

Armstrong, Frederick H. *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology: Revised Edition*. Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 1985. Pp. 278. \$29.95

John H. Taylor

Volume 15, Number 1, June 1986

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1018915ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018915ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Taylor, J. H. (1986). Review of [Armstrong, Frederick H. *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology: Revised Edition*. Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 1985. Pp. 278. \$29.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 15(1), 113–114. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018915ar>

own distinctly non-English languages, nor could they, as new arrivals or later, necessarily be considered the blessed of Victorian children.

Regarding the book's production, there are far too many images shoe-horned onto the pages for all of them to make effective impact. They are reproduced in mediocre halftone, (the photo of Knox College on page 182 is unforgiveably marred by the graffiti of a production note), and are sometimes made more confusing than revealing by the bottom strip of modern street photos. This is because the same strip of addresses has been reproduced on several pages, presumably to maintain continuity. Actually the repetition tends to be distracting and the idea is further confused by running the addresses at times left to right, at other times right to left.

As comparison with the present addresses is so stressed, the author lays on herself the onerous burden of absolute accuracy in identification. Consequently the reader is disconcerted to find numbers 332 to 338 are all shifted over one, particularly since two of those addresses are featured with larger photos. In addition, the famous Crest Grill is given the address of the equally famous Waverly Hotel and Silver Dollar lounge, while the Pickford Theatre (its address was actually 380 Queen St. West) is inattentively moved several blocks uptown, from the corner of Queen and Spadina to 382 Spadina.

However these and a few other minor imperfections (Ontario Archives for Archives of Ontario, M. Micklethwaite for the photographer Frank Micklethwaite) cannot deny the basically sound and inventive research and presentation on which this book is to be congratulated. Originally created as a photo exhibition shown at A Space Gallery on Spadina Avenue in 1984, for which many people's effort was responsible, it well deserves this more permanent record of the searching, thinking, analysis and new photography that brought the idea into existence.

Lilly Koltun
Chief, Acquisition and Research
National Photography Collection
Ottawa

Boyer, Barbaranne. *The Boardwalk Album: Memories of The Beach*. Erin, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1985. Pp. 72. Photographs. \$9.95.

The Boardwalk Album, as its sub-title indicates, is chiefly memorabilia, dealing with the heyday of a "recreational suburb" of Toronto.

It is worth noting because of the thin literature on the subject, and to express the earnest desire that the authors

and publishers of such material would take the small amount of effort necessary to document their sources. In doing so, such local histories could become important historical building blocks. Work done to build up the material presented here, for example, would not be lost, and at some future date have to be researched once again. The acknowledgments given at the beginning of the book are helpful, but not adequate.

Perhaps a minimum of scholarly apparatus should be required by the granting agencies that subsidize such publications. In this instance financial assistance is acknowledged from The Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Office of the Secretary of State. All of them should be insisting on some sort of long-term gain, and not assist what, unnecessarily, is pure ephemera.

The author, in this case, was clearly committed to the subject, and had privileged access to local, usually oral sources. By not documenting them properly, there is no way to tell what in the text is representative and what is fantasy. Those who follow cannot simply take her word on it. The book is well produced. But clearly an opportunity has been lost. Again.

John H. Taylor
Department of History
Carleton University

Armstrong, Frederick H. *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology: Revised Edition*. Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 1985. Pp. 278. \$29.95.

The first edition of this book was prepared in 1967 "... because of the difficulties that inevitably seem to arise in finding answers to even the simplest of questions. . . ." It was immediately useful then, and in revised form should be even more so.

The tables in the original publication, including those on "Local and Municipal Government, 1788-1849," have "been checked for corrections and amplifications" and where necessary have been reorganized.

Parts VI and VII — "Special Government Departments and Commissions" and "Supplementary Information" — contain largely new information or complete revisions of tables. In these sections can be found information on the customs department, the emigrant office, the post office, special commissions, surveyors, corporate legislation, corporate officers, ecclesiastical information, and population statistics.

Updated tables and diagrams, maps, and a bibliography close the volume. This handbook remains a basic reference for the shelves of scholars of Upper Canadian history.

John H. Taylor
Department of History
Carleton University

Roussopoulos, Dimitrios, ed. *The City and Radical Social Change*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982. Pp. 352. \$12.95 (paperback). \$22.95 (hardcover).

Nothing dates so quickly as the writing of a failed revolutionary. Half the essays in this book express the revolutionary hopes of the militants associated with the Montreal Citizens Movement in the 1970s. Most of these essays were originally published in *Our Generation*, and they reflect the squabbles and debates of the time — largely from the perspective of the “libertarian socialists.” Despite the theoretical sophistication of some of the contributors — especially Stephen Schecter — their analyses seem unconvincing, because we have to read them now in light of subsequent events. Who can take seriously the hopes of these 1970s radicals when Bourassa is again Premier of Quebec, and the Parti Quebecois has abandoned its ostensible commitment to social democracy?

The most useful papers in this book have nothing to do with Montreal: a nice summation of Manuel Castells early work, by Fred Caloren; a pair of good papers by Mike Goldrick and Bill Freeman on urban reform in Toronto in the 1970s; and a couple of essays on urban development in Hamilton and Ottawa-Hull (the latter an especially meaty case-study of Campeau's Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere). The Toronto articles make a nice contrast with the ones on Montreal, in both style and substance. They reveal the less ideological character of reform politics in Toronto, and they do so in a dispassionate, analytic tone, which is a welcome relief from the polemics about Montreal.

Reflecting on the experience of reform politics in Toronto and Montreal in the 1970s, one is struck by the inverse proportion between political substance and ideological sophistication. Obviously, the Toronto reformers had much more impact on their city than their Montreal counterparts. The latter were voices crying in the wilderness, whose debates (at least as reported here) became increasingly sophisticated as they got further removed from political reality. As abstract theory, some of the analyses are rather persuasive, but they rarely touch ground with the reality in Montreal. One suspects that these people would be saying exactly the same things if they were living in Miami or San Antonio. (Indeed, the “urban crisis” is often identified as a “North American” phenomenon: the specifically Canadian context is virtually

ignored.) It is ironic that analyses emphasizing the importance of *local* struggles should convey so little sense of place and context, and suggest so much the imposition of abstract theories on recalcitrant facts.

There is nothing in this book that sheds much light on urban politics in the 1980s. In that respect, it is hopelessly dated. However, it may be of considerable interest to future historians who want to analyze the radical thinking about urban politics that developed in the 1970s. They may not find it as edifying as it seemed at the time.

Warren Magnusson
Department of Political Science
University of Victoria

Sharpe, L.J. and Newton, K. *Does Politics Matter? The Determinants of Public Policy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984. Pp. XVIII, 249. £19.00.

Over the past twenty years an enormous number of studies have been produced analyzing policy outcomes and attempting to evaluate the importance of different factors in determining these outcomes. The major focus of this debate has been on whether socio-economic factors or political factors can best explain policy outcomes. The major thrust of *Does Politics Matter?* is to argue, both theoretically and on the basis of an empirical analysis of English and Welsh local government expenditures and policies, the importance of politics. The debate has the fascination and irritation of all good academic debates — delight in the imagination and intelligence focussed on very detailed questions but the occasional thought that too much attention is being given to essentially trivial points.

Does Politics Matter? has the advantage of not merely presenting statistical material with little discussion or interpretation. Sharpe and Newton do analyze considerable amounts of statistical material but they have clearly tried to keep control of their data. The book is eminently readable — and that's not true for all studies that are based on so much statistical material.

Their main contributions to the overall debate relate to two areas, defining socio-economic factors in terms of the locality as a whole and, secondly, the better definition of political factors. The two are linked, as their redefinition of the way to measure socio-economic factors relates to their understanding of the political process. The traditional method of using socio-economic variables which relate to individual characteristics of the population is flawed because, as Sharpe and Newton argue, “it assumes that government is mainly engaged in reflecting the objective socio-economic characteristics of its citizens” (p. 20). As governments also have