

Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

**Baker, Marilyn. *The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years*.
Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1984. Pp. 135. 10
colour plates; 109 black and white plates. Cloth \$35.00,
Paperback \$16.50**

Eva Major-Marothy

Volume 14, numéro 2, octobre 1985

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1018002ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018002ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Major-Marothy, E. (1985). Compte rendu de [Baker, Marilyn. *The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1984. Pp. 135. 10 colour plates; 109 black and white plates. Cloth \$35.00, Paperback \$16.50]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 14(2), 215–216. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018002ar>

implications of yet another conditional grant in the shaping of local policy, in this case public transportation policy.

This volume is distributed by the Carleton University Bookstore, Carleton University, Ottawa, K1S 5B6.

John H. Taylor
Department of History
Carleton University

Alberta Culture. *The Historical Evolution of the Department of Municipal Affairs*. Edmonton: Alberta Culture, 1984. Pp. 97. Indexed. Free from Provincial Archives of Alberta, 12845-102 Avenue, Edmonton, T5N 0M6.

The Historical Evolution of the Department of Municipal Affairs is one of two publications in Alberta Culture's Departmental History Series. The other volume in this series, published in 1983, deals with the history of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The intent of this series is not to provide an official history that covers a number of topics and their roles in the development of Alberta, but rather to give a detailed outline of the administrative history of each department. This series has been undertaken in order to fulfill Alberta Culture's mandate as exercised by the Provincial Archives of Alberta to collect, preserve and make available the public records relating to Alberta's history. It is also organized around the archival concept of provenance. This involves the organization of documents in series according to the agency that created them rather than by theme or topic. Such an approach allows documents to be used on an ongoing basis to study a variety of topics. A knowledge of the administrative history of a department can therefore serve as a valuable guide both to the archivist who is organizing the records, and to the historian who needs to utilize the documents. This volume is therefore a sophisticated type of archival finding aid that gives the researcher a head start on understanding and utilizing the records of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

The department's history is described in four major sections. Part Two, which follows introductory comments on the purpose of the series, identifies the Department's current functional components and views them in relation to several time periods. Part Three contains the bulk of the historical information. It begins with a review of the legislative events for the period from 1887, when the Territorial Government passed the Statute Labor Districts Ordinance, to 1912 when the Province of Alberta passed the Department of Municipal Affairs Act. This background information is followed by subsections describing the department's functional development from 1912 to 1983. Part Four provides an analysis of the Department's administrative organization. Each division and the branches within them are listed, and their functions

are outlined in historical perspective. Part Five supplements the historical data with a chronology of major historical developments and a list of ministers and deputy ministers.

In overall terms this book represents a very well organized compendium of administrative history which achieves its goal of introducing historians to the world of provenance.

John Gilpin
Historic Sites Service
Alberta Culture

Baker, Marilyn. *The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1984. Pp. 135. 10 colour plates; 109 black and white plates. Cloth \$35.00, Paperback \$16.50.

This publication is a sequel to an exhibition aimed at exploring the mode of education at the Winnipeg School of Art from 1913 until 1934. Gallery 1.1.1., which held the exhibition, the anonymous donor, who supplied funding, and Marilyn Baker are all to be commended for a thoroughly researched publication in the history of Canadian art education, a field little explored. The book is well illustrated with art work by both teachers and students, and with numerous interesting photographs, which enhance its documentary and human interest value.¹

The founders of the Winnipeg School hoped that such an institution would "civilize and refine the West." That the study of art would refine the public and improve its taste, impoverished by the ugliness of early industrial products, is an idea dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. It led to the establishment of the British Design Schools where the curriculum mixed traditional art training with industrial design. The Winnipeg School of Art was modelled after these British Schools. So were the Art Schools in Ontario.

The Winnipeg School of Art was established in 1913 by local businessmen of the Winnipeg Industrial Bureau, using both municipal and private funds. Although the Manitoba Government was approached several times, the Winnipeg School did not receive provincial aid until 1920, and then only intermittently. In contrast, the Ontario School of Art in Toronto was founded by artists, with provincial support.

This original funding/founder difference led to variations in the operations of the two schools. Because of the provincial involvement, the Ontario Art Schools were closely tied to the education system and teacher training received top priority. In contrast, the Winnipeg School was a business proposition. It would "lend eminence to the city and advertise its progressiveness beyond its borders," attracting visitors and thus increasing trade. As a bonus, well-trained commer-

cial artists would be locally available. The curriculum was strong in the commercial design area and concentrated on the technical development of the students. In Winnipeg, the businessmen usually hired the principals from abroad, bypassing local artists. In Toronto the control rested with artists, who taught in and administered the School.

The history of the Winnipeg School, which includes biographical sketches of teachers, students and administrators, brings together much unpublished material. The School records seem intact, unlike those of the Ontario College of Art or the Ottawa School of Art, which are lost.

However, because much of the visual evidence of the exhibition is not reproduced, the book does not provide an adequate answer to the question implied by the exhibit's main aim: to investigate "the relationship between art education and the art produced at the time." Unfortunately it also lacks a bibliography, and is marred by a number of editorial oversights and typographical errors. Moreover, the alternate use of maiden and married names for some women, without cross-referencing, is confusing. Criticism aside, however, books like this lay the groundwork for future synthesis and we need more of them.

Eva Major-Marothy
Department of Art History
Carleton University

Notes

1. The preparatory pencil drawing by Fitzgerald for the *Portrait of C. Keith Gebhardt*, (Winnipeg Art Gallery), is in the collection of the Department of Art History, Carleton University (Frances P. Barwick Bequest). It is clearly dated December 8, 1924. The painting, illustrated in the book, is dated c1927, and should perhaps be dated earlier. Thanks to Roger J. Mesley for this information.
-

Marshall, John, ed. *Citizen Participation in Library Decision-Making: The Toronto Experience*. Metuchen, N. J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., in association with the School of Library Service, Dalhousie University, 1984. Pp. xxvii, 392. Map Section; 18 black and white plates. \$25.00 (U.S.).

The contributions in this book describe how Toronto's public library system was subjected to a heavy dose of citizen participation in the 1970s. The result was a wave of new ideas, about both structure and policy, crashing over the whole organization, dislocating a number of traditional conceptions about libraries held by users, staff, and Library Board members alike.

The book has a fascinating array of viewpoints — one hesitates whether to say viewpoints of the same thing — by

more than a dozen different participants, playing different roles in the whole process, plus two or three academics whose essays tend to be broader and more abstract. The contributors, aside from these latter, include a reform alderman, a publisher and a writer, all of whom were members of the board; two or three academics who became directly involved as citizens; two or three other citizen activists from a variety of backgrounds; an official of a native peoples' organization; an architect who served in an advisory capacity; an urban planner who helped plan the library's new capital budget; and a student of the book's editor attending the School of Library Science at the University of Toronto. And it might be added that this list of labels does no justice to the variety of hats worn by these individuals, and to their extremely varied fields of expertise.

Citizen participation in the Toronto Public Library thus emerges as a number of different phenomena. The process apparently started when Toronto's reform council appointed some reform-minded citizens and alderpersons to the Library Board in 1974. The newly constituted board started asking questions about "received" policy, about biases in the system, and about the lack of citizen input. The board did not stop at asking questions; it acted. The policy of building for big district libraries was changed to building up the smaller branches, after feedback from citizens indicated that this was what they wanted. Resources started flowing more equitably toward libraries in working class communities, instead of almost overwhelmingly favouring the upper middle class part of the city. Acquisitions began to reflect expressed needs of different ethnic groups, as well as preferences for more pop culture materials, such as comic books and Harlequin romances. Finally, a number of citizen advisory committees were set up, one in each of the four areas of Toronto's library system (north, central, east, and west), plus a dozen or more committees for individual branches, which were given the task of deciding how to use the capital money released by the abandonment of the district library plan.

For an organizational flow-chart fanatic, the committee scape that emerges from these pages is far from neat. In fact, when combined with descriptions of increased staff participation in policymaking, the picture of organizational change described throughout the book is downright confusing. Nor do the book's essays provide a framework on which to hang the facts (Meyer Brownstone's contribution comes closest to doing this). As editor John Marshall puts it, the book is

a faithful account of a many-sided experience, approached from as many angles as possible by a select but representative group of participants and observers, each honestly reporting what was experienced and relating it to the overall context and central theme (p. xii).

Unfortunately, "the overall context and central theme" were so general as to make their utility as unifying threads