

# CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'I was adored once too'  
Issue April 2016



## Article overview

Long before the Shakespearean Festival of Canada became an important part of Stratford, Ontario's economy, the Grand Trunk Railroad/Canadian National Railroad locomotive repair shop played a vital role as one of the city's main economic drivers. The Grand Trunk Railroad selected Stratford to be the home of their steam locomotive repair facilities in 1870 and in 1906 opened a massive new building. As steam engines became a thing of the past, so did the building designed to repair them. Now the once grand building is a ruin, and nearby residents have mixed feelings about whether it should be preserved. This article focuses on the challenge facing Stratford City Council as they decide the fate of the huge industrial building from another age. It lends itself wonderfully to numerous discussions and activities based upon various aspects of economic, urban and cultural geography.

## Here are some ways you can use with this article in your geography classroom:

- Introduce or reinforce the ideas of economic base, basic and nonbasic activities, and specialized communities. Has employment in tourism replaced those jobs lost when the CN Shop closed? Consider calculating location quotients for the CN shop when it was at its peak and for tourism today.
- Many Canadians make the connection between the Festival and name Stratford. This can lead to an interesting discussion of toponymy with your students.
- Consider using location analysis to explore why the community of Stratford was selected by the Grand Trunk Railroad as the location for their locomotive repair shop.
- Discuss the concepts of deindustrialization, brownfields and the Rustbelt. The concepts of greyfields and brightfields could also be introduced.
- Discuss the challenges that communities and developers face when redeveloping a brownfield area? (environmental, financial, political, social)
- Have students create a design plan that will revitalize the old railroad shop. Provide students with a map of Stratford that shows the location of the CBD, the abandoned CN locomotive repair shop, major tourist attractions such as the theatres, and the major transportation infrastructure in the area. Students should also make a sketch of the abandoned CN shop with the dimensions evident.
- Use this article to study the topic of deindustrialization in Canada and the U.S. Why is it happening and where are the products formerly made in Canada and the U.S. being manufactured now? Numerous concepts, such as multinational corporations, environmental and labour regulations, wages, right to work legislation in numerous states, contracting, export processing zones, Free Trade Agreements, and maquiladoras in Mexico, can all be examined within this topic.

## Using past *Canadian Geographic* issues with this article.

Below is a list of several additional *Canadian Geographic* articles that may also be useful when exploring some of the concepts described above. For example, an earlier *Canadian Geographic* article examined the Festival, the development of the city, and the relationship between the two. ("*Stratford: All the City's Not a Stage*" October/November, 1984) If the 1984 article is used in conjunction with this new article, even more geographic concepts emerge.

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## Ways you can use previous articles from *Canadian Geographic*:

- Examine other communities in Canada that have lost large industries to see what they've done with their brownfields (abandoned industrial sites). (The article mentions Winnipeg's development at The Forks, Toronto's Distillery District, Vancouver's Granville Island, Montreal's Lachine Locks)

*Rediscovering MONTREAL'S Lachine Canal*

Apr./May 83

*Winnipeg: tough, self-reliant, a truly Canadian city*

Dec. 84/Jan. 85

*Toronto's Harbourfront - An Exciting Blueprint for Urban Renewal*

Dec. 84/Jan. 85

- Two examples of re-developments of former industrial areas in Canada are the False Creek area of Vancouver and the Sydney Tar Ponds in Cape Breton. Examine the processes and results of one or both of these former brownfields. Use these past issues to help.

*Vancouver's False Creek: From Eyesore to Dynamic Waterfront Showcase*

Apr./May 82

*A Peek at Expo 86: Vancouver Prepares to Welcome the World (located in the False creek area)*

Dec. 85/Jan. 86

*Cleaning Bill (Sydney Tar Ponds)*  
*Burying Hell (Sydney Tar Ponds)*

May/June 2004

May/June 2007

- Dealing with potential environmental hazards at former industrial sites can be very challenging. Research various techniques that are being used to clean land and water contaminated by industry. These three articles discuss the cleanup of industrial pollution.

*The Re-Greening of Sudbury*

Jun./Jul. 83

*Green Rebirth (Clean up of Sudbury's Industrial Gloom)*

May/June. 00

*Steeltown Charts a New Course: Hamilton Smokestacks to Knowledge-based Industries*

Jul./Aug. 93