Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine



Rudin, Ronald. Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878–1908. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 290. Illustrations, photographs, maps. \$60.00 (hardcover) \$27.95 (paperback)

John C. Walsh

Volume 33, Number 1, Fall 2004

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1015681ar DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1015681ar

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

Walsh, J. C. (2004). Review of [Rudin, Ronald. Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878–1908. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 290. Illustrations, photographs, maps. \$60.00 (hardcover) \$27.95 (paperback)]. Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 33(1), 59–60. https://doi.org/10.7202/1015681ar

All Rights Reserved © Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 2004

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/



This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Bref, Manufacturing Montreal offre une analyse détaillée du déploiement de la structure industrielle montréalaise et remet sérieusement en question plusieurs notions acceptées quant aux modalités et à la chronologie de ce développement en Amérique du Nord. À cet égard, sa démonstration est impeccable. Toutefois, les thèses de Lewis à propos de l'apparition et de l'évolution des banlieues ouvrières de Montréal, bien qu'intéressantes, demeurent incomplètes et ne sont pas aussi solidement argumentées que celles concernant l'activité industrielle. Plus largement, l'ouvrage de Lewis nous amène à nous interroger sur l'utilisation des concepts de suburbanisation et de banlieue. Ces dernières années. l'évocation et l'étude d'un nombre grandissant de « variétés » suburbaines donne l'impression d'un éclatement de ces concepts. Lewis a certainement raison lorsqu'il affirme qu'on ne peut pas s'en tenir aux frontières politiques existantes lorsqu'on veut définir ces termes, mais il faut se demander jusqu'à quel moment on peut considérer certaines des banlieues annexées par Montréal comme avant toujours un caractère suburbain. Il n'en demeure pas moins que Manufacturing Montreal constitue un jalon important dans l'évolution de ce débat plus large sur la notion de banlieue.

Harold Bérubé Urbanisation, culture et société Institut national de recherche scientifique

Rudin, Ronald. Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878–1908. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 290. Illustrations, photographs, maps. \$60.00 (hardcover) \$27.95 (paperback).

Like a classic mystery, Ronald Rudin's *Founding Fathers* begins with the discovery of a body. But Rudin's book is no whodunit. Rather, this book's opening chapter explains what others did with the discovered body of Monsignor Laval in 1878. Rudin argues effectively that the body of the first bishop of New France became a point of departure for ultramontane celebrations of the history and survival of the French-Canadian nation.

In the reinterment of Laval, Quebec City's legacy as a Catholic bulwark in Canada and North America reverberated throughout the parades and speeches. In his second chapter, Rudin then sets the Catholic icon Laval against the body and memory of Samuel de Champlain who, like Laval, was memorialized in 1898 with the building of a magnificent statue. Unlike the religiosity that surrounded Laval's body, the Champlain monument was decidedly secular, seeking to emphasize and promote the accomplishments of both the historic French colonial state and the ensuing and enduring French-Canadian nation that had persevered since the Conquest.

The last two chapters of the book deal with 1908 when Laval's statue was unveiled in the spring to be followed later in the summer by the celebration of Quebec City's 300th anniversary, a celebration that, as H. V. Nelles explored so beautifully in

his *The Art of Nation-Building* (1999), was really a celebration of 1760 and the ascendancy of a British Canada. By the end of the book, however, the discovered body of Laval seems like a distant memory for the reader. And perhaps this is appropriate, for as Rudin explains in his conclusion, both Laval and Champlain receded from popular consciousness after World War II, their memories less valuable politically and culturally for a post–Quiet Revolution Quebec.

The strengths in this book reflect the historiographical context in which it was written. In both the introduction and conclusion, the reader can see how this book dovetails rather nicely with Rudin's much-discussed study of scholarly historical consciousness in Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec (1997). In that earlier book, Rudin took to task what he called the "normalization" of Quebec by the "post-revisionists," who he believed had downplayed, and to some extent forgot, what was unique to Quebec's history both before and after 1760: the relationship between church and state. In Founding Fathers, the recurring theme is the uneasy, fractious, and complex relationship between French-Canadian nationalism and Catholicism. In the case of both Laval and Champlain, contemporaries argued over how to combine these two elements of Quebec's history struggles, Rudin argues, that permeated Quebec society and politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While very much aware of Quebec's place in a larger world, and the importance of that larger world on Quebec, Rudin also goes to great lengths to emphasize that the ever-present ultramontane forces in Quebec gave the events of 1878, 1898, and 1908 something unique and different from the rest of the memorializing world. Whether one agrees or not with Rudin's suppositions and/or conclusions, this book and the historian behind it deserve our admiration for not only diagnosing a problem but also offering a solution.

For all that, however, readers of this journal will be somewhat disappointed by the rather passive role played by Quebec City as a city and as a civic community in this book. In 1908, Quebec City was by any measure the pre-eminent ville de mémoire in Canada, its citizens well-versed in the culture of memorialization (parades, monuments, parties, decorations, tourists). The impact of this culture on the city and its residents is not, however, of much interest to Rudin in this book. Despite the remarkable photographs provided by Rudin showing the immense crowds that appeared for the events of 1878, 1898, and 1908, as readers we are rarely taken into the crowd. Here one wishes Rudin had adopted a more anthropological stance and sought to explore what being in the crowd felt like, not from the point of view of one of those elite organizers on the stages, but one of those countless Quebec City residents who—alone, with families, and with friends—made way to the celebrations and in fact became part of them. Laval's body was on display in a glass coffin in 1878, but so too were the bodies of tens of thousands of the city's residents who embedded themselves in the celebration of that body.

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

While such an analysis would have required some different research questions, Rudin occasionally does not consider more fully what his evidence does show. In 1878, 1898, and again in the spring of 1908, Rudin demonstrates how various stakeholders within Quebec City used the memorialization of Laval and Champlain to affirm, extend, and even transcend a number of community boundaries central to the everyday lives of Quebeckers. Even when the intent was to reach out to people from outside of Quebec City, the intent was to (re)connect these others to the city and what the city had historically meant for French-Canadian identity. In the case of the tercentenary, when this message was of little interest to Earl Grey's organization. Armand Lavergne told the House of Commons that "we must remember that we are now in 1908; that Quebec was founded in 1608 and that we are not celebrating the second centenary of the battle on the Plains of Abraham, but the third centenary of the founding of the city of Quebec." Rudin provides this quotation by remarking that Lavergne "was no doubt speaking for many Quebecers" when he said this (173).

What Rudin's evidence also suggests is that there were two different notions of community at work in Quebec City during 1908. For the monument of Laval, there was—as was the case with Laval's body in 1878 and Champlain's monument in 1898 an intense effort by organizers to create horizontal bonds of community that sought to address various sub-communities (ethnic, religious, class, and gender) within the city. Even when there were hierarchies, such as in the case of the 1898 celebrations, there were also efforts to reach across boundaries of difference to create a larger and more inclusive civic community. This was not the case for the tercentenary, where the specific elements of Quebec City were of little or no interest to organizers who sought instead to talk about the imagined community of Canada as a nation-state. The tercentary did not speak to the citizens of Quebec City directly, and the bonds of community it celebrated were, despite their efforts to be inclusive (British, French, Aboriginal) undeniably vertical, with a triumphant Anglo-Canadian nation at the top and all others equally below.

Rudin seems to understand the role of neo-imperialism, but his overriding concern with "French-Candians," which he explicitly defines (236n7) as referring to all of Quebec, rather than "French-Canadians in Quebec City," sometimes hinders the analysis and relegates the city to the role of stage for another, seemingly larger and thus more important, history. Place, however, matters more than this, and urban historians in particular will lament its relative unimportance here. But for those scholars of the city interested in the politics of commemoration, and the production of commemorative space, there is much in this book to absorb and to consider.

John C. Walsh
Department of History
Carleton University

Dagenais, Michèle, Irene Maver, and Pierre-Yves Saunier. Municipal Services and Employees in the Modern City: New Historic Approaches. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003. Pp. xii, 238. US\$84.95 (hardcover).

This is an important book. Not only do we learn a great deal about the ways in which services have been delivered at the municipal level and all the complexities about who delivers them, we also gain valuable insights into issues of professionalization and its links to expertise, training, unionization, bureaucratization, management theories and practices, creation of new knowledge and new methods of acquiring knowledge, and the impact of industrialization and urbanization on urban public services. From this we gain a fresh perspective on the crucial role played by municipal governments at the turn of the century in the development of the new knowledges of the 20th century: engineering and the social sciences. And finally, the material in the book brings strong support to those who find the literature on "rescaling" an important perspective for understanding the processes by which societies decide who does what, where, and why. In looking at municipal services and municipal employees across Europe, and North and South America, the contributors provide rich material for examining the interrelations of local and central levels of the state and of local and central levels of voluntary and professional associations and the ways in which state and non-state actors maximize their interests through scalar strategies. It is always useful to be reminded of the multiplicity, and the complexity, of strategies that have been used. Industrialization and urbanization were transforming cities all across Europe and the Americas in the late 19th century, and the collection of detailed case studies brought together in this book illustrate the rich variety of strategies used to develop municipal services, policy transfers from one city to another, "jumping scale" to use the resources of different levels of political action or to avoid barriers or opposition at some particular level, multi-level governance in combining state and civil society strategies for change.

A recurring theme in the book is the link between the new scientific methods of the early 20th century, key municipal officials, and innovative public services. This emerges around the key role of engineers in Italian cities in the chapters by Filippo De Pieri on Turin and by Roberto Ferretti on Italy-wide trends in local government. Michèle Dagenais' chapter on municipal management in Montreal in the 1930s emphasizes the importance of new management techniques (reforms to financial and personnel systems) introduced by new and more professionalized bureaucrats whose expertise came more from formal training than from municipal experience. Another version of this theme comes out in the chapter on American fire departments by Amy Greenberg, in which she argues that the change from volunteer to professional fire departments had more to do with the ideology of professionalism (along with the introduction of steam engines and the role of fire insurance companies) than the traditionally accepted interpretations of an inevitable reaction to urbanization and/or as a means to control unruly volun-