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Violich, Francis. *The Bridge to Dalmatia: A Search for the Meaning of Place*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. Pp. xvii. 351. Maps, black and white illustrations, bibliography and index. US\$ 49.95 (cloth)

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[See table of contents](#)

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The title of this book, *The Bridge to Dalmatia*, refers to the connection between Dalmatia on the Adriatic Sea and northern California on the Pacific, two regions which have much in common in terms of their relationships between land and sea and between environment and people. This connection or bridge is particularly significant for the immigrants who left Dalmatia three or four generations ago and settled in California. These immigrants maintained this bridge between their old and new homes over the years; so too did their descendants in California, one of whom is Francis Violich.

For Violich, professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, the bridge represents both personal and professional connections. His personal connections come from family and friends who left Dalmatia to settle in California and who came to love their places in California but never lost their love for the places they left in Dalmatia. His professional connections come from his years as an academic involved in urban planning and environmental relationships and inclined towards a comparative approach to urban problems and solutions. In this book Violich weds his personal and professional interests to create a work that is sound in framework and attractive in presentation.

Fundamental to his framework is the concept of place and identity. Throughout the book the words place and identity come up over and over again as Violich guides us on a journey in *A Search for the Meaning of Place*, the subtitle of the book. While place is the key in a broad sense, the framework is actually based on a triad comprised of place, buildings, and people. Place in this latter and narrower sense is the natural environment of a particular area, the given characteristics of that area. Buildings include the structures, streets, and fabric of the city or town and the relationship of this built environment to the natural environment. And people is used to identify the "web of environmental decision making" that occurs in urban centers, a decision making that should be inclusive in terms of inhabitants that participate in the process and sensitive in terms of maintaining harmony between the built and natural environments.

After breaking down his tripartite framework into subunits, Violich uses it to assess two towns in Italy and two cities in California, and then several places in Dalmatia. Actually his assessments of the hill towns of Giove and Lugnano in Italy and the cities of Berkeley and San Francisco in California are used to familiarize the reader with his framework and to demonstrate his technique of "urban reading," a technique which includes walking a city or town in order to get a feel for its natural and built environments. Following this demonstration, Violich turns to his main task, an analysis and reading of urban areas in Dalmatia. These readings cover three mainland cities (Zadar, Split, and Dubrovnik), five island villages on the seaside, and four villages on the peninsula of Peljesac; included in this selection are Pucisca and Kuna, the village homes of Violich's grandparents.

In conducting these readings and analyses of Dalmatian places, Violich compliments the inhabitants of those urban centers where modernization is sensitively integrated with the given natural environment and the traditional built environment, that is, where a feeling of harmony between nature and people has been maintained; and, of course, he criticizes those who have harmed these environments by erecting inelegant and monstrous structures, often hotels for tourists, that jar the harmonious character of a village or a town. In addition to praise and criticism, Violich also offers a prescriptive plan consisting of ten characteristics that are basic to an urban area's identity and place. This plan may be used by urban populations to effect sensitive changes in their own cities and towns no matter where they are located. In this respect the book becomes a bridge that connects urban areas throughout the world. Thus, not only in Dalmatia and California, areas that mean so much to Violich personally, should people constantly heed their natural and built environments in preserving the past and building the future but inhabitants of urban places should do this universally.

Violich presents his case for rational and sensitive development of urban areas attractively, in a book that is well written and amply illustrated with photographs and sketches, many of them his own. His suggestions for urban development are reasonable and achievable, and therefore easy for most of us to accept. Though some readers may initially question his analyses or perhaps be uncomfortable with them because of his personal involvement with several of the places covered in the book, most readers will subsequently find, as did this reviewer, that Violich turns his integration of the personal and professional into a plus. If anything, the personal element makes his arguments even more convincing. In the end, then, he is very convincing in his argument that sensitive urbanization requires the consideration of the emotions of urban dwellers as much as it does the views of professional planners. He is convincing too in his metaphoric suggestion of urban connections or bridges throughout the world, bridges such as the one connecting the places of Dalmatia and California, bridges that simultaneously span geography and generations, bridges we should cross with Violich as concerned urban residents.

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Elizabeth Bloomfield, *Waterloo Township through Two Centuries*. Kitchener: Waterloo Historical Society, 1995. Pp. xiv & 466. Maps, illustrations. \$75.00 hard, \$85.00 with handling.

This large book is about a rural municipality dismantled twenty-six years ago. Waterloo Township was the rural "doughnut or onion ring" surrounding Kitchener/Waterloo in the centre, increasingly eaten away by annexations. Elizabeth Bloomfield here has attempted "a computer-assisted historical/bibliographical approach" to its development to capture "the persisting and valuable essence of the township."