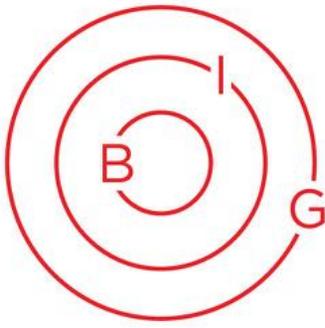




**BORDERS IN
GLOBALIZATION**





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Back to the Future: Winnipeg's Reinvention from Regional Trade and Transportation Gateway to Borderland Trade and Transportation Hub

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There exists in the historical literature considerable debate over the idea of a “Greater New England” encompassing the Atlantic region of Canada and New England. While much of the debate has centered on cross-border flows of goods, people and capital, particularly during the pre-Revolutionary period, it is culture, I believe, that many view as being most important in the creation of the idea or ideal of an Atlantic borderland. This article addresses the question of whether or not culture, or more specifically, cultural diffusion, has produced a cultural borderland in this part of North America.

INTRODUCTION

Winnipeg is a paradox. Most Canadians consider it to be relatively isolated, separated from the urban conurbation of southern Ontario and southern Quebec by the vast expanse of the Canadian Shield and located far from the faster growing centres of the central and western Prairies. And yet at the same time, its' location at almost the geographical centre of the North American continent has historically made Winnipeg an important transportation focal point with connections that have integrated the city with places and regions beyond its southern Manitoba boundaries. Winnipeg is also both a borderland city, with historically important links to American centres to the south, and a regional gateway and hub, with strong connections to the rest of Canada. Its' location at the intersection of north-south and east-west axes of development and at the liminal peripheries of both the Great Plains/Prairies and Great Lakes borderland regions makes it a fascinating place for borderland study. This paper explores the history of Winnipeg as a transportation and trading centre and focuses on its early associations with the upper Midwest and northern Plains, its emergence and decline as the major metropolis and gateway to the Canadian West, and its recent efforts to draw upon the past in order to reinvent itself as a Great Plains and North American trade and transportation hub.

WINNIPEG'S EMERGENCE AS A BORDERLAND CITY

At the end of the eighteenth century, the international region that we know today as the Great Plains of North America (Fig. 1) was a vast expanse that was virtually empty of Europeans and non-native North Americans, the exception being a relatively small number of fur traders. At this point in time, the major struggle over space for whites in this part of the continent was that taking place between the Hudson's Bay (HBC) and North West (NWC) fur trading companies. The

Canadian historian W.L. Morton describes the Canadian prairies during this time as: "... a virgin *tabula rasa* (my italics), a blank sheet with no writing, an unmarked parchment, unscrapped, unspoiled, unprepared."¹ Using his criteria, much the same could be said if one were to describe the northern section of the American Great Plains during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. Yet such a view overlooks the presence of indigenous groups and the dynamic nature of native-white relations taking place over time. Native peoples armed with guns, spears and bows and arrows followed on horseback or on foot great herds of bison, deer, antelope, and waterfowl. Whites and natives engaged in various kinds of relations centering on the fur trade which superimposed itself upon and was incorporated into traditional native trading networks.

Despite an increasing presence of whites, indigenous people were the main 'actors' in the unfolding events that shaped the contours of the international region for much of the first half of the nineteenth century. Different kinds of 'middle grounds' reflecting variable historical and geographical circumstances existed throughout what might be described as a gigantic trade zone.² The Great Plains at this time might also be viewed as representative of what Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron describe as a frontier, that is, a geographic and cultural intersection where the borders that did exist were rather undefined and where relationships between peoples were characterized by intercultural accommodations.³ Only later, when the international border was established in 1818, the white presence increased, and imperial rivalries became more pronounced, did borderlands emerge. Winnipeg was given birth and shaped by the intersection of such forces.

Permanent settlement in what would become southern Manitoba began in 1811 when the HBC granted the Earl of Selkirk 300,000 square kilometres of land (116,000 acres), an area encompassing the whole basin of the Red River drainage system, known as Assiniboia,, for a colonization project called the Red River Colony (Fig. 2). The colony reached a population of

600 in 1821, consisting of people displaced from the Scottish Highlands by the enclosure acts, French Canadians who came to the area in 1818, and German-speaking Swiss mercenaries awarded land for their services to the British crown. Another group were the Métis. Descended from voyageurs from Québec and the Great Lakes who worked for Montréal-based fur trade companies and married Native women, mostly Cree and Ojibwe, the Métis settled at Pembina and the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers before the arrival of European immigrants in 1812.⁴ Agricultural activities in the colony were conducted largely by the Scots who grew oats, barley and later, wheat on long lots similar to those that existed in Québec. Settlement was oriented to the rivers (Red and Assiniboine) and the survey, conducted by the HBC, was deemed as suiting the needs of the colony at that time.⁵ The Métis were semi-nomadic, traveling as far as necessary in their roles as provisioners for the fur trade and later as hunters in the buffalo robe trade.⁶ Over the course of much of the nineteenth century, the Métis showed that they were at home throughout the Plains-Prairies borderland. They were trans-border citizens who took advantage of opportunities presented on both sides of the line, a situation which meant that they could challenge territorial claims when it was to their advantage to do so.

The major trading post in Assiniboia was Fort Garry, located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers in what is now downtown Winnipeg. The post was created in 1822 by the HBC and quickly became the nucleus of the colony. Red River colonists, as well as employees and traders, were expected to sell their furs and purchase all their supplies through the HBC but as early as 1821 there was considerable trade going on across the border. Many furs found their way to the American Fur Trading Company posts just across the border at Pembina and other points where a better price could be secured and whiskey could be purchased.⁷ Right from the beginning, the problem of provisioning the colony was evident to Lord Selkirk and the HBC. It

was expensive to bring in goods from far-off Europe and freeze-up in Hudson Bay limited the transportation season. As well, the challenging environment of the Canadian Shield made the transportation of provisions a very costly venture. On December 22, 1817, Selkirk addressed a letter to U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams pleading that American restrictions be lifted on the passage of trade through the more than 500 miles of territory in what was called the Great Northwest. Selkirk foresaw a day “when well-established land routes joining the Mississippi and Red Rivers would create a commercial, economic and political avenue linking Canada and the U.S. and doing much to build the communities of St. Paul [Minnesota] and Winnipeg.”⁸ That request was granted and a two-way corridor of trade quickly developed.

“Geography favored trade links to the south,” Carolyn Gilmour argues,

but it was not the only factor. Family ties connected a number of the Red River settlers to the group of independent British and Canadian traders who had flourished at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, since the 1780s. Moreover, resentment of the Hudson's Bay Company's monopolistic control over the settlement's trade after 1821 sparked a spirit of competition among old fur trade families for whom the tradition of independent commerce went back for generations.⁹

Shortly after Selkirk's request was granted, the HBC began buying oxen, sheep and cattle in the St. Paul market. The Red River colony was supplied livestock from south of the border until 1833. After that date, the colonists in turn delivered livestock to farms and urban centers in Minnesota.¹⁰

It wasn't long after the Red River trade was initiated that "free traders" made their presence felt. Driving two-wheeled ox-carts laden with furs and robes over what was collectively known as the "Red River trails",¹¹ Métis and colonists supplied a growing American market, challenging the monopoly of the HBC. They would return to the Red River colony with their carts loaded with food, tobacco, manufactured goods, ammunition, seed, dry goods, and many other imports purchased in the United States. The flow of furs and robes southward slowed somewhat after 1836 when the Selkirk grant was re-conveyed by his heirs to the HBC. Immediately, the Company imposed a stiff tariff on all imported goods, in effect thickening the border at least in terms of trade. However, the inability on the part of the HBC to police such trade combined with the growth of settlement to the southeast along the Mississippi River, especially at St. Paul, and the subsequent escalating demand for furs, served to increase the ox-cart trade within a very short time. A Canadian-born trader, Norman Kittson, who worked for the Pierre Choteau Company out of St. Louis, played a major role in facilitating the cross-border fur trade during this period. Under his direction, a number of posts were built at strategic locations along the trails, including one at Pembina, located just south of the boundary, from which furs were traded and then shipped by carts, driven by Métis, to Mendota or St. Paul where they were loaded on to steamboats and transported to St. Louis and ultimately New Orleans or New York. Kittson recruited Canadian-born Métis to work for him. The census of 1850 shows that there were 1,123 people in Pembina district and 64.5% of these were born in Canada.¹²

In 1845 the free traders could get a price for their furs at Pembina nearly 25% more than they could procure from the HBC at Fort Garry.¹³ In response to this loss of business, the governor of the HBC, George Simpson, successfully lobbied the British government to send 350 troops to the colony on the pretence that the Americans were planning to invade. With these

troops, the HBC was able to police and almost terminate the trade, although some smuggling still continued. Yet Kittson's decline in profits from furs was partly balanced by the presence of the militia who increased the demand for imported groceries and manufactured goods brought in by Kittson.¹⁴ As a result, the Red River trade corridor continued to grow in importance. Growth would continue even after the troops left as the trade expanded to include the carrying of mails. A more reliable courier service was organized in 1853 and two years later a monthly service was established between Red River and Pembina. Attempts to develop a Canadian route through northern Ontario proved unsuccessful and so the colony depended entirely on the U.S. post office at Pembina. Outgoing mail had to be paid in U.S. stamps sold in Fort Garry. In 1870 an agreement was signed with the U.S. post office for transmission of closed mails between Fort Garry and Windsor by way of Pembina, St. Paul and Chicago.¹⁵

St. Paul prospered from this trade and was made capital of the new Minnesota Territory in 1849. Located at the head of navigation on the Mississippi River, it also benefited from being the major gateway for the Canadian northwest. "By 1856," Gilman, Gilman and Stultz state:

St. Paul accounted for nearly half the value of all goods imported to the Red River. Year by year the brigades lengthened until trains of 200 or 300 carts, mostly driven for hire by their Métis builders, were not uncommon. In 1857 a total of some 500 arrived in St Paul. The estimated value of furs and skins shipped through the city that year was \$183,000, of which about four-fifths came from the Red River region. Other items of freight often brought from the Red River country were pemmican, dried buffalo meat, moccasins, and skin garments fashioned by skilled Indian hands and worked

with beads or porcupine quills. On their return north the brigades hauled a varied supply of general merchandise –staple groceries, tobacco, liquor, dry goods, clothing of all kinds, tools, hardware, guns, ammunition, farm implements, and even window glass.¹⁶

The advantage of the Red River trade corridor over the northern route to Hudson Bay was further increased after packet service on the Mississippi began in 1852 and when the first railroad reached the Mississippi at Rock Island in 1854, followed by other lines to Galena, Prairie du Chien, and La Crosse. By compressing time and space, these developments in transportation reduced the cost of shipment of furs and goods.¹⁷

Unable to compete with the cheaper American route, George Simpson negotiated an agreement in 1857 that allowed HBC goods from Britain, sealed and bonded, to be transported through the U.S. to the Red River duty-free, a development which meant a virtual abandonment of the Hudson Bay route and the decline of York Factory as the principal port of entry into Rupert's Land.¹⁸ By this time, the British government was starting to seriously consider the idea that Rupert's Land might be annexed to Canada. This news in turn further stimulated interest in developing the north-south connection along the Red River among St. Paul capitalists. In 1859 a steamboat service on the Red River began with the launching of the *Anson Northrup*. That same year, the Minnesota Stage Company commenced stagecoach and freight service to the upper Red River where it connected with the steamboat.¹⁹ This improvement in transportation inaugurated, in the words of John Macoun, “a new era for the trade of the Red River colony.”²⁰

At this point, Simpson made a bold move by silently partnering with James and Henry Burbank, the owners of the Minnesota Stage Company, to purchase the *Anson Northrup*, which the Burbanks renamed the *Pioneer*. The boat then sailed between the Red River settlement and

the HBC's new post opposite the mouth of the Sheyenne River in Dakota Territory, at first called Sheyenne but later renamed Georgetown in honour of Simpson. The following year, Simpson contracted with the Minnesota Stage Company to handle the company's overland freight, even though they continued to use carts.²¹ Yet the Burbanks and Simpson would eventually part ways as the former wanted immigration and trade while the latter wished only to continue a monopoly in trade in the northwest, and acted to block any efforts for further expansion. After the Burbank contract ran out and was not renewed in 1863, Norman Kittson bought out the brothers' half interest in the steamer the *International* to become the American associate of the HBC in the steamboat business. By this time, the cart traffic was on its last legs as the railroad approached Dakota Territory with increasing speed.²²

It was during this time that St. Paul and Chicago capitalists competed for control of the northern plains and in this contest, the border did not seem to matter too much. Politicians and businessmen in both centres wanted to extend their empires into Canada and viewed the monopoly of the HBC as a barrier to realizing their dreams. Some, including the following editorialist in the January 20, 1864 edition of the New York *Daily Tribune*, believed that rail transportation was the key to tapping the resources of the northwest and ensuring American control of the borderland region: "The great northern thoroughfare across the American continent must be upon our own soil. Nothing else can so assure our political and commercial dominance, and hasten the assimilating process through which British America will ultimately drop into our hand like a ripe pear."²³ While St. Paul capitalists were most directly concerned with commercial intercourse with the Red River settlement, Chicago interests also dreamed of a northwest empire with their city serving as the primary gateway. "With this in mind," Paul Sharp tells us, "the Chicago *Daily Democratic Press* bitterly attacked the Hudson's Bay Company as 'that great

monopoly which now holds the Northwest in its grasp' and noisily urged that it be 'driven out of existence' so that the 'whole country [could] be thrown open to settlement.'"²⁴

While Red River citizens valued the strong economic connection with Minnesota, many still preferred the historical link with Britain and some even believed that a Canadian route through northern Ontario would prove more successful to the colony than the southern one through Minnesota. This feeling ran contrary to the strong support shown for Manifest Destiny in Minnesota, especially among those who sought to exploit the robust commercial ties linking Minnesota with the Red River settlement as a means of acquiring northwestern Canada for the United States. It was only natural, supporters argued, that Minnesota's economic dominance over Red River should lead to political annexation.²⁵ Certain individuals including former governor Senator Alexander Ramsey and treasury agent and future U.S. consulate at Winnipeg, James "Saskatchewan" Taylor, lobbied hard for such action. In 1866 Taylor, an agent of the U.S. Treasury, presented the draft "of an act for the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan, and Columbia".²⁶ The key to the whole venture, Taylor believed, was building railway links between east and west through British territory. His proposals were introduced as a bill the next month by General N.P. Banks, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, but it was not considered in Congress.²⁷ Taylor also envisioned the day in which a railroad would link St. Paul to what was then called the "Saskatchewan country".²⁸

Despite their displeasure with the HBC, there was little support among Red River citizens for annexation. In January 1863, a memorial presented by citizens of Red River to the British government expressed grave concern over the danger of Americanization: "We feel bound to observe that American influence is rapidly gaining ground here; and if action is long delayed,

very unpleasant complications may arise. Thus both politically and commercially, the opening up of this country and the making through it a national highway, would immensely subserve Imperial interests.”²⁹ Minnesota’s economic collapse of 1857, the Civil War, and the disruption caused by the troubles with the Sioux also stood in the way of those who favoured political absorption.³⁰ Yet Taylor continued to push hard on the issue, suggesting to Washington that the Canadian government would be willing to transfer the northwest in return for a reciprocity treaty and expressing the belief that the Métis would lead an annexation movement within the colony.³¹ He was wrong on both counts. In Ontario, meanwhile, political pressure was mounting for the Canadian government to secure the Northwest for Canadians. Ontarians, who comprised a significant portion of the business and farming community in Red River, also pushed for entry into Confederation.

At Confederation, there were approximately 12,000 people in the Red River Colony, roughly 10,000 of who were Métis.³² Two years later, the Government of Canada purchased Rupert’s Land from the HBC for \$1,500,000, the date of transfer being set for December 1, 1869. At that point in time, the settlement that would eventually become Winnipeg was just a small cluster of buildings situated at a location along the fur-runners’ trail at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.³³ On November 8, 1873, this settlement was incorporated as a city with a population of 1,869 people and named Winnipeg after the Cree word for “muddy water” assigned to the lake 70 kilometres to the north.³⁴ The purchase of Rupert’s Land by the new Dominion of Canada dampened the appetite for Manifest Destiny among Minnesota capitalists who more and more focused their sights on capturing the rapidly expanding agricultural hinterland of the Dakota Territory and eastern Montana. Control over such a vast hinterland by Minnesota entrepreneurs was made possible by a railway system that connected resource based

communities with Minneapolis and St. Paul and by the basic geographical fact that there was no other city in the northern Plains of sufficient size, power and constituent capitalists to offer any kind of competition.

During the 1870s, the Canadian prairies were still isolated from points east and west and continued to function primarily as a declining fur trade frontier awaiting settlement while the northern U.S. plains were on the verge of a large-scale migration of railways and settlers which would effectively terminate its frontier state within the borderland region. Demographic processes pushing people westward combined with the rapid growth of the railroad network and the manifest proclivities of the government to advance settlement to the eastern margins of the Great Plains. In 1870 the Dakotas and, to a much lesser extent, Montana, were about to become less peripheral and more connected to the expanding American empire. River corridors, oriented primarily north-south, were superseded by railroad corridors that ran primarily east-west. While railroads facilitated settlement in the northern Plains, another development, the process created by Minneapolis millers which enabled a high-quality flour to be made from spring wheat, also encouraged agricultural development. A combination of factors including the coming of the railroads, the advent of spring wheat, free homestead land, soil exhaustion back east, an increase in foreign migration and high wheat prices triggered the first Dakota Boom of 1879.³⁵ While the population of the North Dakota portion of the territory was only 2,405 in 1870, by 1890 it had increased to 190,983.³⁶ Over 100,000 people entered the territory between 1879 and 1886³⁷; the majority were homesteaders, but some settlers with money organized large, highly mechanized, well capitalized bonanza farms that would last only a short time before they would fall victim to drought, low grain prices, and plagues of grasshoppers.³⁸

While the northern Plains were rapidly filling up with settlers, the situation north of the 49th parallel was very much different. Although western Canada's first Homestead Act was passed in 1872, the region failed to attract the hundreds of thousands of Europeans and North Americans moving westward. Between 1870 and 1896, while much of the adjacent American plains were filling up, the Canadian prairies remained largely empty of white settlement. Winnipeg and Manitoba, however, proved to be an exception to this trend as thousands of Ontarians and a smaller number of Europeans during the 1870s were drawn to the province by the prospect of wheat farming. Even though immigration slowed considerably in the 1880s and throughout most of the 1890s,³⁹ Manitoba's population stood at almost 150,000 in 1891 even though the closing of southwestern Manitoba to homestead entry in July 1882 redirected later migrants to the Dakotas.⁴⁰ Manitoba also lost settlers who abandoned their land in response to their anger with government land policy and the high import duties they were forced to pay.

Between 1871 and 1881, the population of Winnipeg increased slowly from 1,000 to 9,000 inhabitants (Fig. 3).⁴¹ The St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway (later the Great Northern Railway) reached Winnipeg in 1878, connecting the city with St. Paul and Chicago and ensuring its status as the principal gateway to the Canadian West. However, growth was impeded by the slow settlement of the west, a struggling Canadian economy deterred by a global recession, and a "thickening" of the border following the enactment of tariff legislation in the United States. Despite the new rail connection to St. Paul, traditional links with Minnesota declined while the anticipated development that was promised by the entry into Confederation was slow to be realized. The Conservative government under Sir John A. Macdonald viewed the development of the west as key to the survival and growth of the country. Two major components of Macdonald's National Policy, railways and immigration, were seen as integral to

the realization of this dream. Financial scandals and the immense physical barrier presented by the Canadian Shield slowed construction of a transcontinental line but eventually such obstacles were overcome. The fortunes of Winnipeg changed significantly when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) decided in 1881 to construct its main line through the city, a choice which guaranteed that Winnipeg would become the hub of commercial activity for the region and the gateway to the Canadian West. With this decision, the axis of development that stimulated Winnipeg's growth shifted direction.

WINNIPEG'S EMERGENCE AS GATEWAY AND RAILWAY HUB

The effect of the CPR's decision was immediately felt. Within months, 3,000 real estate offices sprang up in Winnipeg. The population quickly doubled and the town earned the name "Chicago of the North".⁴² Its position as gateway and railroad hub was further reinforced when the Canadian Northern (CNoR), Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP) and Midland railways laid tracks through the city. Winnipeg's potential for growth was recognized by William Curtis, a correspondent for the *Chicago Record-Herald* who visited the city in September 1911 and stated:

All roads lead to Winnipeg. It is the focal point of the three transcontinental railway lines of Canada, and nobody, neither manufacturer, capitalist, farmer, mechanic, lawyer, doctor, merchant, priest, nor labourer, can pass from one part of Canada to another without going through Winnipeg. *It is a gateway through which all the commerce of the East and the West, and the North and the South must flow* (my italics). No city, in America at least, has such absolute and complete command over the wholesale trade of so vast an area. It is destined to become one of the greatest distributing commercial centers of the continent as well as a manufacturing community of great importance.⁴³

Discriminatory freight rates awarded by railways and greater accessibility to eastern markets favoured Winnipeg in the wholesale trade. Slow delivery of goods from the east gave impetus to manufacturing (e.g. flour mills, packing plants, construction firms, etc.). Because of

its central role in the grain trade, Winnipeg was able to develop as the major financial centre of the region. As Alan Artibise states,

The Grain and Produce Exchange in 1887 and numerous bank branches, brokerage houses, transportation and insurance agencies were all created specifically for the grain transactions. Revenue from grain trading was managed through the city, thus encouraging the growth of numerous wholesaling and service functions for the expanding prairie region, financing real estate activities in Winnipeg and the West, and generally providing an important source of capital for western Canadian development. This growth extended well beyond these direct relationships with the grain trade. Real estate, insurance, and banking all developed important linkages over an extensive western hinterland.⁴⁴

The city almost tripled in population from 7,995 in 1881 to more than 27,000 a decade later.

With the end of a long global recession and the filling up of agricultural lands south of the border, immigration to Canada increased dramatically after 1896, much of it directed towards western Canada (Table 1). In Saskatchewan alone, the preferred destination at the turn of the century, the population increased 1,124.7 percent between 1891 and 1911.⁴⁵ While most immigrants intent on farming settled in Saskatchewan and Alberta, large numbers were attracted to Winnipeg and its rapidly expanding local economy. The city grew by 219.8 percent between 1901 (N=42,450) and 1911 (N=136,035) and reached a total of more than 179,097 in 1921 (Fig. 4).⁴⁶ A flood of immigrants, high wheat prices, plentiful capital, and improved farming techniques contributed to making Winnipeg the wholesale, administrative, and financial centre of western Canada.

Table 1. Decennial Population Growth, Prairie Provinces, 1901-1991

Year	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta
1901	255,211	91,279	73,022
1911	461,394	492,432	374,295
1921	610,118	757,510	588,454

Source: Statistics Canada, The Canada Year Book, 1916-17, accessed August 10, 2010, accessed November 19, 2015, http://www65.statcan.gc.ca/acyb02/1917/acyb02_191700838-eng.htm.

Within the northern Plains/Canadian Prairies borderland, Winnipeg clearly occupied a position at the top of the transnational urban hierarchy. Urban development reached a greater level of intensity on the Canadian side of the 49th parallel. Winnipeg emerged as the regional metropolis with the rest of Manitoba and the North West Territories, and then for some time, Saskatchewan and Alberta, as its hinterland.⁴⁷ Parallel urban development in Alberta was eventually ensured to some degree by the great distance separating this part of the prairies from Winnipeg but the latter would continue to have considerable hold over Saskatchewan well after the province was established in 1905. Geographically, Winnipeg was ideally situated as to assume the role as the gateway city for the Canadian West. Indeed, Winnipeegers viewed the prairies as their hinterland just as central Canadians did.⁴⁸

No urban centre in the northern Plains would experience the same level of development that Winnipeg did during the turn of the twentieth century period. Even though a dependency relationship developed between the prairies and central Canada, whereby prairie centers were dependent to a significant degree on the fortunes of eastern metropolises to which they were subordinate, a regional urban system based on the railway evolved, but no comparable system would develop in the northern Great Plains. There, urban centers functioned primarily as commercial outposts for Minneapolis-St. Paul and other large cities such as Denver and St. Louis encircling the region. As a result, Prairie cities played, and continue to play, a much more important role in the regional economy and identity than their northern Plains counterparts did and do. In addition, while other Canadian borderlands served to some extent as hinterlands for cities in corresponding American borderlands, the same was not the case in the Great Plains-Prairies region. While Winnipeg developed as a vital node, hub and gateway within the developing Canadian urban system, Fargo, Grand Forks, Billings, Great Falls and other northern

Plains cities would remain as lower order centres within the developing American urban hierarchy.

WINNIPEG'S CHANGE IN FORTUNE

However, the halcyon days would soon end. Among many causes for this relative decline was the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 which reduced the city's domination over the western Canadian grain economy. The construction of the canal reduced the distance between Vancouver and European ports by more than 8,000 kilometres. This, in turn, brought western Saskatchewan and Alberta into the hinterland of the B.C. city as it was cheaper to ship grain to Europe via rail to the coast than via rail through Winnipeg to Port Arthur, where it would then be loaded on to Great Lakes steamers bound for Montréal and Buffalo and then reshipped to Europe.⁴⁹ Also important was the increasing competition posed by other Prairie cities after the termination of freight rates favourable to Winnipeg. Following World War I, economic stagnation due to low wheat prices and the Depression that lasted well into the 1940s resulted in slow growth. The end of large-scale immigration to the west also led to this decline.

To a considerable degree, the city's fortunes throughout the twentieth century paralleled those of the railway industry. As the railways declined in relative importance because of increasing competition from other modes of transportation, so did Winnipeg descend in rank among Canadian cities. The city slipped from third largest in Canada in 1911, to fourth in 1941, to fifth in 1971, and seventh by 1991. Between 1971 and 1996, the population on average grew by just 0.6 per cent per year, well under the Canadian average for cities. In comparison to the other major cities, both within the region (Table 2) and elsewhere in the country, Winnipeg was clearly falling behind in terms of growth. One could argue that not only was Winnipeg stuck in

the middle of the country, isolated from other big cities, it was also stuck between its celebrated past and its somewhat worrisome future.

Table 2. Population^a of Major Prairie Centres, 1901-1991, Selected Years

City	1901	1921	1931	1951 ^b	1971 ^c	1991 ^d
Winnipeg	42,340	179,087	218,785	357,000	540,000	652,000
Calgary	4,392	53,305	83,761	142,000	403,000	754,000
Edmonton	4,176	58,821	79,197	194,000	496,000	840,000
Regina	2,249	34,432	53,209	73,000	141,000	192,000
Saskatoon	113	25,739	43,291	56,000	126,000	210,000

^a – includes census metropolitan areas (CMAs) for 1951, 1971 and 1991

^b – rounded to nearest 000s

^c – rounded to nearest 000s

^d – rounded to nearest 000s

Source: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book 1932* (Ottawa: P.A. Acland, 1932), 103-104; “Canada: 20 Top Census Metropolitan Areas: Population from 1931,” *Demographia* website, accessed June 6, 2015, <http://www.demographia.com/db-cancma.htm>.

However, while Winnipeg grew more slowly than many other high ranking Canadian cities during the second half of the twentieth century, it arguably had a more diversified economy than other prairie centres and thus was better able to weather slowdowns in traditional export markets. By the end of the century, growth in the aerospace, transportation and information technology sectors supplemented the traditional agri-business, furniture and apparel, manufacturing, and finance and insurance businesses. With its more diversified economic base, Winnipeg, with a 2011 metropolitan population of 730,018, a figure constituting more than 60 percent of the Manitoba’s total population of 1,208,268,⁵⁰ doesn’t suffer as much from recession and declining export markets as do other Prairie cities. And yet at the same time, Winnipeg and Manitoba do not experience the same kind of booming growth that the other western cities and provinces experience during periods when the export-based Canadian economy is doing well. This situation has resulted in a concerted effort among the provincial government, the city, and private interests to recapture Winnipeg’s glory days by re-establishing its historical role as the gateway to the west and major transportation hub within North America.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: TAPPING WINNIPEG'S POTENTIAL AS A TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION HUB

The desire among various parties to pursue this strategy must be viewed in relation to the current phase of globalization, the neo-liberal ideology upon which it is based, and the concomitant belief that in order for a community to be successful in such a world order, it is necessary to implement policies and pursue development plans that take advantage of the increasing geographical scale of economic, political and social interactions. The erasure of trade restrictions and the open flow of financial capital across borders, facilitated by technologies of communication and transportation that have simultaneously compressed space and time and extended space, have together served to create a template for development to which governments, businesses, communities and individuals have ascribed. As globalization and the late and post stages of modernity produced unprecedented flows and mobilities that transcended borders of all kinds, the nature of the relationship between the United States and Canada changed. By the end of the twentieth century, marked in particular by the enactment of free trade, many began to emphasize the permeability, fluidity and flexibility of the Canadian-American border and to question its' ontological status. All of these developments prompted individuals, businesses, communities and governments to seek strategies that would best benefit organizational efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and greater wealth.

In this context, there is widespread belief that “multinational corporations and networks of global cities are replacing nation states as the primary players in the new economy ...”⁵¹ While Winnipeg at the turn of the twenty-first century could hardly be classified as a major global city, it shared with larger centres the desire to extend economic linkages beyond national borders in order to take advantage of global restructuring. Such an extension, it was believed, could be best

achieved by taking advantage of Winnipeg’s central location within North America and developing its historical role as a trade and transportation gateway and hub.

In actual fact, the city never lost its importance as a major transportation centre, even in the face of limited growth. Both truck and rail traffic crossing at Pembina, North Dakota, 115 kilometres directly south of the city, increased dramatically between 1996 and 2014 (Table 3). By the end of the twentieth century, this particular crossing was the fifth busiest along the Canada-U.S. Border, and the second busiest west of the Great Lakes. By 2008, trucking, which had replaced rail as the most important mode of transportation of goods, hauled 95% of all land freight and 80% of the province’s US merchandise trade. Over 300,000 commercial trucks crossed the US-Manitoba border that year, the vast majority at the Emerson-Pembina port. At the same time, Winnipeg was, and continues to be, the only major city between Vancouver and Thunder Bay with direct US rail connections via the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe.⁵² It also continues to benefit from its location along the CP and Canadian National (CN) mainlines.⁵³

Table 3. Border Crossing Statistics for Emerson, North Dakota, 1996-2014

Year	# of trucks	loaded truck containers	empty truck containers	# of trains	loaded rail containers	empty rail containers
1996	140,627	51,688	7,430	NA	NA	NA
1997	152,110	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1998	177,916	83,489	11,907	NA	2,483	1,081
1999	200,456	170,504	16,710	NA	967	234
2000	214,377	199,947	11,768	NA	1,415	220
2001	219,733	211,020	8,372	NA	NA	NA
2002	203,416	196,366	7,135	NA	325	81
2003	201,761	191,029	9,953	86	1,139	418
2004	208,035	207,765	10,993	87	161	71
2005	198,843	205,007	17,148	NA	1,155	280
2006	200,541	177,353	29,298	666	32,485	9,371
2007	228,455	200,107	29,912	1,411	74,130	24,791
2008	224,152	185,754	39,172	1,267	76,945	29,145
2009	189,393	156,888	33,809	1,003	54,320	23,068
2010	202,438	159,231	46,404	1,242	74,209	31,015
2011	208,509	151,603	61,445	1,372	82,871	37,433
2012	214,047	155,730	59,740	1,649	103,129	39,846

2013	219,338	164,428	56,432	1,304	99,566	25,098
2014	229,078	182,589	49,972	1,282	103,019	28,530

Source: United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border Crossing/Entry Data for Pembina, North Dakota, accessed November 17, 2015, http://transborder.bts.gov/tbdr/bc_gtableprt.jsp.

Nevertheless, despite Winnipeg's continuing importance as a transportation centre, private interests and governments, municipal and provincial, aspired to augment the city's position as a major transportation and trade hub and gateway within North America. In particular, attention was focused on developing Winnipeg as a key inland port serving as a gateway to the north and access to Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean via the port of Churchill; as a gateway to the west and access to China and the Pacific Rim via the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert; as a gateway to eastern Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Asia via the ports of Thunder Bay, Montreal and Halifax; and as a gateway to the south and access to the United States and Mexico via the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor (Fig. 5)⁵⁴ and the ports of Houston, New Orleans, Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas. By doing so, it was argued, Winnipeg could enhance its transportation portal/gateway function for three key trade flows: the burgeoning Asian-North American trade, the growing north-south North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade; and the traditional Canadian east-west freight flows.

With this rationale in mind and influenced by the preceding development of a lattice of cross-border trade corridors (e.g. West Coast Corridor, CANAMEX Corridor, North American Superhighway Corridor), Canadian gateways (the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor, the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway, and the Atlantic Gateway and Trade Corridor), and inland terminals throughout North America, the most notable being the Kansas City SmartPort, a partnership was formed to re-establish Winnipeg as a major transportation hub. The first step in

this process was the participation of the city and the province in the aforementioned North American Superhighway Corridor, which runs from Winnipeg, through Fargo, Kansas City, Dallas and Laredo, then enters Mexico and runs through Monterrey to Mexico City. It is also called the Mid-Continent Corridor or the I-35 Corridor, while its northern portion, including west central and northwestern Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and southern Manitoba is termed the Red River Trade Corridor (RRTC). The RRTC, which began in 1990, was created to foster trade and travel within the region and encourage people to network around economic development issues.⁵⁵

A 2001 report on the environmental impacts of trade on five binational secondary corridors (Vancouver-Seattle, Winnipeg-Fargo, Toronto-Detroit, San Antonio-Monterrey and Tucson-Hermosillo) of three primary NAFTA trade corridors (the West Coast Corridor, the CANAMEX Corridor, and the North American Superhighway Corridor) showed that in 1999 the Toronto-Detroit Corridor (which includes both the Detroit-Windsor and Port Huron crossings) carried more freight tonnage than the other four corridors combined (Table 4).⁵⁶ The report also showed that all five corridors had significant rail flows although only in the Winnipeg-Fargo corridor did rail tonnage exceed truck tonnage. Table 4 also reveals that truck and rail commodity flows through the Winnipeg-Fargo corridor trailed far behind the traffic passing through the other two Canadian-American corridors. The goal of increasing Winnipeg and Manitoba's share in this cross-border traffic led to the CentrePort initiative which lies at the heart of the city's efforts to expand its market base.

Table 4. Summary of 1999 Cross-Border Commodity Flows (millions of kg.)

Corridor Segment	By Truck			By Rail			By Truck and Rail		
	N-bound	S-bound	Sub-Total	N-bound	S-bound	Sub-Total	N-bound	S-bound	Total
Vancouver-Seattle	3,112	3,711	6,822	840	3,557	4,398	3,952	7,268	11,220
Winnipeg-Fargo	2,098	2,358	4,456	652	4,132	4,784	2,750	6,490	9,240
Toronto-Detroit *	22,355	21,677	44,032	5,466	12,104	17,569	27,821	33,780	61,601
San Antonio-Monterrey	7,281	10,345	17,626	2,994	5,950	8,944	10,275	16,295	26,571

Tucson-
Hermosillo 2,385 1,390 3,775 981 579 1,560 3,366 1,969 5,335

* Northbound flows are United States to Canada, Southbound flows are Canada to United States

Source: ICF Consulting, North American Trade and Transportation Corridors: Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies, Final Report, prepared for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (August 2001), 5, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.cec.org/storage/41/3313_trade_corridors_final-e1_en.pdf.

By lowering intermodal transportation costs, the containerization of western Canadian commodities has made it possible for inland ports such as CentrePoint, which began in 2008 and opened for business in late 2013, to improve the competitiveness of regional exports. When fully completed a few decades from now, CentrePort will house freight distribution activities, industrial parks, and infrastructure designed to link the inland port to the regional highway system and provide water and waste management systems. The site will also have a common use intermodal rail facility designed to take advantage of Winnipeg's location as the point of convergence of the transcontinental lines of the CNR and the CPR.⁵⁷ It is also located adjacent to Winnipeg's international airport which means that CentrePort has the means to transfer goods quickly from rail to truck, from plane to rail, and so forth. Presently, it provides foreign trade zone benefits offering tax and cost savings to its clients. CentrePort also plans to take advantage of its rail link to the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay which serves as the northern terminus and port for the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor.

The project seeks to reap the benefits of Winnipeg's central location at the junction of the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the Mid-Continent NAFTA Trade Corridor. Like other inland ports in the region, CentrePort is expected to handle the increase in Asian imports resulting from the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor initiative and to provide economies of scale to effectively handle this traffic. Indeed, in 2011 CentrePort announced an agreement with two Chinese partners, including the country's largest private shipping company, Minsheng International Freight Company, to create a new container-based rail system that will move crops

such as soybeans and canola from the Canadian prairies into the Chinese market.⁵⁸ It will also try to balance these imports with Manitoba-based exports, including agricultural products such as canola, soybeans and distillers dried grains and products manufactured primarily in Winnipeg. And yet while CentrePort is deeply involved with the federal strategy of developing the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor, it will also attempt to increase trade with other North American trade corridors. From CentrePort, products will be shipped to traditional east coast gateways, mainly Montreal, but also southwards across the border along the Mid-Continent corridor linking Winnipeg to Kansas City, Laredo and the Mexican port of Lazero Cardenas.⁵⁹ Key cities along this corridor include Winnipeg, Minneapolis, Kansas City (Missouri and Kansas), Oklahoma City, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City.

CONCLUSION

Prior to the arrival of the CPR, Fort Garry and then Winnipeg functioned as the northern terminus in the Red River corridor. In this capacity, it was largely dependent for transportation and trade on St. Paul. This dependency meant that to a significant degree, Winnipeg functioned as a borderland city, closely connected to the upper Midwest and the Red River Valley of the Dakota Territory. This would change with the arrival of the railways which transformed the small community into the major metropolis and gateway of the Canadian West and reconfigured the orientation of the city and the region from a predominantly north-south to an east-west axis even as flows of people, goods and capital continued between the upper Midwest and the northern Plains and the Canadian Prairies.⁶⁰ An extensive railway system centering on Winnipeg solidified its position and role as transportation hub within Canada even though connections also existed between the city and centres south of the border. Winnipeg continued to be a borderland city but its rapid ascent in the Canadian urban hierarchy and its important role as gateway and

hub within Canada ensured that its connections with the rest of the country would supersede those previously established with communities across the border.

A long depression following the opening of the Panama Canal, competition from more westerly Prairie cities experiencing growth fueled by resources, particularly oil and gas, and a host of other factors slowed growth and weakened Winnipeg's relative position within the Canadian urban hierarchy. But towards the end of the 20th century, in the midst of the most recent phase of globalization supported by neo-liberalism and free trade, Winnipeg found itself once again in a position in which it could take advantage of its geographical location to establish economic connections with places and regions beyond the border. With their support of the CentrePort project, the city and the province have demonstrated a commitment to a continental as well as an international vision of development, as is evidenced in this statement made by Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger in the February 10, 2009 issue of *The Canadian Business Journal*: "Now it [Winnipeg] is the gateway into North America and a reverse gateway into Europe and Asia."⁶¹

It is too early to tell if CentrePort will achieve the success envisioned by Premier Selinger and others, especially in light of challenging economic times and the competition posed by other Prairie inland ports such as Port Alberta and the Global Transportation Hub in Regina. But hopes remain high. Support for the project and acceptance of the globalization argument on which it rests reveals that Winnipeg now views its "place" in North America in a way that is to a certain extent reminiscent of the past when the city recognized that connections beyond the border, whether they be with St. Paul, Minnesota or further afield in eastern Canada and Europe, were absolutely necessary if growth and prosperity were to occur. Such a perspective and the strong connections with the upper Midwest and the Red River Valley strengthened the position of

Winnipeg as a borderland city but today the city's orientation and spatial reach extends well beyond the immediate borderland. Government and business now share a view of Winnipeg as a global city using its geographically advantageous position within North America to establish economic opportunities that extend well beyond any geographically circumscribed region. While Winnipeg continues to be connected to communities immediately across the border by family ties, tourism, media and business, it now puts much more effort into establishing connections with places and regions elsewhere. The Great Plains remains in the city's line of sight but it is the more populous and rapidly growing southern section of the region upon which Winnipeg interests focus.

In effect, the borderland has expanded for Winnipeg. The opening up of vast spaces beyond the local, the regional, and the national made possible during the late twentieth century through new transportation, information and communication technologies has made it easier for places like Winnipeg to become global cities. Technology has created a *space paradox*: it has reduced distance, thus shrinking space, and expanded the scope of interaction, thus extending space. The combination of containerization and transportation and communication technologies has increased the attractiveness of Winnipeg's location not only within Canada but within the North American and global spatial frames of reference as well. As globalization and free trade have "thinned" borders, the borderland core for Winnipeg has expanded from spaces immediately on or near the border to include the larger region of the Great Plains. Yet paradoxically, the integrative forces of investment, trade, migration and communication that combined to reshape and further expand Winnipeg's functional borderland have increasingly drawn the city toward other places beyond that of the North American interior west.

NOTES

¹ W. Morton, A Century of Plain and Parkland, in: R. Francis, H. Palmer (Eds), *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, Edmonton, 1992, 28.

² The middle ground, as Richard White describes it, is a liminal hybrid space, “the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages.” In such a setting, made possible by the fur trade system, economic negotiation and cultural accommodation took place, and native agency played a major role in dictating the evolution of the space-economy even though the system was managed by and catered to the demands of distant metropolises. See: R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, Cambridge, 1991, x.

³ J. Adelman and S. Aron, From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History, *American Historical Review* 104 (1999) 815–841.

⁴ R. Swan, *The Crucible: Pembina and the Origins of the Red River Valley Métis*, Ph.D diss., University of Manitoba, 2003.

⁵ J. Bumsted, Red River Colony, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed March 11, 2011, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/red-river-colony>.

⁶ G. Ens, The Border, the Buffalo, and the Métis of Montana,” in: S. Evans (Ed), *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel*, Lincoln, 2006, 140-154.

⁷ W. Ramsey, *The Selkirk Colony on the Red River of the North and its profound influence on early development of the Twin Cities*, Minneapolis, n.d.) (pamphlet found in the North Dakota State Archives).

⁸ R. Gilman, C. Gilman, and D. Stultz, *The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870*, St Paul, 1979, 2. This quote originally appeared in J. Pritchett (Ed), A Letter by Lord Selkirk on Trade Between Red River and the United States, *Canadian Historical Review* 17 (1936) 418-423.

⁹ C. Gilman, Perceptions of the Prairie: Cultural Contrasts on the Red River Trails, *Minnesota History* 46 (1978) 113.

¹⁰ B. Kaye, The Trade in Livestock Between the Red River Settlement and the American Frontier, 1812-1870, *Prairie Forum* 6 (1981) 163.

¹¹ It should be noted that no agreement had ever been sought or given for the passage of the carts through the lands of the Dakota or the Ojibway. Eventually the native peoples took action against this infringement on their lands. "After a period of hostilities," Gilman, Gilman and Stultz state, "a treaty [was] signed in 1863 which ceded all of the valley on both sides of the river from the border south to the Wild Rice on the east and to the Sheyenne on the west, a total of 9,470,000 acres, much of it very fertile, for a total payment of \$510,000..." See: Gilman, Gilman and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 23.

¹² J. Tanner, Foreign Immigration into North Dakota, *North Dakota State Historical Society Collections* 1 (1906) 184.

¹³ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

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- ¹⁵ D. Whiteley, Letters Home: Correspondence to and from the Red River Settlement, 1812-1870, *Manitoba History* 26 (1993) 21-25.
- ¹⁶ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 14.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, 20.
- ¹⁸ A. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, 2nd ed., Toronto, 1973, 853.
- ¹⁹ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails*, 21.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, 22. Macoun was appointed by Sanford Fleming, chief engineer of the proposed railway to the Pacific, to survey possible routes through the Prairies and assess the agricultural capabilities of various western tracts.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 23-4.
- ²² *Ibid*.
- ²³ New York *Daily Tribune*, January 20, 1864. As quoted in P. Sharp, The northern Great Plains: A study in Canadian-American regionalism, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39 (1952) 68.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, 66. The quote comes from the Chicago *Daily Democratic Press*, March 17, 1856.
- ²⁵ A. Gluek, *Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest: a study in Canadian-American relations*, Toronto, 1965.
- ²⁶ U.S. Congress, Serial 1263, 39:1, House Executive Document 128, pp. 2, 31, 32. As quoted in R. Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest, 1865-1870, *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 6 (1931) 13.
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- ³¹ Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest (note 26), 17, 23.
- ³² J. Lewis, "The New Dominion, 1867-1873," in: A. Shortt, A. Doughty (Eds), *Canada and Its Provinces*, vol. 6, Toronto, 1914, 32.
- ³³ A. Artibise, Winnipeg, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/winnipeg/>.
- ³⁴ Winnipeg's History, *City of Winnipeg* website, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.winnipeg.ca/services/CityLife/HistoryOfWinnipeg/HistoricalProfile.stm>.
- ³⁵ R. Wilkins and W. Wilkins, *North Dakota: A Bicentennial History*, New York, 1977.
- ³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives: North Dakota*, accessed April 26, 2005, <https://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/northdakota.pdf>. The territory was divided into North Dakota and South Dakota in 1889.
- ³⁷ E. Robinson, *The History of North Dakota*, Lincoln, 1966.
- ³⁸ H. Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North*, Fargo, 1964.
- ³⁹ T. Weir, Manitoba, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed May 25, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba/>.
- ⁴⁰ Immigration and Settlement: 1870-1919, *Manitobia: Digital Resources on Manitoba History*, accessed May 26, 2015, <http://manitobia.ca/content/en/themes/ias>.
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⁴² CBC, Winnipeg Boomtown, *Canada: A People's History*, accessed June 5, 2015,

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⁴³ This quote comes from: A. Levine, The Panama Canal and the decline of Winnipeg, *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 22, 2014, A13.

⁴⁴ A. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg 1873 – 1913*, Volume V: The Manitoba Record Society Publications, Winnipeg, 1979, 16.

⁴⁵ Minister of the Interior, *Immigration Facts and Figures*, Ottawa, 1910.

⁴⁶ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1932*, Ottawa, 1932, 103.

⁴⁷ In 1905 the North West Territories were divided into the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

⁴⁸ A. Burghardt, A hypothesis about Gateway Cities, *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 61 (1971) 269-85.

⁴⁹ Levine, The Panama Canal (note 44).

⁵⁰ Statistics Canada, "Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census, Province of Manitoba," accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-pr-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GC=46>.

⁵¹ D. Janelle and M. Beuthe, Globalization and research issues in transportation, *Journal of Transport Geography* 5 (1997) 200.

⁵² The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) was formed in 1996 with the merger of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroads. At that time, the company acquired a short-line existing within the city of Winnipeg from which they service local customers who ship grain and produce to the US. In 1999 the Manitoba facilities became known as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (Manitoba), operating as a subsidiary of BNSF. The railway maintains

running rights along the CN tracks tracks to Emerson where it connects to the BNSF main line.

Source: Canada Rail, "Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.canada-rail.com/bc/railways/BNSF.html#.VkuEndKrTcs>.

⁵³ Economic Development Winnipeg, Winnipeg's Transportation and Distribution Industry, accessed November 17, 2015, http://www.tourismwinnipeg.com/uploads/document_file/transportation_and_distribution_sector_profile.pdf.

⁵⁴ Economic Development Winnipeg, Transportation and Location, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.economicdevelopmentwinnipeg.com/why-winnipeg/doing-business-here/competitive-advantages/transportation-and-location>. Permission to use this map was granted by Economic Development Winnipeg.

⁵⁵ The Free Library, Regional alliances build economic advantages, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Regional+alliances+build+economic+advantages.-a017321084>

⁵⁶ ICF Consulting, *North American Trade and Transportation Corridors: Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies, Final Report*, prepared for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, August 2001, 5, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.ccc.org/storage/41/3313_trade_corridors_final-e1_en.pdf. The secondary corridors or segments were defined on the basis that they are long enough to allow the capture of trade impacts beyond the immediate border area but short enough so that corridor freight activity is still dominated by NAFTA trade.

⁵⁷ J.-P. Rodrigue, *The Containerization of Commodities: Integrating Inland Ports with Gateways and Corridors in Western Canada*, Calgary, 2012, 49.

⁵⁸ Winnipeg working to regain role as transportation 'gateway to the West', *The Globe and Mail* May 22, 2011, accessed November 13, 2015,

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/winnipeg-working-to-regain-role-as-transportation-gateway-to-the-west/article4247831/>.

⁵⁹ Rodrigue, *The Containerization of Commodities* (note 59), 12, 48-9.

⁶⁰ For further discussion of such cross-border flows within the international region of the Great Plains, see: R. Widdis, Borderland Interaction in the International Region of the Great Plains: An Historic-Geographical Perspective, *Great Plains Research* 7 (1997) 103-37.

⁶¹ Gateway to the World – Premier Selinger Talks CentrePort, *The Canadian Business Journal*, February 10, 2009, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.cbj.ca/premier_selinger_talks_centreport/.

Abstract

This study explores the changing position of Winnipeg as a borderland city, focusing on its early associations with the upper Midwest and northern Plains, its emergence and decline as the major metropolis and gateway to the Canadian West, and its recent efforts to draw upon the past in order to reinvent itself as a Great Plains and North American trade and transportation hub. It concludes that the opening up of vast spaces beyond the local, the regional, and the national made possible during the late twentieth century through new transportation, information and communication technologies has made it easier for places like Winnipeg to become global cities. As globalization and free trade have “thinned” borders, the borderland core for Winnipeg has expanded from spaces immediately on or near the border to include the larger region of the Great Plains. Yet paradoxically, the integrative forces of investment, trade, migration and communication that combined to reshape and further expand Winnipeg’s functional borderland have increasingly drawn the city toward other places beyond that of the North American interior west.

Keywords: borderland; corridors; gateway; hub; Canadian West; Great Plains

Running Headline: Back to the Future

INTRODUCTION

Winnipeg is a paradox. Most Canadians consider it to be relatively isolated, separated from the urban conurbation of southern Ontario and southern Quebec by the vast expanse of the Canadian Shield and located far from the faster growing centres of the central and western Prairies. And yet at the same time, its' location at almost the geographical centre of the North American continent has historically made Winnipeg an important transportation focal point with connections that have integrated the city with places and regions beyond its southern Manitoba boundaries. Winnipeg is also both a borderland city, with historically important links to American centres to the south, and a regional gateway and hub, with strong connections to the rest of Canada. Its' location at the intersection of north-south and east-west axes of development and at the liminal peripheries of both the Great Plains/Prairies and Great Lakes borderland regions makes it a fascinating place for borderland study. This paper explores the history of Winnipeg as a transportation and trading centre and focuses on its early associations with the upper Midwest and northern Plains, its emergence and decline as the major metropolis and gateway to the Canadian West, and its recent efforts to draw upon the past in order to reinvent itself as a Great Plains and North American trade and transportation hub.

WINNIPEG'S EMERGENCE AS A BORDERLAND CITY

At the end of the eighteenth century, the international region that we know today as the Great Plains of North America (Fig. 1) was a vast expanse that was virtually empty of Europeans and non-native North Americans, the exception being a relatively small number of fur traders. At this point in time, the major struggle over space for whites in this part of the continent was that taking place between the Hudson's Bay (HBC) and North West (NWC) fur trading companies. The Canadian historian W.L. Morton describes the Canadian prairies during this time as: "... a virgin

tabula rasa (my italics), a blank sheet with no writing, an unmarked parchment, unscraped, unspoiled, unprepared.”¹ Using his criteria, much the same could be said if one were to describe the northern section of the American Great Plains during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. Yet such a view overlooks the presence of indigenous groups and the dynamic nature of native-white relations taking place over time. Native peoples armed with guns, spears and bows and arrows followed on horseback or on foot great herds of bison, deer, antelope, and waterfowl. Whites and natives engaged in various kinds of relations centering on the fur trade which superimposed itself upon and was incorporated into traditional native trading networks.

Despite an increasing presence of whites, indigenous people were the main ‘actors’ in the unfolding events that shaped the contours of the international region for much of the first half of the nineteenth century. Different kinds of ‘middle grounds’ reflecting variable historical and geographical circumstances existed throughout what might be described as a gigantic trade zone.² The Great Plains at this time might also be viewed as representative of what Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron describe as a frontier, that is, a geographic and cultural intersection where the borders that did exist were rather undefined and where relationships between peoples were characterized by intercultural accommodations.³ Only later, when the international border was established in 1818, the white presence increased, and imperial rivalries became more pronounced, did borderlands emerge. Winnipeg was given birth and shaped by the intersection of such forces.

Permanent settlement in what would become southern Manitoba began in 1811 when the HBC granted the Earl of Selkirk 300,000 square kilometres of land (116,000 acres), an area encompassing the whole basin of the Red River drainage system, known as Assiniboia, for a colonization project called the Red River Colony (Fig. 2). The colony reached a population of 600 in 1821, consisting of people displaced from the Scottish Highlands by the enclosure acts,

French Canadians who came to the area in 1818, and German-speaking Swiss mercenaries awarded land for their services to the British crown. Another group were the Métis. Descended from voyageurs from Québec and the Great Lakes who worked for Montréal-based fur trade companies and married Native women, mostly Cree and Ojibwe, the Métis settled at Pembina and the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers before the arrival of European immigrants in 1812.⁴ Agricultural activities in the colony were conducted largely by the Scots who grew oats, barley and later, wheat on long lots similar to those that existed in Québec. Settlement was oriented to the rivers (Red and Assiniboine) and the survey, conducted by the HBC, was deemed as suiting the needs of the colony at that time.⁵ The Métis were semi-nomadic, traveling as far as necessary in their roles as provisioners for the fur trade and later as hunters in the buffalo robe trade.⁶ Over the course of much of the nineteenth century, the Métis showed that they were at home throughout the Plains-Prairies borderland. They were trans-border citizens who took advantage of opportunities presented on both sides of the line, a situation which meant that they could challenge territorial claims when it was to their advantage to do so.

The major trading post in Assiniboia was Fort Garry, located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers in what is now downtown Winnipeg. The post was created in 1822 by the HBC and quickly became the nucleus of the colony. Red River colonists, as well as employees and traders, were expected to sell their furs and purchase all their supplies through the HBC but as early as 1821 there was considerable trade going on across the border. Many furs found their way to the American Fur Trading Company posts just across the border at Pembina and other points where a better price could be secured and whiskey could be purchased.⁷ Right from the beginning, the problem of provisioning the colony was evident to Lord Selkirk and the HBC. It was expensive to bring in goods from far-off Europe and freeze-up in Hudson Bay limited the

transportation season. As well, the challenging environment of the Canadian Shield made the transportation of provisions a very costly venture. On December 22, 1817, Selkirk addressed a letter to U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams pleading that American restrictions be lifted on the passage of trade through the more than 500 miles of territory in what was called the Great Northwest. Selkirk foresaw a day “when well-established land routes joining the Mississippi and Red Rivers would create a commercial, economic and political avenue linking Canada and the U.S. and doing much to build the communities of St. Paul [Minnesota] and Winnipeg.”⁸ That request was granted and a two-way corridor of trade quickly developed.

“Geography favored trade links to the south,” Carolyn Gilmour argues, but it was not the only factor. Family ties connected a number of the Red River settlers to the group of independent British and Canadian traders who had flourished at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, since the 1780s. Moreover, resentment of the Hudson's Bay Company's monopolistic control over the settlement's trade after 1821 sparked a spirit of competition among old fur trade families for whom the tradition of independent commerce went back for generations.⁹

Shortly after Selkirk's request was granted, the HBC began buying oxen, sheep and cattle in the St. Paul market. The Red River colony was supplied livestock from south of the border until 1833. After that date, the colonists in turn delivered livestock to farms and urban centers in Minnesota.¹⁰

It wasn't long after the Red River trade was initiated that “free traders” made their presence felt. Driving two-wheeled ox-carts laden with furs and robes over what was collectively

known as the “Red River trails”,¹¹ Métis and colonists supplied a growing American market, challenging the monopoly of the HBC. They would return to the Red River colony with their carts loaded with food, tobacco, manufactured goods, ammunition, seed, dry goods, and many other imports purchased in the United States. The flow of furs and robes southward slowed somewhat after 1836 when the Selkirk grant was re-conveyed by his heirs to the HBC.

Immediately, the Company imposed a stiff tariff on all imported goods, in effect thickening the border at least in terms of trade. However, the inability on the part of the HBC to police such trade combined with the growth of settlement to the southeast along the Mississippi River, especially at St. Paul, and the subsequent escalating demand for furs, served to increase the ox-cart trade within a very short time. A Canadian-born trader, Norman Kittson, who worked for the Pierre Choteau Company out of St. Louis, played a major role in facilitating the cross-border fur trade during this period. Under his direction, a number of posts were built at strategic locations along the trails, including one at Pembina, located just south of the boundary, from which furs were traded and then shipped by carts, driven by Métis, to Mendota or St. Paul where they were loaded on to steamboats and transported to St. Louis and ultimately New Orleans or New York. Kittson recruited Canadian-born Métis to work for him. The census of 1850 shows that there were 1,123 people in Pembina district and 64.5% of these were born in Canada.¹²

In 1845 the free traders could get a price for their furs at Pembina nearly 25% more than they could procure from the HBC at Fort Garry.¹³ In response to this loss of business, the governor of the HBC, George Simpson, successfully lobbied the British government to send 350 troops to the colony on the pretence that the Americans were planning to invade. With these troops, the HBC was able to police and almost terminate the trade, although some smuggling still continued. Yet Kittson’s decline in profits from furs was partly balanced by the presence of the

militia who increased the demand for imported groceries and manufactured goods brought in by Kittson.¹⁴ As a result, the Red River trade corridor continued to grow in importance. Growth would continue even after the troops left as the trade expanded to include the carrying of mails. A more reliable courier service was organized in 1853 and two years later a monthly service was established between Red River and Pembina. Attempts to develop a Canadian route through northern Ontario proved unsuccessful and so the colony depended entirely on the U.S. post office at Pembina. Outgoing mail had to be paid in U.S. stamps sold in Fort Garry. In 1870 an agreement was signed with the U.S. post office for transmission of closed mails between Fort Garry and Windsor by way of Pembina, St. Paul and Chicago.¹⁵

St. Paul prospered from this trade and was made capital of the new Minnesota Territory in 1849. Located at the head of navigation on the Mississippi River, it also benefited from being the major gateway for the Canadian northwest. “By 1856,” Gilman, Gilman and Stultz state:

St. Paul accounted for nearly half the value of all goods imported to the Red River. Year by year the brigades lengthened until trains of 200 or 300 carts, mostly driven for hire by their Métis builders, were not uncommon. In 1857 a total of some 500 arrived in St Paul. The estimated value of furs and skins shipped through the city that year was \$183,000, of which about four-fifths came from the Red River region. Other items of freight often brought from the Red River country were pemmican, dried buffalo meat, moccasins, and skin garments fashioned by skilled Indian hands and worked with beads or porcupine quills. On their return north the brigades hauled a varied supply of general merchandise –staple groceries,

tobacco, liquor, dry goods, clothing of all kinds, tools, hardware,
guns, ammunition, farm implements, and even window glass.¹⁶

The advantage of the Red River trade corridor over the northern route to Hudson Bay was further increased after packet service on the Mississippi began in 1852 and when the first railroad reached the Mississippi at Rock Island in 1854, followed by other lines to Galena, Prairie du Chien, and La Crosse. By compressing time and space, these developments in transportation reduced the cost of shipment of furs and goods.¹⁷

Unable to compete with the cheaper American route, George Simpson negotiated an agreement in 1857 that allowed HBC goods from Britain, sealed and bonded, to be transported through the U.S. to the Red River duty-free, a development which meant a virtual abandonment of the Hudson Bay route and the decline of York Factory as the principal port of entry into Rupert's Land.¹⁸ By this time, the British government was starting to seriously consider the idea that Rupert's Land might be annexed to Canada. This news in turn further stimulated interest in developing the north-south connection along the Red River among St. Paul capitalists. In 1859 a steamboat service on the Red River began with the launching of the *Anson Northrup*. That same year, the Minnesota Stage Company commenced stagecoach and freight service to the upper Red River where it connected with the steamboat.¹⁹ This improvement in transportation inaugurated, in the words of John Macoun, "a new era for the trade of the Red River colony."²⁰

At this point, Simpson made a bold move by silently partnering with James and Henry Burbank, the owners of the Minnesota Stage Company, to purchase the *Anson Northrup*, which the Burbanks renamed the *Pioneer*. The boat then sailed between the Red River settlement and the HBC's new post opposite the mouth of the Sheyenne River in Dakota Territory, at first called Sheyenne but later renamed Georgetown in honour of Simpson. The following year, Simpson

contracted with the Minnesota Stage Company to handle the company's overland freight, even though they continued to use carts.²¹ Yet the Burbanks and Simpson would eventually part ways as the former wanted immigration and trade while the latter wished only to continue a monopoly in trade in the northwest, and acted to block any efforts for further expansion. After the Burbank contract ran out and was not renewed in 1863, Norman Kittson bought out the brothers' half interest in the steamer the *International* to become the American associate of the HBC in the steamboat business. By this time, the cart traffic was on its last legs as the railroad approached Dakota Territory with increasing speed.²²

It was during this time that St. Paul and Chicago capitalists competed for control of the northern plains and in this contest, the border did not seem to matter too much. Politicians and businessmen in both centres wanted to extend their empires into Canada and viewed the monopoly of the HBC as a barrier to realizing their dreams. Some, including the following editorialist in the January 20, 1864 edition of the New York *Daily Tribune*, believed that rail transportation was the key to tapping the resources of the northwest and ensuring American control of the borderland region: "The great northern thoroughfare across the American continent must be upon our own soil. Nothing else can so assure our political and commercial dominance, and hasten the assimilating process through which British America will ultimately drop into our hand like a ripe pear."²³ While St. Paul capitalists were most directly concerned with commercial intercourse with the Red River settlement, Chicago interests also dreamed of a northwest empire with their city serving as the primary gateway. "With this in mind," Paul Sharp tells us, "the Chicago *Daily Democratic Press* bitterly attacked the Hudson's Bay Company as 'that great monopoly which now holds the Northwest in its grasp' and noisily urged that it be 'driven out of existence' so that the 'whole country [could] be thrown open to settlement."²⁴

While Red River citizens valued the strong economic connection with Minnesota, many still preferred the historical link with Britain and some even believed that a Canadian route through northern Ontario would prove more successful to the colony than the southern one through Minnesota. This feeling ran contrary to the strong support shown for Manifest Destiny in Minnesota, especially among those who sought to exploit the robust commercial ties linking Minnesota with the Red River settlement as a means of acquiring northwestern Canada for the United States. It was only natural, supporters argued, that Minnesota's economic dominance over Red River should lead to political annexation.²⁵ Certain individuals including former governor Senator Alexander Ramsey and treasury agent and future U.S. consulate at Winnipeg, James "Saskatchewan" Taylor, lobbied hard for such action. In 1866 Taylor, an agent of the U.S. Treasury, presented the draft "of an act for the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan, and Columbia".²⁶ The key to the whole venture, Taylor believed, was building railway links between east and west through British territory. His proposals were introduced as a bill the next month by General N.P. Banks, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, but it was not considered in Congress.²⁷ Taylor also envisioned the day in which a railroad would link St. Paul to what was then called the "Saskatchewan country".²⁸

Despite their displeasure with the HBC, there was little support among Red River citizens for annexation. In January 1863, a memorial presented by citizens of Red River to the British government expressed grave concern over the danger of Americanization: "We feel bound to observe that American influence is rapidly gaining ground here; and if action is long delayed, very unpleasant complications may arise. Thus both politically and commercially, the opening up of this country and the making through it a national highway, would immensely subserve

Imperial interests.”²⁹ Minnesota’s economic collapse of 1857, the Civil War, and the disruption caused by the troubles with the Sioux also stood in the way of those who favoured political absorption.³⁰ Yet Taylor continued to push hard on the issue, suggesting to Washington that the Canadian government would be willing to transfer the northwest in return for a reciprocity treaty and expressing the belief that the Métis would lead an annexation movement within the colony.³¹ He was wrong on both counts. In Ontario, meanwhile, political pressure was mounting for the Canadian government to secure the Northwest for Canadians. Ontarians, who comprised a significant portion of the business and farming community in Red River, also pushed for entry into Confederation.

At Confederation, there were approximately 12,000 people in the Red River Colony, roughly 10,000 of who were Métis.³² Two years later, the Government of Canada purchased Rupert’s Land from the HBC for \$1,500,000, the date of transfer being set for December 1, 1869. At that point in time, the settlement that would eventually become Winnipeg was just a small cluster of buildings situated at a location along the fur-runners’ trail at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.³³ On November 8, 1873, this settlement was incorporated as a city with a population of 1,869 people and named Winnipeg after the Cree word for “muddy water” assigned to the lake 70 kilometres to the north.³⁴ The purchase of Rupert’s Land by the new Dominion of Canada dampened the appetite for Manifest Destiny among Minnesota capitalists who more and more focused their sights on capturing the rapidly expanding agricultural hinterland of the Dakota Territory and eastern Montana. Control over such a vast hinterland by Minnesota entrepreneurs was made possible by a railway system that connected resource based communities with Minneapolis and St. Paul and by the basic geographical fact that there was no

other city in the northern Plains of sufficient size, power and constituent capitalists to offer any kind of competition.

During the 1870s, the Canadian prairies were still isolated from points east and west and continued to function primarily as a declining fur trade frontier awaiting settlement while the northern U.S. plains were on the verge of a large-scale migration of railways and settlers which would effectively terminate its frontier state within the borderland region. Demographic processes pushing people westward combined with the rapid growth of the railroad network and the manifest proclivities of the government to advance settlement to the eastern margins of the Great Plains. In 1870 the Dakotas and, to a much lesser extent, Montana, were about to become less peripheral and more connected to the expanding American empire. River corridors, oriented primarily north-south, were superseded by railroad corridors that ran primarily east-west. While railroads facilitated settlement in the northern Plains, another development, the process created by Minneapolis millers which enabled a high-quality flour to be made from spring wheat, also encouraged agricultural development. A combination of factors including the coming of the railroads, the advent of spring wheat, free homestead land, soil exhaustion back east, an increase in foreign migration and high wheat prices triggered the first Dakota Boom of 1879.³⁵ While the population of the North Dakota portion of the territory was only 2,405 in 1870, by 1890 it had increased to 190,983.³⁶ Over 100,000 people entered the territory between 1879 and 1886³⁷; the majority were homesteaders, but some settlers with money organized large, highly mechanized, well capitalized bonanza farms that would last only a short time before they would fall victim to drought, low grain prices, and plagues of grasshoppers.³⁸

While the northern Plains were rapidly filling up with settlers, the situation north of the 49th parallel was very much different. Although western Canada's first Homestead Act was

passed in 1872, the region failed to attract the hundreds of thousands of Europeans and North Americans moving westward. Between 1870 and 1896, while much of the adjacent American plains were filling up, the Canadian prairies remained largely empty of white settlement. Winnipeg and Manitoba, however, proved to be an exception to this trend as thousands of Ontarians and a smaller number of Europeans during the 1870s were drawn to the province by the prospect of wheat farming. Even though immigration slowed considerably in the 1880s and throughout most of the 1890s,³⁹ Manitoba's population stood at almost 150,000 in 1891 even though the closing of southwestern Manitoba to homestead entry in July 1882 redirected later migrants to the Dakotas.⁴⁰ Manitoba also lost settlers who abandoned their land in response to their anger with government land policy and the high import duties they were forced to pay.

Between 1871 and 1881, the population of Winnipeg increased slowly from 1,000 to 9,000 inhabitants (Fig. 3).⁴¹ The St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway (later the Great Northern Railway) reached Winnipeg in 1878, connecting the city with St. Paul and Chicago and ensuring its status as the principal gateway to the Canadian West. However, growth was impeded by the slow settlement of the west, a struggling Canadian economy deterred by a global recession, and a "thickening" of the border following the enactment of tariff legislation in the United States. Despite the new rail connection to St. Paul, traditional links with Minnesota declined while the anticipated development that was promised by the entry into Confederation was slow to be realized. The Conservative government under Sir John A. Macdonald viewed the development of the west as key to the survival and growth of the country. Two major components of Macdonald's National Policy, railways and immigration, were seen as integral to the realization of this dream. Financial scandals and the immense physical barrier presented by the Canadian Shield slowed construction of a transcontinental line but eventually such obstacles

were overcome. The fortunes of Winnipeg changed significantly when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) decided in 1881 to construct its main line through the city, a choice which guaranteed that Winnipeg would become the hub of commercial activity for the region and the gateway to the Canadian West. With this decision, the axis of development that stimulated Winnipeg's growth shifted direction.

WINNIPEG'S EMERGENCE AS GATEWAY AND RAILWAY HUB

The effect of the CPR's decision was immediately felt. Within months, 3,000 real estate offices sprang up in Winnipeg. The population quickly doubled and the town earned the name "Chicago of the North".⁴² Its position as gateway and railroad hub was further reinforced when the Canadian Northern (CNoR), Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP) and Midland railways laid tracks through the city. Winnipeg's potential for growth was recognized by William Curtis, a correspondent for the *Chicago Record-Herald* who visited the city in September 1911 and stated:

All roads lead to Winnipeg. It is the focal point of the three transcontinental railway lines of Canada, and nobody, neither manufacturer, capitalist, fanner, mechanic, lawyer, doctor, merchant, priest, nor labourer, can pass from one part of Canada to another without going through Winnipeg. *It is a gateway through which all the commerce of the East and the West, and the North and the South must flow* (my italics). No city, in America at least, has such absolute and complete command over the wholesale trade of so vast an area. It is destined to become one of the greatest distributing commercial centers of the continent as well as a manufacturing community of great importance.⁴³

Discriminatory freight rates awarded by railways and greater accessibility to eastern markets favoured Winnipeg in the wholesale trade. Slow delivery of goods from the east gave impetus to manufacturing (e.g. flour mills, packing plants, construction firms, etc.). Because of its central role in the grain trade, Winnipeg was able to develop as the major financial centre of the region. As Alan Artibise states,

The Grain and Produce Exchange in 1887 and numerous bank branches, brokerage houses, transportation and insurance agencies were all created specifically for the grain transactions. Revenue from grain trading was managed through the city, thus encouraging the growth of numerous wholesaling and service functions for the expanding prairie region, financing real estate activities in Winnipeg and the West, and generally providing an important source of capital for western Canadian development. This growth extended well beyond these direct relationships with the grain trade. Real estate, insurance, and banking all developed important linkages over an extensive western hinterland.⁴⁴

The city almost tripled in population from 7,995 in 1881 to more than 27,000 a decade later.

With the end of a long global recession and the filling up of agricultural lands south of the border, immigration to Canada increased dramatically after 1896, much of it directed towards western Canada (Table 1). In Saskatchewan alone, the preferred destination at the turn of the century, the population increased 1,124.7 percent between 1891 and 1911.⁴⁵ While most immigrants intent on farming settled in Saskatchewan and Alberta, large numbers were attracted to Winnipeg and its rapidly expanding local economy. The city grew by 219.8 percent between 1901 (N=42,450) and 1911 (N=136,035) and reached a total of more than 179,097 in 1921 (Fig. 4).⁴⁶ A flood of immigrants, high wheat prices, plentiful capital, and improved farming techniques contributed to making Winnipeg the wholesale, administrative, and financial centre of western Canada.

Table 1. Decennial Population Growth, Prairie Provinces, 1901-1991

Year	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta
1901	255,211	91,279	73,022
1911	461,394	492,432	374,295
1921	610,118	757,510	588,454

Source: Statistics Canada, The Canada Year Book, 1916-17, accessed August 10, 2010, accessed November 19, 2015, http://www65.statcan.gc.ca/acyb02/1917/acyb02_191700838-eng.htm.

Within the northern Plains/Canadian Prairies borderland, Winnipeg clearly occupied a position at the top of the transnational urban hierarchy. Urban development reached a greater

level of intensity on the Canadian side of the 49th parallel. Winnipeg emerged as the regional metropolis with the rest of Manitoba and the North West Territories, and then for some time, Saskatchewan and Alberta, as its hinterland.⁴⁷ Parallel urban development in Alberta was eventually ensured to some degree by the great distance separating this part of the prairies from Winnipeg but the latter would continue to have considerable hold over Saskatchewan well after the province was established in 1905. Geographically, Winnipeg was ideally situated as to assume the role as the gateway city for the Canadian West. Indeed, Winnipeggers viewed the prairies as their hinterland just as central Canadians did.⁴⁸

No urban centre in the northern Plains would experience the same level of development that Winnipeg did during the turn of the twentieth century period. Even though a dependency relationship developed between the prairies and central Canada, whereby prairie centers were dependent to a significant degree on the fortunes of eastern metropolises to which they were subordinate, a regional urban system based on the railway evolved, but no comparable system would develop in the northern Great Plains. There, urban centers functioned primarily as commercial outposts for Minneapolis-St. Paul and other large cities such as Denver and St. Louis encircling the region. As a result, Prairie cities played, and continue to play, a much more important role in the regional economy and identity than their northern Plains counterparts did and do. In addition, while other Canadian borderlands served to some extent as hinterlands for cities in corresponding American borderlands, the same was not the case in the Great Plains-Prairies region. While Winnipeg developed as a vital node, hub and gateway within the developing Canadian urban system, Fargo, Grand Forks, Billings, Great Falls and other northern Plains cities would remain as lower order centres within the developing American urban hierarchy.

WINNIPEG'S CHANGE IN FORTUNE

However, the halcyon days would soon end. Among many causes for this relative decline was the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 which reduced the city's domination over the western Canadian grain economy. The construction of the canal reduced the distance between Vancouver and European ports by more than 8,000 kilometres. This, in turn, brought western Saskatchewan and Alberta into the hinterland of the B.C. city as it was cheaper to ship grain to Europe via rail to the coast than via rail through Winnipeg to Port Arthur, where it would then be loaded on to Great Lakes steamers bound for Montréal and Buffalo and then reshipped to Europe.⁴⁹ Also important was the increasing competition posed by other Prairie cities after the termination of freight rates favourable to Winnipeg. Following World War I, economic stagnation due to low wheat prices and the Depression that lasted well into the 1940s resulted in slow growth. The end of large-scale immigration to the west also led to this decline.

To a considerable degree, the city's fortunes throughout the twentieth century paralleled those of the railway industry. As the railways declined in relative importance because of increasing competition from other modes of transportation, so did Winnipeg descend in rank among Canadian cities. The city slipped from third largest in Canada in 1911, to fourth in 1941, to fifth in 1971, and seventh by 1991. Between 1971 and 1996, the population on average grew by just 0.6 per cent per year, well under the Canadian average for cities. In comparison to the other major cities, both within the region (Table 2) and elsewhere in the country, Winnipeg was clearly falling behind in terms of growth. One could argue that not only was Winnipeg stuck in the middle of the country, isolated from other big cities, it was also stuck between its celebrated past and its somewhat worrisome future.

Table 2. Population^a of Major Prairie Centres, 1901-1991, Selected Years

City	1901	1921	1931	1951 ^b	1971 ^c	1991 ^d
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Winnipeg	42,340	179,087	218,785	357,000	540,000	652,000
Calgary	4,392	53,305	83,761	142,000	403,000	754,000
Edmonton	4,176	58,821	79,197	194,000	496,000	840,000
Regina	2,249	34,432	53,209	73,000	141,000	192,000
Saskatoon	113	25,739	43,291	56,000	126,000	210,000

^a – includes census metropolitan areas (CMAs) for 1951, 1971 and 1991

^b – rounded to nearest 000s

^c – rounded to nearest 000s

^d – rounded to nearest 000s

Source: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book 1932* (Ottawa: P.A. Acland, 1932), 103-104; “Canada: 20 Top Census Metropolitan Areas: Population from 1931,” *Demographia* website, accessed June 6, 2015, <http://www.demographia.com/db-cancma.htm>.

However, while Winnipeg grew more slowly than many other high ranking Canadian cities during the second half of the twentieth century, it arguably had a more diversified economy than other prairie centres and thus was better able to weather slowdowns in traditional export markets. By the end of the century, growth in the aerospace, transportation and information technology sectors supplemented the traditional agri-business, furniture and apparel, manufacturing, and finance and insurance businesses. With its more diversified economic base, Winnipeg, with a 2011 metropolitan population of 730,018, a figure constituting more than 60 percent of the Manitoba’s total population of 1,208,268,⁵⁰ doesn’t suffer as much from recession and declining export markets as do other Prairie cities. And yet at the same time, Winnipeg and Manitoba do not experience the same kind of booming growth that the other western cities and provinces experience during periods when the export-based Canadian economy is doing well. This situation has resulted in a concerted effort among the provincial government, the city, and private interests to recapture Winnipeg’s glory days by re-establishing its historical role as the gateway to the west and major transportation hub within North America.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: TAPPING WINNIPEG’S POTENTIAL AS A TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION HUB

The desire among various parties to pursue this strategy must be viewed in relation to the current phase of globalization, the neo-liberal ideology upon which it is based, and the concomitant belief that in order for a community to be successful in such a world order, it is necessary to implement policies and pursue development plans that take advantage of the increasing geographical scale of economic, political and social interactions. The erasure of trade restrictions and the open flow of financial capital across borders, facilitated by technologies of communication and transportation that have simultaneously compressed space and time and extended space, have together served to create a template for development to which governments, businesses, communities and individuals have ascribed. As globalization and the late and post stages of modernity produced unprecedented flows and mobilities that transcended borders of all kinds, the nature of the relationship between the United States and Canada changed. By the end of the twentieth century, marked in particular by the enactment of free trade, many began to emphasize the permeability, fluidity and flexibility of the Canadian-American border and to question its' ontological status. All of these developments prompted individuals, businesses, communities and governments to seek strategies that would best benefit organizational efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and greater wealth.

In this context, there is widespread belief that “multinational corporations and networks of global cities are replacing nation states as the primary players in the new economy ...”⁵¹ While Winnipeg at the turn of the twenty-first century could hardly be classified as a major global city, it shared with larger centres the desire to extend economic linkages beyond national borders in order to take advantage of global restructuring. Such an extension, it was believed, could be best achieved by taking advantage of Winnipeg’s central location within North America and developing its historical role as a trade and transportation gateway and hub.

In actual fact, the city never lost its importance as a major transportation centre, even in the face of limited growth. Both truck and rail traffic crossing at Pembina, North Dakota, 115 kilometres directly south of the city, increased dramatically between 1996 and 2014 (Table 3). By the end of the twentieth century, this particular crossing was the fifth busiest along the Canada-U.S. Border, and the second busiest west of the Great Lakes. By 2008, trucking, which had replaced rail as the most important mode of transportation of goods, hauled 95% of all land freight and 80% of the province's US merchandise trade. Over 300,000 commercial trucks crossed the US-Manitoba border that year, the vast majority at the Emerson-Pembina port. At the same time, Winnipeg was, and continues to be, the only major city between Vancouver and Thunder Bay with direct US rail connections via the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe.⁵² It also continues to benefit from its location along the CP and Canadian National (CN) mainlines.⁵³

Table 3. Border Crossing Statistics for Emerson, North Dakota, 1996-2014

Year	# of trucks	loaded truck containers	empty truck containers	# of trains	loaded rail containers	empty rail containers
1996	140,627	51,688	7,430	NA	NA	NA
1997	152,110	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1998	177,916	83,489	11,907	NA	2,483	1,081
1999	200,456	170,504	16,710	NA	967	234
2000	214,377	199,947	11,768	NA	1,415	220
2001	219,733	211,020	8,372	NA	NA	NA
2002	203,416	196,366	7,135	NA	325	81
2003	201,761	191,029	9,953	86	1,139	418
2004	208,035	207,765	10,993	87	161	71
2005	198,843	205,007	17,148	NA	1,155	280
2006	200,541	177,353	29,298	666	32,485	9,371
2007	228,455	200,107	29,912	1,411	74,130	24,791
2008	224,152	185,754	39,172	1,267	76,945	29,145
2009	189,393	156,888	33,809	1,003	54,320	23,068
2010	202,438	159,231	46,404	1,242	74,209	31,015
2011	208,509	151,603	61,445	1,372	82,871	37,433
2012	214,047	155,730	59,740	1,649	103,129	39,846
2013	219,338	164,428	56,432	1,304	99,566	25,098
2014	229,078	182,589	49,972	1,282	103,019	28,530

Source: United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border

Crossing/Entry Data for Pembina, North Dakota, accessed November 17, 2015, http://transborder.bts.gov/tbdr/bc_gtableprt.jsp.

Nevertheless, despite Winnipeg's continuing importance as a transportation centre, private interests and governments, municipal and provincial, aspired to augment the city's position as a major transportation and trade hub and gateway within North America. In particular, attention was focused on developing Winnipeg as a key inland port serving as a gateway to the north and access to Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean via the port of Churchill; as a gateway to the west and access to China and the Pacific Rim via the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert; as a gateway to eastern Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Asia via the ports of Thunder Bay, Montreal and Halifax; and as a gateway to the south and access to the United States and Mexico via the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor (Fig. 5)⁵⁴ and the ports of Houston, New Orleans, Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas. By doing so, it was argued, Winnipeg could enhance its transportation portal/gateway function for three key trade flows: the burgeoning Asian-North American trade, the growing north-south North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade; and the traditional Canadian east-west freight flows.

With this rationale in mind and influenced by the preceding development of a lattice of cross-border trade corridors (e.g. West Coast Corridor, CANAMEX Corridor, North American Superhighway Corridor), Canadian gateways (the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor, the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway, and the Atlantic Gateway and Trade Corridor), and inland terminals throughout North America, the most notable being the Kansas City SmartPort, a partnership was formed to re-establish Winnipeg as a major transportation hub. The first step in this process was the participation of the city and the province in the aforementioned North American Superhighway Corridor, which runs from Winnipeg, through Fargo, Kansas City,

Dallas and Laredo, then enters Mexico and runs through Monterrey to Mexico City. It is also called the Mid-Continent Corridor or the I-35 Corridor, while its northern portion, including west central and northwestern Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and southern Manitoba is termed the Red River Trade Corridor (RRTC). The RRTC, which began in 1990, was created to foster trade and travel within the region and encourage people to network around economic development issues.⁵⁵

A 2001 report on the environmental impacts of trade on five binational secondary corridors (Vancouver-Seattle, Winnipeg-Fargo, Toronto-Detroit, San Antonio-Monterrey and Tucson-Hermosillo) of three primary NAFTA trade corridors (the West Coast Corridor, the CANAMEX Corridor, and the North American Superhighway Corridor) showed that in 1999 the Toronto-Detroit Corridor (which includes both the Detroit-Windsor and Port Huron crossings) carried more freight tonnage than the other four corridors combined (Table 4).⁵⁶ The report also showed that all five corridors had significant rail flows although only in the Winnipeg-Fargo corridor did rail tonnage exceed truck tonnage. Table 4 also reveals that truck and rail commodity flows through the Winnipeg-Fargo corridor trailed far behind the traffic passing through the other two Canadian-American corridors. The goal of increasing Winnipeg and Manitoba's share in this cross-border traffic led to the CentrePort initiative which lies at the heart of the city's efforts to expand its market base.

Table 4. Summary of 1999 Cross-Border Commodity Flows (millions of kg.)

Corridor Segment	By Truck			By Rail			By Truck and Rail		
	N-bound	S-bound	Sub-Total	N-bound	S-bound	Sub-Total	N-bound	S-bound	Total
Vancouver-Seattle	3,112	3,711	6,822	840	3,557	4,398	3,952	7,268	11,220
Winnipeg-Fargo	2,098	2,358	4,456	652	4,132	4,784	2,750	6,490	9,240
Toronto-Detroit *	22,355	21,677	44,032	5,466	12,104	17,569	27,821	33,780	61,601
San Antonio-Monterrey	7,281	10,345	17,626	2,994	5,950	8,944	10,275	16,295	26,571
Tucson-Hermosillo	2,385	1,390	3,775	981	579	1,560	3,366	1,969	5,335

* Northbound flows are United States to Canada, Southbound flows are Canada to United States

Source: ICF Consulting, North American Trade and Transportation Corridors: Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies, Final Report, prepared for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation

(August 2001), 5, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.cec.org/storage/41/3313_trade_corridors_final-e1_en.pdf.

By lowering intermodal transportation costs, the containerization of western Canadian commodities has made it possible for inland ports such as CentrePoint, which began in 2008 and opened for business in late 2013, to improve the competitiveness of regional exports. When fully completed a few decades from now, CentrePort will house freight distribution activities, industrial parks, and infrastructure designed to link the inland port to the regional highway system and provide water and waste management systems. The site will also have a common use intermodal rail facility designed to take advantage of Winnipeg's location as the point of convergence of the transcontinental lines of the CNR and the CPR.⁵⁷ It is also located adjacent to Winnipeg's international airport which means that CentrePort has the means to transfer goods quickly from rail to truck, from plane to rail, and so forth. Presently, it provides foreign trade zone benefits offering tax and cost savings to its clients. CentrePort also plans to take advantage of its rail link to the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay which serves as the northern terminus and port for the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor.

The project seeks to reap the benefits of Winnipeg's central location at the junction of the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the Mid-Continent NAFTA Trade Corridor. Like other inland ports in the region, CentrePort is expected to handle the increase in Asian imports resulting from the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor initiative and to provide economies of scale to effectively handle this traffic. Indeed, in 2011 CentrePort announced an agreement with two Chinese partners, including the country's largest private shipping company, Minsheng International Freight Company, to create a new container-based rail system that will move crops such as soybeans and canola from the Canadian prairies into the Chinese market.⁵⁸ It will also try to balance these imports with Manitoba-based exports, including agricultural products such as

canola, soybeans and distillers dried grains and products manufactured primarily in Winnipeg. And yet while CentrePort is deeply involved with the federal strategy of developing the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor, it will also attempt to increase trade with other North American trade corridors. From CentrePort, products will be shipped to traditional east coast gateways, mainly Montreal, but also southwards across the border along the Mid-Continent corridor linking Winnipeg to Kansas City, Laredo and the Mexican port of Lazero Cardenas.⁵⁹ Key cities along this corridor include Winnipeg, Minneapolis, Kansas City (Missouri and Kansas), Oklahoma City, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City.

CONCLUSION

Prior to the arrival of the CPR, Fort Garry and then Winnipeg functioned as the northern terminus in the Red River corridor. In this capacity, it was largely dependent for transportation and trade on St. Paul. This dependency meant that to a significant degree, Winnipeg functioned as a borderland city, closely connected to the upper Midwest and the Red River Valley of the Dakota Territory. This would change with the arrival of the railways which transformed the small community into the major metropolis and gateway of the Canadian West and reconfigured the orientation of the city and the region from a predominantly north-south to an east-west axis even as flows of people, goods and capital continued between the upper Midwest and the northern Plains and the Canadian Prairies.⁶⁰ An extensive railway system centering on Winnipeg solidified its position and role as transportation hub within Canada even though connections also existed between the city and centres south of the border. Winnipeg continued to be a borderland city but its rapid ascent in the Canadian urban hierarchy and its important role as gateway and hub within Canada ensured that its connections with the rest of the country would supersede those previously established with communities across the border.

A long depression following the opening of the Panama Canal, competition from more westerly Prairie cities experiencing growth fueled by resources, particularly oil and gas, and a host of other factors slowed growth and weakened Winnipeg's relative position within the Canadian urban hierarchy. But towards the end of the 20th century, in the midst of the most recent phase of globalization supported by neo-liberalism and free trade, Winnipeg found itself once again in a position in which it could take advantage of its geographical location to establish economic connections with places and regions beyond the border. With their support of the CentrePort project, the city and the province have demonstrated a commitment to a continental as well as an international vision of development, as is evidenced in this statement made by Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger in the February 10, 2009 issue of *The Canadian Business Journal*: "Now it [Winnipeg] is the gateway into North America and a reverse gateway into Europe and Asia."⁶¹

It is too early to tell if CentrePort will achieve the success envisioned by Premier Selinger and others, especially in light of challenging economic times and the competition posed by other Prairie inland ports such as Port Alberta and the Global Transportation Hub in Regina. But hopes remain high. Support for the project and acceptance of the globalization argument on which it rests reveals that Winnipeg now views its "place" in North America in a way that is to a certain extent reminiscent of the past when the city recognized that connections beyond the border, whether they be with St. Paul, Minnesota or further afield in eastern Canada and Europe, were absolutely necessary if growth and prosperity were to occur. Such a perspective and the strong connections with the upper Midwest and the Red River Valley strengthened the position of Winnipeg as a borderland city but today the city's orientation and spatial reach extends well beyond the immediate borderland. Government and business now share a view of Winnipeg as a

global city using its geographically advantageous position within North America to establish economic opportunities that extend well beyond any geographically circumscribed region. While Winnipeg continues to be connected to communities immediately across the border by family ties, tourism, media and business, it now puts much more effort into establishing connections with places and regions elsewhere. The Great Plains remains in the city's line of sight but it is the more populous and rapidly growing southern section of the region upon which Winnipeg interests focus.

In effect, the borderland has expanded for Winnipeg. The opening up of vast spaces beyond the local, the regional, and the national made possible during the late twentieth century through new transportation, information and communication technologies has made it easier for places like Winnipeg to become global cities. Technology has created a *space paradox*: it has reduced distance, thus shrinking space, and expanded the scope of interaction, thus extending space. The combination of containerization and transportation and communication technologies has increased the attractiveness of Winnipeg's location not only within Canada but within the North American and global spatial frames of reference as well. As globalization and free trade have "thinned" borders, the borderland core for Winnipeg has expanded from spaces immediately on or near the border to include the larger region of the Great Plains. Yet paradoxically, the integrative forces of investment, trade, migration and communication that combined to reshape and further expand Winnipeg's functional borderland have increasingly drawn the city toward other places beyond that of the North American interior west.

NOTES

¹ W. Morton, A Century of Plain and Parkland, in: R. Francis, H. Palmer (Eds), *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, Edmonton, 1992, 28.

² The middle ground, as Richard White describes it, is a liminal hybrid space, “the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages.” In such a setting, made possible by the fur trade system, economic negotiation and cultural accommodation took place, and native agency played a major role in dictating the evolution of the space-economy even though the system was managed by and catered to the demands of distant metropolises. See: R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, Cambridge, 1991, x.

³ J. Adelman and S. Aron, From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History, *American Historical Review* 104 (1999) 815–841.

⁴ R. Swan, *The Crucible: Pembina and the Origins of the Red River Valley Métis*, Ph.D diss., University of Manitoba, 2003.

⁵ J. Bumsted, Red River Colony, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed March 11, 2011, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/red-river-colony>.

⁶ G. Ens, The Border, the Buffalo, and the Métis of Montana,” in: S. Evans (Ed), *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel*, Lincoln, 2006, 140-154.

⁷ W. Ramsey, *The Selkirk Colony on the Red River of the North and its profound influence on early development of the Twin Cities*, Minneapolis, n.d.) (pamphlet found in the North Dakota State Archives).

⁸ R. Gilman, C. Gilman, and D. Stultz, *The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870*, St Paul, 1979, 2. This quote originally appeared in J. Pritchett (Ed), A Letter by Lord Selkirk on Trade Between Red River and the United States, *Canadian Historical Review* 17 (1936) 418-423.

⁹ C. Gilman, Perceptions of the Prairie: Cultural Contrasts on the Red River Trails, *Minnesota History* 46 (1978) 113.

¹⁰ B. Kaye, The Trade in Livestock Between the Red River Settlement and the American Frontier, 1812-1870, *Prairie Forum* 6 (1981) 163.

¹¹ It should be noted that no agreement had ever been sought or given for the passage of the carts through the lands of the Dakota or the Ojibway. Eventually the native peoples took action against this infringement on their lands. "After a period of hostilities," Gilman, Gilman and Stultz state, "a treaty [was] signed in 1863 which ceded all of the valley on both sides of the river from the border south to the Wild Rice on the east and to the Sheyenne on the west, a total of 9,470,000 acres, much of it very fertile, for a total payment of \$510,000..." See: Gilman, Gilman and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 23.

¹² J. Tanner, Foreign Immigration into North Dakota, *North Dakota State Historical Society Collections* 1 (1906) 184.

¹³ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

¹⁵ D. Whiteley, Letters Home: Correspondence to and from the Red River Settlement, 1812-1870, *Manitoba History* 26 (1993) 21-25.

¹⁶ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (note 8), 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

- ¹⁸ A. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, 2nd ed., Toronto, 1973, 853.
- ¹⁹ Gilman, Gilman, and Stultz, *The Red River Trails*, 21.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 22. Macoun was appointed by Sanford Fleming, chief engineer of the proposed railway to the Pacific, to survey possible routes through the Prairies and assess the agricultural capabilities of various western tracts.
- ²¹ Ibid, 23-4.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ New York *Daily Tribune*, January 20, 1864. As quoted in P. Sharp, The northern Great Plains: A study in Canadian-American regionalism, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39 (1952) 68.
- ²⁴ Ibid, 66. The quote comes from the Chicago *Daily Democratic Press*, March 17, 1856.
- ²⁵ A. Gluek, *Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest: a study in Canadian-American relations*, Toronto, 1965.
- ²⁶ U.S. Congress, Serial 1263, 39:1, House Executive Document 128, pp. 2, 31, 32. As quoted in R. Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest, 1865-1870, *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 6 (1931) 13.
- ²⁷ Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest (note 26), 14.
- ²⁸ Sharp, The northern Great Plains (note 23), 67.
- ²⁹ Public Archives of Canada, Sessional Papers of the Province of Canada, 7 Parl. 2 Sess., 1863, VI, No. 83: 7. As quoted in Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest (note 26), 11.
- ³⁰ F. Pannekoek, The Historiography of the Red River settlement, 1830-1868, in: G. Marchildon (Ed), *The Early Northwest, History of the Prairie West Series, Vol. 1*, Regina, 2008, 241.
- ³¹ Sanborn, The United States and the British Northwest (note 26), 17, 23.

³² J. Lewis, "The New Dominion, 1867-1873," in: A. Shortt, A. Doughty (Eds), *Canada and Its Provinces*, vol. 6, Toronto, 1914, 32.

³³ A. Artibise, Winnipeg, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/winnipeg/>.

³⁴ Winnipeg's History, *City of Winnipeg* website, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.winnipeg.ca/services/CityLife/HistoryOfWinnipeg/HistoricalProfile.stm>.

³⁵ R. Wilkins and W. Wilkins, *North Dakota: A Bicentennial History*, New York, 1977.

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives: North Dakota*, accessed April 26, 2005, <https://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/northdakota.pdf>. The territory was divided into North Dakota and South Dakota in 1889.

³⁷ E. Robinson, *The History of North Dakota*, Lincoln, 1966.

³⁸ H. Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North*, Fargo, 1964.

³⁹ T. Weir, Manitoba, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, accessed May 25, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba/>.

⁴⁰ Immigration and Settlement: 1870-1919, *Manitobia: Digital Resources on Manitoba History*, accessed May 26, 2015, <http://manitobia.ca/content/en/themes/ias>.

⁴¹ Library and Archives Canada, Manitoba, accessed November 12, 2015, <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3040-e.html>.

⁴² CBC, Winnipeg Boomtown, *Canada: A People's History*, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP10CH3PA5LE.html>.

⁴³ This quote comes from: A. Levine, *The Panama Canal and the decline of Winnipeg*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 22, 2014, A13.

⁴⁴ A. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg 1873 – 1913*, Volume V: The Manitoba Record Society Publications, Winnipeg, 1979, 16.

⁴⁵ Minister of the Interior, *Immigration Facts and Figures*, Ottawa, 1910.

⁴⁶ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1932*, Ottawa, 1932, 103.

⁴⁷ In 1905 the North West Territories were divided into the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

⁴⁸ A. Burghardt, A hypothesis about Gateway Cities, *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 61 (1971) 269-85.

⁴⁹ Levine, *The Panama Canal* (note 44).

⁵⁰ Statistics Canada, “Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census, Province of Manitoba,” accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-pr-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GC=46>.

⁵¹ D. Janelle and M. Beuthe, Globalization and research issues in transportation, *Journal of Transport Geography* 5 (1997) 200.

⁵² The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) was formed in 1996 with the merger of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroads. At that time, the company acquired a short-line existing within the city of Winnipeg from which they service local customers who ship grain and produce to the US. In 1999 the Manitoba facilities became known as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (Manitoba), operating as a subsidiary of BNSF. The railway maintains running rights along the CN tracks tracks to Emerson where it connects to the BNSF main line.

Source: Canada Rail, "Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.canada-rail.com/bc/railways/BNSF.html#.VkuEndKrTcs>.

⁵³ Economic Development Winnipeg, Winnipeg's Transportation and Distribution Industry, accessed November 17, 2015, http://www.tourismwinnipeg.com/uploads/document_file/transportation_and_distribution_sector_profile.pdf.

⁵⁴ Economic Development Winnipeg, Transportation and Location, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.economicdevelopmentwinnipeg.com/why-winnipeg/doing-business-here/competitive-advantages/transportation-and-location>. Permission to use this map was granted by Economic Development Winnipeg.

⁵⁵ The Free Library, Regional alliances build economic advantages, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Regional+alliances+build+economic+advantages.-a017321084>

⁵⁶ ICF Consulting, *North American Trade and Transportation Corridors: Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies, Final Report*, prepared for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, August 2001, 5, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.cec.org/storage/41/3313_trade_corridors_final-e1_en.pdf. The secondary corridors or segments were defined on the basis that they are long enough to allow the capture of trade impacts beyond the immediate border area but short enough so that corridor freight activity is still dominated by NAFTA trade.

⁵⁷ J.-P. Rodrigue, *The Containerization of Commodities: Integrating Inland Ports with Gateways and Corridors in Western Canada*, Calgary, 2012, 49.

⁵⁸ Winnipeg working to regain role as transportation 'gateway to the West', *The Globe and Mail* May 22, 2011, accessed November 13, 2015,

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/winnipeg-working-to-regain-role-as-transportation-gateway-to-the-west/article4247831/>.

⁵⁹ Rodrigue, *The Containerization of Commodities* (note 59), 12, 48-9.

⁶⁰ For further discussion of such cross-border flows within the international region of the Great Plains, see: R. Widdis, Borderland Interaction in the International Region of the Great Plains: An Historic-Geographical Perspective, *Great Plains Research* 7 (1997) 103-37.

⁶¹ Gateway to the World – Premier Selinger Talks CentrePort, *The Canadian Business Journal*, February 10, 2009, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.cbj.ca/premier_selinger_talks_centreport/.



Back to the Future: Winnipeg's Reinvention from Regional Trade and Transportation Gateway to Borderland Trade and Transportation Hub

**Randy William Widdis
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Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Introduction

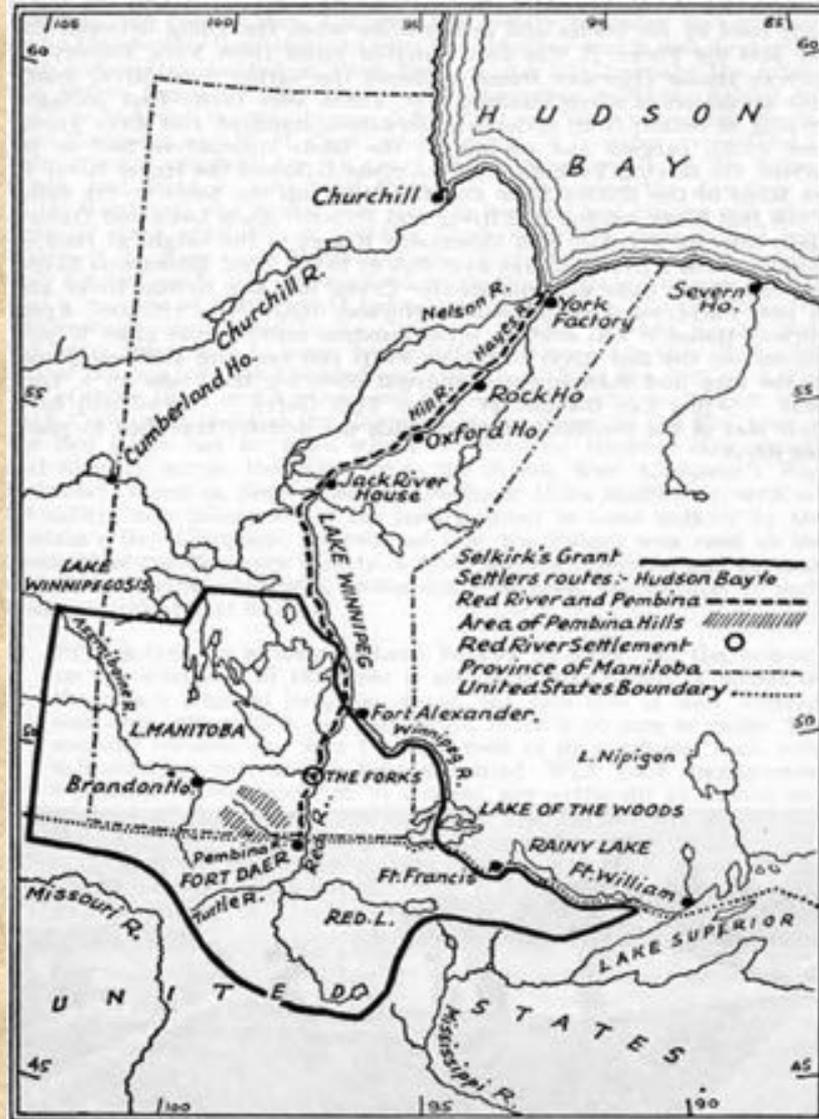
- **Winnipeg is both a borderland city and a regional gateway and hub**
- **at the intersection of north-south and east-west axes of development and at the liminal peripheries of both the Great Plains/Prairies and Great Lakes borderland regions**
- **paper explores the history of Winnipeg as a transportation and trading centre and focuses on its early associations with the upper Midwest and northern Plains, its emergence and decline as the major metropolis and gateway to the Canadian West, and its recent efforts to draw upon the past in order to reinvent itself as a Great Plains and North American trade and transportation hub**



Winnipeg's Location in North America

Emergence as a Borderland City

- Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony



Emergence as a Borderland City

- **Fort Garry – major fur trade post for Assiniboia, HBC monopoly**
- **cross-border trade at Pembina**
- **difficulties in provisioning the colony**
- **negotiations with the Americans to lift restrictions on trade and the resultant development of the Red River corridor**
 - **cart trade**
 - **carrying of mails**
- **St. Paul as major gateway to the Canadian west**
- **cheaper American routes forced the HBC to negotiate an agreement with the Americans that allowed HBC goods from Britain, sealed and bonded, to be transported through the US to the Red River duty-free, a development which meant a virtual abandonment of the Hudson Bay route and the decline of York Factory as the principal port of entry into Rupert's Land**

Metis Cart Brigade Trails



Emergence as a Borderland City

- **St. Paul and Chicago competition**
- **Minnesota Manifest destiny and Red River loyalty**
- **pressure to enter Confederation**
- **purchase of Rupert's Land by the Dominion of Canada in 1869**
- **incorporation of Winnipeg as a city in 1873**
- **declining interests of St. Paul capitalists**
- **slow settlement of the Canadian West, the exception being Manitoba and Winnipeg**
- **population of Winnipeg**
 - **1871 – c. 1,000**
 - **1881 – c. 9,000**



Main Street, Winnipeg, 1880

Emergence as a Borderland City

- **St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway (later the Great Northern Railway) reached Winnipeg in 1878, connecting the city with St. Paul and Chicago and ensuring its status as the principal gateway to the Canadian West**
- **growth was impeded by the slow settlement of the west, a struggling Canadian economy deterred by a global recession, and a “thickening” of the border following the enactment of tariff legislation in the United States**
- **traditional links with Minnesota declined**
- **coming of the CPR in 1881 signaled a change in fortune**
- **the axis of development that stimulated Winnipeg’s growth shifted direction**

Emergence as Gateway and Railroad Hub

- **immediate results**
 - within a few months, 3,000 real estate offices sprang up
 - “Chicago of the North”
 - position as gateway and railroad hub was further reinforced when the Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk Pacific and Midland railways laid tracks through the city
 - discriminatory freight rates awarded by railways and greater accessibility to eastern markets favoured Winnipeg in the wholesale trade
 - developed as the major financial centre of the region
 - 1891 population – more than 27,000
 - growth of Canadian West after 1896 had a huge impact on the city
 - grew by 219.8 percent between 1901 (N=42,450) and 1911 (N=136,035) and reached a total of more than 179,097 in 1921
 - flood of immigrants, high wheat prices, plentiful capital, and improved farming techniques contributed to making Winnipeg the wholesale, administrative, and financial centre of western Canada
 - regional metropolis
 - no equivalent in the adjacent northern Plains



Corner of Portage and Main, Winnipeg, ca. 1910

Change in Fortune

- **end of the halcyon days**
 - impact of Panama Canal
 - increasing competition posed by other Prairie cities after the termination of freight rates favourable to Winnipeg
 - following World War I, economic stagnation due to low wheat prices and the Depression that lasted well into the 1940s resulted in slow growth
 - end of large-scale immigration to the west
- **decline in relative position among Canadian cities**
 - third largest in Canada in 1911, to fourth in 1941, to fifth in 1971, and seventh by 1991
 - between 1971 and 1996, the population on average grew by just 0.6 per cent per year, well under the Canadian average for cities
- **however, Winnipeg had a more diversified economy than other prairie centres and thus was better able to weather slowdowns in traditional export markets than its Prairie counterparts**
- **yet at the same time, Winnipeg and Manitoba do not experience the same kind of booming growth that the other western cities and provinces experience during periods when the export-based Canadian economy is doing well**
- **has resulted in a concerted effort among the provincial government, the city, and private interests to recapture Winnipeg's glory days by re-establishing its historical role as the gateway to the west and major transportation hub within North America**

Back to the Future

- **current context of globalization, neo-liberal ideology, the erasure of trade restrictions and the open flow of financial capital across borders, facilitated by technologies of communication and transportation**
- **widespread belief that multinational corporations and networks of global cities are replacing nation states as the primary players in the new economy**
- **Winnipeg shared with larger centres the desire to extend economic linkages beyond national borders in order to take advantage of global restructuring**
- **such an extension, it was believed, could be best achieved by taking advantage of Winnipeg's central location within North America and developing its historical role as a trade and transportation gateway and hub**

Back to the Future

- **city never lost its importance as a major transportation centre**
 - **truck and rail traffic crossing at Pembina, North Dakota, 115 kilometres directly south of the city, increased dramatically between 1996 and 2014**
 - **fifth busiest along the Canada-U.S. Border, and the second busiest west of the Great Lakes**
 - **2008 - over 300,000 commercial trucks crossed the US-Manitoba border, the vast majority at the Emerson-Pembina port, directly south of the city**
 - **Winnipeg was, and continues to be, the only major city between Vancouver and Thunder Bay with direct US rail connections via the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe**
 - **continues to benefit from its location along the CP and Canadian National (CN) mainlines**

Back to the Future

- nevertheless, private interests and governments - municipal and provincial - aspired to augment the city's position as a major transportation and trade hub and gateway within North America
- attention focused on developing Winnipeg as a key inland port serving as:
 - a gateway to the north and access to Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean via the port of Churchill;
 - as a gateway to the west and access to China and the Pacific Rim via the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert;
 - as a gateway to eastern Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Asia via the ports of Thunder Bay, Montreal and Halifax;
 - and as a gateway to the south and access to the United States and Mexico via the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor . and the ports of Houston, New Orleans, Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas
- by doing so, it was argued, Winnipeg could enhance its transportation portal/gateway function for three key trade flows: the burgeoning Asian-North American trade, the growing north-south North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade; and the traditional Canadian east-west freight flows

Back to the Future

- **influenced by the preceding development of a lattice of cross-border trade corridors (e.g. West Coast Corridor, CANAMEX Corridor, North American Superhighway Corridor), Canadian gateways (the Asia–Pacific Gateway and Corridor, the Ontario–Quebec Continental Gateway, and the Atlantic Gateway and Trade Corridor), and inland terminals throughout North America, a partnership was formed to re-establish Winnipeg as a major transportation hub**
- **first step in this process was the participation of the city and the province in the North American Superhighway Corridor, also called the Mid-Continent Corridor or the I-35 Corridor, which runs from Winnipeg, through Fargo, Kansas City, Dallas and Laredo, then enters Mexico and runs through Monterrey to Mexico City**
- **goal of increasing Winnipeg and Manitoba's share in this cross-border traffic led to the CentrePort initiative which lies at the heart of the city's efforts to expand its market base**

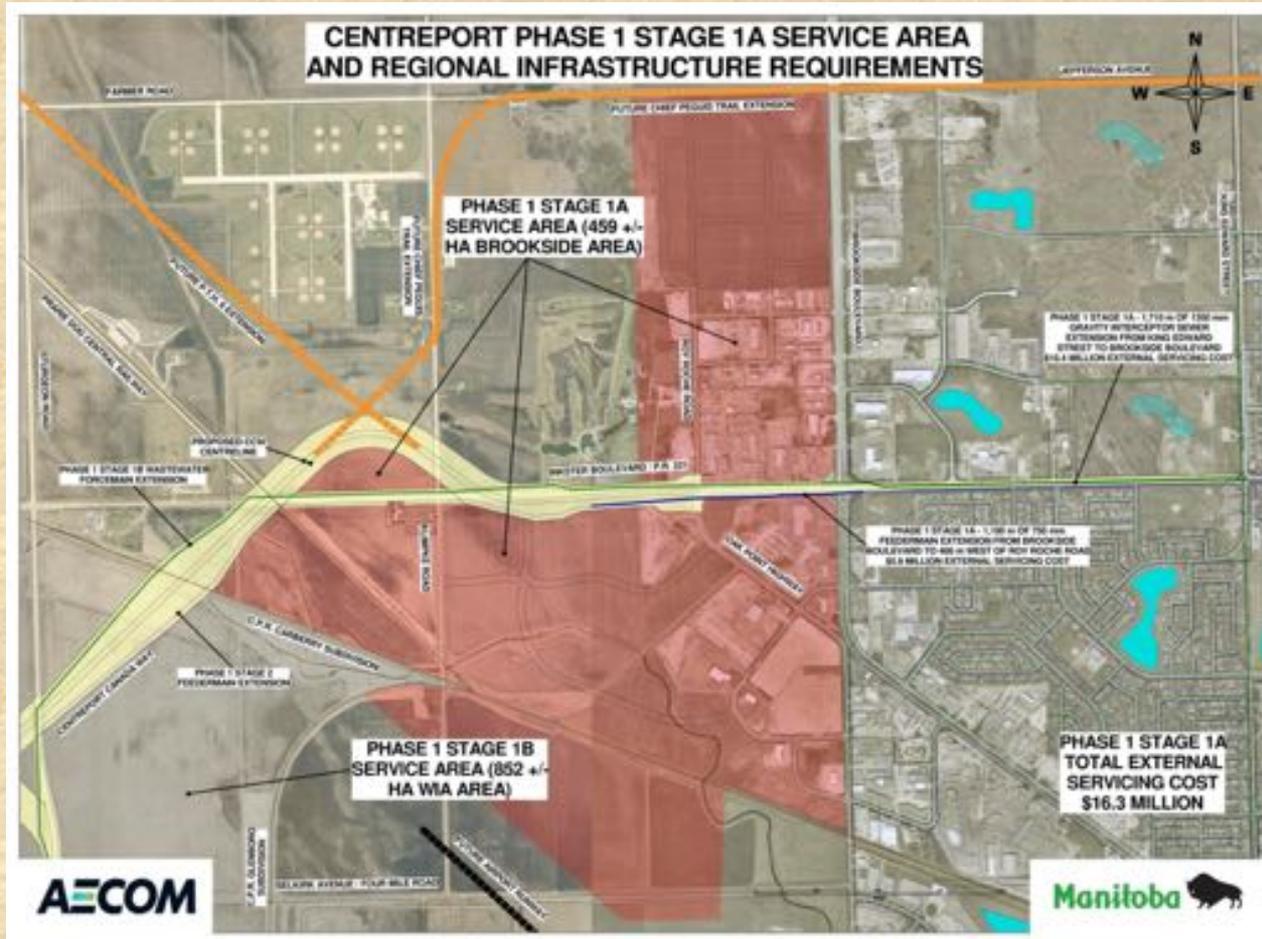


The Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor

Back to the Future

- **impact of containerization**
- **CentrePort**
 - began in 2008 and opened for business in late 2013
 - will house freight distribution activities, industrial parks, and infrastructure designed to link the inland port to the regional highway system and provide water and waste management systems
 - site will have a common use intermodal rail facility designed to take advantage of Winnipeg's location as the point of convergence of the transcontinental lines of the CNR and the CPR
 - also located adjacent to Winnipeg's international airport which means that CentrePort has the means to transfer goods quickly from rail to truck, from plane to rail, and so forth
 - provides foreign trade zone benefits offering tax and cost savings to its clients
 - also plans to take advantage of its rail link to the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay which serves as the northern terminus and port for the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor

CentrePort Phase 1



Back to the Future

- **CentrePort**

- **project seeks to reap the benefits of Winnipeg's central location at the junction of the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor and the Mid-Continent NAFTA Trade Corridor**
- **expected to handle the increase in Asian imports resulting from the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor initiative and to provide economies of scale to effectively handle this traffic**
- **will also try to balance these imports with Manitoba-based exports, including agricultural products such as canola, soybeans and distillers dried grains and products manufactured primarily in Winnipeg**
- **will also attempt to increase trade with other North American trade corridor**
 - **products will be shipped to traditional east coast gateways, mainly Montreal, but also southwards across the border along the Mid-Continent corridor**

Back to the Future

CENTREPORT CANADA
Canada's Centre for Global Trade
WINDSOR & DETROIT

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At the Hub of Key Trade Gateways



The map displays North America with a red star highlighting the Windsor/Detroit region. A network of lines radiates from this central point, representing various trade corridors. A legend in the bottom-left corner identifies these corridors: Trans Canada Corridor (orange), Quebec-Ontario Gateway (green), NAFTA Gateway (yellow), Atlantic Gateway (blue), and Arctic Gateway (purple). Major cities like Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and New York are also marked.

CentrePort Canada is connected to important global markets:

- **Asia Pacific Gateway**
 - Trans Canada Corridor
 - Northwest Corridor
- **Quebec-Ontario Gateway**
 - Trans Canada Corridor
 - Windsor/Detroit
- **NAFTA Gateway**
 - Mid-Continent Corridor
 - Eastern USA Seaboard
 - Mexico
- **Atlantic Gateway**
 - Halifax Port
- **Arctic Gateway**
 - Air Polar Routes
 - Marine Polar Routes

Conclusion

- **current assessment**
 - **challenging economic times**
 - **challenges posed by regional competitors (Port Alberta and the Global Transportation Hub in Regina)**
- **technology and Winnipeg's efforts to become a global city**
 - *space paradox*
 - **combination of containerization and transportation and communication technologies has increased the attractiveness of Winnipeg's location not only within Canada but within the North American and global spatial frames of reference as well**
- **as globalization and free trade have "thinned" borders, the borderland core for Winnipeg has expanded from spaces immediately on or near the border to include the larger region of the Great Plains**
- **paradoxically, the integrative forces of investment, trade, migration and communication that combined to reshape and further expand Winnipeg's functional borderland have increasingly drawn the city toward other places beyond that of the North American interior west**