

Dawley, Alan. *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976

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The concluding chapter is a systematic and logical summation and policy statement. It brings the book to a close in a satisfying manner, but does not purport to be a detailed blueprint for the future. Rather, the authors indicate policy directions that should be followed in order to achieve a better urban Canada and leave the details of implementation as challenges to the three levels of government.

It is a good book well worth reading and digesting, and stands as a worthy and sophisticated successor to Lithwick's exploratory document of 1970.

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Dawley, Alan. Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn.
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Class and Community is about the shoemakers of Lynn, Massachusetts, a slow-paced, agricultural village on the New England coast that became a leading center for the manufacture of ladies footwear. The book poses a very large question about the Industrial Revolution in the United States. Who owned or controlled the means of production? What was the distribution of income and property? What were the links between economic, political, and social power?

Alan Dawley is not the first historian to be interested in such matters, but Class and Community is not an ordinary book. Acknowledging explicitly his debt to Marx, the author uses the concept of class as the analytical framework for his study. As might be expected, the result is not a celebration of the American dream. There was poverty and exploitation in Lynn, not a new industrial order where factory workers could enjoy the benefits of a middle class life. As large amounts of capital and machinery transformed the artisan occupation of shoemaking into an impersonal, large-scale enterprise, Dawley finds

that the workers themselves suffered economically and politically. Taking issue with recent studies of occupational mobility, Dawley argues that the extent of such movement has been exaggerated by historians in recent years, and he insists, based on rather limited evidence, that most wage earners sought to rise with their class, not by stepping out of it. Thus the emphasis on trade unionism.

Urban historians will be especially interested in Dawley's discussion of municipal architecture, especially the Lynn City Hall, and in his scathing analysis of municipal services. He sees the installation of water pipes through the business district as a way to secure factories from fire, the creation of a professional police force as a way for "one class in the community to discipline another," and the establishment of a school system as a way to teach respect for the social and political elite.

Class and Community is also a sophisticated attempt to prove that John R. Commons was wrong in insisting that the labor movement in the United States was a hopeless rearguard action of non-factory workers trying to fend off the effects of industrialization. In Lynn, at any rate, the organizers of the Knights of St. Crispin were factory workers searching for social equality and protesting against the pervasive inequalities resulting from the industrial system.

Dawley's logic, inferences, and assertions are not at every point convincing, and his generalizations frequently outrun his evidence. But Class and Community is one of the best-written and most imaginative and provocative books yet to appear in the fields of urban and social history. That it was recently awarded the Bancroft Prize is a tribute both to its scholarship and to its importance.

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