

Manitoba Historical Theme Frameworks

It is very useful, in a heritage research project, to be able to place the subject of attention into a larger context. Research on a person will certainly profit from a comparison with other similar people, allowing for a more nuanced and realistic portrayal. Research on a building needs comparison with others of similar type to help define significance.

A very important comparative viewpoint that helps with nearly any heritage research project focuses on the actual historical connections that can be analyzed and described for greater understanding and education.

Heritage Manitoba is aware of two thematic frameworks that researchers should think about using in their individual projects. One has been developed by the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. The other has been developed by Parks Canada.

Historic Resources Branch Thematic Framework

The Historic Resources Branch uses a framework that focuses on three foundational aspects of historical development, and rounds those out with key aspects, or sub-themes:

Economic History

Subsistence Industries
Primary Industries
Secondary Industries
Tertiary Industries

Political History

Institutions of Government
Important Governmental Function, Political Issues, and Public Affairs
Important Organizations

Social and Cultural History

Domestic Life
Religious Life
Teaching and Learning
Art
Recreation and Celebration
Suffering and Healing
Advancing Knowledge
Death

Each of the sub-themes can be analyzed according to additional thematic filters:

- organization
- technology
- important or representative people

- important or representative events
- important or representative buildings, sites, artifacts

The use of a sub-theme can also profit from the focused application of two other organizing approaches, historical time frames and geographic regions:

Time Frames

Early Prehistoric

Middle Prehistoric

Late Prehistoric

1640 – 1821 (Early Fur Trade)

1821 – 1881 (Late Fur Trade and Red River Settlement)

1881- 1901 (Settlement)

1901 – 1930 (Consolidation)

1930 – 1960 (Early Modern)

1960 – Present (Modern)

Geographic Regions

Hudson Bay Lowland

Boreal Forest/Shield

Lakes and Interlake

Prairie/Parkland

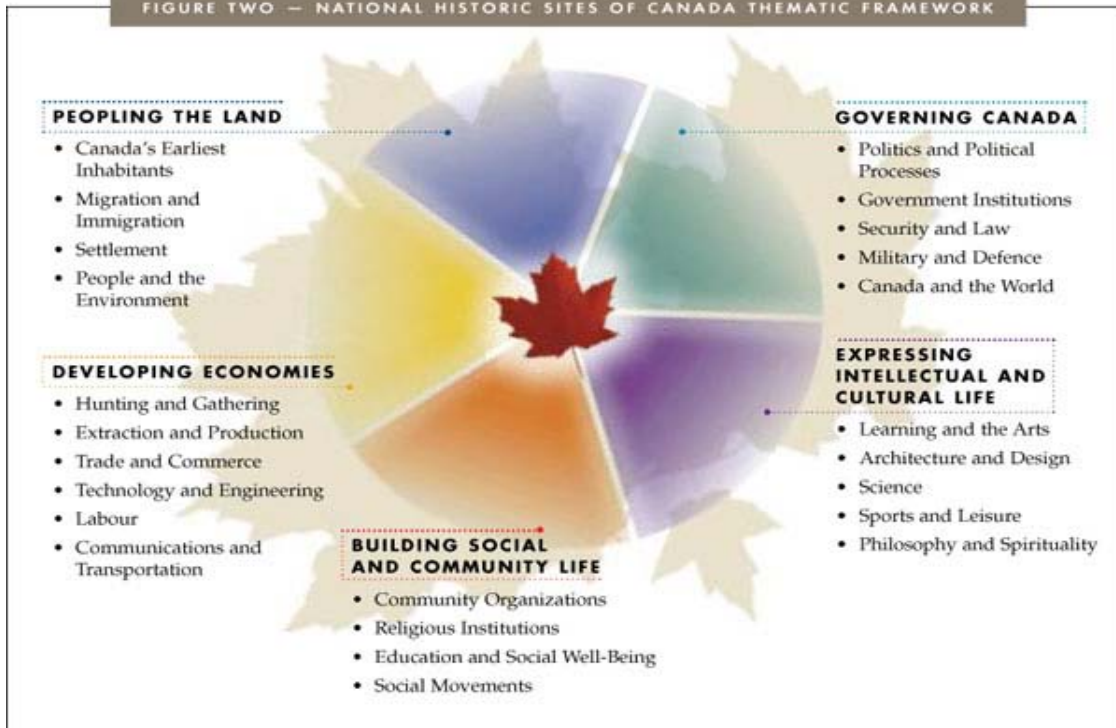
Greater Winnipeg

Parks Canada Thematic Framework

Parks Canada's thematic framework responds to evolving concerns and interests within that department, and reflects recent scholarship on the evolution of Canadian historiography.

The thematic framework organizes Canadian history into five broad, inter-related themes, each of which has a number of sub-themes. These are shown on the image below. To explore the complete content of the Parks Canada framework, visit: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/r/system-reseau/sec2.aspx>

FIGURE TWO — NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA THEMATIC FRAMEWORK



Using Thematic Frameworks

Historical thematic frameworks are very useful for certain kinds of community research projects. They are excellent tools that aid in organization, analysis and communication.

For example, for a general community historic overview, the use of a framework will ensure that major aspects of local history are not overlooked. At the same time, the more detailed aspects of a framework ensure that other important aspects of local historical development are not overlooked.

When an overview is being used to describe a community's historical development on a website, the use of a framework makes it much easier to organization and locate all the different kinds of information that will be highlighted there.

The use of a framework is helpful when a community is focused on a project dealing with collections of buildings, and where there is an effort to identify the most significant ones for ongoing attention. A framework will help group buildings and provide the kinds of additional historical sub-themes and other organizing tools that make analysis and assessment much more meaningful.

And even when a research project is focused on just one theme—education for example—a framework will help a researcher develop the kinds of questions that allow for the creation of a larger picture or a more focused and interesting story.