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Hershberg, Theodore, ed. *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century — Essays toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981. Pp. xviii, 525. Maps, tables, appendices. $15.50

Chad Gaffield

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living conditions of the poor in "Stasis in Makeshift Housing: Perspectives from Mexico and the Caribbean."

Collections such as the present one are always difficult to evaluate, for the quality of the articles is rarely uniform. None the less, this special issue is of definite interest, not only because it contains several papers of high quality, but also because it calls attention to the ongoing contributions of the ICA's urban studies symposia.

Jacques Barbier
Department of History
University of Ottawa

Hershberg, Theodore, ed. *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century – Essays toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City.* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981. Pp.xviii, 525. Maps, tables, appendices. $15.50

History has been one of the bulwarks of scholarly attachment to disciplinary segregation. This phenomenon might be considered ironic since the discipline of history is not associated with particular theories and methods which could be held responsible for a particular sense of self-identity. However, it is precisely a lack of definition which draws together the historical profession. In history, scholarly inquiry thrives on the specific, on the unique, on anomalies; historians seek out nuance and complexity. As a group, they see other researchers as uncritical in assessing data and naïve in understanding human thought and behaviour. In their hearts, historians believe that they comprehend social interaction better than sociologists, governmental issues better than political scientists, ecological factors better than geographers, mental processes better than psychologists, and so on. For these reasons, historians have usually been reluctant participants in interdisciplinary efforts and have rarely engaged in sustained debate with other scholars.

Theodore Hershberg is convinced that this situation has never been justifiable. Hershberg argues that "scholarship" is inherently political. The tools of the social scientist are not – any more than is the technology of the engineer – neutral. The assumptions and world views of the various disciplines are the source of much conflict. Socialization has created an internalized set of values that make achievement in scholarship almost synonymous with individual effort. Our educational experiences leave all too many of us ill-prepared to undertake team research" (p.492). As a result, Hershberg perceives a "fragmentation of knowledge" which has generally hindered true conceptual headway. This perspective has provided the theoretical underpinnings of the Philadelphia Social History Project which Hershberg began in 1969. The project was both revolutionary and straightforward. With nineteenth-century Philadelphia as a research focus, Hershberg began constructing a computerized data base which was then made accessible to scholars from a variety of disciplines. Over time and under Hershberg's enthusiastic leadership, the project enlarged the data base and invited historians, economists, demographers, sociologists and others to examine the files. Hershberg strove for true interdisciplinarity rather than multidisciplinary, and the project's ambition became no less than a coherent explanatory synthesis of urban development in a major metropolis.

Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century represents a decade of research and is a landmark publication. The book includes a group of previously published articles as well as some additions. The topics covered include such diverse issues as the production functions of various industries and migration patterns, while the approaches range from basic description to sophisticated theorizing. As the subtitle indicates, the volume is divided into four main sections which encompass twelve chapters. A final section is entitled "Urban as Process and History and Policy" and highlights "A Tale of Three Cities: Blacks, Immigrants, and Opportunity in Philadelphia, 1850, 1880, 1930, 1970," an article which first appeared in 1979. This article is not used as an overall synthesis of the book but rather emphasizes the dominant focus of the project on the interrelationships of "the experience of a city and its diverse peoples." *Philadelphia* also includes a directory of researchers who have used the project's data and a bibliography of completed work. Considered together, these components reflect the major research effort which Hershberg has spearheaded since 1969.

At the same time, however, *Philadelphia* also confirms that Hershberg's ambition has not been fulfilled in at least two important ways: interdisciplinarity has not been achieved, and a synthetic understanding of the urbanization process has only been sketched. In his well-known piece, "The New Urban History: Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City," which has been revised to form the introduction to the book, Hershberg argues that the "experience of the P.S.H.P. suggests that it is possible to construct and operationalize the needed mechanism" for interdisciplinary research. In the epilogue to *Philadelphia* Hershberg admits that this goal was not reached. He blames the larger university structure and the "system of rewards that controls hiring and promotion in our institutions of higher learning." This system is based on individual research and "disciplinary purity" at the expense of the "pressing intellectual questions." As a result, the project has tended to be multi-disciplinary rather than interdisciplinary and this tendency is reflected in the chapters of *Philadelphia*.

Hershberg can claim more success in the pursuit of a new concept of urbanization but the most important step remains his own introductory chapter which is more an inspiration to research than a specification of actual process. *Philadelphia* emphasizes innovative themes such as the changing interrelationships of residence and place of work during industrial development, and the objective meaning of class and race within nineteenth-century urban social structure. However, important gaps remain in the delineation of Philadelphia's urbanization; many Canadian historians will be disappointed, for example, that the promotional activity of civic leaders is largely ignored. Between the lines, Hershberg also conveys this kind of disappointment and he undoubtedly would have welcomed to the project historians interested in topics such as civic politics.

Chad Gaffield
Department of History
University of Victoria

Holli, Melvin G., and Jones, Peter d'A., eds. *Biographical Dictionary of American Mayors, 1820-1980: Big City Mayors.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981. Pp.xii, 451. Tables, $69.50

This biographical dictionary details the political careers of 679 individuals who served as mayors of fifteen selected American cities between 1820 and 1980. The fifteen cities – Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and St. Louis – were chosen, the editors state, because they "have maintained *consistent* leadership in population and historical importance since the 1820s," the decade "popular election became the norm" in municipal politics in the United States. Not everyone will be happy with the selection criteria, the editors admit, but they promise a second volume to cover the mayors of fifty American cities omitted from the present study.

Although they vary in length, the biographies generally run about 500 words and relay valuable information on the family background and business interests as well as the political career of each mayor. Important elections are highlighted, the results dissected, and major political trends briefly noted. As well, the biographies discuss the form of government, population, and place of each city in the urban hierarchy during the incumbency of each mayor. Information is most complete for mayors elected since 1960, with current office-holders receiving the most print. Each entry also includes a note on sources, which scholars will find extremely useful since doctoral theses, manuscript collections, newspaper obituaries and the like are listed in addition to the more usual published material.

The dictionary also offers twelve appendices, the most useful of which group the mayors by city, political affiliation, ethnic background, religion and place of birth. Surprisingly, given the ubiquity of the pocket calculator, the editors have not commented on trends in office-holding for the fifteen cities, either individually or as a whole. They limit their remarks to a two-page preface in which they plead the importance of studying big cities, a point surely conceded by all those who would consult this dictionary. It is disappointing to see the editors make so little use of the data they have compiled. Moreover, their taciturnity leaves the reader quite uncertain as to the rationale behind appendices tabulating the American urban population for the period 1790-1970, the population of the fifteen cities from 1820 to 1960, and of their ethnic and racial composition at arbitrarily selected intervals between 1860 and 1970.

Obviously the editors have aimed this volume, and presumably the larger one to follow, at reference libraries and, given the high quality of scholarship in the biographical entries, libraries should acquire it. Individual scholars will no doubt find the price too much to pay for a work that fails to draw more general conclusions about the American political system.

Donald F. Davis
Department of History
University of Ottawa

Alexander, John K. *Render Them Submissive: Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia, 1760-1800.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980. Pp.xi, 234. $15.00

Render Them Submissive offers a curiously fragmented and one-dimensional view of attitudes towards poverty in an urban setting during the economic dislocation of the 1760s, the war between America and Britain, and the post-revolutionary era of reform and reconstruction. Despite these momentous events, John Alexander argues that neither the nature of poverty nor the "general" attitudes towards it changed in Philadelphia. All that he is willing to concede about underlying social and economic conditions is that the doubling of the city's population might have augmented distress. What changed was the political climate in which poor and non-poor co-existed. In this new environment, Alexander postulates, the poor became a sinister, dangerous class which the leaders of post-revolutionary urban society wished to control and reform rather than simply to relieve. The book's hypothesis, then, is that the extension of the franchise, part of the vaunted American egalitarianism, gave political power to