

A POLICY PROPOSAL
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE
MORDEN - WINKLER AREA

A Thesis

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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of City Planning

by

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INTRODUCTION

The settlements of Winkler and Morden (both about 3,200 population) are unique in that they are located only seven miles from each other. Both centres are, however, prospering economically. As service centres, these towns depend, to a large degree, on the agricultural hinterland they serve. The situation raises questions as to why this is occurring and what possible implications it may have for future development. The answers to the posed questions may be found in the structure or character of the towns, their relationship to the hinterland and their relationship to each other.

It is the hypothesis of this thesis that the communities of Morden and Winkler are so interrelated as to form a system. The proximity of the two towns suggests that a strong communication link exists between them and that both communities may be serving identical hinterlands. Although each possess the basic elements characteristic of self-sufficient communities, it may be that each centre specializes in some activities which are desired by the other centre as well as its hinterland. It is this functional difference which ties the two communities and their hinterlands to form one interdependent system.

Based upon the premise that the two towns are mutually interdependent and serve a similar hinterland, it seems only natural that any future development in one community cannot be carried out without considering the effect on the other. In order to optimize the future development of each community, they must be considered simultaneously. The future growth of the two communities must be predicted. From population projections it is possible to estimate the future space requirements of land use activities. It will then be necessary to allocate the appropriate activities to each community based upon their specialized functions.

The significance of a planning proposal based on an area including more than one community lies in the fact that the communities within the system will be better off performing those functions which each can do best, rather than competing for the attainment of all activities. Herein may lie the solution to many a community in rural Manitoba.

PART I - THE ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 1

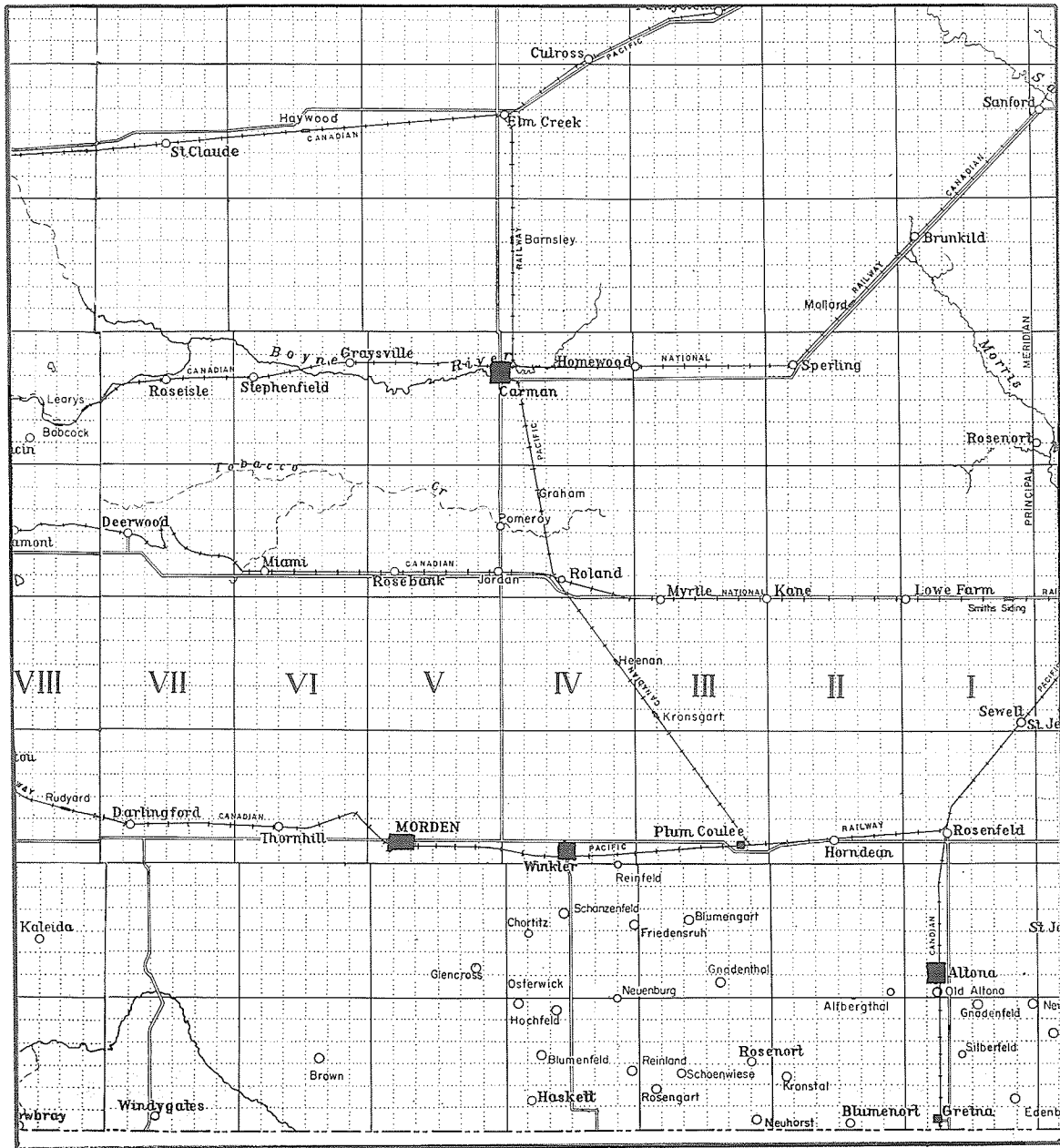
SALIENT ASPECTS OF MORDEN AND WINKLER

The communities of Morden and Winkler are located about 80 miles southwest of the city of Winnipeg near the Canada-United States Boundary. (Map 1). Both towns are characteristic of service centres.¹ Important historical events have influenced and shaped the communities to become what they are today. The historical development of Morden and Winkler will be dealt with in a combined manner in order to stress the dependent nature of their existence. The chapter will conclude with an account of resultant population structure and character in each community as it exists today.

Historical Sketch

In order to more fully understand the interactions of the present

¹As a country advances, a greater proportion of its population becomes engaged in performing services instead of manufacturing or production. Since many of the services are centralized, their personnel are concentrated in towns which develop as service centres. Towns find their territorial basis as service centres by serving the rural population as well as the community. Arthur E. Smailes, The Geography of Towns, Hutchinson University Library, London, 1965, p. 28, 35, 36. Murphy defines a Service Centre (Diversified Retail Centre) as having greater employment in retailing than manufacturing, but manufacturing is at least 20 per cent of aggregate employment. R. E. Murphy, The American City, McGraw Hill, New York, 1966, p. 118. The 1961 Dominion Bureau of Statistics employment figures for Winkler and Morden fit this definition.



MORDEN - WINKLER AREA



scale: 8 miles to
one inch

Source: Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Surveys Branch.

economic and social structures of the towns of Morden and Winkler, a brief account of the past processes which have brought about these conditions should be given.

The present townsite of Morden was laid out in 1883. It was surveyed into the regular gridiron pattern with the plan taking shape along the north side of the railway right of way. This new Canadian Pacific branch line had bypassed the nearby towns of Nelson and Mountain City. As a result, business establishments from these two towns were moved to Morden. Morden grew rapidly throughout 1884 and 1885.

Most of the Morden merchants were Anglo-Saxons serving the farmers of the Pembina Mountain country as well as the newly established Mennonites to the southeast. By 1888, Morden had become the largest agricultural supply and grain marketing centre, aside from Winnipeg. The town, although attempting the establishment of small industries, remained dependent upon the agricultural area which it served. During this time, other centres such as Plum Coulee and Gretna also developed as a result of the agricultural settlement of South Central Manitoba.

The first indication that a trading centre was to be built between Plum Coulee and Morden occurred in 1892. Although the

Morden businessmen were opposed to the construction of the railway siding, the new town site of Winkler was established seven miles east of Morden. There were good reasons for founding Winkler at this location. In 1892, over 700,000 bushels of wheat had been shipped from Morden, much of it supplied by the Mennonites.² The Mennonites often considered themselves poorly treated by Morden businessmen. Plum Coulee, located farther east, was somewhat removed from the main agricultural settlement to serve as an alternate grain depot for farmers. The prospect of a new service centre attracted Mennonites to Winkler. Economic factors and ethnic differences determined the establishment of Winkler.

The growth of Winkler is an excellent example of how a new service centre can effect the trade area of an established town. Morden's trading boom reached its height in 1888. The building of the North Pacific Railway (now owned by the Canadian National Railway) 12 miles to the north in 1889 curtailed Morden's trading in that direction. Shortly afterward, Winkler cut off the trade to the southeast. Business became quiet in Morden from the effects

² John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960), p. 274.

of the reduced umland.³ Morden then turned to industry and wholesale in an attempt to ensure the continued growth of the town. A woolen mill was erected in 1893. Two pump factories were established in 1895. In 1896, the Morden Marble and Granite Works were founded. A tannery and a carriage works were also set up in Morden. These industries, however, could not meet the competition of Winnipeg which had the banking, transportation facilities and the more central location necessary to run competitive, well organized businesses.

From 1900 until the early 40's, Morden was in a slump. Its population was 1522 in 1901, but dropped sharply to 1130 by 1911. It rose steadily after that until it reached 1500 again in the 40's. Morden did manage to survive, partly because its stores were always supported by the government employees who were stationed in Morden. Much of the activity in Morden was preserved by the judicial and administrative functions of the town. These supplied Morden with responsible citizens and some social

³There is no generally accepted terminology for contiguous areas around a centre. The area in which the influence of a community is dominant has been variously called tributary area, market area, sphere of influence, hinterland, umland, urban field and service area. Here, the single-feature regions will be termed trade areas, and the area of city dominance as a whole as the city's umland. Spheres of influence will be used in the more general sense of including both the city's trading area and its umland.

prestige. Further importance was brought to Morden when a Dominion Government Experimental farm was located there in 1914.

Winkler continued to prosper after 1900, mainly because its businessmen were extremely competitive. Much of the competition was due to the sizable Jewish community which settled in Winkler. The development of new service centres provided opportunities for the Mennonites, who were until then an agriculturally oriented people, to become businessmen. As a result a well balanced rural prairie society developed.

Winkler's trade kept on expanding at the expense of Plum Coulee and to some extent, Morden. Winkler's population was small even though its business volume was great. In 1901, it had 391 people, and 458 in 1911, but by 1921 its population had shot up to 812. This sudden growth was the result of a great increase in the purchasing power of Winkler's umland accompanying the rise in grain prices during the War years. Winkler also prospered because Anglo-Saxon Morden merchants drove away much Mennonite and German trade during the war. After the 1920's, Winkler also emerged as the cultural centre for the Mennonites, with the establishment of the Bible School. During the 40's, Winkler established a

cannery. It built a large modern seed cleaning plant in 1955 and a huge potato warehouse in 1956. These enterprises kept Winkler well to the front as a centre of a diversified agricultural area. Winkler also had four large stores in competition for the retail trade. Prices were more competitive in Winkler and people even came from Morden to shop in Winkler.

Morden began to reassert itself as a service centre after World War II. In 1941, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Area (PFRA) engineers created a small lake one and one-half miles southwest of Morden by constructing a dam across Dead Horse Creek. This dam was enlarged in 1952 to meet the needed water supply of Morden. In addition to supplying Morden with a source of domestic and industrial water, this lake also provided the town with a recreational facility. These improvements revitalized the town and not only rural industries but also new trades-people moved in, and in 1955, 31 out of 81 businesses in Morden were owned by Mennonites.⁴

Thus both Morden and Winkler established themselves as important service centres for the rural population of South Central Manitoba. For example, by 1955 Winkler had a cannery, a creamery, poultry dressing plant and a dry cleaning establishment. Morden also

⁴Warkentin, Op. Cit., p. 403.

acquired a cannery and poultry plant. Both towns were the only ones in the area each having a hospital, a newspaper and a funeral service.

Morden dominated the recreational facilities with the construction of the lake, golf course, public park, movie theatre and enclosed rink. It gained the reputation of a beautiful site and a good place to live. The major streets were paved and curbed and streets were lined with trees. In contrast, Winkler was a treeless town with poor streets due to the quicksand-like subsurface and characteristically high water table of the site.

Historical influences, to a large degree, determined the street pattern and the location of the business area within the two communities. Because both Morden and Winkler developed as a result of the introduction of rail service in southern Manitoba, they were surveyed on a gridiron pattern by Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) engineers, and consequently, the fact that the main business street in CPR towns generally ran parallel to the rail line was not a mere accident. In 1892, when the plan for Winkler was being laid out, the co-promoter of the project attempted to have included, a town square with space for market and recreation facilities. The CPR refused to allow this on the grounds that all the business

firms in town should be on the street facing the railway.

As Morden grew, the business area along Railway Avenue became crowded. A fire which gutted a portion of the business area initiated the relocation of businesses to Stephen St., one block to the north. The main road leading through town was located another block to the north. Although the main highway did not attract business establishments until much later, it did determine the direction of growth that the town would take.

The town site of Winkler was surveyed to the south of the railway line. Poor drainage north of the tracks prevented any major development until recently. Winkler's business district was located along South Railway Ave. It also moved from the railway, but 30 years later and for different reasons. With the improvements of roads and truck service to Winnipeg, businessmen relied less on rail service. This change in the mode of transportation coupled with the general deterioration and fire hazards in the old area, encouraged businesses to move south along Main Street, perpendicular to the railway line. Winkler's direction of development occurred mainly to the south and west.

The Town of Winkler

The population of Winkler was 1,331 in 1951. Winkler's population increased by 90 per cent between 1951 and 1961 to 2,529. Much of this change was due to the annexation of the southern extension of the town. (See Map 2). Winkler's population increased by about 18 per cent from 1961 to 1971. It now has 3,124 people. Of the total change in population between 1951 and 1971, about 66 per cent was accounted for by net in-migration; the remaining 34 per cent by natural increase. The male-female ratio of the population is 46/54 per cent.⁵

The ethnic composition of the population of the town of Winkler indicates a dominance of German and Netherland people, most of whom are Mennonites. (Table 1). Of the total population in 1961, almost 90 per cent were of German and Netherland origin. The remaining proportion of the population was shared between British Isles, French and other ethnic groups. Only about 3 per cent of Winkler's population was of British origin.

⁵ Population characteristics of Winkler were obtained from the Regional Analysis Program, compiled by the Department of Industry and Commerce, Data Output Part 1A, and the Manitoba Hospital Commission Report, Population of Manitoba.

TABLE 1

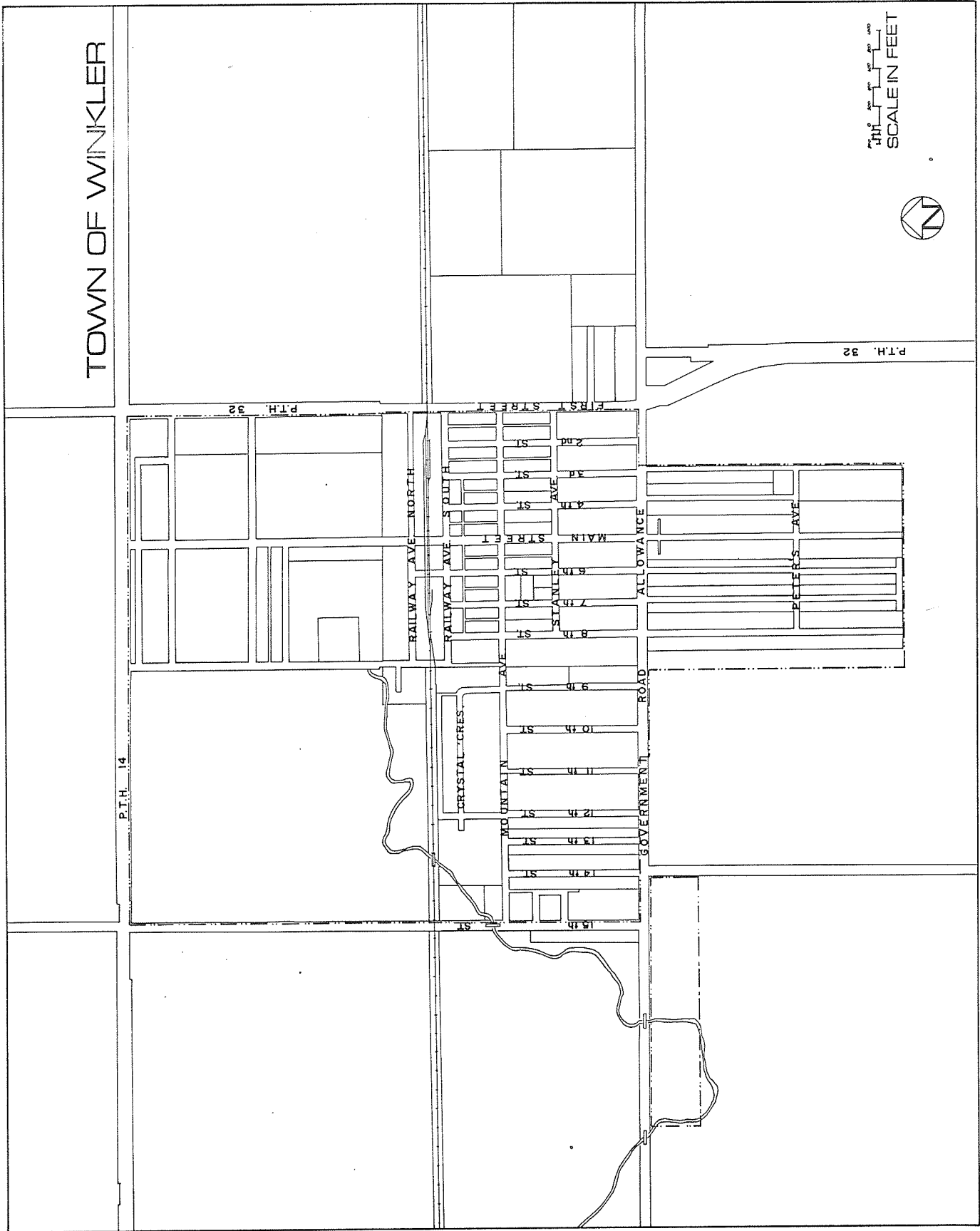
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF THE WINKLER POPULATION - 1961

Total Pop.	British Isles	Per Cent	French	Per Cent	German & Netherland	Per Cent	Other	Per Cent
2529	74	2.9	3	0.1	3266	89.6	180	7.4

Source: Regional Analysis Program, Data Output Part 1A, p. 163.

The age-sex structure of Winkler's population shows a relatively large number of children and young people with fewer people in the middle range and a substantial number of retired persons (Figure 1). In 1971, 39.8 per cent of the total population fell between the ages of 0-19, 18.9 per cent between the ages of 20-34, 23.5 per cent were in the 35-64 age group and 14.5 per cent comprised that group over 65 years of age. Table 1A indicates the changing trends which are occurring in the age structure of the

TOWN OF WINKLER



Map 2

AGE - SEX PYRAMID
WINKLER - 1971

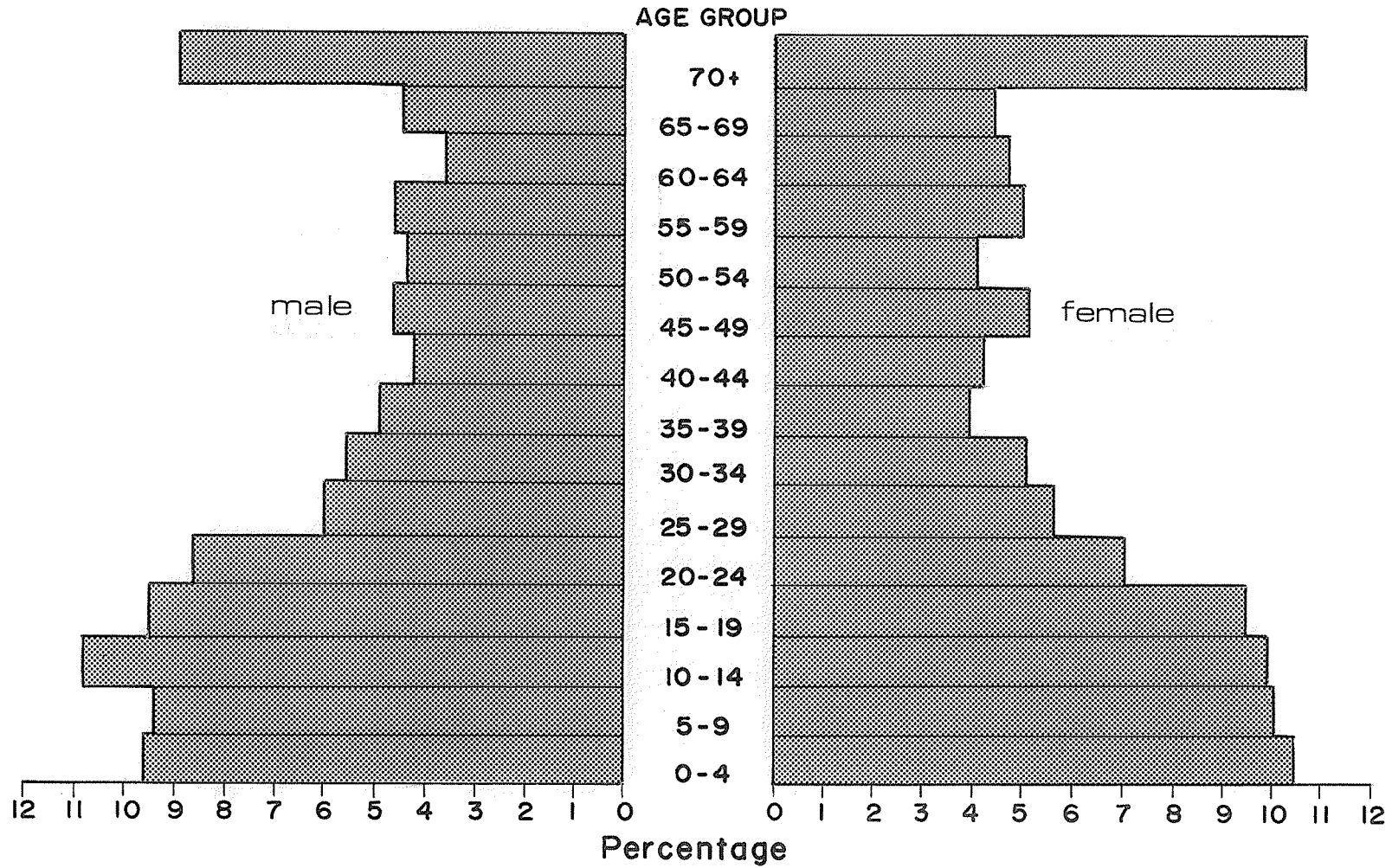


Figure 1

population. The percentage of young people between the ages of 0-19 remained fairly stable over the last 15 years. The percentage decrease of people between the ages of 20-64 is important to note. There is also a significant percentage increase of that population over 65 years of age. In all likelihood these trends will probably continue as young people tend to leave the community to seek opportunities in larger cities, and as the older people from the surrounding area move into the community in anticipation of retirement.

TABLE 1 A

POPULATION OF WINKLER BY SELECTED AGE-GROUPS 1956-1971

Year	Total	0-19	%	20-34	%	35-64	%	65-	%
1956	1634	632	38.6	327	20.0	468	28.7	207	12.7
1961	2529	1058	41.8	407	16.1	707	28.0	357	14.1
1966	2570	977	38.0	420	16.3	735	28.6	438	17.1
1971	3124	1242	39.8	591	18.9	834	26.7	454	14.6

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada.

Most of Winkler's residential growth during the late 40's occurred between the railway and the southern town limits. Many of the people lived within several blocks of the Central Business District (CBD). Residential expansion toward the west occurred in a leap-frog fashion, leaving whole blocks unoccupied. This phenomenon was mainly attributed to lot size and absentee