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## Review Editor's Notes

John Taylor

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**Review Editor's Notes**

Henry Scadding described his classic *Toronto of Old*, first published in 1873, as among that class of books "originating in Accident." Whatever the origin, the endurance is unquestioned. An abridged edition, edited by F.H. Armstrong and published by Oxford in 1966, has now been reissued in paperback by Dundurn Press of Toronto at a price of \$19.95.

Professor Armstrong notes that the introduction to his 1966 abridgement "has been substantially revised to provide explanations, and to update some sections in consideration of the many changes in the last twenty years." A fourth appendix to deal with street name changes since Scadding's time and a short bibliography have been added. The text, however, is largely as in the 1966 edition, which has been out of print since 1973.

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In 1987 three important volumes relating to what might broadly be call urban renewal issued from Université du Québec's INRS-Urbanisation, Montréal.

The first of these is **Richard Morin's *Réanimation urbaine et pouvoir local*, (Pp. 200. \$18.00 paper)**. Morin, a professor of urban studies at UQAM, examines the 1970s "reanimation" of older quarters showing signs of decline in Montreal, Sherbrooke and Grenoble. In particular, his focus is the significant role played by local governments against the backdrop of broader structural and political/administrative forces. While the experiences of the three cities bear similarity, the processes show noteworthy variations.

The second of the INRS-Urbanisation volumes is that of **Francine Dansereau and Daniel L'Ecuyer, *Réaniamation, reconquête, conversion*, (Pp.274. paper)**. Published as the tenth in the "Rapports de recherche" series, the volume is, in equal portions, a review of the literature and a selected annotated bibliography. Neither is a

simple listing. The literature review, is an extensive, thoughtful taxonomy and appraisal of important work in the field, the bulk of which emanates from the U.S. and England. The review section ends with a summary of regulations respecting conversions in the United States and Canada (outside Quebec). The bibliography is of a special order of magnitude. The annotation for each major work is extensive, in some cases running to as long as two pages in length. The reader is presented, in effect, with an alphabetized series of 89 book reviews. This volume probably represents the single best overview of available literature in this field. For students, or for those who want a single-volume course on conversion, it is close to ideal.

The final volume from the research institute is **Marc Choko and Francine Dasereau, *Restauration résidentielle et copropriété au centre-ville de Montréal*, (Pp. 177. paper)**. Part of the institute's "Études et documents" series, it is a formal research study (including 51 tables and 2 maps) of a renewal neighbourhood on the eastern periphery of Montreal's core. Its concluding reflections call for a rethinking of the questions surrounding the gentrification of inner city neighbourhoods.

For further information on these or other volumes in the above noted series, write: INRS-Urbanisation, 3465, rue Durocher, Montreal, H2X 2C6.

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Urban scholars should note three widely different studies of public space.

The first and most scholarly of these is **Yvan Lamonde et Raymond Montpetit, *Le Parc Sohmer de Montréal, 1889-1919: Un lieu populaire de culture urbaine*, (Québec: Institute Québécois de recherche sur la cultur, 1968. Pp.231. Illustrations)**. Among the earliest, if not the first, study in Canada to use, in part, the analytical framework of Michel Foucault, it is sharply distinguished

from most "park" studies by the questions it asks, by the resources it uses, and most especially by its ability to integrate the park and its context. As the sub-title indicates, its concern is urban culture and not the evolution of the physical artifact. One of its chief conclusions - that Le Parc Sohmer was the first durable product of the introduction of commercial capitalism into the arena of culture and recreation - is as provocative as it is useful. This notion has popped up frequently enough in urban studies, most often in connection with the numerous street railway parks, but nowhere has it been elaborated so completely. This is an important book for students of the city and urban culture.

The other volumes, both intended for a popular audience, are a contrast for no reason other than the traditional character of their approach. **Robert Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials* (Toronto: NC Press Ltd, 1987. Pp 200. Illustrations \$24.95)** is, nonetheless, a thorough study of the outpouring of patriotism in stone that marked World War I. It is primarily a matter-of-fact account of the process leading to various monuments and their parks, using feeling as its chief dynamic. The research is sound and well documented, the photographs are excellent. The appendix, which lists monuments in some 900 Canadian communities is a valuable resource pregnant with possibilities. The Toronto area appears to be the war memorial capital of the country, with approximately 40 monuments. Should we be surprised?

Finally, **Linda Martin and Kerry Segrave, *City Parks of Canada* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1983. Pp.120. Illustrations)** claims to be "the first systematic account of the history and development" of Canadian urban parks, providing a "coherent, historically accurate portrait" covering 33 cities. In fact, it can make good on neither of these claims. It is simply a list beginning with a park in Brantford and ending with one in Winnipeg.

While the descriptions might be potentially useful, none is properly documented and there is little consistency from one to the next. This would be fair enough if the book were simply a picture book intended for a popular audience, but the book maintains an academic pretense. Partially funded by the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council, it is one of a number of similar books to have received such support. One wonders why?

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Adelman, Melvin L. *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986. Pp. 388. Appendices and plates. \$24.95 (U.S.)

Ruck, Rob. *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987. Pp. 238. 14 black and white plates.

Melvin Adelman's *A Sporting Time* and Rob Ruck's *Sandlot Seasons*, two contributions to the University of Illinois Press's "Sport and Society" series, are contrasts in American historiography as well as style. Although the study of sport and leisure by professional scholars is new, these two authors bring established historiographical traditions to their work. Both books make solid contributions that suggest leisure can be as important as work in understanding society. Both also argue that sport is not a free floating aesthetic but is indeed rooted in specific social reality and historical circumstance.

In *A Sporting Time*, the more contentious of the two books, Adelman resurrects modernization theory with a few appropriate apologies for some of its shortcomings. Organized sport of the present, he believes, has a greater social value than earlier less-structured, pre-industrial forms. Adelman's argument owes much to the work of Richard Hofstadter, Robert Wiebe, and the English sociologist Eric Dunning. The book pays tribute to Wiebe with its contention that the development of modern sport was the result of the American middle class's "search for order."

Modernization theory in American history has been one focus of those in search of national exceptionalism. Critics charge that it glorifies the middle class at the expense of a heterogeneous society. It asks Americans to choose a national history based on a rural (often southern) "cracker" influence, an industrial/business aristocracy, or the virtues

of the urban middle class. Presented in this way, the choice for most people is obvious. Adelman is firmly convinced that what is urban and middle class is uniquely American, while the rural and aristocratic tendencies are a hindrance to national advancement. Those groups that are not part of the urban middle class can be incorporated into this mythology or face exclusion.

Between 1820 and 1870 leisure in New York City was transferred from the wealthy (rural) influences to the urban middle class. Those sports unable to adapt to the process of modernization and rationalization, such as cricket, fell by the wayside. Other sports such as harness racing and rounders (baseball) proved more adaptable and became dominant forms of organized leisure in New York. Adelman's model, using value-laden terminology, defines pre-modern sport as sporadic, imprecise, static, and inconsistent. In the hands of the middle class it became formal, rational, dynamic, orderly and ideologically consistent. Sport and leisure by 1870 had come to reflect the modern American personality: rational, individualistic, autonomous and achievement-oriented. Baseball and harness racing had become the best examples of the triumph of the search for order in American sport. Under urban, middle-class/entrepreneurial guidance, these sports were the most ideologically and highly commercialized.

The question left begging by *A Sporting Time* is what role did blacks, the working class, and farmers play in the development of modern sport? Adelman states that racial prejudice excluded blacks. "The lower class was conspicuous by its absence," and rural America fought and retarded modernization. These peremptory dismissals are at odds with the bulk of recent histories of working-class leisure. Adelman argues that the urban, middle-class, through the aid of a powerful press with national influence, used sport to propagate its own attitudes and values, ultimately establishing a national identity for sport consistent with its own ideology. Those