

Wall, Geoffrey, and John S. Marsh, eds. *Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982. Pp. 436. Illustrations. \$14.95

C. J. Taylor

Volume 14, Number 2, October 1985

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1018007ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018007ar>

[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, C. J. (1985). Review of [Wall, Geoffrey, and John S. Marsh, eds. *Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982. Pp. 436. Illustrations. \$14.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 14(2), 221–222.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1018007ar>

in Upper Canada, and its effect on Hamilton's operations. His policy of bringing out cousins, training them and setting them up in business, in the end meant that he had himself created several of his leading rivals. The careers of Hamilton's sons is also discussed, their trials and tribulations clearly demonstrate the problems faced by a second generation in trying to equal the career of the founder. As Wilson notes, the lack of success of the sons in commerce, and their turning to office holding, established a precedent followed by many other Upper Canadian mercantile and official families. The changing character and economy of early nineteenth century Upper Canada seems to have been inimical to the founding of important dynasties. In Hamilton's case, as Wilson also points out, the father's training his cousins but spoiling his sons may have had a great deal to do with the long-term dynastic failure. Although the book includes tables of commercial statistics and maps showing Hamilton's land speculations, there are no genealogical tables showing the Scottish kinship relations, marriage contacts and Hamilton's sons and their offices, which would be of great assistance as references.

For the urban historian the study has a great deal of interest, as it deals with some of the first urban nuclei of the colony, and shows how the metropolis of Montreal, or possibly London operating through Montreal, dominated the western hinterlands. It also shows something of the very beginnings of the rise of Toronto from the point of view of the hinterland magnates. More broadly, what we have in Wilson's Hamilton is a study of the Upper Canadian merchant at the opposite end of Upper Canadian history from McCalla's Buchanan; at a period of rapid transition when the first primitive settlements of the colony were developing into a united province. Hamilton, as Wilson states, represented an era; his biography provides a good picture of the pioneer merchant in the continental Mid-West in the era of transition from wilderness to settled colony.

F.H. Armstrong
Department of History
University of Western Ontario

Wall, Geoffrey, and John S. Marsh, eds. *Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982. Pp. 436. Illustrations. \$14.95.

The term "recreational land" includes those areas, including parks, that are used for recreational purposes. Though pedantic, it is useful for allowing the inclusion of multi-purpose land in a discussion of outdoor recreation along with more formally defined parks. The essays included in this selection discuss a variety of aspects of outdoor recreation, largely from the perspective of the historical geographer.

Generally comprised of case studies, they explore the reasons for the development of recreational land and the conflicting pressures these bring to the planning process. Topics range from the development of national, provincial and municipal parks to the growth of commercial tourist areas. The essays also examine activities as diverse as pioneer recreation, canoeing and snowmobiling.

Many of the articles were originally published in the 1970s and include pioneering studies by J.G. Nelson, R.I. Wolfe and G. Killan. The editors have also added new works in an effort to better represent the themes and regions of recreational land development in Canada. The articles are grouped into several sections covering themes of rural and urban development and outdoor leisure activities. The whole is introduced by an overview written by the editors—"Themes in the Investigation of the Evolution of Outdoor Recreation"—and by a lead article written by Geoffrey Wall entitled "Recreation Resource Evaluation, Changing Views."

Books of this type that rely on available articles to examine a comprehensive theme are inevitably limited by the chance nature of the selection. In this case the choice is complicated by the multi-disciplinary nature of the field. Most of these articles were originally penned for a variety of reasons for a number of special audiences. The resulting collection is therefore uneven and there are a number of holes in the coverage. The articles, written by planners, geographers and historians, sometimes present conflicting ideas. Some are laden with jargon and esoteric references while others are excessively bland. The article by Battin and Nelson, for example, "Recreation and Conservation: The Struggle for Balance in Point Pelee National Park, 1918-1978," while interesting from a planning perspective, is very simplistic in its historical analysis.

The difficulties of satisfactorily treating a subject by using randomly written articles are readily apparent in the section on urban recreation. Two useful articles by E. McFarland, "The Beginnings of Municipal Parks Systems" and "The Development of Supervised Playgrounds," document the emergence of the parks idea in Canadian cities. Although weak on context and analysis, they point to the contradictory philosophies that promoted parks both as physical recreation areas and as gardens. W.C. McKee's article on the Vancouver parks system looks at the motivation behind the establishment of parks in that city. It too is weak on analysis, however, and the central argument that businessmen promoted parks for their own economic ends is not convincing. Having introduced the notion of recreational land in order to broaden the discussion beyond parks, it is unfortunate that the section on urban recreational land is confined to this traditional form. There is no discussion of broader planning concerns. Heritage preservation, for example, would have been an apt topic. Yet this aspect of recreational land use is poorly served by V.A. Konrad's highly esoteric "Historical Artifacts as Recreational Resources."

Many of the problems of this heterogeneous collection—especially the lack of cohesion and references to larger contexts—could have been overcome by a good introduction. Unfortunately the introduction is one of the weakest essays of the collection. Although there are many themes the editors could have brought together, such as the relation between cities and recreational land, they chose instead to offer weak generalizations. Cities are barely mentioned as the editors concentrate on wilderness preservation. Their thesis that recreational land development is marked by continuity and change seems particularly unenlightening. While most will find one or two articles that are useful, most too will still hunger for a more meaty look at the evolution of recreational land use in Canada.

C.J. Taylor
National Historic Parks and Sites
Parks Canada
Ottawa

Contents

Themes in the investigation of the evolution of outdoor recreation, *J. Marsh* and *G. Wall*; Changing views of the land as a recreational resource, *G. Wall*; Pioneer recreation and social life, *E. Morgan*; Canada's national parks: past, present and future, *J.G. Nelson*; The evolution of recreation in Glacier National Park, British Columbia, 1880 to present, *J. Marsh*; Recreation and conservation: the struggle for balance in Point Pelee National Park, *J.G. Battin* and *J.G. Nelson*; The evolution of the Ontario Provincial Park system, *K. Morrison*; The development of tourism in Nova Scotia, *C.A. Moffat*; The changing patterns of tourism in Ontario, *R.I. Wolfe*; Recreational land use in Muskoka, *G. Wall*; Northern Ontario's tourist frontier, *J. Benidickson*; The development of tourist accommodation in the Montreal Laurentians, *J. Lundgren*; A history of recreation on the Trent-Severn Waterway, *F. Helleiner*; Banff townscape: an historical-geographical view of urban development in a Canadian national park, *R.C. Scace*; Mowat and a park policy for Niagara Falls, 1873-1887, *G. Killan*; The fluctuating fortunes of water-based recreational places, *G. Wall*; The beginning of municipal park systems, *E. McFarland*; The development of supervised playgrounds, *E. McFarland*; The Vancouver park system, 1886-1929; a product of local business, *W.C. McKee*; The Canadian National Exhibition: mirror of Canadian society, *G. Wall* and *N. Zalkind*; Paddling for pleasure: recreational canoeing as a Canadian way of life, *J. Benidickson*; Camping for fun: a brief history of camping in North America, *G. Wall* and *R. Wallis*; Tourism development, conservation and conflict: game laws for caribou protection in Newfoundland, *J. Overton*; The development of snowmobiles in Canada, *R.W. Butler*; Historical artifacts as recreational resources, *V.A. Konrad*; Outdoor recreation and the Canadian identity, *G. Wall*.

Russell, Victor L. *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. Pp. vii, 360. Index. \$12.95.

Of the numerous works printed in celebration of the sesquicentennial of the City of Toronto, this is one of the better. With a good introduction, Victor Russell, Manager

of the City of Toronto archives, co-ordinates the talents of eleven of the best scholars researching Toronto's history. The well-written essays, based on solid research, furnish new detail about public ownership, utilities, urban politics, construction and civic pride. The overall theme of this collection of essays portrays Toronto as a city that works, one with a distinctive civic culture based on stability through consensus. One cannot quarrel with what is said so much as with what is not said by the editor and contributors.

The major problem with this consensual approach to Toronto is naivety. Cities are complex social systems and Toronto, among them, is by no means unique. It seems that "the holism" of Robert Redfield and Milton Singer is a sub-conscious element in this particular consensual theory, for Russell, like these urban anthropologists, parallels "an urban homogeneity that discounts ghettos, unassimilated urban migrants, ethnic conflicts and all other behavioral and ideological disparities that define an urban centre."

In his article, "A Struggle for Authority," Paul Romney concludes that "the politics of ethnic and ideological fragmentation would give way to those of pluralistic consensus: a limited tolerance of diversity. . . ." This statement tends to indicate that Romney was selective in his reading. Certainly the *Toronto Mirror*, the second *Canadian Freeman* or the *Irish Canadian* fail to support Romney's conclusion of ethnic consensus between 1840 and 1890. Moreover, the Irish press showed the politics of ethnic conflict. Similarly, Gregory Kealey, in his persistent search for an unified working class, begins his article, "Orangemen and the Corporation" with the statement that "ethnicity and religion do not stand outside class." Yet, he dismisses any attempt to define ethnicity and religion within the framework of what he considers "class" to be. Furthermore, he fails to discuss what the Orange Order represented and what and whom it opposed. Nicholas Rogers in his article, "Serving Toronto the Good," would have us believe that the involvement of the Orange Order with the police force was "openly tolerated on the implicit assumption that it would not embroil the force in party politics" and therefore the police were "no longer a political weapon." Actually the police, politicians and Orange Order were elements in a vast protestant apparatus that kept Toronto within their power well into the twentieth century and therefore one wonders what was their "significant contribution to the making of Toronto the Good," beyond shutting out Irish Catholics from civic employment.

Perhaps the inclusion of additional articles would have modified this illusionary consensus. Material is available demonstrating that an elite group, representing a Protestant majority, held hegemony over the city and led it to metropolitan dominance. Irish Catholics, who formed one-quarter of the city's population in 1850 were locked out of its political, social and economic life. To them the city was a 'hollow-town'; consensus meant assimilation and loss of ethno-reli-