

## "We Shall Be as a City Upon a Hill": John Winthrop's Vision and the Urban History of New England

Lamphere, Louise. *From Working Daughters to Working Mothers: Immigrant Women in a New England Industrial Community*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1987. Pp. xviii, 391 Appendices, bibliography, index, tables. \$45.00 (U.S.)

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experience that the photographs in this section are so very apt. Paired photographs, taken only two years apart, show the remnants of trees pulled from superb farmland to be replaced by the non-descript architecture which passes for modernity and "progress." Another plate (#58) shows literally the signs of the city to come and then farm buildings being razed to add to the recently constructed shopping centre.

The most dramatic plate relates to a section of Etobicoke, which, in the space of 15 years, was utterly transformed with the building of Highway 401. But the plates on pages 68 and 69 are equally as meaningful. On the former, cows graze in front of a barn-yard, located three kilometres from Woodstock; in the background grain is stacked. In the subsequent shot of this same location 70 years later, the cows, grain and barn-yard are all gone; the landscape in an "eclipsed form" awaits the inevitable factories and housing. Page 69 shows an old rural road being remade as a city street, the street incorporating a plaque commemorating a world famous dairy cow and the farm whence it came!

In a chapter on hamlets and villages, Martin documents the steady decline in the villages and hamlets as changing spatial relationships and transportation affect their functions, but plate 88 serves to remind one that change can be revolutionary. This plate shows the village of Iroquois whose heart was destroyed to accommodate the St. Lawrence Seaway and its associated hydro-electric scheme.

The subsequent chapter distinguishes between village and town on the basis, of course, of function and size, but also on the "rule of thumb" that at the centre of a town, the "downtown", would have at least a block built up with three storey structures. The chapter reminds us of the ever present agent of fire as a force for change, that the roads of these towns were not asphalt and required boardwalks and that the past is manifest most

especially at second floor level since first floors have often been removed from the street because of the aesthetic offence they create.

In chapter 6, entitled "Cities," the stress is upon technology, which, Martin holds, set in motion the building of the city by improvements in transportation, and which provided the means of vertical expansion.

The chapter shows how much that was fine in our older cities has been drastically affected by the banking industry, by the city fathers and by those bent on "urban renewal." Much that was distinct and pleasing has been removed to be replaced by the bland. This is well illustrated by pages 124 and 125, which serve to illustrate not only the changes in transportation from trolley-car to omnibus to automobile, but the wanton destruction of much that was pleasing in St. George's Square, Guelph.

It is also exemplified on pages 140 and 141, in photographs of Toronto Street, in the city of that name. This, Martin notes, has been described "as the street which died"; a street from which "perhaps the finest grouping of nineteenth century commercial buildings on the continent" was removed to accommodate a parking garage and some office buildings, including an architectural monstrosity erected on behalf of Revenue Canada. Here, as elsewhere, Martin does not mince words, and since his values are mine I am sympathetic.

The chapter also contains useful photographs that illustrate the process by which streetscapes are changed as fire destroys, as streets are incorporated into the city replacing pine trees with telephone posts and concrete buildings. There is much to lament here, but there are also positive reminders. Our city streets have less mud and fewer "pot-holes" and the twentieth-century city is, at night, much better lit than its earlier counter-part, which in the absence of street-lighting was pitch black unless the moon shone.

Well enough! There are other chapters germane to those interested in things urban such as transportation and industry, chapters which can also stand in their own right, but these three serve to "savour the flavour."

This book will be of interest to urban and social historians, to landscape architects and to cultural and historical geographers. It presents some marked contrasts, even for those who might be expected to be so familiar with landscape to admit to surprise; one of the most telling demonstrations is that trees are now more abundant than at any time during the past century. The book can be used as illustrative material in teaching.

Who will buy it? I am not sure, but we will all be grateful that this innovative piece exists. I am sure the author hopes that his book will be a financial success. In a day and age in which government philosophy seems to be that success is to be measured in dollars, we may have to be grateful to the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Office of the Secretary of State for their insights: works such as this one may well remind us of the important function of such agencies. My personal thanks to Virgil Margin.

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***"We Shall Be as a City Upon a Hill": John Winthrop's Vision and the Urban History of New England***

"We Shall Be as a City Upon a Hill," Governor John Winthrop exhorted his fellow emigrants on the flagship *Arabella* shortly before the great Puritan expedition of 1630 discharged its passengers on to the shores of Boston harbour. Winthrop's fleet of eleven ships was not the first to bring religious dissenters to the area: a small congregation of separatists form

Scrooby, England and Leyden, Holland (the Pilgrims) had been trying to wrest a living from the cod and corn of Plymouth since 1620; and transient groups of West Country fishermen and religious zealots had planted tenuous little settlements in 1623, 1628 and 1629 at modern-day Dorchester and Salem. But the history of Massachusetts, of Puritanism in the New World, of New England, began in earnest with the arrival of the seven-hundred men and women who together with Winthrop founded the towns of Cambridge and Boston as the urban heart of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

To some historians and to much of the popular culture of the next three centuries, the history of the American nation also began with the arrival of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans. The first English men in North America, the Jamestown settlers of 1607, are curiously shortshrined in American folkculture. In the hazy, collective portrait Americans have of their distant past, the Puritan has always towered above the other early settlers in the picture. Not only have they provided the visual imagery — pointed hats, shiny buckles, black and white clothes — they have also provided the controlling metaphor of the American mission. No one ever expressed this better than Winthrop. In the same shipboard sermon, he predicted that "men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England . . . the eyes of all people are upon us."

The arrogance of Winthrop and this little settlement of Puritans — the sheer effrontery of this assertion of preeminence — would quickly have been unmasked for its absurdity except for one niggling point: Winthrop turned out to be right. The eyes of much of the world have been upon the Puritans, New England, the American Revolution and the United States ever since; and the sense of being a city upon a hill has remained at the core of American self-definition. So, too, within the American nation, New England has continued to provide more than its fair share of the standards, the benchmarks and the

definitions for the rest of the country. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the world of academic historical writing. Historians write far more about New England than they do about any other region. Partly, the over-emphasis is a function of the disproportionate number of colleges and universities in New England which creates a sizeable professoriat looking for scholarly targets. Partly, it is a function of the successful hornblowing which started with Winthrop and the Puritans. And, partly, the over-emphasis reflects the reality of an American past in which New England has indeed played the most conspicuous role. Other sections of the United States have identities as discrete historical regions: the South as tragic anachronism; the West as egalitarian democracy; Texas and California as wild or wacky cultural icons. But all of these *regions* have *regional* histories. Only New England's past purports to speak for the nation.

The three books reviewed below are distinguished examples of the New England genre of historical writing that says: as goes New England so goes the nation. All three authors are far too sophisticated either to state explicitly or even to believe that this could possibly be true. Yet, all three are rather like Emily Dickenson who described her views of the world to a friend by saying: "I think New Englandly." Each of the three books examines changes in the industrial economy and the effects of these changes on the social structure of a community or system of communities. Each book by itself makes a major contribution to labour, economic and urban history: taken together, they add a new lush layer to the historiography of communities and of industrial capitalism in New England and the United States.

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Louise Lamphere's analysis of the two spheres of family and work in Central Falls, Rhode Island is the product of amazingly creative research. An anthropologist by formal training, Lamphere worked in the mills of Central Falls as a participant-observer to learn of her subject firsthand. She also supervised a team of researchers that conducted lengthy family interviews — some as long as eight hours with members of one family — and she combined all of this with traditional qualitative and quantitative historical research extending back to 1790 and the first federal census. Moreover, Lamphere situated her evidence in a sophisticated theoretical framework and presents it in a lively narrative. The result is a book that should win major prizes.

The heart of Lamphere's argument centres on changes in the conditions of working women over the course of the twentieth century. In 1915, the year for which she collects the bulk of her data for the early part of the century, most women working in the mills were unmarried daughters living at home with their parents. By contrast, in 1977, the end-date of her analysis, most of the working women were married and mothers of young children. At both ends of the time span, working women tended to be poor and to be from identifiable ethnic groups, usually of recent origin in the area, French Canadian, Irish and