in the variety of law enforcement, public order, and social service activities that it was involved in throughout the late nineteenth century. While the Winnipeg force cannot be credited with taming the “wild west,” their labours did not go without serious consequence. The police served as the strong arm of municipal government, utilizing the power invested in them to monitor and regulate the urban population. Their activities were defined by law as well as by the interests of local politicians, elites, reformers, religious leaders, community members and commanding chiefs of police.

The primary responsibility of the police force was maintaining order within the expanding urban environment. Influenced by Victorian ideals and popular notions of the period, order was defined as public morality, and the police force cracked down on alcohol- and prostitution-related offences. Generally, the lack of serious or “wild” criminal activity in the city left time for the police to carefully regulate the lives, morality and leisurely activities of the urban population, and more specifically, the working class, prostitutes and the local Aboriginal and Métis population. The police force’s continued enforcement of morals laws likely weakened public confidence in their impartiality and
role within the community.\textsuperscript{108} D.B. Murray’s twelve year reign as chief, for example, ended in controversy as a variety of public accusations concerning his biased motives and shameful conduct surfaced.

Members of the Winnipeg police force not only enforced morals law, they influenced, entered and were invited into the lives of the populace as guardians, councillors, mediators and disciplinarians. The police station served as a shelter and a community welfare/emergency centre and Winnipeg police officers were important arbiters of urban life.\textsuperscript{109} While some of the social services performed by the police may have served as a complementary means of supervising transients and the impoverished, such intentions proved of little concern to the many desperate men, women and children who turned to the police for help. The police proved unable or unwilling to aid the population with many of their “private” familial crises; however, their limited charitable efforts did serve to further legitimize their role within the city.\textsuperscript{110}

Nicholas Rogers has suggested that the Toronto police force was a local product “of changing and sometimes competing political and social forces.”\textsuperscript{111} Similarly, the dynamic context provided by the rise of the city of Winnipeg affected the unique local role of urban police work during the late nineteenth century. Questions remain as to how the power imbued in the municipal police force played out in the lives of members of the


\textsuperscript{109} Marquis, “Power from the Street,” 32.

\textsuperscript{110} See Marquis, “The Police as a Social Service,” 335.

\textsuperscript{111} Rogers, 116.
police force and in the hands of constables on the streets of the modernizing city.

Chapter two will explore “life on the Winnipeg police force” during the late Victorian period.
Chapter 2  

Life on the Winnipeg police force

The policing of nineteenth-century Canadian cities was an endeavour strictly reserved for “real” men. The professional urban police officer born of the period was a typical Canadian hero: masculine, nameless, faceless, dedicated and brave.¹ The policeman was an idealized working man whose life on the beat demanded steadiness and impartiality as well as resilience, patience and physical endurance. In Winnipeg, the first rule outlined by the police code of the municipal force demanded that “each member of the police shall devote his whole time and attention to the police service.”² Could the earliest policemen of Winnipeg measure up to their heroic image and to the tall order of a life on the force?

This chapter will focus on the profile and identity of police officers and the nature and culture of the police labour force in late nineteenth-century Winnipeg. The position of “policeman” was quite highly coveted during the period; yet a policeman’s shoes were not the easiest ones to fill, or to keep filled. Though many hazards can be associated with police work and the turnover rate of the Winnipeg force was quite high, elements of camaraderie and a police culture emerged and policemen came to share a common identity within nineteenth-century society. How did the profile of local policemen and the culture and identity of the Winnipeg force come to bear on the streets of the frontier

¹ Based in part on Daniel Francis’ discussion of Pierre Berton’s view of Canadian heroes in National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 34.

² See Appendix 1 for the “Rules and Regulations of the Police Force of the City of Winnipeg” that were compiled by Chief D.B. Murray in 1876 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 897.5 (July 15, 1876)].
city? The daily patrol records of an individual constable, John H. Grady, provide a vivid depiction of policing activities and of life on the force in the frontier city.

**Becoming a police officer in the late nineteenth century**

The police forces of Canadian towns and cities were made up entirely of men during the late nineteenth century.\(^3\) The physical attributes of policemen during the period suggest that the challenges of policing, and the maintenance of law and order, demanded strong, imposing, and commanding individuals. The physical brawn of officers was, in part, necessitated by the most common offense, drunk and disorderly.\(^4\) The intimidating and commanding physical presence of policemen also served to reinforce state power on the streets of Canadian cities.

Perhaps the most telling reason for the appointment of only the most strapping men to municipal forces pertains to notions of masculinity. With respect to the Hamilton force, John Weaver notes that “policing was not open to just anyone, but to a special muscular breed… physical prowess and size linked into popular notions of manliness.”\(^5\) The policemen of the late nineteenth century were appointed not only to impose order; the “exaggerated masculinity” of their appearance promoted the ideal of a powerful yet respectable working man.\(^6\) Policing was considered to be a “job for real men,”\(^7\) who had

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\(^3\) Women were appointed to the police forces of North American and British cities in the early twentieth century as protective officers, patrol women, safety workers, women constables and policewomen. See Myers, “Women Policing Women,” 230.

\(^4\) Weaver, “Social Control, Martial Conformity,” 117.

\(^5\) Weaver, *Crimes, Constables and Courts*, 123.


\(^7\) Weaver, *Crimes, Constables and Courts*, 97.
the strength, health and authority to maintain order, yet who were also deserving, sober, and steady in their character and manner. Forces generally sought out candidates who were literate and devout and who seemed reliable and responsible.

In their search, urban forces often looked to men with military experience. Many qualities possessed by soldiers were thought to be desirable, as well as applicable, to a career in policing. While the physical endurance or strength of younger men was often desired, the maturity and experience that older men brought to forces was also indispensable. In many Canadian cities, there was no strict policy with respect to the age of men recruited; policemen generally ranged from between twenty and fifty years old. Some municipal forces, however, did have regulations governing eligibility according to age. The Hamilton police force lowered the maximum age of officers from forty-eight to thirty years around 1880, and by 1900, most applicants were in their early or mid twenties. The youthful character of the Hamilton force distinguished it from the forces of both Toronto and Winnipeg during the period, whose men were between their mid twenties and mid fifties.

Regardless of their age, most Canadian municipal policemen came from the working or lower middle classes. In addition to the significant number of ex-soldiers

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8 Rogers, 126.
9 Ibid.
11 Weaver, Crimes, Constables and Courts, 125.
12 Marquis, “Working Men in Uniform,” 261; also see Table 3a.
13 Marquis, “Power from the Street,” 37.
and men previously employed as patrolmen or officers, several police forces preferred
the sons of farmers and tradesmen as candidates. Furthermore, English Canadian
police forces employed a large number of British Protestant and Anglo-Celtic
immigrants. During the nineteenth century the Hamilton police force was dominated by
Protestant British immigrants, while the majority of the men on the Toronto force were
Irish Protestants who belonged to fraternal societies.

A variety of preferences were exhibited by specific Canadian towns and cities for
policemen of a certain age, upbringing, ethnicity, or religious conviction. The profile of
police officers remained relatively unique to each urban centre during the period, and the
Winnipeg force was no exception. Men appointed to the Winnipeg police force were
tall, brawny and imposing in stature. They ranged from twenty-three to fifty years old,
with the largest percentage of men aged between thirty and thirty-nine years. (See Table
3a) The average age of a late nineteenth-century Winnipeg policeman was thirty-three.

The western migration of men from Ontario and Nova Scotia significantly
affected the composition of the Winnipeg force. Many touted some past military or

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid; Weaver, Crimes, Constables & Courts, 128.
17 Based on information provided by letters of application and visual images of members
 of the force from the period.
18 Based on the average of 21 Winnipeg policemen identified in the Canadian census
 records from 1881 and 1891 [NAC, Census of Canada, 1881; NAC, Census of Canada, 1891].
policing experience and the majority of the men were married prior to their move west.\textsuperscript{19} Another striking commonality between inspectors, sergeants, and constables of the Winnipeg force pertained to their ethnicity and religious beliefs. According to census records, virtually every member of the police was of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic descent. (See Table 3b) The majority of officers' parents were born in Great Britain, and relocated to Canada prior to the birth of their children. Several historians suggest that the late nineteenth-century Winnipeg police exhibited a specific fondness for Scots; however, there were a significant number of Irish and British men who also worked as police officers.\textsuperscript{20} In the Canadian census records of both 1881 and 1891, less than one-half of the officers registered were of Scottish ancestry. (See Table 3c) The large majority of officers were Presbyterian, while a small portion of them were adherents to the Episcopalian, Congregational, and Anglican Churches. Despite some of their similarities in personal background and belief, the police record books suggest that Winnipeg policemen had a variety of different educational backgrounds. Some of the constables composed heavily worded and descriptive accounts of daily occurrences, other reports contain the prose of less well educated men, while a couple of policemen appeared barely literate.

\textsuperscript{19} While little information is available regarding policemen's previous occupations, many applications to the force mention military or policing experience, suggesting that it was a preferred qualification.

\textsuperscript{20} See James H. Gray, \textit{Boomtime: Peopling the Canadian Prairies} (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979) and Greg Marquis, "Power from the Street".
Table 3a: Age distribution of Winnipeg police officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
<td>3 (23.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>8 (61.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (15.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Census of Canada [NAC, Census of Canada, 1881; Census of Canada, 1891].

Table 3b: Birthplace of Winnipeg police officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6 (85.7)</td>
<td>12 (92.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (7.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Census of Canada [NAC, Census of Canada, 1881; Census of Canada, 1891].

Table 3c: Ancestry/birthplace of parents of Winnipeg police officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ancestry</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td>No. of men (as %)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>6 (46.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>1.5 (11.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>3 (42.9)</td>
<td>4 (30.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1.5 (11.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Census of Canada [NAC, Census of Canada, 1881; Census of Canada, 1891].

21 Figures displayed in Tables 3a, 3b and 3c are based on the information offered by census records on individuals identified as police officers. In 1881, the records cite information on 7 officers and in 1891, 13 police officers are identified. Information on the exact size of the Winnipeg force at the time of each census remains unknown; therefore, figures are to be considered a close representation of the make up of the force during the period.
Generally, a position on the Winnipeg Police force in the late nineteenth century was difficult to obtain. Between 1874 and 1880, there were well over fifty applications received, yet there were only six men on the force.\(^\text{22}\) In their letters to the mayor, city council and chief of police, applicants to the Winnipeg force cited a variety of qualifications for the job. Many letters communicated petitioners’ desire to fulfill the role of policeman and offered testimonials of character or competency.\(^\text{23}\) Men who had previous experience in a police force or in the military often mentioned the duration and extent of their experience and bolstered the value of their knowledge and ability.\(^\text{24}\) The majority of men, lacking any policing expertise, stated a variety of credentials which they thought would qualify them for a position on the force: knowledge of the city gained from years of residence, “steady and active habits,” or their impressive height or weight.\(^\text{25}\)

A variety of factors potentially influenced the appointment of individual officers to the Winnipeg police force.\(^\text{26}\) Letters of application and recommendation likely

\(^{22}\) Based on the number of applications received by city council and registered as Council Communications, held by the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Centre [hereafter referred to as CWAR]. Additional applications to the force may have been received by the chief or Police Committee directly.

\(^{23}\) CWAR, Council Communications, no. 49 (March 9, 1874), no. 155 (October 30, 1874), no. 388 (September 10, 1875), no. 1893 (May 3, 1880).

\(^{24}\) CWAR, Council Communications, no. 17 (January 29, 1874), no. 20 (January 26, 1874), no. 27 (February 6, 1874), no. 50 (March 6, 1874), no. 185 (November 10, 1874), no. 289 (May 25, 1875), no. 389 (September 8, 1875), no. 1894 (May 3, 1880).

\(^{25}\) CWAR, Council Communications, no. 13 (January 30, 1874), no. 49 (March 9, 1874), no. 2193 (April 7, 1881), no. 2205 (April 25, 1881), no. 2609 (March 26, 1882).

\(^{26}\) The selection procedure of applicants and the credentials of many of the men appointed to the Winnipeg police remains somewhat elusive.
weighed heavily in the selection process, as did the acquaintance of members of city council; however, the most consistent factor in the selection process appears to have been the authority of the chief. Upon forwarding his approval or recommendation of an applicant to city council, that applicant was consistently successful in obtaining a position on the force. Though city council and the police committee had the last word on all appointments to the force, the opinion and suggestions of the police chief appear to have significantly influenced their decisions.

By and large, the profile of Winnipeg policemen remained consistent throughout the late nineteenth century. Men were successful at attaining and maintaining a position on the Winnipeg police force if they met the profile of an urban policeman and effectively policed the city according to the interests of the city council and chief of police. Circumstances reveal, however, that many officers’ “manliness,” strength, age, background and ethnicity failed to suitably prepare them for the variety of hazards that accompanied life on the force.

The hazards of police work

Law enforcement and the maintenance of order was a demanding and unpredictable undertaking on the Canadian frontier. The Winnipeg police force experienced a high turnover rate of constables from its earliest days and throughout much of the late nineteenth century.27 One of the first two men appointed a police constable in

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27 The records predominantly pertain to the careers of policemen during the 1870s and early 1880s. While little information is available regarding the careers of policemen during the late 1880s and 1890s, it seems that the turnover rate of officers was a problem that continued to plague the Winnipeg force. The names of officers appear and disappear from the police record books with surprising regularity throughout the period of this study.
1874 resigned after only two weeks of service. Mixed in controversy, the first chief of police was forced to resign in 1875 after only one year of service. Within the first five years of its founding the size of the Winnipeg force doubled from three to six men, yet there were at least seven resignations during the same period. As the force increased to over thirty men during the “boom years” between 1880 and 1882 there were at least twelve resignations.

While there were a handful of officers that served four, five, or as many as twelve years on the Winnipeg force, significantly more men served between 2 months and 2 years. In December 1881, the Winnipeg Daily Times reported on the high turnover problem experienced by the force:

There are no fewer than four of the city police who are about to vacate that honorable calling at the end of the present month. Three are resigning to better their position, and the other – Gordon- who only served two days, has been compelled to do so owing to sickness.

A variety of factors contributed to a high turnover rate of the police and the constant shortage of men on the force. Apparently the drill exercises, which were implemented in the attempt to strengthen the resolve of constables who worked the beat, combined with long shifts of ten to twelve hours to physically exhaust many officers.

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28 Templeman, 10.

29 Information on resignations and turnover of the force based on letters filed with the city clerk and registered as part of Council Communications at CWAR.

30 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (December 12, 1881).

31 The fatigue of men is revealed in their resignation letters, and in letters of the chief asking city council to appoint more men to the force.
Concerns about the weather, working conditions and illness also dominated resignation letters.

The relatively low salaries of policemen and the high cost of living in the city further contributed to a constant shortage of men on the Winnipeg police force. During the early to mid-1880s, economic concerns were cited in the majority of officers’ letters of resignation. Inflation made it increasingly difficult for policemen to live off their wages, especially those with families to support. Upon resigning from the force, Constable John Hunt apologetically explained that he could not make enough income to pay rent, buy fuel, and support his family in the city, and that he had “accordingly accepted an offer of a more remunerative situation in Emerson.”

Similarly, Constable T.J. Barber’s letter of resignation in 1883 stated that he had accepted another position by which he “could do better.”

The onerous demands of life on the beat consistently challenged the commitment of police officers. Beginning in 1875, there were often more constables on night patrol than during the day, due to the chief’s concern that there was “more danger to be feared in the still house of the night to life and property than in broad day.”

Walking the beat at night, and often alone, wore on the physical energy and mental determination of many policemen. Finding the demands of night patrol overwhelming, one constable resigned his position on the force after only two months of service. His letter to council reads:

…I tender you my resignation. Since I joined the force I have found the night work very wearing and trying to my constitution, so that I am

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33 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 3146 (March 5, 1883).

34 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 3148 (March 10, 1883).

34 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 330 (June 1875).
compelled to act as I am doing. I know it is not right to wish to leave after such a short service.\textsuperscript{35}

Another constable resigned his position on his doctor’s orders, due to an illness that was the apparent result of night patrol: “I hereby tender my resignation... on the ground of a disease which I have contracted during the time I was on night service.”\textsuperscript{36}

During the coldest periods of the year, constables often had little to report other than the challenges of extreme weather: “the coldest of the night was the greatest obstacle I had to encounter.”\textsuperscript{37} Similar reports during the spring and summer complain that the “Knight was very wet and nasty” and “the night was fearfully dark and stormy.”\textsuperscript{38} The extreme climate of the city made patrolling the streets strenuous year-round. After working for the police for a little over a year, Constable Robert Armstrong tendered his resignation citing the harsh climate as the cause of his early leave: “I beg most respectfully to tender my resignation... As I find that I cannot stand the extreme cold of this country.”\textsuperscript{39}

The constables who patrolled the streets of Winnipeg were relatively under prepared for the working conditions that their position entailed. Police uniforms, especially those of the early force, did not protect the men from the intense and varied conditions that plagued the city year round. Buffalo coats were worn by officers for most

\textsuperscript{35} CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2699 (May 26, 1882).

\textsuperscript{36} CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2462 (December 12, 1881).

\textsuperscript{37} WPM, Occurrence reports (March 15, 1879).

\textsuperscript{38} WPM, Occurrence reports (May 3, 1879; August 24, 1879).

\textsuperscript{39} CWAR, Council communications, no. 2512 (January 23, 1882).
of the 1870s and 1880s, and were replaced by coon skin coats in the early 1890s. Reports of constables reveal, however, that the heavy robes which served as their uniforms could not protect them in the harsh Winnipeg winter evenings. During the summer, the dark coats and pants that served as police uniforms made the heat on the street equally as difficult to endure.

The challenges of policing were also little improved by the “comforts” of the police station house. The original station house, located on the corner of William Avenue and Main Street, was well known for its poor condition. Chief Murray petitioned the city council throughout the late 1870s and early 80s for improvements to the officers’ sleeping quarters, prison cells, and the ventilation and insulation of the station building. Though the Chief stated his concern about the health of the men and prisoners who were confined to the decrepit structure on several occasions, city council was slow to respond. The state of the station house, described by one officer as “primitive,” remained in such an abysmal state that it served as a deterrent to offenders. During the summer of 1881, the Winnipeg Daily Times warned its readers: “Every cell in the provincial jail is let. This should be a solemn warning to offenders of the law, as they will have to rusticate in the cells at the police station until a vacancy occurs.” After the new police station was built in 1883, conditions of station duty were relatively improved

40 Hutchison, 9.

41 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 145 (October 25, 1874), no. 415.5 (July 1, 1875), no. 1568 (April 7, 1879), no. 1643 (June 16, 1879), no. 1739 (October 13, 1879), no. 1796.5 (January 8, 1880), no. 2216 (April 18, 1881).

42 J.C. McRae, “I Remember” [MLL, Manitoba Biography Scrapbook, B5: 58].

43 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (August 29, 1881).
for members of the force. The significant amount of time that officers were expected to work, sleep and be on call in the station, however, remained a challenging aspect of life on the force.

During much of the late nineteenth century, the Winnipeg police force was short staffed, under clothed, and over worked. Policemen constantly faced extreme weather conditions, illness, exhaustion, solitary night patrol, and dilapidated quarters. These factors, along with others, contributed to the relatively unstable police labour force during much of the period as many men became exhausted with life on the beat and dissatisfied with their prospects.\(^4^4\) Furthermore, the duties performed by police officers went largely unappreciated by the urban community at large. In one of his annual reports, Chief Murray recognized the demanding and unrewarding nature of life on the force:

> Few people unless they have taken the pains to study and examine the life and duties of a patrolman have the remotest idea of what is expected of him, of the hardships and dangers he has to undergo.... he is expected to patrol the streets... whether in rain, storm or sunshine. Not only is he expected to care for and protect the lives and property of the citizens while they sleep, but he must be present at all times and on all occasions.\(^4^5\)

The constables and chiefs of the Winnipeg force, however, made significant efforts to gain appropriate recognition and compensation for their efforts; they petitioned city council to raise their wages on more than one occasion during the period. The Winnipeg Daily Times supported the appeal made by the policemen in late 1881:

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\(^4^4\) Weaver, Crimes, Constables and Courts, 126.

\(^4^5\) Annual report of the chief of police for 1880 [WARC, Council Communications, no. 2120b (January 27, 1881)].
The police have signed a petition to the council asking for an increase of pay. They say the commonest labourer can earn $2.50 a day, while they have to work day and night for $1.66. Their position is certainly a responsible and also a dangerous one, and it is nothing but fair that they should be paid in accordance with the times.46

In a letter submitted to City Council in 1882, seven constables repeated the effort, specifically requesting that their monthly stipend be increased from sixty to eighty dollars. They pointed to the fact that the police of Minneapolis and St. Paul made over eighty dollars per month, and that the cost of living was comparatively lower over the border.47

The efforts of the members of the Winnipeg force were rewarded with an increase in pay by the end of 1882.48 The city council also implemented a new resolution to encourage men to become career policemen. The resolution stipulated that after each one-half year period of time, patrolmen would receive a bonus of ten dollars per month for the preceding six months of service, so long as they continued to serve on the force.49 The salary, number of policemen employed and the turnover rate of the force, however, proved to be ongoing issues for the city council, Board of Police Commissioners and Winnipeg police force throughout the period.50

46 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (December 12, 1881).

47 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2827 (August 26, 1882).

48 In 1874, salaries were listed as $750/per annum for the chief of police and $500/per annum for constables. By the end of 1882, the salary of the chief was increased to $1800/per annum and the salary of policemen ranged from $720-$1400/per annum depending on rank and length of service [CWAR, City Clerk, Minutes of Council (March 9, 1874); CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2950 (November 13, 1882)].

49 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 3519 (August 25, 1883), no. 3814 (January 14, 1884).

50 While correspondence and reports are unavailable for the latter years of the late nineteenth-century, a report of the Board of Police Commissioners from 1885 suggests that the
Despite the various hazards and modest salary that accompanied police work, a significant number of men continued to apply for positions with the municipal force during the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, community members viewed employment on the force as lucrative, especially when compared to other civic positions. One citizen petitioned city council in 1884 for a reduction in the salaries of policemen, stating that he knew of many men who worked for the city and who would be more than willing to trade places with a member of the police force. The general popularity of positions with the Winnipeg police can be explained, in part, by the strength of camaraderie and shared culture amongst the members of the force.

**Police culture and “the harmony amongst the men...”**

In letters addressed to the chief of police and city council, many policemen reflected positively on their experiences with the Winnipeg police force, wrote fondly of fellow officers, or tendered their resignation with feelings of regret. In 1882, one constable resigned his position with expressions of both gratitude and regret to the chief: “I received many acts of kindness from yourself and the other members of the force... it is with feelings of deep regret... I tender you my resignation.” Another constable’s regretful resignation in 1883 included substantial praise and appreciation of the force:

The kindness and courtesy of the officers... is all that can be desired... the harmony amongst the men is a matter of remark as it is seldom that men

salaries and status of the police labour force remained unresolved [CWAR, Council Communications, no. 5064 (June 8, 1885)].

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51 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 3814 (January 14, 1884).

52 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2699 (May 26, 1882).
are found to be working in as much unison as the constables of the Winnipeg Police Force.\textsuperscript{53}

Unlike other cities, the hierarchical organization of the Winnipeg force seemed to have little detrimental effect upon its functioning and identity. The resentment that stirred amongst the Hamilton police force in response to the promotion of sergeants and superior officers, and the "natural tension" that existed between members of the Toronto force, remains undetected in the early history of the Winnipeg force.\textsuperscript{54}

The shared experiences of maintaining order in the city seemed to quickly cement the bonds between members of the Winnipeg police. Constables often came to rely upon each other for assistance with difficult or dangerous situations or suspects during their policing careers. The challenges of beat patrol, the small size of the force (especially in the early years), and the cramped police quarters also contributed to close and lasting connections between officers. Furthermore, reports of Winnipeg constables suggest that the values of order, sobriety and morality that the force represented and enforced on the streets of the city were mirrored by officers' own belief systems. The policemen were governed by a code of conduct which collectively regulated their behaviour. The codes, regulations and values that structured the lives of policemen served to strengthen the unity of the force.

Despite the responsibilities and restrictions that defined the lives of policemen, many of them seemed to take pleasure in, and appreciate, aspects of their work. A sense

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{53} CWAR, Council Communications, no. 3146 (March 5, 1883).

\textsuperscript{54} One exception to the amicable history of the Winnipeg police, however, may be the first year of its existence (1874-1875) when constables were in conflict with the chief and were partly responsible for his eventual resignation. See Weaver, \textit{Crimes, Constables and Courts}, 126; and Marquis, "Working Men in Uniform," 272.
\end{footnotesize}
of pride is communicated in many officers' reports in response to arrests of notorious criminals, drunks or disreputable characters. Constable John H. Grady openly expressed disappointment when he returned "empty-handed" to the station after a night on the beat. Many officers also made noticeable efforts to record the variety of social services they provided to the community, from rescuing homeless or transient strangers during the winter, to walking children home who were wandering alone around the streets of city. The charitable and kindly nature of many of these tasks offered some personal reward to local officers and further contributed to the friendly bonds that developed among members of the force.

Underpinning the connections that grew out of both the adversity and enjoyment of police work and the camaraderie and culture shared amongst the all-male group, were the similar personal backgrounds of many of the policemen. As previously mentioned, a significant number of late nineteenth-century Winnipeg policemen were Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic Protestants who were born in Ontario or Nova Scotia, and who shared the common experience of moving west in search of new and exciting and opportunities. Many of the men also had past military or policing experience, and well over one-half had families to support. Though the occurrence reports suggest that some of the constables were more educated and literate than others, the common situation and shared encounters of the men likely served to transcend the differences between them.

While the similarities in background, ethnicity and religious belief were not steadfast, they did appear to cement the ties between officers who moved to, and who lived in, Winnipeg. The shared ties amongst the men were especially pronounced in light of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the frontier city's population.

55 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 1, 1879; September 16, 1880).
Further contributing to the “harmony amongst the men” were the shared social positions and aspirations of the officers with respect to class and status. As “working-class aspirants to middle-class independence,”56 Winnipeg policemen of the late nineteenth century collectively situated themselves safely within the lower middle class. In their aspirations to secure a comfortable, respectable, and more secure class position, Winnipeg police constables were similar to those of the Toronto force. Membership in the lower middle class had both advantages and disadvantages for the police. The liminal identity of the class position, betwixt the labouring classes and the more secure middle classes, helped to perpetuate the culture and identity of policemen as a professional group within society. Yet their position between social classes also served to socially isolate the officers from broader society: a policeman was never really able to disassociate himself from his role as a “police officer” because his personal identity and character was inherently defined by his membership in the force. V.A.C. Gatrell suggests that policemen lived a uniquely isolated, conflicted and disciplined existence during the Victorian period:

Isolated by uniform, discipline and function from the working-class community, and upholding ‘order’ in the face of chronic hostility and abuse from their targets… the career policeman made (and makes) sense of his extraordinary situation only by internalizing authoritarian values and deferring to conventional standards of respectability.57

Based on his research into the early twentieth-century Toronto police force, Greg Marquis has observed rather the opposite; that Toronto policemen were not socially isolated from the “civilian” population. In Winnipeg, several factors testify to at least


57 Gatrell, 272.
some degree of social isolation from the urban populace: the police force was relatively small and shared no obvious associations with religious, cultural or fraternal societies or associations; and the population of the city (especially the working class) was ethnically diverse and strong class polarizations quickly evolved during the period.

The only obvious bond between the police and the broader population appears to have been the shared goal of middle-class independence and respectability. Many members of the Winnipeg police force participated in a common effort “to better their position”: moving west for opportunity, applying to the police force out of lower paying or labouring positions, demanding appropriate compensation for their dedication and service, or resigning based on more remunerative prospects for themselves and their families. Furthermore, officers seemed to support each other’s efforts to climb the economic and social ladder: they petitioned council for salary increases collectively, several of them resigned their positions on the force simultaneously, and many of them offered glowing reports of their colleagues to city council. In an attempt to supplement their salaries and successfully situate themselves within the growing middle class, a few officers pursued business interests in the city independent from their positions on the force. After several citizens angrily opposed the involvement of police officers in local trade, however, the practise was prohibited.

A strong police culture was sustained by the members of the Winnipeg police force throughout much of the period in spite of the variety of hazards associated with

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58 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2609 (March 26, 1882); MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (December 12, 1881).

59 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 1309 (February 25, 1878), no. 1347 (April 8, 1878), no. 1403 (July 22, 1878).
police work. The question remains, however, as to how the profile of late nineteenth-century Winnipeg policemen and the culture and identity of the police force impacted upon the lives of the local community. Patrolling the streets of Winnipeg was often a solitary activity, significantly influenced by personal discretion and the prejudices of constables towards the city and its populace. In order to appreciate how members of the force patrolled “according to order” we will now explore the Winnipeg beat through the eyes and daily patrol records of Constable John H. Grady.

A day in the life of a Winnipeg police constable

One balmy fall evening in Winnipeg, Constable John H. Grady, a dedicated Methodist Irishman of the Winnipeg police force, visited Point Douglas Common “in search of Drunk Indians”60 to lock up for the evening. After answering a domestic abuse call, and returning a lost child home to its family, Grady set back towards the station, somewhat disappointed to be returning “empty-handed” from his night on the beat. A few blocks from the station house he stumbled over the “notorious” Charlotte Spence, lying drunk on the sidewalk. Unable, or unwilling, to remove Spence from the street on his own, Grady employed a dray to transport the prisoner to the station house. In the meantime, he made a final visit to hotel row, to ensure that all the licensed saloons and barrooms were appropriately shut down for the evening. A tipsy, but reputable, local merchant requested that Grady escort him home, as he felt unsafe on the dark streets of the city all alone. Constable Grady eventually returned to the police station around 3 a.m. to compose and record his official occurrence report. Reflecting upon the duties

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60 WPM, Occurrence reports (September 16, 1880).
that he had performed that evening in 1879, he began: “Patrolled the streets according to order and found…”

When John Grady was appointed to the Winnipeg police in 1878 the force was in its infancy and consisted of only a handful of men. Grady was specifically chosen as the source for an exploration of “a day in the life of a Winnipeg police constable” because his activities on the beat are well documented and candidly reported throughout the Occurrence report log books of the police. When Grady joined the police force he was thirty-two years old. Grady was born in New Brunswick in 1846 and was of Methodist and Irish ancestry. He was married to a woman named Sarah, who was born in Ontario of Scottish descent. Grady eventually discovered that the life of a policeman was a challenging and exhausting one; he resigned in December 1881 after approximately three years of service. Following his resignation, Grady became the proprietor of the British Lion Hotel on Main Street.

61 Little additional information is available about Grady’s professional background, such as whether or not he had any prior experience in policing or in the military.

62 While it is unclear when Grady first arrived in the city, there is a record of a “John Grady” living in Winnipeg as early as 1876 according to Henderson’s Directory of the City of Winnipeg and incorporated towns of Manitoba (Winnipeg: 1876).

63 Henderson’s Directory of the City of Winnipeg and incorporated towns of Manitoba (Winnipeg: 1882).
Constable Grady visited a routine set of locations while on duty, many of which were within the boundaries of his designated beat. The urban sites that he and his fellow officers most commonly visited included: the train station, “the flats,” the immigrant sheds, Point Douglas commons, the river bank, disorderly houses, “half breed” ranches and shanties, and “out west” where the houses of prostitution were located. Grady described frequenting these locations in response to the orders of the chief, the requests of citizens, or at his own discretion.

Grady’s reports expose an unpredictable, exciting and even bizarre side of life on the force. While on beat patrol, he often encountered runaway teams of horses, furious drivers and other disorderly behaviour which made the streets of the frontier city dangerous for community members. It was not uncommon for Grady to chase down these anxious culprits on foot. Another activity that stirred up excitement in the occurrence reports were raids on houses of ill fame, disorderly houses, and dives belonging to notorious characters. Grady and his fellow constables often got the opportunity to “pull” a handful of prisoners at once on these occasions, and reported on such with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Grady and his fellow officers also had to track and capture prisoners who escaped from the station house. Two days subsequent to one prisoner’s original arrest for “wearing women’s clothes” on September 26 1879, Grady reported: “Francis made his escape between 8 and 9 p.m. we could find no trace of him.”\footnote{WPM, Occurrence reports (September 26, 1879; September 28, 1879).} Grady continued his search for the missing prisoner out west, and the prisoner was eventually re-arrested and
subjected to an investigation into his sexual identity. On October 11 1879, Grady’s occurrence report reads: “Frances the Mafridite was examined this afternoon by the Mayor and a doctor from Toronto in company with John McTavish of the HBC they pronounce him or her a woman.”\textsuperscript{65}

While opportunities to conduct unusual chases, searches and raids arose quite frequently, unpredictably dangerous circumstances were fairly uncommon. On one such occasion, Constable Grady reported that he was assaulted while trying to make an arrest: “I arrested one Indian for drunk and fighting when a Squaw and two other Indians got me down and tore my pants and otherwise abused me I finally captured two and brought them to the station.”\textsuperscript{66} Determined to make an arrest, Grady managed to capture his two assailants despite his injured condition and without the help of any other officers. Grady was more suspicious of danger on one particular evening in November 1880, when he was called to arrest a drunk man who had drawn his revolver in the St. Nicholas Hotel. After calling for back up from a fellow constable, Grady was able to apprehend and arrest the offender. It took the strength of both Constable Huston and Grady to transport the prisoner, who “resisted the whole way down to the station.”\textsuperscript{67}

Beat patrol, however, was not always an exciting or adventurous undertaking. The mundane details of urban life often consumed officers, whose beats proved less than disorderly on any given date. On many evenings, Grady reported on events such as the arrival time of the trains, people out walking on the streets or rooms and houses with

\textsuperscript{65} WPM, Occurrence reports (October 11, 1879).

\textsuperscript{66} WPM, Occurrence reports (June 23, 1881).

\textsuperscript{67} WPM, Occurrence reports (November 23, 1880).
their lights on late into the night. Maintaining order in the city largely entailed the surveillance and monitoring of the urban population and environment. In his struggle to “patrol according to order” Constable Grady relied upon his powers of observation as well as notions of gender, class and ethnicity. His daily patrol records suggest that police work during the late nineteenth century was extremely vulnerable to the discretion, practices and prejudices of the members of the force.

Constable Grady conducted many policing operations based upon his impression of the reputation or notoriety of local community members. He often described disreputable characters in his occurrence reports as “notorious”: in June 1879, he noted that he “met the notorious AnnaBella Sutherland she is back to town;” in February 1880, he reported that he “arrested the Notorious Charlotte Spence at 2pm drunk lying on the sidewalk of the Post Office Street;” and he also describes having “met the notorious Mary Trouchie” in July 1880.68 Grady’s “notorious” category may have arisen out of the police force’s privileged knowledge of certain individuals as active offenders or recidivists. Yet other Winnipeg constables did not refer to suspects or offenders in the same manner, suggesting that the labelling was predominantly the endeavour of Constable Grady. Grady, however, was not entirely alone in his stigmatization of certain offenders as “notorious;” the local press also participated in the practise. In December 1881, the Winnipeg Daily Times reported that a prisoner brought into the station “first thought to be a boy… was the notorious Mary Trochu.”69 It is likely that the newspaper announcement was based on a direct account provided by the chief or by one of the

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68 WPM, Occurrence reports (June 29, 1879; February 18, 1880; July 15, 1880).

69 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (December 26, 1881).
members of the Winnipeg force responsible for providing the local press with police reports.

Regardless of its origins, the regular attachment of notoriety to suspects and offenders is significant because it testifies to the biases and prejudices of the police which negatively impacted upon the urban community. Not only were women the only individuals labelled “notorious” by Grady, the occurrence reports reveal that he consistently arrested as many, if not more, females as males.\(^70\) Furthermore, Grady exhibited a greater tolerance towards drunk men and “boys” than towards women in a similar condition. For example, on February 28 1879, Grady was requested to detain Mr. Henry, who was “crazy with whiskey.”\(^71\) Grady visited the Henry residence but did not arrest the man, despite his inebriated and potentially dangerous condition. Similarly, in September 1880, Grady reported that “there was quite a number of boys… on the beer” on his beat, yet he did not report any attempt to arrest or reprimand the men.\(^72\) Virtually every occasion of women drinking, making noise, staying out late at night, or acting disorderly on Grady’s beat, however, resulted in an arrest. Grady arrested two women for “using Profane and Indecent language on Main Street” at 10:30 p.m. one evening, yet the “loud talking & swearing done by some Frenchmen” on another occasion went unregulated.\(^73\)

\(^70\) Grady’s habit of arresting more women than men is especially significant considering that the population of the city during the period included more men than women. See Alan Artibise, *Winnipeg: a social history of urban growth*, 146-147.

\(^71\) WPM, Occurrence reports (February 28, 1879).

\(^72\) WPM, Occurrence reports (September 9, 1880).

\(^73\) WPM, Occurrence reports (September 23, 1879; April 27, 1879).
From Grady’s perspective on the beat, the most disruptive characters to the moral order of the city were women, and more specifically, prostitutes. Grady consistently monitored the actions and whereabouts of prostitutes and “street walkers.” He often included details in his reports regarding the prostitutes he had seen in the city, the hotels that they were seen going into, the amount of time they spent in any one location, and the people with whom they were seen associating. Grady failed to police any offences, such as drunkenness, vagrancy, loitering or disorderliness, as strictly as he did when such offences related to or involved the presence of women in urban spaces. On behalf of the Winnipeg police force and the municipal government, Grady upheld unequal, gendered standards of order on the city streets.

The biases of police work extended beyond gender boundaries to also include race and ethnicity. A significant portion of Constable Grady’s patrolling activities were directed at Aboriginal and Métis peoples. Grady monitored the tents and ranches of those he referred to as “half-breeds” more consistently than any other location within in the city. In his reports, he described going to such sites to “fish” for offenders, and visiting certain locations “in search of drunk Indians.”

Again, Grady applied a double-standard when it came to making arrests: Aboriginals and Métis were consistently arrested while other citizens (not identified ethnically in Grady’s reports) were often treated with leniency. For example, in August 1879, Grady recorded the arrest of “two half breed prostitutes” who were loitering on the street. When he met a white prostitute

74 WPM, Occurrence reports (August 23, 1879; September 16, 1880).

75 The inhabitants of Ella Lewis’ house of ill-fame are mentioned repeatedly in the police record books but do not appear to have been described as Aboriginal on any occasion. Based on Winnipeg police officers’ consistent labelling of Aboriginal women as such, it seems safe to assume that the ladies of Ella Lewis’ house were predominantly white.
from Ella Lewis’ house of ill-fame downtown one evening, rather than arrest her for
loitering Grady admits that he “gave her a chance to go home and she went.”

In keeping with the gender and racially biased treatment of individuals, suspects,
and offenders within the urban community, police patrolled the beat along class lines.
Grady, for example, regularly visited the poorer neighbourhoods on his “fishing trips” for
drunks, but when the “usual quantity of drunks” passed off an annual summer ball very
early into the morning he showed little concern. Similarly, upon discovering
established, respectable male community members drunk on the street outside of a saloon
late into the evenings, Grady took no regulatory action. Rather the opposite, Constable
Grady escorted such men of privilege safely home or to a hotel room and put them to bed
for the evening. Grady’s occurrence report of one such occasion reads: “Met John
Lauder at 4 am he was Drunk he gave me over $300 to keep for him I put him to bed in
the International Hotel.”

Despite the degree to which Grady allowed notions of gender, race, ethnicity and
class to influence his work as a policeman, many community members continued to look
to him for assistance. Revealing their trust in uniformed officers, some community
members handed over cash or valuables to policemen for “safe-keeping.” Constables
also responded to numerous requests from wives and mothers to protect them from their
drunken husbands. Grady responded to many domestic calls, and though he very rarely

76 WPM, Occurrence reports (October 15, 1880).
77 WPM, Occurrence reports (April 17, 1879).
78 WPM, Occurrence reports (December 6, 1880).
arrested any of the men for drunkenness or assault often the same women called upon him for assistance.

While Winnipeg officers were no strangers to heavy-handed policing, they were also not without compassion or empathy for their fellow community members. On several occasions, Grady displayed such consideration, giving “a chance” to those characters he would usually lock up. According to one of his reports, Grady and the chief exhibited leniency towards two young Métis girls who were loitering in a private home of a respected community member. The officers’ sympathy that evening seems to have been driven by the fact that the girls were young, sober, and put up little fight: “Capt Flanigan sent for the police at 8:30 p.m. to remove some half breeds out of his house I went in company with the chief and found two girls in his room they were sober and quiet and we let them go.”79 Grady also exhibited some compassion for lost children who he escorted home, transients and tramps who he provided shelter to, or agitated husbands and wives involved in domestic disturbances.

Grady’s unequal and somewhat irregular policing of the city yielded similarly uneven appreciation and treatment from the community. Upon his resignation in 1882, city council decided to gift Grady one hundred dollars in recognition of his service on the force. A total of four policemen resigned within the same month of Grady, yet he was the only man to receive such consideration. In January 1882, the Winnipeg Daily Times reported:

Ex-constable Grady desires us to thank the members of the city corporation for the gratuity of $100 voted him at their meeting last evening, on the occasion of his retirement from the Police force.80

79 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 6, 1880).
Not long after Grady communicated his gratitude to the city, a letter was sent to council by a concerned citizen stating that it was unacceptable and illegal to award Grady one hundred dollars of "the peoples money."81

Winnipeg police officers were responsible for upholding the reputation, power and morality of the city centre. To this end, the policing activities of constables such as Grady negatively impacted a large segment of the urban population of Winnipeg. Grady’s practices suggest that the police force was specifically prejudiced towards "notorious" suspects, women, Aboriginal and Métis peoples, and the lower classes.

Perhaps as much as members of the police force were required to act as representatives of the state on the city streets, they can also be viewed as flâneurs of the urban frontier. Winnipeg constables such as Grady bore witness to powerful forces of modernization at work; what was once a morally coherent and self-contained community gave way to a modern urban metropolis serving as the gateway to the west. During his life on the force, Grady struggled with the crises of representation and identification that accompanied such change. The shifting character of the city initiated specific policing operations by the state and local government, and police constables’ powers of observation and regulation rose to the forefront of such activities.

Conclusion: Life as a Winnipeg police officer

The life of a police officer in the late nineteenth century was a complex and rather contradictory one. As a role model for the working man, the police officer was idealized

80 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (January 11, 1882).

81 CWAR, Council Communications, no. 2509 (January 23, 1882).
as an objective, impartial servant of the municipal government and civic society. He was portrayed as an upstanding member of the community and an effective regulator of urban disorder. Ultimately, it seems most appropriate to consider Winnipeg police officers as local heroes defined only from the “top-down.” The profile and identity of the police force, the hazards of police work, and the personal and often prejudicial activities of policemen reveal that officers primarily laboured in the interests of the state, patriarchy, and the dominant classes of society. For the most part, local policemen failed to represent or respond to the diverse needs and interests of their fellow Winnipeggers. Furthermore, like an urban flâneur, the late nineteenth-century police officer was “in the crowd but not of it.” The power of the policeman’s identity prevented him from ever belonging to or disappearing within the urban community. Constable Grady: a hero of the Canadian urban frontier? A large segment of the urban community would likely disagree.

Chapter three will focus upon the role of community members as complainants, the profile of the “policed” population of the city, and the manner in which the Winnipeg police force worked alongside the residents of the city to maintain order and police reputation and identity.
Chapter 3

Surveillance, suspicion and identity formation on the urban frontier

Canadian legal historian Greg Marquis suggests that nineteenth century policing was “a two-way, if uneven, street: the police had an impact upon the city, and neighbourhood feeling in turn shaped the police institution.”¹ Though police work was largely defined from the top-down by municipal governments, police boards, chiefs of police and civic elites, policing was not immune to the interests, initiatives and “feelings” of urban populations. Lacking the technology and manpower to gather extensive knowledge or conduct thorough investigations, early Canadian municipal police forces relied, at least in part, on the surveillance activities and information provided by local community members. The sharing of knowledge and suspicion between the police and community facilitated the navigation of, and control over, the new identities and environment of emergent urban centres.

This chapter will explore how, and to what degree, the Winnipeg police force aligned their work with the knowledge, opinions and suspicions of the urban population. Complainants regularly approached the police with concerns about the prevalence of crime, disorder and immorality within the late Victorian city. The profile and interests of complainants and the range of “usual suspects” that emerge from the police records reveal that the categorization and regulation of “criminal” groups and classes was a cooperative activity between the police and the urban population. As the space of the city underwent processes of industrialization and modernization, its inhabitants came to increasingly rely upon notions of gender, ethnicity and respectability to construct

criminality and measure reputation. Reporting crime and suspicion of offensive
behaviour to the police was an important act in the process of creating and defining
“community members” and, conversely, “criminals.” Identity formation in Winnipeg
during the late nineteenth century relied upon, and served to solidify, the boundaries
between those segments of urban society who “policed” and those who were “policed.”

Complainants, property crime and community disorder

A broad array of complainants approached the Winnipeg police force with reports
of disorderly or criminal activity within the frontier city. The largest portion of
complaints pertained to property offences; however, community members also registered
general and personal suspicions with the police force concerning neighbourhood safety
and the immoral or threatening behaviour of specific individuals or groups. The profile
of complainants and the nature of complaints made to the Winnipeg police force suggest
that a significant portion of the urban population was determined to employ the powers of
the police to realize and secure their own welfare, wellbeing and reputation.

The predominance of reported property crime pertained to the theft of provisions,
clothing, watches and jewellery, cash and bicycles. Stolen items, however, were also
largely miscellaneous in nature; ranging from chickens to pocketbooks to underwear.
The value of property involved in the reports also varied significantly; from a twenty-five
cent stack of firewood, to a thirty dollar pocket watch, to hundreds of dollars worth of
cash.

Local merchants, store owners and purveyors acted as the most frequent
complainants in the robbery reports of the police. They commonly reported the theft of
clothing items, food, canned goods and tobacco products from their stores, groceries or butcheries. When these property offences occurred during working hours, store owners occasionally described witnessing the work of thieves first hand. On one such instance, a store owner looked on as a thief made off with a coat which was displayed outside the front of his Main Street store. Leaving the store unattended, the merchant chased the thief down the street and eventually captured and detained the culprit until a police constable arrived. As a result of the swift response of the store owner and the police constable, the stolen property was recovered in full and the offender was sentenced to two months of hard labour.

A case like this one, however, was the exception rather than the rule. Most store and shop owners who reported property crimes failed to successfully recover the goods involved. Many offences were committed during evening hours, leaving few witnesses and little information available. Furthermore, the perishable quality of food and tobacco products made their successful recovery nearly impossible.

Winnipeg home owners and residents also frequently approached the police with complaints. Clothing, watches, jewellery and silverware were typically reported stolen from private homes. From yards and sheds blankets, animals and firewood were often taken. Several local residents also reported that their henhouses were broken into on more than one occasion during the period, and that up to a dozen hens were stolen at one time. Houses under construction were reported as attractive targets of property crime as well. Thieves often ran off with building tools and hardware from these vacant structures, and sometimes any doors and windows that were not yet secured in place.

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2 WPM, Robbery reports (December 1, 1896).
Robberies also commonly transpired on the streets of the city and in public places. Many complainants reported the theft of pocketbooks or cash from their pockets, coats and purses during outings in and around the city. Pickpocketing appeared to escalate during the period culminating in the July of 1899 with the summer agricultural exhibition. Held at the local exhibition grounds, the event attracted a great number of tourists as well as petty thieves to the city and robbery reports were at an all time high. Cash was rarely recovered or returned in full to victims of pickpocketing.

 Summers during the 1890s also witnessed a noticeable increase in bicycle theft. Bikes left unattended outside of stores, homes or offices were frequently taken; however, to the benefit of many complainants, the bikes were often recovered with the help of local citizens. Local community members commonly informed police of persons riding bikes that were easily recognized as the property of another owner, and many stolen bikes were also found abandoned by local residents or members of the police force.

 During winter months, a significant number of complainants reported the theft of warm clothing items from almost any place in the city that they were put down; at the skating rink, from rigs in the street, from bar rooms and billiard halls and sometimes directly from their owners. Similar to bicycles, winter clothing proved easily recovered. Animal skin coats and caps were distinctive and limited enough within the city that they were often recognized on the culprits by local citizens not long after the theft had occurred.

 Police records also reveal that many complainants appeared at the police station to file official reports subsequent to a night of patronage at local saloons. Most inebriated complainants who turned up at the station house reported missing cash or valuables. The
The police force displayed a consistent willingness to record and investigate these reports, although drunkenness put in question the reliability of such complainants. For example, one complainant who appeared at the station to report that he had been robbed of cash, his watch and some jewellery the evening prior, was unable to identify when he had been robbed or where he had been during the night in question. He was prepared, however, to identify two suspects: his cab driver for the evening, Andrew Hart, and Anthony Egan, of the well known Egan "outfit." The police questioned the cab driver and learned that the complainant had visited five local bar rooms and saloons in the one evening, and the investigation proceeded no further. The police relied on the information provided by the suspected cab driver over that of the inebriated complainant, and the property was never successfully recovered.

The context of community complaints made to the police and the nature and value of property involved in the cases suggests that the majority of persons who acted as complainants (sometimes regardless of their state or condition) were middle- and upper-class, property-holding members of Winnipeg society. The affluent members of local society largely determined when, and for what reasons, the police were involved in the regulation of crime and disorder in the city. Furthermore, their willing participation served to reinforce the regulatory efforts of the police during the period.

A very small percentage of complainants were from the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Boarders at the Salvation Army, residents at run-down hotels, shanty-dwellers, transients and vagrants acted as complainants in cases that largely pertained to property valued at less than one or two dollars. The police reports reveal that within local temporary lodgings, it was common for virtual strangers to share rooms and beds, and for
one to wake before the other and commit robbery; complainants often described waking to find their cash, coat, pants or boots missing. Additional cases pertained to the theft of used blankets and clothes off of clotheslines, and pieces of firewood out of shanties and yards. The context and property involved in many of these reports suggests that a portion of local complainants and offenders were desperate to meet their basic needs, and that property crime served as a much needed means of survival.

In addition to the multitude of complaints made concerning property crime in the city, community members also approached the police with concerns about urban safety issues, the character of their neighbourhoods, and by-law infractions. For example, in the spring of 1879 several reports were made regarding the unsafe nature of the sidewalk on Bannatyne Street in front of J.H. Ashdown’s block. Complainants also contacted the police in reference to public nuisances, such as the one pertaining to the “parties that were in habit of depositing manure in the willows in the South Ward.” The most telling of complaints, however, pertained to the “disorderly” activities and behaviours of residents and revealed the degree to which community members actively monitored each other. In many of these cases, no obvious crime had been committed; complainants reported only the information they had gathered from surveillance and the suspicions that they had formed based upon such information. Many complainants reported the disorderly or disruptive behaviour of neighbouring persons or parties to the police, in the hope of “cleaning up” their communities.

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3 WPM, Occurrence reports (April 25, 1879; May 22, 1879).

4 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 1, 1879).
Generally, the complaints made to the police during the period suggest that few behaviours, activities and issues escaped the notice or concern of Winnipeg inhabitants. The frequency of police reports concerning property offences and the safety and character of neighbourhoods testifies to the degree to which "policing" had saturated the social environment of the late nineteenth-century city, and to the willingness of the community to utilize the regulatory functions of the police to their own ends. The frequent recovery of property items such as bikes and fur coats indicates that the scale of the city and urban community had not yet overwhelmed the police or local population; a reliable network of community and police surveillance existed which served to protect the propertied members of Winnipeg society. Further exhibiting their conviction and concern for the maintenance of the moral and social fabric of the city, many complainants articulated direct suspicions and accusations to the police. A distinctive group of "usual suspects" emerge from their reports, testifying to the wide-spread desire of the urban community to regulate reputation and identity on the urban frontier.

**Suspicions, accusations and the "usual suspects"**

Patterns of community suspicion that were recorded in the reports of the Winnipeg police testify to the eagerness of complainants to participate in the categorizing and ordering of the urban population. A significant portion of the reports made by Winnipeggers were concentrated around the disorderly or threatening behaviour and activities of what may be termed the "usual suspects:" boys, prostitutes, tramps, "outfits," neighbouring ethnic groups and members of the working class. Before proceeding with an exploration the "usual suspects," it is important to recognize that not all complainants
were willing or able to identify suspects in their police reports. For example, in one-third of all reported property cases between 1883 and 1899 there was "no one suspected" of the offence, and approximately one-third of all other "persons suspected" sections were left blank. The failure to name or describe suspected person(s) may have been related to either the complainant's reluctance or inability to identify suspects. In one report from the fall of 1899, the complainant admits to having suspicions and also to being unwilling to share them with the police. The report reads that the complainant: "suspects a man but does not care to give name at present."^6^  

One of the most significant groups of "usual suspects" that emerged from the police reports were boys. Throughout the late nineteenth century, boys were suspected of committing property crimes, arson, assault and trespassing, as well as a litany of other disorderly activities and offences including bathing in the river, breaking windows, making "a terrible noise," fighting, congregating in yards, using "the most disgraceful language," and stealing newspapers, chickens, bottles and "everything they can lay their hands on."^7^  

A large portion of boys who were identified to the police as suspects were referred to generally as neighbourhood "boys" or "bad boys." For example, in a case brought to the police regarding the theft of fire works valued at one dollar, the police report reads: "There are a number of bad boys and young men who live around there who

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^5^ Approximately 840 of 2490 (or 33.7%) of robbery cases between 1883 and 1899 cited "no one suspected" in the relevant section of the report.

^6^ WPM, Occurrence reports (September 20, 1899).

^7^ WPM, Occurrence reports (1879, 1886).
cause a disturbance around there and he [the complainant] suspects them. Anonymous young males who were identified by complainants were also often described by their age or physical appearance. One case pointed to “a 17 year old Persian boy” as a suspect, while another described a boy “with dark hair and large restless black eyes… nervous in all his movements.” Numerous other “bad boys” were identified according to the service they provided within the city; nameless delivery boys, bellboys, newsboys and bootblacks were frequent targets of community suspicion.

Many reports also indicate that recurring pairs or groups of boys, often identified by their surnames only, emerged as suspects. For example, in 1886 the young Miles boys were suspected of thieving food, ginger ale, cash and a shot gun. They were eventually arrested for the robbery, but were sympathetically released with a warning. The Miles boys were again suspected of robbery later that same year, and were arrested and convicted for the offence. Other pairs and groups of boys identified as suspects by their surnames only include the Scurry, Nicoll, McInnis, Turnbull, Anderson, Finklestein, and Maitland boys. The majority of these boys were named as suspects on several occasions; their reputation proved to be a shared and ongoing concern of complainants and the police. Despite their status as “usual suspects” however, the majority of these boys were never charged with or convicted of any crimes.

8 WPM, Robbery reports (May 29, 1896).
9 WPM, Robbery reports (December 21, 1893; January 9, 1886).
10 WPM, Robbery reports (August 13, 1886; October 2, 1886).
11 WPM, Robbery reports (October 22, 1886).
Though some of the behaviour of boys amounted to little more than foolish pranks, community members were quick to alert the police to such activity. In April of 1886, one complainant reported that a wire, which was believed to have been purposely strung across the sidewalk on Jemina Street for the purpose of upsetting people passing by, had tripped up a neighbourhood woman and broken her knee cap.\(^{12}\) The report condemned local boys, “mischievous boys are believed to be the perpetrators of this outrage,” and demanded police attention to the matter. Another complainant was concerned about boys who were in the habit of ringing doorbells and running off and “raising a general disturbance” during the evenings. On one particular evening, the complainant reported that between ten and fifteen boys approached her door, rung the bell and “threw a straw man” inside, “frightening her and also her husband who was sick upstairs.”\(^{13}\) The complainant requested police protection from the neighbourhood gang of young tyrants.

The reputation of neighbourhood boys became so threatening to some local residents that they began requesting police surveillance and protection. During the spring of 1886, a representative from Winnipeg Bottling Works reported to the police that he suspected “that boys will make a raid on their yard” and that “he wishes the Chief send a man to watch.”\(^{14}\) Similarly, the secretary of Wesley College requested the protection of a

\(^{12}\) WPM, Occurrence reports (April 9, 1886).

\(^{13}\) WPM, Occurrence reports (November 5, 1887).

\(^{14}\) WPM, Occurrence reports (April 24, 1886).
policeman at the College one evening in October of 1886, stating that “there is to be a social there and trouble from boys is feared.”

Compared to boys, the number of girls suspected of criminal activity was low during the period. Young women accused of wrongdoing by complainants were consistently identified as members of the working class. It was common for young girls employed, or formerly employed, as servants to complainants to be accused of stealing cash, jewellery or small household items. A few local girls who sold newspapers also appeared as suspects in the police records and were the targets of police investigation; but they, like boys, were rarely convicted or punished for any crimes.

Of equal concern to the population of Winnipeg as “bad boys,” was the presence and behaviour of disreputable women and “prairie nymphs.” During the late nineteenth century, numerous reports made by community members to the police identified suspected prostitutes and local houses of ill-fame. The presence of disorderly houses in neighbourhoods was considered offensive to local residents and a nuisance to “respectable” neighbourhoods. Fallen women were considered a threat to the moral

\[15\] WPM, Occurrence reports (October 22, 1886).

\[16\] WPM, Robbery reports (September 5, 1889; September 30, 1889; June 1, 1893; March 22, 1899; May 6, 1899).

\[17\] In the occurrence report of Police Constable Garland on September 6 1881, two women are identified as “prairie nymphs”. This term was taken to mean that the women were known, or believed to be, local prostitutes. Jeffrey Adler notes that fallen women were described as “nymphs of the pave” in nineteenth-century St. Louis. See Adler, “Vagging the Demons of Scoundrels,” 12.
fabric of the urban community and their presence “contaminated innocent young men”
within the city.\textsuperscript{18}

The presence of suspected prostitutes was also considered harmful to the
reputations of “innocent” community women. Once prostitutes had tainted a
neighbourhood, other local women could no longer make a “respectable” appearance on
the city streets without the risk of being mistaken a “working woman.” In March of
1886, one complainant asked that the police “clean out” his neighbourhood and revealed
his concern for the welfare of local women in the public spaces of the city: “there is a
shanty at the Corner of Isabel and McDermot St where three prostitutes live... a woman
cannot go out in that neighbourhood at night without being insulted.”\textsuperscript{19} Another
complainant suggested that the presence of fallen women posed a danger to both women
and children. His report reads:

a number of prostitutes... loaf about with infantry school soldiers in Fort
Rouge... their conduct has become so loathsome of late that it is not safe
for women and children to walk out in the vicinity without coming in
contact.\textsuperscript{20}

The majority of these reports requested that the police take immediate action to
remove disorderly houses and disreputable women from local neighbourhoods. One
complainant who had his house on Bannatyne Street rented out had “been told that those
parties living there are prostitutes.” The complainant requested that the police “find out

\textsuperscript{18} Based on Jeffrey Adler’s view of sex-trade workers in the frontier city of St. Louis.
See “Streetwalkers, degraded outcasts,” 737.

\textsuperscript{19} WPM, Occurrence reports (March 22, 1886).

\textsuperscript{20} WPM, Occurrence reports (June 7, 1887).
about them and if they are prostitutes... have them removed.”

Only days later, a complainant reported that three or four “half breed women” were occupying a shanty near his residence and that they should be removed on “account of the number of men who frequent it at all hours of the day and night.” A disproportionate number of community complaints associated the tents, shanties, residences and activities of Aboriginal and Métis women with the prostitution. A large majority of the disorderly houses that were identified as threats were inhabited by “breed” women who lived together and who appear to have been single and relatively destitute.

Tramps were another segment of the population that spurred community action during the period. Primarily identified in cases of property crime, a portion of mysterious, transient, and unemployed men appeared as “usual suspects” in reports made to the Winnipeg police. For example, in 1893 anonymous tramps were suspected of stealing jewellery, tools and a gun from local residences in Winnipeg. In 1896, a local Winnipeg doctor reported the theft of shoes valued at three dollars and identified “two tramps who were down there looking for something to eat” as the suspected offenders. When a resident had some clothes and good stolen from his residence near the Louise Bridge in 1899, he blamed “some tramps that are lying in the bush across the river.” The local press also reported on the presence of such threatening characters within the

21 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 23, 1886).
22 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 29, 1886).
23 WPM, Robbery reports (July 22, 1893; October 31, 1893).
24 WPM, Robbery reports (October 20, 1896).
25 WPM, Robbery reports (August 8, 1899).
city. Under a section entitled “Tramps, Tramps,” the *Winnipeg Daily Times* colourfully reported on one community member’s narrow escape from a dangerous group of transient men:

> On yesterday morning... three men of very questionable appearance, interviewed a young man, who can only boast of three or four days citizenship, on his return to the hotel from the telegraph office. These fellows advanced stealthily through the darkness, and... asked him to direct them to an hotel. The young man did so as fully as his knowledge of the city warranted, and continued his walk... The tramps followed and this time each demanded “a quarter”. The stranger felt that an investment of seventy-five cents at that early hour was out of the question, and assuring them, very candidly, that just then he could not summon up the required amount, he went on his way unmolested, and with the consciousness that he had just escaped harsh treatment at the hands of his midnight interviewers.26

James Pitsula notes that tramps in Toronto also received alarming coverage from the local press during the period because they symbolized the rejection of the work ethic and middle class values.27

> Tramps and vagrant men in nineteenth-century cities “lived far beyond the edge of moral society and acceptable behaviour... and posed an extreme threat because of their ability to infiltrate respectable society and to prey upon it.”28 The “respectable” portion of Winnipeg society was threatened by the presence of mysterious, idle, urban characters in their midst who were disposed to using con artistry, false pretences or “personation” against unknowing residents. They made efforts to monitor the activities of tramps and potential con artists in the community by logging reports with the police that were based

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27 Pitsula, 116.

28 Adler, “Street walkers, degraded outcasts,” 748.
largely on their distrust and suspicion of anonymous men who visited the city. A house “where a lot of tramps live or congregate evenings” spurred one such report to the police in July 1886. The questionable character and identity of transients contributed to the boundary that was created between Winnipeg “community members” and the “criminal” or “foreign” element.

Despite their fleeting status within the community, numerous tramps and transient men were familiar to complainants and were commonly identified by distinct aliases. For example, one complainant identified a usual suspect in an 1889 robbery report as “Texas Jack who stops at Scandinavian Hotel.” The presence of men like “Texas Jack,” “Mexican Jack,” “Sleepy Jim,” “Hangman Smithy,” and “Willie Whistle” in the community, however, presented more of a nuisance than a danger to Winnipeg society. Such tramps were predominantly suspected of stealing items of small value and none of them were ever accused of threatening, assaulting, or using a weapon against complainants. Similarly, few of the characters identified by interesting names and aliases appear to have spent time in the police station or the local gaol. Whether these men achieved their rough reputation due to their criminal records or seedy pasts remains unknown; however, the ongoing role of the community in perpetuating the notoriety of such characters appears quite evident.

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29 WPM, Occurrence reports (July 13, 1886).

30 WPM, Robbery reports (February 28, 1889).

31 These men are identified by their aliases in the robbery reports of the Winnipeg police [WPM, Robbery reports (December 26, 1883; February 28, 1889; April 28, 1889; October 17, 1896; November 8, 1896; November 27, 1896)].
A discernable portion of “usual suspects” were also known by way of their association with local gangs or “outfits.” The most infamous group of suspects identified by complainants in police reports was the “Egan outfit.” The outfit was made up of several members of the Egan family, as well as numerous other individuals with similarly questionable reputations. The most prominent member of the Egan outfit seems to have been Anthony Egan (commonly known as Tony Egan). Tony’s name first appears in the records books in 1889, and reappears consistently until the end 1899. Following in his father’s footsteps, Anthony Egan Jr. also established a reputation for himself as a common thief in the city.

Members of the Egan outfit were suspected of thieving cash, watches, jewellery, clothing items, lumber and alcohol by many community members and were arrested on several occasions by the police. Yet according to the robbery report books, the Egans consistently managed to escape conviction. For example, in a case reported by Annie Hasute on May 20 1889, an Egan was one of four men suspected by the complainant of having stolen a hunting case watch from her during a visit to Scotty McIntyre’s hotel and saloon. Egan and another man were arrested and the property was recovered and returned to the complainant, yet Egan and his partner were never prosecuted for the offence. In another case, reported in September 1899, a boarder at the Thomas Block reported the theft of thirty dollars in cash from his room. He identified another boarder in the building as a suspect, yet the police arrested Anthony Egan and another man for the robbery. No details are provided regarding the investigation that led to the arrest of Egan, but it is safe to assume that Egan’s reputation was an important factor.
Less notorious but equally as threatening, members of working class were consistently identified as “usual suspects” in complainants’ reports to the police. Many robbery reports identified nameless local wood sawyers, painters, railway workers, milkmen, bartenders, store clerks and infantry deserters as suspects. Working women most often accused of property crimes were domestic servants, cooks and washerwomen. In a large number of the cases involving workers as suspects, complainants were, or had previously been, the employer of the suspect. This occurred most frequently with delivery people, cooks, farm hands, and drivers.

When local suspects could not be identified by name, alias, employment or profession, they were often identified according to their ethnicity. Many complainants in robbery report cases identified Jews, Aboriginal and Métis peoples, Germans, French, Icelanders, Danes, Poles and Italians as suspects. Evidently, ethnicity played a significant role in neighbourhood relations, and influenced the tendency of neighbours to accuse each other of property offences. Many of the robberies that took place from private residences, yards and sheds were blamed on neighbouring ethnic parties, families or individuals. For example, one family of complainants identified the “Icelanders who live in a shanty below them,” while another accused the “half breeds who live close by.”

In February 1886 a complainant named E.L. Mulligan of Logan Street reported that “a number of Italians are living in Corner of Patrick & Logan and are a great nuisance to the neighbourhood.”

Similarly, in November of 1886 a report came in from

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32 WPM, Robbery reports (July 3, 1893; May 6, 1899).

33 WPM, Occurrence reports (February 10, 1886).
the Sutherland's office that "a French family recently moved into the next house to their office and that they are very disorderly and a nuisance to the neighbourhood."  

The majority of complainants who approached the police were business and home owners and well-propertied local residents, and a large portion of their reports pertained to the criminal activity and the offensive or immoral behaviour of the "usual suspects." Suspects identified to the Winnipeg police during the period ranged from neighbours, Jews, wood sawyers, domestics, and members of the "Egan outfit" - to tramps, prostitutes, streetwalkers and neighbourhood boys. The identity of the suspected offenders was inherently linked to their relationship to and reputation within the community; however, the policing and regulating of suspects was dependent on the extent to which community complaints, fears and suspicions influenced or aligned with those of the Winnipeg police force. Investigation into the police treatment of the "usual suspects" testifies to the power behind the local networks of community suspicion and to the influence of notions of class, gender, ethnicity and respectability upon the identity of the "policed" population of the frontier city during the late nineteenth century.

**Police treatment of the “usual suspects”**

Community members who approached the police with suspicions, complaints and accusations combined forces with the Winnipeg police in the struggle to achieve order in the expanding metropolis. Sharing knowledge or gossip with the police was a deliberate exercise of agency, as well as an attempt to seek redress for any harm, loss or injury. The propertied class of complainants actively defined and identified the presence of a criminal

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34 WPM, Occurrence reports (November 20, 1886).
"underclass" in the city, which was comprised of the wide range of disreputable "usual suspects." How did the police respond to and treat complaints concerning the "usual suspects" and did the sharing of information and suspicion by the community transpire into a broader sharing of regulatory power? A closer examination of the police treatment of suspects and offenders and of the outcomes of cases provides some insight into this important issue.

The robbery and occurrence reports of the Winnipeg police suggest that a good portion of the concerns voiced by the community had an impact upon the work of the force.35 For example, in 1889 there were a total of 349 robbery reports filed with the police force. Out of the 349 reports initiated by complainants, approximately 168 (or around 50%) of cases included identifications of "persons suspected." In 70 of the 168 cases (or approximately 42%), the person(s) arrested by the police was the same person(s) identified by the complainant as a suspect.36 In a rough manner of speaking, approximately 40% of community suspicions aligned with, or were confirmed by, the work of the police during 1889.

While it remains difficult (and beyond the scope of this project) to make direct connections between the rate of crime, the prevalence of community suspicion and the work carried out by the police throughout the period, evidence suggests that the police

35 Many of the robbery reports remain incomplete. The approximate number of cases that included details as to investigations or outcomes varied in each year of the reports. Generally, between 20% and 50% of the cases reported in each of the years included some details as to the police response to, or investigation of, the case, leaving the results of a significant portion of cases unknown. Comparison of the records of the police court would confirm whether individual cases remained unresolved and whether the police records books were just loosely kept up by recording, investigating and arresting officers.

36 WPM, Robbery reports (1889).
made concerted efforts to respond to the concerns and complaints of citizens. Several reports made by community members prompted direct orders from Chief D.B. Murray concerning the parties or activities in question. The chief’s eagerness to address the issues raised by complainants, however, appears to have been linked to the profile or identity of the person issuing the grievance. The occurrence reports of 1886 reveal that the only complaints that warranted the direct involvement of the chief were made by prominent and upstanding community members. The report made by Mrs. Stewart, the wife of a respectable resident and home owner, about persons “prowling around her residence every night” prompted the chief to instruct the policeman assigned to the no. 3 beat to expand his patrol to include the area surrounding the Stewart home.37 When Mayor Westbrook complained that several store keepers on Main Street were “in the habit of making a nuisance ground of the street opposite their places of business,” Chief Murray ordered his men to “pay strict attention to the prevention of the nuisance” and to “hereby report all persons guilty of the offence complained of in the future.”38

The police force aligned their work with the interests of prominent community members in cases involving a variety of offences; however, the issue that most visibly unified and initiated the concern and action of the police and community was prostitution. As previously mentioned, prostitutes and streetwalkers were one of the largest segments of “usual suspects” identified by complainants. The police force was plagued with reports on the presence of disorderly houses and disreputable women within the community as residents voiced their anxiety for the “respectability” and safety of their

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37 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 26, 1886).

38 WPM, Occurrence reports (March 31, 1886).
neighbourhoods and city streets. The reports and actions of the chief of police and members of the force reveal a similar concern about the prevalence of prostitution in the city. The police force regularly pulled houses known or suspected to have been associated with the sex trade at a rate of approximately one per month throughout the period, and arrested anywhere between two and ten occupants during each raid.  

Specific reports made to the police regarding disorderly women appear to have consistently triggered responses from the force. For example, the complaint made by a local barrister which stated that “half breed women are in the habit of bringing men to the rear of the Donaldson Black nightly for the purpose of prostitution” resulted in a specific order made by the police chief that “the men on duty in that vicinity... look after this nuisance with a view to its suppression by arresting the guilty parties.” The police also responded to pressure from Winnipeg religious leaders in the early 1880s by making a promise to remove all houses of ill-fame and “hotbeds of crime” located in the city.  

The context within which the Winnipeg police force laboured with respect to prostitution was a highly contentious one. Debates about the suppression and segregation of prostitution dominated the period and survived well into the twentieth century. As a result, the policing of sexual crime and disorder in the city evolved into an aggressive and

39 WPM, Arrest reports (1879, 1893, 1896, 1899).

40 WPM, Occurrence reports (May 6, 1886).

41 Refer to chapter 1 (page 29) for details of the petition sent by Rev. George Bryce, Rev. J.B. Silcox and others regarding the “promise” made by the police.

cooperative activity on behalf of the police and the urban population. While the police directed their attention to the activities of the segregated houses of ill-fame "out west," community members monitored their own neighbourhoods for signs of disreputable women or immoral behaviour. The majority of complaints received by the police pertained to small, inconspicuous homes and shanties that were supposedly functioning for the purposes of prostitution. Recognizing that beat patrol officers could not independently and adequately control all pockets of sexual vice within the urban environment, concerned and "respectable" community members reinforced police work with their surveillance activities.

The main objective shared by both the police and the community was the maintenance of order, and a large portion of combined efforts were concerned with the morality and respectability of the urban centre. While the majority of the "usual suspects" failed to pose a dangerous threat to Winnipeg residents or the police, they were perceived as a significant threat to the social fabric of the prairie city. Alongside prostitutes, the police and community found the presence of tramps, anonymous transients, con artists, notorious offenders, Aboriginal and Métis peoples, beggars and the destitute most offensive to local order. In order to address the indecency of such characters, the police made arrests of charges of vagrancy, "false pretences," "personation" or fraud.43

"Vagrancy" was a loosely defined offence that provided the police with the most significant discretionary power over suspects and offenders. Historians, who have

43 Available arrest reports of the police reveal that approximately 1 or 2 persons per month were charged with "false pretences," "personation" or "fraud" throughout the period [WPM, Arrest reports (1889, 1893, 1896, 1899)].
explored the significance of vagrancy laws in urban centres, note that “vagrancy” was often used as a “catchall” means of policing the behaviour and activities of urban populations. The Winnipeg police appeared to have primarily utilized the charge of vagrancy on the destitute and “unfortunate” male population of the city. The local press described one victim of the vagrancy act as follows: “The unfortunate is a young man and is almost blind, and has no visible means of support.”

Noting that vagrancy has long been associated with the suppression of male vagrants and tramps, Mary-Anne Poutanen has recently suggested that vagrancy was an important tool used by the police in Montreal to control the behaviour, activities and presence of women in public spaces as well. In Winnipeg, however, it appears that the charge of vagrancy was largely reserved for men until close to the turn of the century. For example, all of the 18 vagrants arrested between January and June of 1889 were men. Similarly, the 37 vagrants arrested between July and December of 1893 were also all male. In 1896 and 1899, however, the number of vagrancy charges per year increased, and approximately half of the total numbers of vagrants arrested per year were women. Though community members often complained about the presence of disorderly and disreputable women within the community, the Winnipeg police force failed to categorize women as vagrants during most of the period. In order to curb the offensive activities of women on the streets, the Winnipeg police largely relied on the charges of “drunk on the

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44 See Adler, “Vagging the Demons and Scoundrels,” 3.

45 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (January 11, 1882).

46 Poutanen, 46-47.
street" or “drunk in public place.” According the local press, the police also occasionally arrested notorious women on charges of “loitering” in public. In 1881, the Winnipeg Daily Times reported that:

Maggie Smoke and Angeline Leflay, two dusky maidens (of about fifty summers) were charged by the chief with loitering about the streets and having no visible means of support. They were sent to the provincial jail for three months each.47

Though the police appear to have aggressively responded to suspicions and complaints concerning prostitutes and tramps, they also exercised discretion when it came to the identification, apprehension and investigation of some “usual suspects.” Many complaints made during the period requested that the police make concerted efforts to capture and punish “bad boys” who were responsible for offending and distressing local residents. In light of the anxiety regularly communicated by complainants and when compared to the consistent policing of prostitutes, however, the Winnipeg police were largely apathetic to the mischievous activities of the younger generation. Complainants who implicated anonymous neighbourhood boys were especially unlikely to generate a response from the police force.

While they exhibited a degree of compassion and apathy towards many young offenders, the police did not entirely ignore the prevalent concerns of the broader community. Rather than utilizing their powers of arrest, however, the police issued warnings and created deterrents, specifically concerning the activities of boys. On one New Year’s Eve, for example, the Winnipeg Daily Times printed a statement on behalf of the police force that candidly announced to local boys:

47 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (November 7, 1881).
As it is expected that there will be a big rush at the post office tonight a detachment of police will be stationed in close proximity to the doors, so that if the boys commence last Saturday night's games they will watch the New Year dawn in the cooler.  

Furthermore, when the presence of the police was requested at a Wesley College social to deal with the threat of boys, the matter was appropriately “attended to” by a local officer. The police agreed that the presence of a uniformed member of the force would successfully serve as a deterrent to mischievous boys in the neighbourhood.

The cases involving boys as suspects that the police investigated were predominantly more serious property offences and those involving young suspects who provided services within the urban community. For example, in October of 1899 the police investigated a report against a young delivery boy who worked for Asford Dairy Kitchen. The search of the boy failed to turn up the stolen property, however, and the boy was let go. In a similar case, a complainant reported a stolen watch and identified “a newsboy selling the Chicago Ledger” as the only suspect. When questioned by two police officers, the newsboy promptly acknowledged stealing the watch and turned it in to the police but was not arrested for the offence. Though working boys in Winnipeg consistently received attention from concerned community members and the police, for the most part investigations that turned up guilty boys prompted only warnings or reprimands. Generally, the manner in which the police dealt with “bad boys” involved utilizing “a schoolmaster’s philosophy of discipline, which justified teaching a boy a

48 MLL, Winnipeg Daily Times (December 31, 1881).
49 WPM, Robbery reports (October 13, 1899).
lesson” every once in a while. According to Susan E. Houston, certain “classic street urchins” like newsboys and bootblacks were expected to get into trouble more than others as “growing up” on the street became the subject of public condemnation and regulation. Apprehension towards young workers, however, was not strictly limited to boys. When a complainant identified “two Jewish girls who sell newspapers” as suspects in a robbery of fifty dollars in cash, the police brought the young newsgirls down to the police station for questioning. As the complainant was asleep during the theft and could not confirm his suspicions and the search of the young girls failed to turn up the money in question, the suspects were released.

The “erratic, casual and even sympathetic” treatment of juvenile delinquents that Susan Houston detected in late Victorian Toronto seems similar to the manner in which the police dealt with young offenders in Winnipeg. Confronted with the recent and increasing appearance of youngsters on the city streets, the Winnipeg police and concerned community members struggled to define and regulate the changing spheres of family and workplace, private and public space, and childhood and adulthood.

The police and community of Winnipeg were also challenged by the increasingly rich ethnic composition of the city, and the tense relations that such diversity fostered.

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51 Ibid., 131-134.

52 WPM, Robbery reports (March 12, 1886).

53 Based on Houston’s discussion of the similar changes experienced by late nineteenth-century Toronto in “The ‘Waifs and Strays’,” 129-130.
Certainly the policing activities of Constable Grady that were explored in chapter two revealed definite ethnic, as well as gender, biases. A comment recorded in an occurrence report from 1879 further suggests that the police treatment of “usual suspects” of specific ethnic backgrounds was prejudiced: “there was some trouble among the Jews but as usual they themselves were to blame.”\textsuperscript{54} The police force exercised obvious discretion when it came to the numerous complaints that were made against neighbours and ethnically-identified individuals and groups. In one revealing case of neighbourhood anxiety, several community members banded together to collectively accuse a specific neighbourhood party.\textsuperscript{55} There were three separate reports made to the police by members of the McFayden and Gowler families who lived within the same block of Disraeli Street; two of the complainants reported that clothes had been stolen from off of their clothesline and the third stated that some of their firewood was missing. Only one of the complainants could pinpoint the exact date of the offence, the others stated that it had been sometime within the last two weeks. All three complainants suspected the same party: a group of Italians living on the next block. Despite the complaints of the McFaydens and the Gowlers, the police conducted no investigation into the suspicious Italians. One month later, another complainant also implicated the Italians living down the street. With respect to the suspicious neighbours, this report reads: “he [the complainant] is under the impression that they [the Italians] steal for they don’t appear to

\textsuperscript{54} WPM, Occurrence reports (September 30, 1879).

\textsuperscript{55} WPM, Robbery reports (February 19, 1886).
be doing anything else for a living.” 56 Again, no apparent action was taken by the police against the suspected Italians.

For the most part, ethnically-based accusations made between neighbouring parties failed to result in the successful recovery of stolen property or the identification or punishment of perpetrators. Yet there appears to have been the rare exception to the rule with such cases. For example, in May of 1889 the police responded to a reported robbery of a baby carriage which was valued at five dollars. 57 The complainant in the case identified the suspects as “two Jews with black beards.” Two Jewish individuals, T. Finkleman and A. Finkleman, were arrested by the police, and were charged and sentenced to two months of hard labour for the crime. While it is not entirely clear whether the men were in fact the “two Jews” suspected by the complainant, it is evident that the offence was prosecuted quite seriously despite the fact that the property was minimal in value and was successfully returned to its owner.

Similarly, several police reports suggest that cases and suspicions raised by certain complainants were attended to or investigated more vigorously than others, and that the activities of the force had a distinct class bias. Though the police recorded complaints from less privileged, working class, or “questionable” characters, many of such cases were labelled “doubtful” by local officers. For example, in a case reported by Herbert Gray in May of 1899, some small goods were reported stolen from a home behind the Brunswick Hotel. The investigating officer visited the reported site of the robbery and noted that “the place referred to is not a house it is a shantie,” and that the

56 WPM, Robbery reports (March 17, 1886).

57 WPM, Robbery reports (May 23, 1899).
likelihood of the offence was “doubtful.”58 Other cases pertaining to items of small value or to theft from questionable premises were treated with similar hesitancy by the police. This trend suggests that in order to qualify as legitimate complainants in police reports, community members had to not only possess property worthy of and susceptible to theft, they had to maintain respectable positions within the community that were vulnerable to the offensive activities of immoral, disreputable and disorderly persons, and therefore worthy of police attention.

The majority of complaints that were general, vague or considered “doubtful” received little response or investigation from the Winnipeg police. The anxieties of the community that aligned with those of the police force, however, served to justify and perpetuate the policing of other activities, behaviours and residents within the city. Members of the force utilized laws, statutes and the power of arrest in the attempt to curb the activities of prostitutes, vagrants and tramps that were offensive to the “respectable” community and an irritant to officers on the beat. Significant discretion was employed, however, in the regulating of others who appeared as “usual suspects.” Recognizing that the concerns of many complainants arose out of fears, uncertainties or disdain for certain members of the working class or ethnic minorities, the work of the police failed to align with all of the concerns voiced by complainants, regardless of their standing or status within the urban centre.

The “usual suspects” who evaded police authority likely did so much to the chagrin of the force. Criminal “outfits,” disreputable characters with memorable aliases, and even gangs of neighbourhood boys seemed to function slightly beyond the scope of

58 WPM, Robbery reports (May 5, 1899).
local law enforcement. Continually escaping conviction and punishment, these individuals and groups kept community suspicion and surveillance on high alert, and perpetuated the dependent and cooperative relationship between the Winnipeg police force and concerned members of the urban community.

**Conclusion: Surveillance, suspicion and identity formation on the urban frontier**

Before proceeding, we might “profitably remind” ourselves of V.A.C. Gatrell’s warning concerning the nature of our subject matter: “the history of crime is a grim subject, not because it is about crime, but because it is about power.”

Winnipeg complainants who approached the police with information, suspicions and accusations exercised a certain degree of influence over the policing and regulating of urban space.

Employing personal observation, their surveillance of the “usual suspects” reinforced, and in many ways, directed the work of the local police force. At the same time, the policing of the community remained an “uneven” street. The police had ultimate discretion over which suspicions to investigate and which suspected offenders became the targets of arrest.

It remains difficult to measure the prevalence of suspicion against the actual rates of arrest and incarceration within the scope of this study; however, the profile of complainants, the nature of complaints, the identity of the “usual suspects,” and the

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59 Gatrell, 246. See Chapter 1 (page 28) for full passage and citation.

60 The concept of the “space” of cities based upon Alan Hunt’s discussion in “Regulating Heterosexual Space: Sexual Politics in the Early Twentieth Century” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 15, no. 1 (2002), in which ‘space’ not only has a spatial, but also a temporal dimension exemplified in deep anxieties about the rapid expansion of cities and life on the streets.
police treatment of the "usuals" testify to other important aspects of policing and urban life during the period. Constructing criminality appears to have been a key component of community building and community regulation. As the anonymous character of the city intensified, the suspicions of the police and the respectable community increasingly aligned to target disreputable individuals and groups. The police, for example, printed warnings in the local newspaper to boys who were expected to cause disorder on important occasions, or they "attended to" events that community members feared boys would terrorize. Similarly, towards the turn of the century, the police brought vagrancy charges against an expanding group of persons who were offensive to the police and broader community based upon their "criminal" destitution, physical incapacity, loitering, idleness or drunkenness in public.

The Winnipeg police and the urban community shared the increasingly foreign space of the modernizing city; their shared objective was to maintain control and order within the changing and expanding urban environment. Indeed, regulation "acted on a mixture of conduct, time and place;" within this context, a select segment of the population consistently found themselves in the "wrong place at the wrong time," condemned by inappropriate behaviour which offended the "respectable" classes of society.61 Such behaviour was then utilized to define the boundary between the local Winnipeg "community" of citizens, and the increasing mass of dislocated, foreign, unemployed or poor inhabitants of the city. Ultimately, many of the characters who

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61 Based on Alan Hunt's discussion of "transformations of heterosocial space" and "inappropriate gender behaviour" in "Regulating Heterosocial Space," 3-5.
appeared as “usual suspects” were guilty of nothing more than the struggle to survive. Examples are found throughout the reports: homeless or hungry persons stole warm clothing, blankets or food; unemployed or transient men wandered the streets of the city looking for opportunity; women with no options for employment turned to prostitution; and young immigrant boys and girls worked to help support themselves and their families.

Ultimately, the social and economic transformations of the city of Winnipeg during the late nineteenth century defined the social space inhabited by, and the identity imposed upon, many of these “criminals.” By voicing and acting upon their suspicions of the unknown elements within the urban centre, the police and the prosperous classes solidified the boundaries that existed between those members of society who policed, and those members who were policed. The citizens, groups and classes who inhabited the emergent centre sought to define their place within the society of the urban frontier; surveillance, suspicion and policing powerfully contributed to identity formation within this context.
Conclusion

The policing process in Winnipeg and the Canadian west

The city of Winnipeg underwent a challenging and exciting period of growth during the late nineteenth century. Within this context, the Winnipeg police force developed into a key urban institution. Policemen were indeed “at the front line of the formal, urban social control system.”\(^1\) With the authority of the state behind them and under the supervision of powerful municipal officials, leaders and citizens, members of the police force performed and fulfilled various duties and roles within society. The primary responsibility of the police force was the maintenance of order; hence, “disorder” became a broadly defined category that encompassed a range of unruly, offensive, immoral and “criminal” behaviours. Though the Winnipeg police cannot be attributed with taming the “wild west” frontier city - or as some would have it the “mild west” - they made no shortage of attempts.\(^2\) By carefully regulating the lives and leisure activities of the urban populace, they attempted to curb all wickedness, “social evil” and vice, and maintain control over the expanding urban environment.

As the most visible representatives of nineteenth-century government, policemen were expected to function as strong, brave, heroic and impartial officers of the law. The police force hired the brawniest, most dedicated and responsible recruits and then attempted to mould the men into “respectable” and professional model citizens. Though policemen were significant figures of authority, their exemplary behaviour was expected

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\(^1\) Monkkonen, *Police in Urban America*, 10.

to neutralize hostility or resistance within the community.\(^3\) The codes, duties and hazards associated with police work in late nineteenth-century Winnipeg seemed to far outweigh the glories; yet the physical demands of life on the beat, poor wages, high turnover, and other issues that plagued the force did little to weaken the “harmony amongst the men.” Local officers banded together to face the challenging and contradictory nature of their work and the high expectations of the urban community.

In spite of their idealized role within society, Winnipeg officers often conducted and instituted biased, morally grounded and discretionary operations and policies. Under Chief D.B. Murray, for example, the force targeted “the criminal classes” that were making their way into the “respectable” neighbourhoods of the city; “ferreting out the culprits” believed to be involved in prostitution, as well as disreputable thieves, gamblers and idlers.\(^4\) Raids on houses of ill-fame and suspected disorderly houses were at an all-time high between 1879 and 1881, as Murray led a moral crusade against social evil. While patrolling his beat “according to order,” Constable John Grady relied upon his powers of observation as well as notions of reputation, gender, class and ethnicity. He regularly arrested “notorious” urban characters, women, Aboriginal and Métis peoples, yet gave more “respectable” community members an escort home or “a chance” to avoid incarceration.

Police work responded to the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the Winnipeg population at the discretion of individual officers, successive chiefs of police and

\(^3\) The “Rules and Regulations of the Police Force of the City of Winnipeg” describe the standard of behaviour that policemen were to uphold in order to avoid creating resistance or a “hostile feeling” towards members of the force. (See Appendix)

\(^4\) WARC, Council Communications, no. 2201.5 (April 11, 1881).
municipal officials. Community members, however, also exhibited significant persuasion over policing and were fairly intimate with the local force.\textsuperscript{5} Surveillance activities, suspicions and reports made to the police by Winnipeg citizens served to solidify the boundary between the “respectable” portion of the urban population and the “criminal” one. Constructing criminality appears to have been a key component of community building and community regulation in late nineteenth-century Winnipeg.

Modernization significantly impacted upon perceptions of order and stability and therefore also upon the role of the police during the period. Social and economic change introduced numerous new and foreign urban personalities and behaviours onto the city streets: transient and unattached “idle” men; the appearance of women outside of the home and family; “street urchins” such as paperboys and bootblacks; gangs of unsupervised neighbourhood boys; urban poor who inhabited tents and shanties; and “foreigners” of various backgrounds and ethnicities. The increasingly anonymous and unknown character of the city was intimidating to local citizens and somewhat frustrating to the police; by cooperatively monitoring the expanding urban environment the maintenance of law and order became a more efficient, as well as prejudiced, practice. The continual decease in the number of arrests made in proportion to the increase in population during the period further suggests that the surveillance and regulatory efforts of the community and police did indeed have a “civilizing” effect upon urban society.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5} Marquis notes that nineteenth-century Canadian police forces had “intimate” connections with their respective urban populations in Policing Canada’s Century, 53.

\textsuperscript{6} Recall the discussion of the “anti-urban myth;” that with the growth of cities the rate of crime increases. Roger Lane suggested the opposite - that population growth “civilizes” urban communities.
The Winnipeg police force actively participated in processes of identity formation on the urban frontier. Alan Hunt observes that “a significant dimension of Victorianism was the self-formation of the middle class.”7 Together with the police, the emerging class society of Winnipeg actively defined, identified and regulated “criminals,” most of who belonged to the working class. An increasing social calm prevailed during the period as the “cult of respectability”8 percolated and the propertied classes, the police and local leaders confidently trusted in the assumption that they could reform, control and “Canadianize” the masses.9

The Winnipeg police’s enforcement of gendered standards of order also reflected the struggles of representation and identification that were occurring within the urban environment. Upholding patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity, the police unequally measured and regulated the behaviours of men and women, mostly at the disadvantage to the latter. The moral order and social fabric of local society was intertwined with the character and reputation of women who inhabited the public sphere, especially with regards to their sexuality. Many Winnipeggers, concerned about the pervasiveness of the prostitution, utilized their powers of surveillance and relied upon community members’ suspicious attitudes towards women who were single or destitute, who lived together in groups with other women, or who were drunk, loitering or simply present in public spaces. Further influenced by notions of race and ethnicity, policing

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8 Ibid.

targeted Aboriginal and Métis women, whose sexuality and morality were considered to pose an even more significant danger to the reputation of the city because of their “otherness.” As the police increasingly monitored and regulated women’s behaviours within the public sphere, they perpetuated – rather than appeased – local anxieties about women’s role and identity within society.

The concern of the police and “respectable” classes over women and the welfare of society, however, only extended so far. Members of the force consistently chose not to “interfere” in matters of the private sphere; disregarding numerous cases of domestic abuse and offering benevolent advice in place of much needed assistance or official action. Police work often extended into the realm of social service as many officers were invited into the private lives of the populace as guardians, councillors, mediators and disciplinarians; yet their concern and compassion remained limited. The inability of the police to appropriately address the welfare of much of the urban population likely contributed, in part, to the eventual formation of a strong network of charitable and welfare organizations within the city.

The records created by the Winnipeg police testify to the duties, responsibilities, and experiences which served to define and solidify the functions of police work in the city and which contributed to identity formation on the urban frontier. Based on the roles performed by the police within late nineteenth-century Winnipeg society, the force successfully carried itself into the ensuing century and eventually evolved into a permanent, unionized, professional force of policemen and policewomen. The most powerful characteristic of urban policing that evolved from the early history of police work, however, was the process of policing which was undertaken and which remains the
foundation for the continued policing of Winnipeg society to the present day. In essence, policing involved the surveillance of and accumulation of knowledge on the urban population and environment. The process of policing in the city, however, was inherently incomplete and was inevitably prone to failure. For example, despite their efforts the Winnipeg police never successfully suppressed the local sex trade or curbed property crime in the city. Tramps with aliases and notorious reputations often avoided conviction and punishment and mischievous neighbourhood boys continued to frighten and intimidate local residents. Though an increasing number and variety of activities and behaviours were regulated by the police, policing remained an unsuccessful and incomplete process. John Weaver notes that the performance of coercive and regulatory functions over the urban population was similarly ineffective in Hamilton, Ontario.\(^{10}\) The inherent failures of police attempts to govern, however, remain a crucial aspect of the policing process by ultimately facilitating continued governance and policing. The policing of late nineteenth-century society necessitates the policing of twentieth- and twenty-first century society; and the cycle continues.

Many of the intricacies of urban policing were unique and specific to the urban centre of Winnipeg; however, cities across the nation also adopted municipal forces and commenced the process of policing during the era, with the same purposes and objectives in mind. Law enforcement, the maintenance or order, and the containment of disorder were founding principles and fundamental responsibilities of municipal forces across the continent. More specific parallels can also be drawn between the history, role and development of the Winnipeg police force and those of other Canadian towns and cities.

\(^{10}\) Weaver, *Crimes, Constables and Courts*, 112.
Similar to the early Toronto police, the Winnipeg force was an active and powerful agency of moral reform, functioning as a “task force for a new respectability.”11 Winnipeg officers shared a comparable police culture and an ambiguously defined class position within the urban community to that of the Toronto force.12 In Montreal, nineteenth-century policing asserted the power of the patriarchal state over the activities of women, and in Winnipeg, a corresponding practice emerged.13 Historians have also explored the social service functions performed by early police forces in several Canadian cities which share several similarities with those performed by the Winnipeg force.14

The nature and role of the police and police work in Winnipeg, however, ultimately remained distinctive and local in character. The city developed at a unique pace, under specific circumstances and by way of specific cultural interaction.15 The police force and broader community responded to social change and urban development in an assortment of ways. The records of the Winnipeg police offer personalized testimonials to the daily struggles of constables, citizens, groups and classes within local society; struggles that served to define the unique character and identity of the young

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11 See Rogers, “Serving Toronto the Good.”

12 See Marquis, “Working Men in Uniform.”

13 See Poutanen, “The Homeless, the Whore, the Drunkard, and the Disorderly”.

14 See McCulloch, “Most Assuredly Perpetual Motion,” and Marquis, “The Police as a Social Service.”

Canadian city. The history of the city transpired on the streets of the city and the police
were not only the primary witnesses and recorders of such, they were key participants.

Ultimately, together with the North-West Mounted Police the Winnipeg police
force represented the spread, reception and maintenance of law and order across the
prairie west. The “men in red” could not, either symbolically or operationally, preserve
law and order on the prairie frontier and within the emergent urban centres of the region.
Members of municipal police forces significantly shaped the social fabric and character
of the Canadian west, accompanying and complementing the work of the “heroic”
Mounties. The role of the police forces of Regina, Calgary, Edmonton (and other
western towns and cities) in the urban and social development of the west remains largely
unknown. Further exploration of their histories is necessary in order to further
contextualize this study, to complement the well established historiography on the
NWMP and RCMP, and to combine with it to provide a fitting view of the history of
police work in the Canadian west.

Only one pertinent question remains: how does one appropriately contextualize,
commemorate and celebrate the legacy of the Winnipeg police force and policing within
the urban centre? Within the Winnipeg Police Museum, the legacy of police work in the
city takes on impressive shape and form. The commemoration of policing in Winnipeg,
however, must not only celebrate the legacy of objects, officers, and services rendered.
The relics and records of the early police force - the pistols, handcuffs, cell blocks, and
log books, for example – would best be interpreted within the context of the local
policing process and the social, cultural and political environment of the emergent city.
The successes and failures of the police force were not theirs alone; the urban community
had a significant effect upon policing and the rise of the city, just as the work of the police, in turn, impacted upon the local populace. Ideally, an exhibition on the history of police work in the city would communicate the role and identity of both the police and the “policed” population of the city of Winnipeg – surely a difficult yet enlightening undertaking this would prove to be.
Appendix

Rules and Regulations of the Police Force of the City of Winnipeg

1. Each member of the Police shall devote his whole time and attention to the Police Service.

2. He shall promptly obey all lawful orders from his superior officer, and conform himself to all rules and regulations which may be made from time to time for the benefit of the service.

3. He shall at all times while on duty appear in Police uniform or with a distinctive badge.

4. He shall not enter any house except in the execution of his duty. And he shall lay particular attention to Public Houses on his beat, reporting whether they appear to be kept in good Order, but on no pretence shall he enter such Public House except in the immediate discharge of his duty.

5. He will be civil to all persons of every rank and class. Insolence or incivility on his part will not be overlooked.

6. He shall not upon no occasion and under pretext whatever receive money or rewards from any person.

7. Every member of the force will be liable to immediate dismissal for the following offences:
   - Disobedience to Orders
   - Drunkenness
   - Insolence in word or manner
   - Violence or Coarse language or behaviour
   - Neglect of duty
   - Entering into houses of ill fame or taverns unless when required in the regular discharge of his duties

8. Policemen are not authorized to interfere with persons for standing or talking together but he is not to allow such members to collect as will obstruct the free passage of the streets or sidewalks. He is to recollect upon all occasions that he is required to execute his duty with good temper and discretion. Any instances of unnecessary violence in striking a prisoner in charge will be severely punished. He must not use his baton or staff because the party in his custody is violent in behaviour or language. He is not to use language to persons in his custody calculated to provoke or offend them, such conduct creates resistance in the party and a hostile feeling towards the Policeman among bystanders. Every constable will recollect that in making an arrest he is not justified in doing more than is absolutely necessary for the safe custody of the parties whilst he conveys them to the Police Station.
9. Members of the force are also strictly forbidden to smoke on the streets while on duty.

10. They are also forbidden to accept any description of drinks from any person while in custody or after he shall have been discharged or from any friend of the defendant.

11. The Police while on duty are to consider themselves liable to be called on at all times and will always prepare themselves when required at the shortest notice.

12. Members of the force will on no occasion whatever hold any intercourse with prisoners brought to the Police Station, nor shall they laugh, jeer, or joke at nor with them while in custody.

13. The Police who shall be on duty in the station house shall not leave unless he is relieved by another member of the force or called away for the purpose of making an arrest or giving assistance.

14. No strangers will be allowed to remain in the guard room or to speak to any prisoners without permission from the Officer in charge of the station

15. No spirituous liquor shall be allowed to be introduced or used in the station house by Prisoners, Policemen, or any other person. This order shall be strictly enforced.

D.B. Murray, Chief of Police
Office of the Chief of Police
City Hall, Winnipeg
July 15, 1876
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