

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BC INTERIOR:

A Case Study of Occupations in the Okanagan, 1881-1921

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THE OKANAGAN IS PART of the present-day Thompson Okanagan Development Region of British Columbia, whose location is shown on Map 1.¹ It is the principal trading area between Vancouver and Alberta, a key economic driver of the BC Interior and one of the most prominent entrepreneurial regions of Canada.² The Okanagan economy is diverse, based upon agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, forestry, and construction. Economic growth is fuelled by information and high technology industries, film, viticulture, and wine production.³ The principal city, Kelowna, is today the largest metropolitan area in British Columbia outside of Vancouver and Victoria, the fastest-growing city in the province, and the fifth fastest in Canada.⁴

Brett McGillivray has ranked the population of the ten largest municipalities in British Columbia in 1996 and, using the census data of 1901 and 1921, shown their relative growth over the period (Table 1).⁵ Of these

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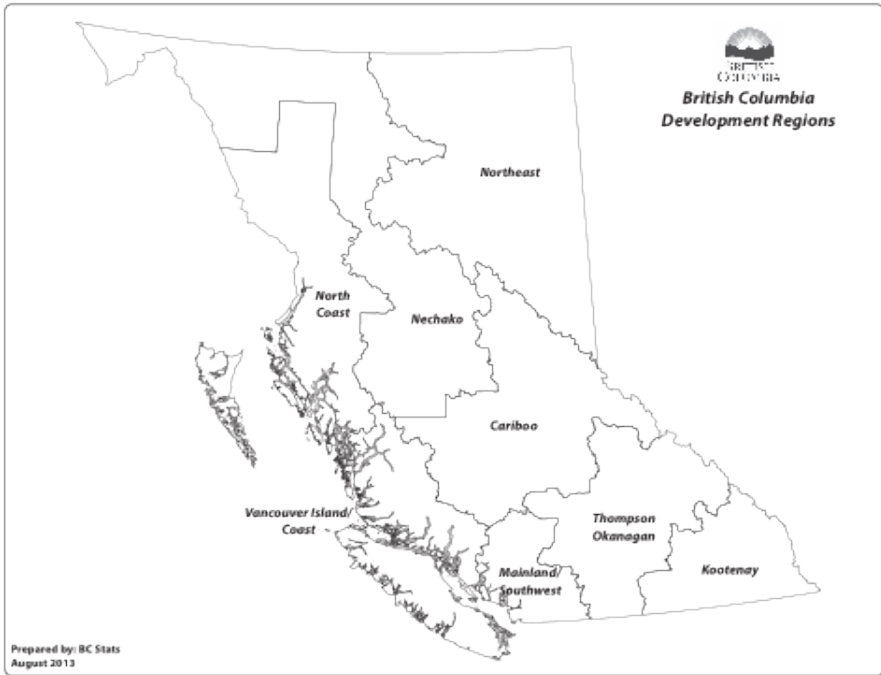
¹ <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Geography/ReferenceMaps/DRs.aspx>

² Keith Culver, Nicky Dhaliwal, Malida Mooker and Roger Sugden, "Regional Social and Economic Development in the Okanagan, Canada: Envisioning the Future to Initiate a Strategy," in *Smart Strategies for Shaping Territorial Competitiveness*, ed. Jesus M. Valdalisio and James R. Wilson, 194-217 (Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

³ 2013 Economic profile: Okanagan Valley, <http://www.investokanagan.com/sites/default/files/PDF/OVEDS-Eco-Profile-1.pdf>; Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, <http://www.investkelowna.com/>.

⁴ Statistics Canada cited by Global News, Canada, 13 February 2015, <http://globalnews.ca/news/1829530/kelowna-fastest-growing-city-in-b-c/>.

⁵ Brett McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 8-9.



Map 1. British Columbia Development Regions. *Source:* © Province of British Columbia. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of the Province of British Columbia.

municipalities, five are either in the Lower Mainland or on Vancouver Island, and three are in the Okanagan. Also included in Table 1 are several other places, notably those in the Kootenays, all of which had a larger population in 1901 than did Kelowna. In 1891, Kelowna did not exist. By 1996, its growth had outstripped all except Vancouver, Victoria, and Abbotsford. Moreover, the urban development of the Okanagan stands in stark contrast with the lack of it in the Kootenays.

Despite the economic importance of the Okanagan, however, there is very little academic literature on the history of its development.⁶ The work reported here begins to fill this void. We are engaged in a large study to better understand the growth of the region from 1881 to the present day, placed in context with elsewhere in British Columbia and Canada. We examine a range of factors – for instance, occupational structure and how it changed, urbanization, the impact of technologies, nominal and real ages, investment, and government policies. The work reported

⁶ Albeit there is a useful wider literature, for example, in *BC Studies* and in the *Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society*, <http://okanaganhistoricalsociety.org/wordpress>.

TABLE 1
Population growth for selected municipalities in British Columbia, 1901–96

MUNICIPALITY	REGION	1901	1921	1996
Vancouver (CMA)	Lower Mainland	27,010	163,220	1,891,465
Victoria (CMA)	Vancouver Island/ Central Coast	20,919	38,727	304,287
Abbotsford	Lower Mainland			105,403
Kelowna	Okanagan	261	2,520	89,442
Kamloops	South Central Interior	1,594	4,501	76,394
Prince George	North Central Interior		2,053	75,150
Nanaimo	Vancouver Island/ Central Coast	6,130	6,304	70,130
Chilliwack	Lower Mainland	277	3,161	60,186
Vernon	Okanagan	802	3,685	31,817
Penticton	Okanagan		<1,000	30,987
Nelson	Kootenay	5,273	5,230	9,585
Rossland	Kootenay	6,156	2,097	3,802
Fernie	Kootenay	1,640	2,802	4,877
Revelstoke	Kootenay	1,600	2,782	8,047
Trail	Kootenay	1,360	3,020	7,696

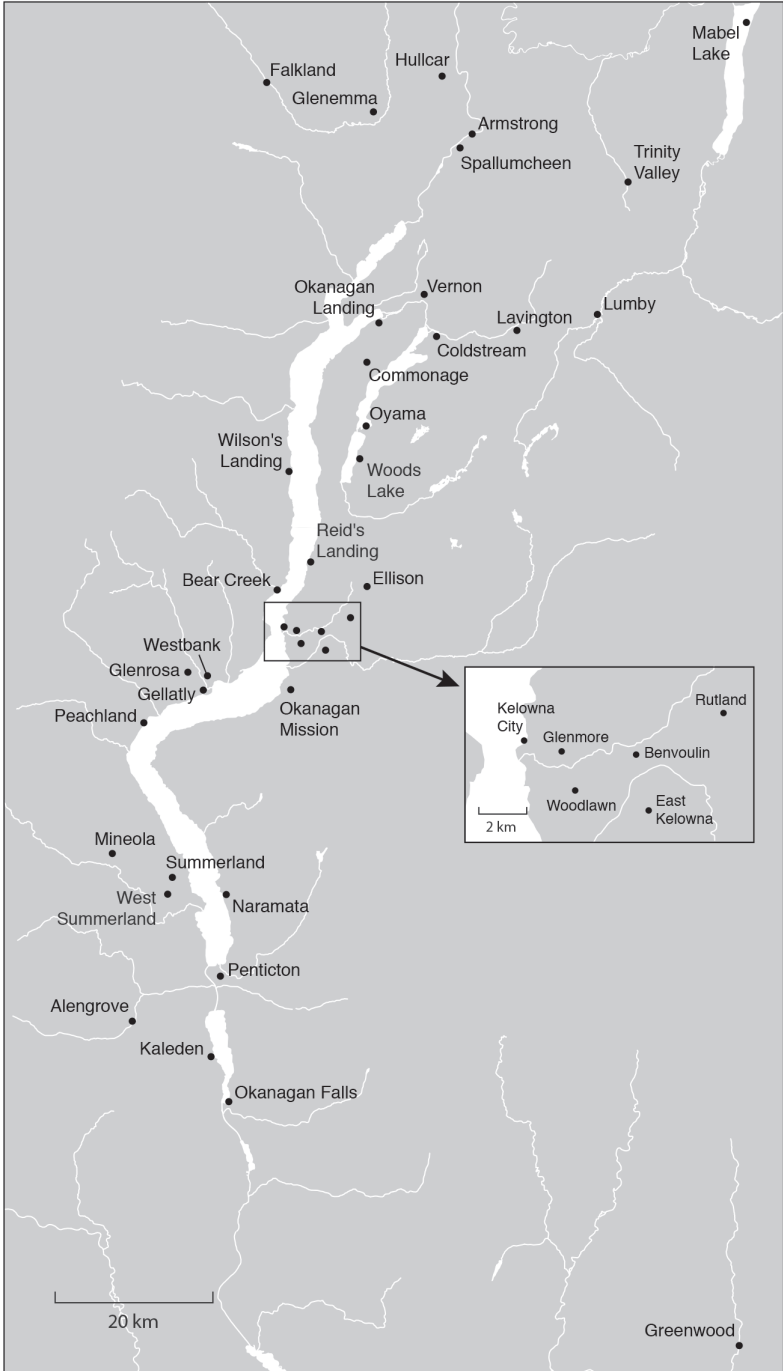
Note: Vancouver and Victoria are census metropolitan areas.

Source: Brett McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 8–9.

here aims to examine the early development of the region by tracking occupational change from 1881 to 1921.⁷ We will show that whilst the move from simple farming to fruit production was the acknowledged driver of growth, other factors were at play, notably urbanization in three key settlements: Kelowna, Vernon and Penticton, each located on the shore of Okanagan Lake (Map 2).⁸ As John Douglas Belshaw noted,

⁷ The larger study will determine structural change from 1881 to the present day, placing the Okanagan in context with other places in Interior British Columbia and in Canada. While this work is concerned with occupations – labour input – the bigger study will examine a number of topics, including land, capital, investment, wages, and output.

⁸ Kelowna, Vernon, and Penticton are currently the largest settlements in the Okanagan, with populations in 2011 of 179,839, 58,584, and 42,361, respectively. See Focus on Geography series, 2011 census, Census metropolitan area of Kelowna, British Columbia, Statistics Canada, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=915>.



Map 2. The Okanagan. Cartography by Eric Leinberger, University of British Columbia.

“Vancouver is only part of the urbanization [of the British Columbia] story.”⁹ Our evidence draws on the argument that the development of manufacturing and service sectors is essential if a primary base is to thrive. In turn, the change from an entirely rural economy to one in which a larger proportion of the workforce is employed outside the primary sector results in the rise of urban centres and the development of an urban/rural mix.¹⁰ Simon Kuznets argues that “the shift away from agriculture to non-agricultural pursuits and, recently, away from industry to services” is a major characteristic of modern economic growth.¹¹ Tony Wrigley, in his essay on the importance of London to the economy of England between 1650 and 1750, constructs a checklist of changes that had to occur to facilitate economic growth in an agricultural community.¹² His list includes the concept that an increase in the productivity of those engaged in agriculture leads to a greater number of people who can be employed elsewhere (e.g., in the manufacturing and service sectors) without unduly affecting the supply or cost of food. Urbanization is associated with improved agricultural productivity and income, and is linked to fast growth and increasing income per capita.¹³

In the preface to a recent publication by the World Bank, Michael Spence remarks that “structural change is a key driver of rapid growth, countries diversify into new industries, firms learn new things, people move to new locations.”¹⁴ Moreover, as Spence suggests, “in the early decades of development, when the majority of the population is still rural, the jump from rural to urban employment makes a big contribution to growth.”¹⁵ We show that this jump occurred in the Okanagan, where real estate agents, house building (carpentry), banking, health, access to the legal system, merchandizing, hotel keeping, and other occupations

⁹ John Douglas Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia: A Population History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 48.

¹⁰ Edward A. Wrigley, *The Path to Sustained Growth: England's Transition from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 175.

¹¹ Simon Kuznets, acceptance lecture for the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, 1971, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/1971/kuznets-lecture.html.

¹² E.A. Wrigley, “A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy, 1650-1750,” in *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic and Historical Sociology*, ed. Philip Abrams and E.A. Wrigley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978): 215-43, 237-38.

¹³ E.A. Wrigley, “Urban Growth and Agricultural Change: England and the Continent in the Early Modern Period,” in *People, Cities and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society*, 157-93 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

¹⁴ Michael Spence, “Preface,” in *Urbanization and Growth: Commission on Growth and Development*, ed. Michael Spence, Patricia Clarke Annex, and Robert M. Buckley (Washington: The World Bank, 2009), ix.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

rapidly developed to support the local economy. We show that transport infrastructure was put in place to move goods and people more efficiently. It is known that there was a rapid influx of immigrants into the Okanagan between 1881 and 1921, a steep increase in population, and the rise of a vibrant fruit industry. We show that the latter, which produced relatively high-value crops from small acreages,¹⁶ was supported, perhaps essentially, by a strong service sector and the growth of urban centres.

This article is organized as follows. First, we consider the value of studying occupational structure, then we discuss the largely under-researched quantifiable occupational sources that are utilized, focusing upon the drawbacks and limitations of each. We then offer an analysis of these sources.

WHY OCCUPATIONS

The use of occupational analyses in historical research is not new. For instance, Leigh Shaw-Taylor is heading a large program at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge, England, to track occupational change in Britain from 1379 to 1911, the aim being to throw light on several centuries of economic development at the country, urban, local, and rural levels.¹⁷ Anne Markusen considers how the targeting of occupations impacts regional economic development.¹⁸ Amartya Sen shows that economic activity in general is reflected in how people are occupied in particular.¹⁹ Jun Koo identifies occupations as the forgotten unit for analyzing regional economies and discusses how different approaches to using occupations data might inform regional strategic planning.²⁰

While we believe there is a paucity of academic literature on Okanagan occupational structure, we are aware of notable published studies of economic growth at the national level. For instance, in the 1930s Joseph Smucker drew upon the censuses from 1871 to determine patterns of change in Canadian economic development.²¹ Around thirty years

¹⁶ Hugh J.M. Johnston, ed., *The Pacific Province* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 228–31.

¹⁷ <http://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/occupations/>.

¹⁸ Ann Markusen, "Targeting Occupations in Regional and Community Economic Development," *Journal of the American Economic Planning Association* 70 (2004): 253–68.

¹⁹ Amartya Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁰ Jun Koo, "How to Analyze the Regional Economy with Occupation Data," *Economic Development Quarterly* 19 (2005): 356–72.

²¹ Joseph Smucker, *Industrialization in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1934), 61–148.

ago, Richard Wanner studied changes in occupations and industry in Canada from 1891 onwards.²² There is also previous research on Canada's economic history at the sub-national level that considers the province or city as the unit of analysis.²³ See, for instance, the work of Rennie Warburton and David Coburn on the rise of non-manual work in British Columbia.²⁴

Our interest is neither the national level nor the provincial level; rather, it is rural communities and urban settlements within a region. We take a lead from Pat Hudson's work on the British industrial revolution, in which she highlights frustration with the use of aggregated national data and strongly advocates the value of and need for regional analysis.²⁵ We echo that call for the Canadian case, notably because it is widely accepted that provincial, regional, and local differences are very marked across the country. As McGillivray says, British Columbia is a "region of regions."²⁶

WHAT DEFINES AN URBAN AREA?

Up to and including the census of 1941, any Canadian place that was incorporated was defined as urban, regardless of size. The rest of the population was deemed rural.²⁷ The census of 1951 redefined an urban

²² Richard A. Wanner, "Occupation and Industry," in *The Changing Canadian Population*, ed. Barry Edmonston and Eric Fong, 133-52 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).

²³ Patrick J. Coe and J.C. Herbert Emery, "The Disintegrating Canadian Labour Market? The Extent of the Market Then and Now," *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue canadienne d'économique* 37 (2004): 879-97; J.C. Herbert Emery and Clint Levitt, "Cost of Living, Real Wages and Real Incomes in Thirteen Canadian Cities, 1900-1950," *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue canadienne d'économique* 35 (2002): 115-37; J.C. Herbert Emery and Ronald D. Kneebone, "Socialists, Populists, Resources and the Divergent Development of Alberta and Saskatchewan," *Canadian Public Policy* 34 (2008): 419-40; Ross D. Hickey and David S. Jacks, "Nominal Rigidities and Retail Price Dispersion in Canada over the Twentieth Century," *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue canadienne d'économique* 44 (2011): 749-80; Kris Inwood, Mary MacKinnon, and Chris Minns, "Labour Market Dynamics in Canada, 1891-1911: A First Look from New Census Samples," in *The Dawn of Canada's Century: Hidden Histories*, ed. Gordon Darroch, 361-95 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

²⁴ Rennie Warburton and David Coburn, "The Rise of Non-Manual Work in British Columbia," in *Workers, Capital and the State in British Columbia*, ed. Rennie Warburton and David Coburn, 220-39 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988).

²⁵ Pat Hudson, "The Regional Perspective," in *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain*, ed. Pat Hudson, 5-38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁶ McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia*, 3-19.

²⁷ The plan for local government was initially set in Ontario by the Baldwin Act, 1849, which permitted an incorporated city, town, or village to run its own affairs through an elected council. See Mary Louise McAllister, *Governing Ourselves? The Politics of Canadian Communities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 82.

space as one that has a population of at least one thousand people, whether incorporated or not.²⁸ By 2001, the latter definition was amended to include the additional requirement of a population of at least four hundred people per square kilometre.²⁹ This study takes little note of incorporation, which essentially meant that the place could run its own affairs (see also Wirth 1938).³⁰ We utilize the definition of one thousand people but suggest that population size was not the only key parameter, and that this definition should be modified to include key occupations that were found only, or predominantly, in urban places.

THE DATA SOURCES

We use the censuses from 1881 to 1921 to show the temporal occupational change that occurred in Canada. We use the censuses of 1881, 1901, and 1921 to track change in the Okanagan over the forty-year period that followed the region's settlement by immigrants.³¹ We use the 1901 census specifically to determine occupations in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton, and to highlight the beginning of the rural-to-urban transformation that occurred over the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. Similarly, we use the 1911 census of Kelowna solely to illustrate urbanization, and we do the same with trade directories from 1902 to 1913, notably for Vernon and to a lesser extent for Kelowna.

We note that the censuses and directories are problematic. In particular, they are extremely poor when it comes to reflecting the actual occupations of First Nations peoples. For millennia, the Okanagan has been part of the Syilx First Nation territory.³² First Nations experienced colonial subjugation, and consequently government records regarding their occupations need to be treated with scepticism, at best. Testimonies recorded in the 1913 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs in British Columbia suggest the presence of agricultural activity on the reserves, which is confirmed by the work of Duane Thomson,³³ but there are

²⁸ Kenneth Buckley, "Population and Migration," in *Historical Statistics of Canada*, ed. M.C. Urquhart and K.A.H. Buckley, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 5.

²⁹ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/geo049-eng.cfm>.

³⁰ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1938): 1-24.

³¹ Images of the enumerations in each of these censuses are available online, but they are not machine-readable and have not been digitized in either Microsoft Excel or Access format. To do so for this work was not practical, but the vicennial analysis is considered sufficient to illustrate temporal trends and change.

³² www.syilx.org/who-we-are/the-syilx-people/.

³³ Thomson noted that First Nations peoples, and not settlers, first introduced horticulture into the region. See Duane Thomson, "The Response of Okanagan Indians to European Settlement," *BC Studies* 101 (1994): 98-99. At mid-nineteenth century, potato growing was

no robust temporal data to track individual employment over time.³⁴ There are few entries of First Nations peoples in the censuses. Data for the Indian reserve in the Okanagan Agency was enumerated by the local Indian agent and recorded in the 1921 census. There are 455 entries for males and 397 for females.³⁵ All entries were given an Anglo-Saxon name. For those men whose occupation is provided, all were engaged in agriculture, mostly as farmers. There is no indication of any other activity, for example, hunting, fishing, or the manufacture of tools, implements, or canoes. Nor is there any indication that the First Nations worked with the enumerator to complete the census. We do know that First Nations did not record their histories in writing and, this being the case, quantitative data in formal records must be treated with extreme care if they are to shed any light at all on First Nations histories.

Another serious issue with the censuses is the recording of the occupation of women, particularly those who were married. The book of instructions for the 1921 census required that the enumerators record the chief or principal occupation or means of living for every person aged ten years and over, but “in the case of a woman doing housework in her own home, without salary or wages, and having no other employment, the entry ... should be ‘none.’”³⁶ In other words, only gainful or wage-earning occupations were included. In their study of the United States, Nancy Folbre and Julie A. Nelson show that, in 1870, around 30 percent of working women had paid jobs.³⁷ By 1930, their number had risen to 40 percent. Even accepting that the economic development of British Columbia and the United States was at this time at different stages, the findings of Folbre and Nelson suggest that it is inconceivable that at least some housewives living in the Interior did not make a significant contribution to the household other than through homemaking. If Margaret Reid’s definition of work, which includes any activity that could, in principle, be undertaken by another person in exchange for payment, or undertaken through the purchase of goods or services, even

common among First Nations, as was stock raising; in 1877, the 177 First Nations people living in the Pentiction area, at the southern tip of the Okanagan Lake, owned 612 horses and 476 cattle (IRC Census of 1877, cited by Thomson, “Response of Okanagan Indians,” 105-6).

³⁴ Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913, <https://archive.org/details/ReportOfTheRoyalCommissionOnIndianAffairsForTheProvinceOfBritish>.

³⁵ Includes sixteen people not belonging to the agency, Sixth Census of Canada 1921, Province of British Columbia, District 25, subdistrict 54, Okanagan Agency, Indian Reserve, www.ancestry.ca.

³⁶ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. IV, *Occupations, 1881-1921* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1929), x.

³⁷ Nancy Folbre and Julie A. Nelson, “For Love or Money – or Both,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14 (2000): 125-26.

if in actuality there is no such exchange or purchase, is accepted, then there are clear deficiencies within the censuses.³⁸ For us, housewives participated in the local economy whether in paid employment or not, and the lack of detail on married women's work is a serious omission.

If the censuses provide the most comprehensive occupational dataset, the trade directories provide a useful supplement. Care also needs to be taken in interpreting these directories, however, not least because it is not known how they were compiled, how comprehensive they are, and how accurately they reflect the local businesses and population. Nor do the directories provide any indication of the size of a particular business or of the number of people employed in it. Yet they do give an indication of the number and type of businesses within a location, and for this reason we use them as an adjunct to the censuses.

THE ANALYSIS

To place our Okanagan study in a national and provincial perspective, we begin with a brief consideration of the censuses to determine the occupational structure of Canada between 1881 and 1921, and of British Columbia in 1921. The censuses show a marked decline in the relative importance of agriculture in Canada over this forty-year period (Figure 1).³⁹ The manufacturing sector remained relatively constant, but by 1921 the total service sector, defined as other services (such as trade and merchandising, the professions, civil and municipal governments, personal and domestic services, plus transport), employed slightly more people than did agriculture. This change is in line with those expected from the observations of Wrigley and Kuznets, which we discussed earlier, and is similar to that seen in the United States during the first two decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

Figure 2 compares, for 1921, the occupational structure of Canada with that of British Columbia and of its Interior, the latter defined as the province less Vancouver and Victoria.⁴¹ As may be expected, agriculture and mining are relatively more important to employment in the Interior than they are to either Vancouver or Victoria, whereas the transport sector is as important to both British Columbia and the Interior as it is

³⁸ Margaret Reid, *Economics of Household Production* (New York: John Wiley, 1934).

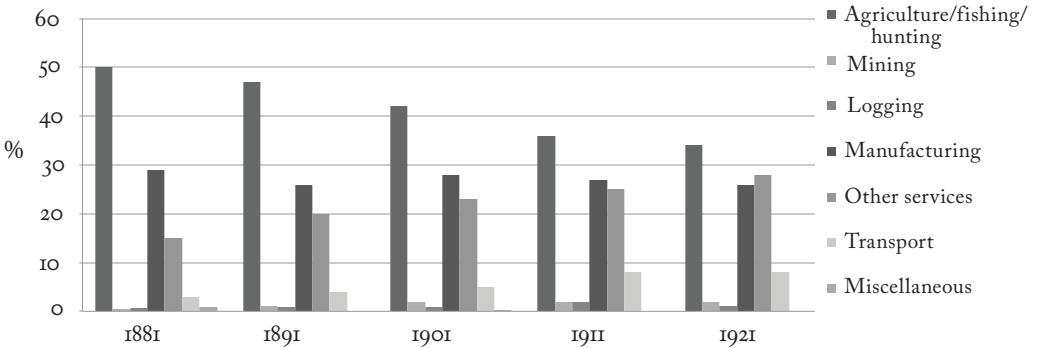
³⁹ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, "Occupations of the Population 10 Years of Age and Over, Table 4," 91-345.

⁴⁰ Soren Kjeldsen-Kragh, *The Role of Agriculture in Economic Development: The Lessons of History* (Gyilling: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2007), 75-76.

⁴¹ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, "Summary Tables," 9-35, 72-89. See also Johnston, *Pacific Province*, 236-38.

FIGURE 1

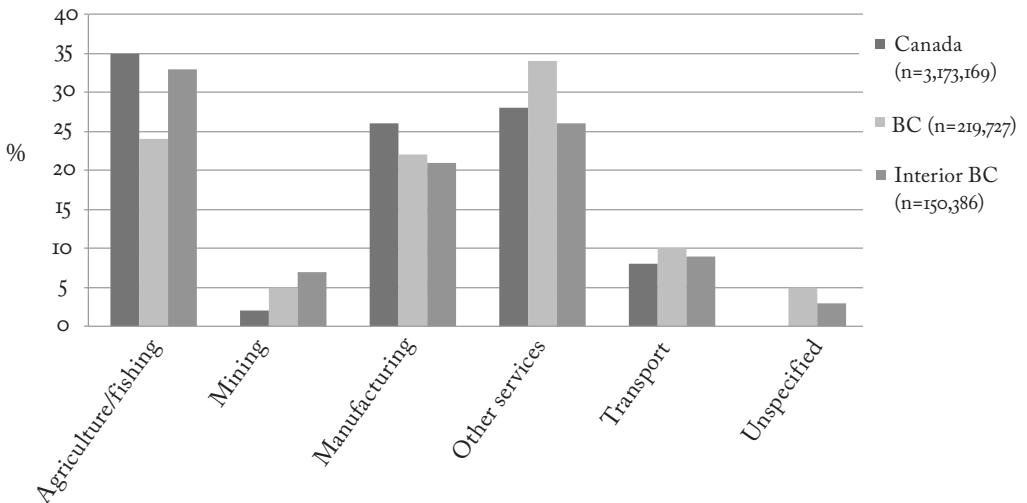
The Canadian censuses, 1881–1921, occupational sector of males and females aged ten years and over (expressed as a percentage of those with an occupation)



Note: The category “Other services” includes domestic and personal service, civil and municipal government, professions, trade and merchandising. *Source:* Sixth Census of Canada, 1921 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1929).

FIGURE 2

The occupational structure of Canada, British Columbia, and Interior British Columbia, males and females aged ten years and over, 1921 (expressed as a percentage of those with an occupation)



Note: In the census of British Columbia, logging is included in the same classification as fishing. *Source:* Sixth Census of Canada, 1921 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1929).

to Canada. Also, we note from the data that, in 1921, there were more than five times as many men in gainful employment in Canada as there were women, whereas in British Columbia the ratio was greater than seven-to-one and in the Interior it was more than ten-to-one.

Turning specifically to the Okanagan, part of the Syilx First Nation territory stretched from Washington State across the border into British Columbia, and we know from the secondary literature that non-Native fur trading was established in the early eighteenth century and that the first Europeans settled in 1859.⁴² The Okanagan Trail was a route taken by miners coming north from the United States. The gold miners' camps attracted cattlemen and immigrants into western Canada and several communities were formed.⁴³ When British Columbia entered into the Dominion in 1870, voters' lists to elect members of the provincial Legislative Assembly were drawn up. The 1874 list for the Okanagan recorded eleven men: nine were farmers, one was a carpenter, and the other a labourer.⁴⁴ A small list, representative of a nascent agricultural community.

The 1881 census provides the opportunity to gain the first comprehensive snapshot of occupations in the Okanagan.⁴⁵ The enumerators collected information on 48,886 residents in British Columbia. For census purposes, the Okanagan was included in the Yale district, in the subdistrict of Nicola and Okanagan. There are no electoral maps to delineate the boundaries accurately, and the precise area covered by Nicola and Okanagan is unclear, but McGillivray estimated the Okanagan population at 1,376 people.⁴⁶ Analysis of the Nicola and Okanagan enumerations shows that one-quarter of those people aged fifteen years and over were female.⁴⁷ That the adult population was overwhelmingly male is not surprising and is in line with observations of frontier settlements

⁴² http://www.syilx.org/wordpress/wp-content/themes/ONA/images/ON_Territory.pdf.

⁴³ Paul M. Koroscil, *The British Garden of Eden: Settlement History of the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University Press, 2008). <https://www.vernon.ca/sites/default/files/docs/heritage-register.pdf>.

⁴⁴ "Okanagan Polling Division in 1874," in *The Seventeenth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1953* (Vernon: Okanagan Historical Society, 1953), 94.

⁴⁵ Enumerations began on 4 April 1881, the second scheduled collection of national statistics in Canada. See 1881 census, Library and Archives Canada, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1881/Pages/about-census.aspx>. From 1911 onwards, the censuses were taken in June. The census enumerators were asked not to record those people who were passing through the region. Itinerant labour supporting the harvest was not captured in the census. See Urqhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2.

⁴⁶ McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia*, 7.

⁴⁷ <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/Pages/census.aspx>.

elsewhere in North America.⁴⁸ There are ninety-three enumerations for females aged fifteen years and over. Only one, a teacher, had a given occupation.⁴⁹ Of the 273 adult males enumerated, two-thirds worked in agriculture. Of these, two-thirds are described as farmers or farmers' sons, the remaining one-third as stock raisers or herders. There are twenty-six entries for miners, of whom half were Chinese. Those males working in manufacturing did so as carpenters, blacksmiths, and wheelwrights, occupations that supported the local agriculture industry. There are two male entries for merchants, one miller, one surgeon, one school teacher, two Roman Catholic priests, and one Methodist minister. Four men were teamsters. These data indicate a small rural community and the beginnings of a service sector.

In 1884, there were only four residences where the city of Vernon now stands, but change was rapid.⁵⁰ In 1892, Vernon became a railway terminus, the Bank of Montreal opened a branch, and the settlement was incorporated.⁵¹ In 1897, land was bought to build a hospital.⁵² By 1901, Vernon had a population of 802. Kelowna had a town plan laid out in 1892, and although it boasted a post office that opened a year later, it was still little more than a village in 1901, one-third the size of Vernon.⁵³ The population of Penticton at that time is unknown. Kelowna and Penticton were not incorporated until later, 1905 and 1909, respectively.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ For instance, see Dee Garceau, *The Important Things of Life: Women, Work and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880-1929* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 37.

⁴⁹ The first teacher was appointed in 1875. See F.M. Buckland, "Okanagan School," in *The Seventeenth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1953* (1953), 95.

⁵⁰ L. Norris, "The Townsite of Vernon," in *Seventeenth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1953*, 109.

⁵¹ Jean Barman, "Growing up in British Columbia: The Vernon Preparatory School, 1914-46," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman and Mona Gleeson, (Edmonton: Brush Education Inc., 2003), 307. Hilda Cochrane, "75 Years of Banking in Vernon," in *The Thirty-First Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1967* (Vernon: Okanagan Historical Society, 1967), 93.

⁵² V.J.H. Grads, told by B. Wamboldt, "Vernon Jubilee Hospital Nurse's Training School, 1904-31," *The Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (Vernon: Wayside Press Ltd., 1982), 45.

⁵³ *Seventeenth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada, 1922*, cited in <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~bcokanag/place-namehis.htm#kelowna>.

⁵⁴ Census of Canada 1901, Library and Archives Canada, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1901/Pages/results.aspx?k=cnsDistrictNum%3a%225%22+AND+cnsSubdistrictNum%3a%22J%22+AND+cnsDivisionNum%3a%22II%22+AND+cnsPageNum%3a%228%22>. City of Kelowna, *Agricultural Overview* (Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Government of British Columbia, 2008), https://www.regionaldistrict.com/media/19876/Kelowna_Ag_Ov.pdf. Fred Thinkell and Bob Scullion, *British Columbia 100 Years Ago: Portraits of a Province* (Surrey: Heritage House, 2002), 132.

The 1901 census provides an opportunity to examine the occupational structure in the three nascent communities.⁵⁵ This census of Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton records the occupations of 659 males and forty females aged fifteen years or over. Of these females, there are thirteen housekeepers/domestics/servants, six cooks, five dressmakers and milliners, and one stenographer.⁵⁶ The census enumerates twelve teachers, of whom five are female, all unmarried. The occupational structure of the adult males in each of the three places is shown in Figure 3. The data are problematic, particularly for Vernon and to a lesser extent for Kelowna, because of the relatively large number of people for whom occupation is either not specified or is described simply as labourer, industry sector unknown. It is not statistically valid to simply pro rata these omissions to the other labour sectors. Nonetheless, it is clear that occupations show a striking divergence from the simple agricultural workforce of 1881. There was significant occupational and economic development over this twenty-year period. Moreover, there are marked dissimilarities between the three places. The male labour force in agriculture was relatively more important in Kelowna than it was in either Vernon or Penticton. Manufacturing was also relatively more important in Kelowna. The latter was driven, at least in part, by the number of men manufacturing cigars in support of the local tobacco-growing industry. At the outset, tobacco leaf was initially sent to Vancouver to be made into cigars, but in 1898 the Kelowna Shippers' Union built its own cigar-making factory, employing five people.⁵⁷ Within one year, the factory employed ten people.⁵⁸ The local tobacco industry developed to supply Kootenay miners, but the demand for Kelowna cigars was short-lived, and, in 1902, the factory closed and the cigar makers left the city.⁵⁹

The presence of general stores and the growth of a service sector provide a distinct indication of the degrees of urbanization in each of these three places (Table 2). Vernon, in particular, had a relatively large number of merchants, all of whom were men, providing supplies for both the townspeople and the neighbouring settlements. The city was also home to doctors, a dentist, and a barrister. Hotel keepers were more evident in Vernon and Penticton than they were in Kelowna. The retail and service sector was less well developed in Kelowna than elsewhere,

⁵⁵ 1901 census, Library and Archives Canada, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1901>.

⁵⁶ Dressmakers and milliners also includes seamstresses and tailoresses.

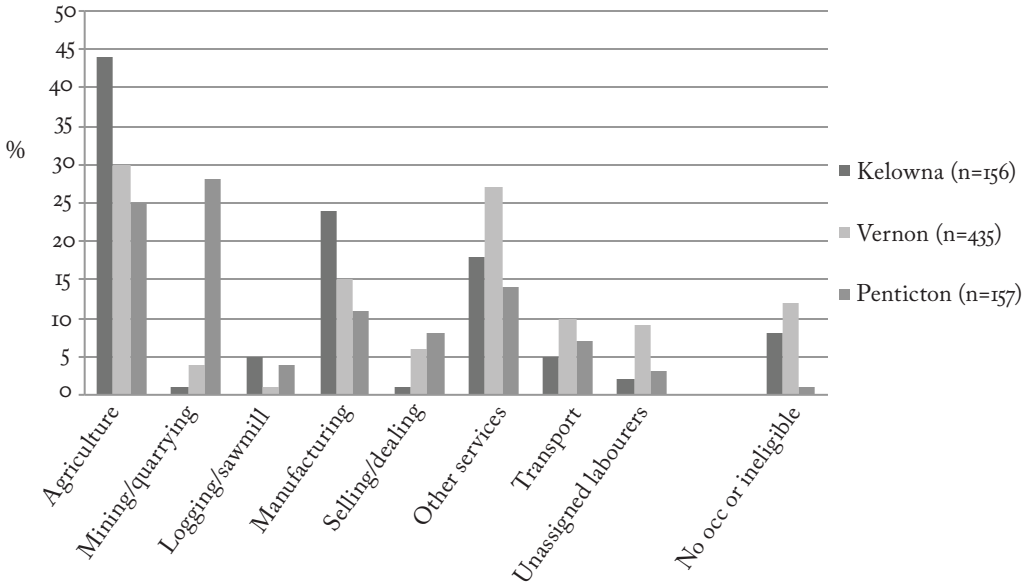
⁵⁷ *The Twenty-Fourth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1960* (Vernon: Okanagan Historical Society, 1960), 137.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, "Early Days in Kelowna," in *The Twenty-Fourth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society 1960* (Vernon: Okanagan Historical Society, 1969), 146.

FIGURE 3

The number of occupations of males aged fifteen years and over in Kelowna, Vernon, and Penticton, 1901 (data for each place is expressed as a percentage of the total)



Source: 1901 census, Library and Archives Canada.

TABLE 2

Selected occupations in retail and the service sector, males and females, 1901 Okanagan census

OCCUPATION	VERNON	KELOWNA	PENTICTON
Stores/merchants	22	1	12
Hotel keeper/proprietor	6	2	6
School teachers	5	6	1
Doctor/physician/surgeon	3	1	0
Dentist	1	0	0
Chemist	0	1	0
Barrister	1	0	0

Source: 1901 census, Library and Archives Canada.

reflective of a smaller community, although interestingly the town did employ a relatively large number of school teachers. More than two dozen people in the service sector in Vernon were employed as cooks, of which four-fifths were Chinese males. These Chinese men, originally railway workers, settled in the Okanagan and took up other work after the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885.⁶⁰ The railway made an important contribution to male employment in Vernon, accounting at this time for one-half of those men working in the transport sector. In Penticton, the mining industry played an important role, employing as many men as did agriculture. The data show that there was more to the settlements along Okanagan Lake than just agriculture.

We use trade directories from 1902 to 1913 to track the growth of urbanization. We concentrate particularly on the directories for the city of Vernon simply because this settlement was the first to develop.⁶¹ We treat these directories with caution not only for the reasons described earlier but also because they were printed by more than one publisher and it is not known whether or not the methods of compilation were consistent. Nonetheless, the growth of non-agricultural business is shown in Table 3. The increase in real estate agents is notable. Architects were at work by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, and the number of accountants and bookkeepers supporting local businesses rose markedly. New technology was introduced through engineers, telephone and telegraph operators, and electricians, and automobiles were in use early in the second decade.

The 1905 trade directory for Kelowna, shown for comparative purposes in Table 3, suggests that Kelowna was slower to develop, lagging Vernon, but by 1911 it was beginning to catch up, as is illustrated by that year's census. The latter enumerates 734 Kelowna males aged fifteen years and over, including 12 estate agents, 13 men working in banks, 7 accountants, 2 dentists, 6 physicians, 6 electricians/electrical engineers, and 3 barristers.⁶² In addition, Kelowna was now home to 12 teachers, of whom

⁶⁰ <http://www.cpr.ca/en/about-cp/our-history>. It was reckoned that three out of four men who built the rail line from the Pacific coast to Craigellachie, northeast of Vernon, were Chinese. See Huang Annian, ed., *The Silent Spikes: Chinese Labourers and the Construction of North American Railroads* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2006), 145.

⁶¹ See: http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1902/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1905/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1910/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory_Part_2; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1913/W.A.Jeffries%27_Vernon_City_and_Okanagan_Valley_Directory.

⁶² District Yale and Cariboo, Subdistrict 43, 1911 Canada census, www.ancestry.ca.

TABLE 3
The growth of some selected businesses, Vernon, 1902-13 and Kelowna, 1905

	1902 VERNON number	1905 VERNON number	1910 VERNON number	1913 VERNON number	1905 KELOWNA number
Accountants/bookkeepers	4	4	20	17	0
Architects	0	0	4	6	0
Automobile garages	0	0	0	1	0
Banks	1	2	2	4	0
Real estate	4	5	19	11	2
Hotels	5	5	10	8	0
Barristers/solicitors/lawyers	3	3	7	7	2
Physicians and surgeons	2	2	6	6	3
Dentists	1	2	1	3	0
Engineers	0	2	4	36	1
Electricians	0	0	1	8	0
Telegraph and telephone	0	0	4	10	0
Power companies	0	0	1	5	0
Oil companies	0	0	0	1	0

Sources: http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1902/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1905/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1910/Henderson%27s_BC_Gazetteer_and_Directory_Part_2; http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php/browse/title/1913/W.A.Jeffries%27_Vernon_City_and_Okanagan_Valley_Directory.

half were female, and twice the number recorded in 1901. By 1911, the city had a population of 1,661 and was clearly adopting occupations associated with urbanization.

We now return our attention to the examination of the 1921 census. For this census, the boundaries of Okanagan subdistricts are more clearly defined than had been the case in previous years (see Table 4, listing subdistricts in the Okanagan [and Map 2]).⁶³ These places enumerated over sixteen thousand males and females aged fifteen years and over, of whom 58 percent were male.⁶⁴ Of the female enumerations, only 15 percent were assigned an occupation. Married women accounted

⁶³ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-8.

TABLE 4

1921 census subdistrict number and places in the Okanagan, Yale district

CENSUS SUBDISTRICT	PLACE
2	Okanagan Landing
3	Oyama
4/4b	Vernon City
5	Coldstream
6	Lavington, Lumby
7	Trinity Valley
8	Mabel Lake
10	Okanagan, Spallumcheen
11	Glenemma
12	Falkland
13	Hullcar, Spallumcheen
14	Armstrong
18	Commonage
28a/28b	Penticton, Greenwood, Alengrove
29	Okanagan Falls, Kaleden
34	Naramata
35	Summerland
36	West Summerland, Mineola
37	Peachland
38	Westbank, Glenrosa, Gellatly
39	Reid's Landing, Bear Creek, Wilson's Landing
40	Kelowna City
41	East Kelowna, Benvoulin, Woodlawn
42	Okanagan Mission
43	Glenmore, Ellison
44	Rutland
45	Ellison
46	Wood's Lake
47	Okanagan Centre

Source: www.ancestry.ca.

for 4,280 enumerations, of which only 1 percent was recorded with an occupation. Single women were more likely to be employed if they lived in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton than if they lived in rural districts. Most women in paid employment were in the service sector, driven largely by occupations in domestic or personal service, but they were also, to a lesser extent, clerks, stenographers, and teachers (Figure 4). It is interesting to note that, while the actual number of females gainfully employed outside the home was small relative to males, there were some occupations (e.g., telephone operators, stenographers, and teachers) that were predominantly female (Table 5).

The change in the Okanagan male occupational structure from 1881 to 1921 is shown in Figure 5. The region remained predominantly agricultural over this forty-year period, but the relative importance of the sector dipped by approximately 14 percent, just under one-half of the decline seen in British Columbia. These data, of course, do not reflect the actual number of men engaged in agriculture because they take no account of the considerable rise in population over this period. Whereas the 1881 census enumerated 273 males aged fifteen years and over, in 1921 there were 9,142 enumerations. Fruit growing, introduced into the region in the last decade of the nineteenth century, was the major industry at that time, well established and of international repute.⁶⁵ This industry grew rapidly and in 1921 produced over three million boxes of apples.⁶⁶

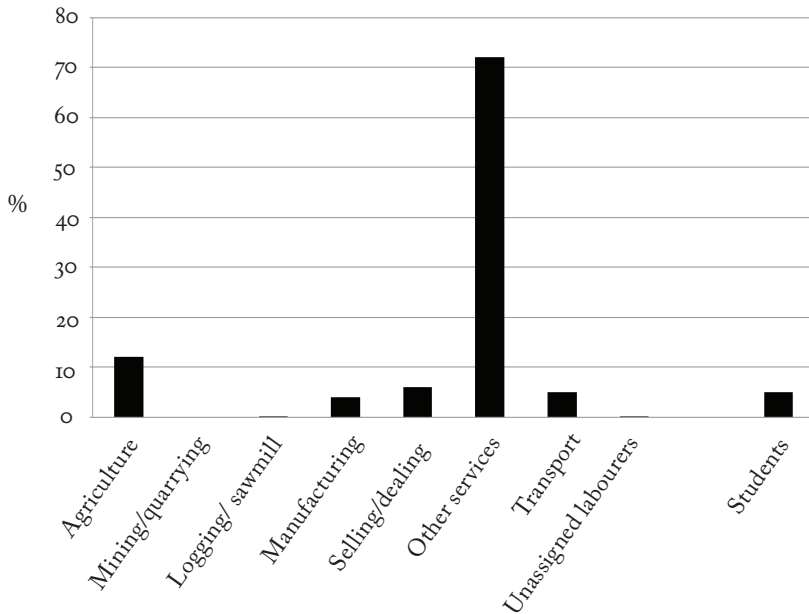
The importance of agriculture to the local economy is clear, but this should not distract us from the significance of the rapid rise of other sectors. Occupational change occurred, unevenly distributed across the region, but particularly in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton, where two-fifths of the Okanagan adult males lived. By 1921, the populations of these three cities were 3,685, 2,520, and 3,979, respectively. Figure 6 shows the marked occupational differences in agriculture, manufacturing, services, and transport between those places and elsewhere in the Okanagan. In the rural settlements, three-quarters of adult males worked in agriculture. In the three cities, only one-quarter did so. Agriculture in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton was a smaller sector than was services. Table 6 shows some occupational differences between the three cities and elsewhere in the Okanagan. For each of the occupations reported in Table 6, Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton collectively account for at

⁶⁵ *Kelowna, British Columbia: The Orchard City of the Okanagan* (Kelowna: Kelowna Board of Trade, 1912).

⁶⁶ W. Sanford Evans, *Report of the Royal Commission Investigating the Fruit Industry*, Part 2 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1932), 11, cited by Margaret A. Ormsby, *A Study of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia* (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1931), 176.

FIGURE 4

Occupations of females aged fifteen years and over in the 1921 Okanagan census, n=961



Note: Those unwaged females described as working either at home or in the father's home are not included in the table. *Source:* www.ancestry.ca.

TABLE 5

Some selected female occupations, 1921 census

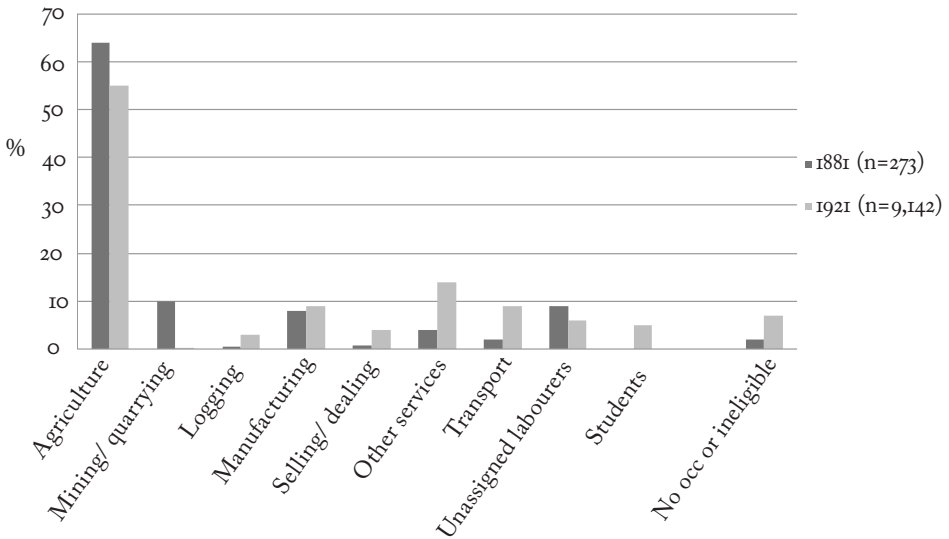
(expressed as the number of enumerations for females and the percentage that was female)

TYPE OF WORK	NUMBER	% FEMALE
Stenographer	69	91
Telephone operator	33	77
Teacher	126	75
Hotel	41	35
Fruit packer	46	27
Clerk	265	26
Store work	56	19

Source: www.ancestry.ca.

FIGURE 5

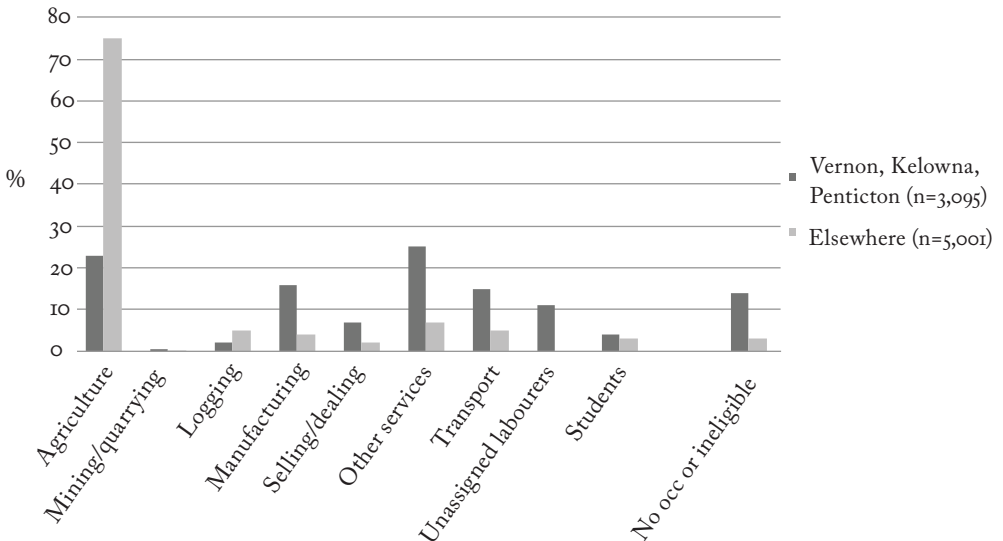
A comparison of the occupations of males aged fifteen years and over in the censuses of 1881 and 1921 (each occupational sector expressed as a percentage of the actual number of enumerations with an occupation)



Sources: 1881 census, Library and Archives Canada; 1921 census, www.ancestry.ca.

FIGURE 6

A comparison of the occupations of males aged fifteen years and over in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton, with those elsewhere in the Okanagan, 1921 (each occupational sector expressed as a percentage of the actual number of enumerations with an occupation)



Sources: 1921 census, www.ancestry.ca.

TABLE 6

Some selected occupations in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton, 1921 census (expressed as the total number of enumerations in the Okanagan and as the percentage the three cities collectively)

OCCUPATION	TOTAL NUMBER	%
Dentist	11	91
Barber	13	85
Lawyer	19	84
Clerk	265	79
Doctor	22	77
Stenographer	76	75
Architect	4	75
Butcher	43	74
Accountant/bookkeeper	139	73
Electrician	51	71
Hotel work	116	69
Automobile	131	68
Shoemaker	19	68
Carpenter	221	65
Bank	105	64
Merchant/store	267	64
Real estate	35	63

Source: www.ancestry.ca.

least 63 percent of its total number. For some occupations, for example, dentist, barber, and lawyer, they account for more than four-fifths of all enumerations; and for others, such as clerk, doctor, stenographer, and architect, they account for at least three-quarters. Butchers; accountants; hotel and automobile workers; shoemakers; carpenters; bank, store, and real estate workers are more likely to live in these three cities than elsewhere. Some adult males in other settlements, such as Armstrong and Summerland, had occupations associated with the cities, but in smaller numbers. Lumby and Mineola, two significant lumber settlements, boasted a bank and hotel between them but few other urban institutions. Interestingly, with regard to teachers in the Okanagan, there were only slightly more per capita in the cities than there were in the rural areas.

The opportunity to be formally educated appears to have been widespread.

Another interesting change is in the transport sector. In 1881, a distinct Okanagan transport sector was non-existent, but in 1921 it accounted for 9 percent of the male workforce. In Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton, 15 percent of adult males worked in transport. Elsewhere, only 6 percent did so. The railway was a significant contributor to the rise of transport and was a major employer, particularly in Penticton. A rail link from Vernon via Armstrong to Sicamous on the Canadian Pacific main line was completed in 1891. Penticton was joined to the Kettle Valley Railway, connecting Vancouver to Nelson in neighbouring Kootenay, in 1914.⁶⁷ Kelowna was not connected to a railway until 1925.⁶⁸ Only 2 percent of adult males in Vernon worked on the railway in 1921. In contrast, in Penticton, 24 percent of adult males worked in transport, and 13 percent worked on the railway. Clearly, the economy of Penticton was based upon more than agriculture.

SUMMARY

Our aim in this article is to use censuses and trade directories to gain a better understanding of the speed and nature of economic growth in the Okanagan between 1881 and 1921, and to show that, while the development of added-value farming in the form of fruit production was the acknowledged driver, other factors were at play, particularly the growth of a service sector and the rise of urbanization. We recognize the limitations associated with each source, notably the shortage of information on First Nations and on the occupations of females. Nonetheless, we show that, while agriculture played a key role over this forty-year period, as the Okanagan developed, the relative importance of this sector had declined by 1921. This decline is in line with that observed for Canada itself and corroborates the implications of the work of Wrigley and Kuznets, among others. Relative importance, of course, is not the same as absolute importance. For instance, in 1881, 64 percent of males aged fifteen years and over worked in agriculture. In 1921, only 55 percent did so, but by then there were 9,142 males at work, compared with only 273 in 1881. The agricultural labour force grew nearly thirtyfold. To support this

⁶⁷ Maurice Williams, *Myra's Men: Building the Kettle Valley Railway, Myra Canyon to Penticton* (Kelowna: Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society, 2008), 1914. See also, <http://www.bcadventure.com/adventure/explore/kootenays/trails/kettle.htm>.

⁶⁸ Ian Pooley, "When the Titans Met: Railway Rivalry in the Okanagan and Kelowna's Rise as Fruit Shipping Centre," *BC Studies* 176 (2012-13): 56.

growth, there was an accompanying increase in the relative importance of other sectors, notably services and transport. Without a strong service sector, and without concomitant urbanization, the Okanagan would not have developed as it did.

It is interesting to compare this growth with that elsewhere. Mining, for instance, was a key industry in the Kootenays. With the influx of miners, settlements such as Nelson, Rossland, Fernie, and Trail quickly developed. As with mining towns elsewhere in North America, their growth was hard to sustain, restricted by the limited capacity of the mines. The development of places in mountainous regions, such as Nelson, was also limited by unfavourable topography. Revelstoke was a railway town, founded on the Canadian Pacific Railway line. Other industries developed there, for instance smelting, but this, too, was mining-dependent. The Okanagan, where there was large scope for orchards to be planted and fruit farming to develop, was not restricted in this manner.

The impact of the railway was significant. Ian Pooley argues that it “played a crucial part in the evolution of a competitive transport system that was essential to the needs of Okanagan fruit growers.”⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that Kelowna was the last of the three cities on Okanagan Lake to be connected. An earlier railway line to link Vernon and Kelowna was muted and chartered, but, for whatever reason, it was not completed.⁷⁰ If this tardiness hampered the growth of the city, it was short-lived, perhaps because of the accessibility of water transport to Vernon.

Urbanization occurred rapidly. By the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton were cities not only because of the size of their populations but also, we suggest, because of the type of work that was being undertaken. The simple definition of a city as a place with at least one thousand inhabitants may be too limited. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to broaden the definition to include any place in which a particular set of occupations is found (e.g., dentist, barber, lawyer, doctor, stenographer, and architect). Paul Koroscil refers to the Okanagan as a “Garden of Eden” for immigrants, but there was a lot more going on in the region than just agriculture.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 57-58.

⁷¹ Koroscil, *British Garden of Eden*; Paul M. Koroscil, “Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, ed. Donald A. Akenson, 71-102 (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1986).

The introduction and subsequent growth of transport, electricity, and engineers is striking. The railway had a rapid and significant impact on employment in Vernon and Penticton, but road transport along Okanagan Lake was limited, and it is difficult to argue that the automobile played a key role in the economic development of the region. The introduction of electricity served more than one function. Not only did it provide for street lighting, another key for urban growth, but it also, and perhaps more important, was available to power machinery, whether on a farm or in a sawmill. It is difficult to value the contribution of electricity to the early economic growth of the Okanagan, but it is interesting to note that, in their study of rural electrification in the United States from 1930 to 1960, Joshua Lewis and Edson Severnini estimate that it increased productivity by 40 percent.⁷² The introduction of locomotives and the automobile resulted in the demand for engineers. Other machines, for instance the steam donkey engine used in logging, became widespread in British Columbia.⁷³

Communications also changed markedly, not only through transport but also through the introduction of the telephone. These networks improved the exchange of goods, financial services, mail, and information.⁷⁴ The introduction of the telephone is also significant because it gave rise to a new employment opportunity for women.

This article is the beginning of a major work on Okanagan economic development. We are currently working on two fronts. We are examining the occupational structure of the Okanagan from 1921 to the present day, placing the region's economic development in the context of the Interior, of British Columbia, and of Canada. This work is focusing on space, place, and gender. In a separate study, we are also examining wages, particularly in the first twenty-one years of the nineteenth century. These wage data are available in each of the censuses from 1901 to 1921, and, given what they told us in our work for this article, they suggest that there may be significant differences in various places according to occupation and place. Beyond these two pieces of work, we expect our future research to focus upon a contextual economic analysis of the postwar Okanagan.

⁷² Joshua Lewis and Edson Severnini, "The Value of Rural Electricity: Evidence from the Rollout of the US Power Grid," <http://www.digitalhistorian.ca/cneh/pdfs/2014/lewisSevernini.pdf>.

⁷³ Robert Galois, "British Columbia Resources," in *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 3, *Addressing the Twentieth Century 1891-1961*, ed. Donald Kerr and Deryck W. Holdsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), plate 21; McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia*, 107.

⁷⁴ James W. Simmons, Michael P. Conzen, and Donald Kerr, "The Emergence of the Urban System," in Kerr and Holdsworth, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 10.