

[Canada, Department of Agriculture] *List of Canadian Patents, From the Beginning of the Patent Office, June, 1824, to the 31st of August, 1872.* Ottawa: Roger & Co., 1882. Fascimile reproduction by Gordon Publications and Reproductions, 929 Alpine Avenue, Ottawa, K2B 5R9, 1979. Pp. 222. \$7.50

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responses and problems which were unique. Similarly, P.J. Smith's essay on "The Principle of Utility and the Origins of Planning Legislation in Alberta, 1912-1975" is superb. Tracing the influence of British ideas, especially Utilitarianism, on the thinking of Canadian reformers, he is able to make an excellent case study of Alberta and the relevance of its experience for those of us who have never visited that province.

Although I would prefer that the other authors also focus more on the comparative dimension, Peter Moore's, "Zoning and Planning: The Toronto Experience, 1904-1970"; Max Foran's, "Land Development Patterns in Calgary, 1884-1945"; Oiva Saarinen's, "The Influence of Thomas Adams and the British New Towns Movement in the Planning of Canadian Resource Communities;" and Shirley Spragge's, "A Confluence of Interests: Housing Reform in Toronto, 1900-1920" maintain the high standards of the book. Walter Van Nus' study of zoning between the wars is solid, but in need of a broader framework.

Artibise and Stelter have appended "A Brief Guide to Canadian Urban Studies" to the book. Taken individually or as a group, these essays will be of considerable utility to both American and Canadian scholars because the two countries have shared so much in terms of language and geography even while diverging substantially in terms of their political and cultural traditions. I plan to adopt the book in my course in American urban history.

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[Canada, Department of Agriculture]. *List of Canadian Patents, From the Beginning of the Patent Office, June, 1824, to the 31st of August, 1872.* Ottawa: Roger & Co., 1882. Fascimile reproduction by Gordon Publications and Reproductions, 929 Alpine Avenue, Ottawa, K2B 5R9, 1979. Pp. 222. \$7.50.

Canada's present accumulation of patents of invention, poetry, and political platforms are all part of a record of human creativity, need, and ingenuity. The most distinctive feature of the patents of invention is the degree to which they have been ignored almost completely by Canadian scholars. Perhaps the fascimile reproduction of the very scarce *List of Canadian Patents* will encourage greater use of an exceedingly rich mirror of Canadian culture. Not all patented ideas became saleable products; nonetheless, like unfulfilled political promises, they do provide insight into the nature of society, its perceived problems, aspirations, potential, achievements, and failures.

The first Patent Act in Canada was passed in March 1824 in Lower Canada, and two years later a similar act was passed in Upper Canada. By August 1872 almost 5,000 patents had been issued in what then constituted Canada, and to date there are over 1,000,000. In 1873 the *Canadian Patent Office Record* appeared and with it the first regular publication of Canadian patent information. In apparent recognition of the difficulty of obtaining information on pre-1873 patents, the *List of Canadian Patents* was published, a slim blue covered paperback which since then has been referred to in patent circles as The Blue

Book.¹

The Blue Book lists patents in numerical, and hence roughly chronological, order. There is no index, although a recently compiled index will soon be published in the National Museum of Man's Mercury Series. Each entry gives patent number, name of patentee and/or assignee, place of residence, descriptive title, and date. More detailed information is available from the Patent Office if the file has not been lost or destroyed. It is relatively easy to examine a particular year or defined period of time. However, anyone wishing to examine activity in a field - say agriculture, sanitation or sawmilling - or a particular region or city must read the book from cover to cover. The seemingly endless references to improved churns, spinning wheels, smut mills, mowing, reaping and haying machines are a natural reflection of a predominantly rural society. Other items are a reminder of the variety of pursuits and occupations which influence our culture: No. 1154, "A new and improved Galvanic Battery and Electric Helix"; No. 2059, "A new and useful reversible Forge-rolling machine"; No. 3198, "An artificial Stone"; No. 3223, "An improvement in the manufacture of Cast Iron Columns"; No. 165 (Act of 1869), "Improvements on machines for Carving wood." Frequently patents are the only surviving clear record of an idea.

To date, two types of writing

have drawn heavily on Canadian patents. One group is aimed at Christmas sales and intellectual titillation and includes Janis Nostbakken and Jack Humphrey, *The Canadian Inventions Book: Innovations, Discoveries, and Firsts* (Toronto: Grey de Pencier, 1976). Books of this *genre* flit from invention to invention with little hint at thesis or understanding. At the other end of the spectrum, J.J. Brown, *Ideas In Exile: A History of Canadian Invention* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), stands alone, exceedingly informative but with oft-questionable thesis and claims. Clearly there is need for improvement, and works such as *Ideas in Exile* and *The Canadian Inventions Book* show there is no lack of raw material.

The historiography of Canadian technology is described charitably as embryonic. Hence there is no easy way for historians in other fields to see what might be of potential use. It is not unfair to say that Canadian urban historians might benefit by paying more attention to technological factors. Historians of particular cities might look to its inventors as a part of the record of intellectual achievement. Historians of the fabric of cities will find much of interest in areas such as construction equipment, building components, sanitation, illumination, heating, ventilation, and power. Scholars who are interested in the changing

1 For a brief introduction to the history of Canadian patent regulation and literature see Margaret Coleman, *The Canadian Patent Office from its Beginnings to 1900*. National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Research Bulletin No. 32 (Ottawa, 1976). The same paper was republished in The Association for Preservation Technology, *Bulletin*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (1976), pp. 56-63.

occupations, which are the truest expression of the nature of a city, also will find patents richly rewarding.

At a time when facsimile reprints of this length often sell for \$30.00, The Blue Book is a bargain at \$7.50. The historical profession owes a word of thanks to Gordon Publications, a one-man basement operation run by a professional engineer/patent examiner who believes patents of invention are an important part of the historical record.

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Public Archives of Canada

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Preston, Howard L. *Automobile Age Atlanta: The Making of a Southern Metropolis*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979. Pp. xix, 203. Tables, maps, illustrations. \$12.00.

Urban history in the United States has generally had a sociological focus, the inhabitants of each city more often studied than the city itself. Accordingly there have been few studies of the city-building process in that country, with the automotive era especially neglected. Howard Preston's brief examination of Atlanta's accommodation between 1900 and 1935 to the automobile, thus makes an important contribution to our understanding of American urban development.

As the epitome of the New South, Atlanta in the late 1890s revealed how backward the region yet remained. Victimized by low cotton prices and Northern exploitation, Atlanta lagged far behind cities like Boston and

Philadelphia in population and development. Spatially, Atlanta in 1903 resembled a walking city, with more money budgeted for sidewalks than for streets. The wealthy still lived, as in a pre-industrial city, near downtown, their mansions adorning Peachtree Street, the only asphalted thoroughfare in Atlanta. The city, a metropolis neither functionally nor spatially, had only limited growth prospects, that is, until the advent of the automobile.

Preston, devoting an entire chapter to the 1909 Atlanta automobile show, the first in the South, stresses that the city's boosters early recognized the economic potential of the motor vehicle industry. By making Atlanta the distribution centre for the Southeast for automobiles, parts, and services they sparked the city's "economic awakening" and its transformation over two decades into a regional metropolis. In addition, Atlanta's leadership in the Southern "good roads" movement helped make the city the hub of the regional highway system. Economically, the automobile was, according to Preston, a blessing. "The automobile industry came south to create market demand for its product and not, as other northern enterprises had done in the past, to rob the region of its raw materials." In other words, the automobile contributed to Atlanta's decolonization.

The motor car had an equally dramatic impact on the city spatially. Rapid decentralization ensued, with the economic elite leading the rush to suburbia after 1910. To an unusual degree Preston emphasizes the "push" factors behind their flight. In 1910 auto garages began sprouting up amongst the Peachtree Street mansions, as