

Karni, M.G., ed. *Finnish Diaspora I: Canada, South America, Africa, Australia and Sweden. Finnish Diaspora II: United States*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981. Vol. I. Pp.. xiv, 305. Vol.. II. Pp.. xii, 319

Peter V. Krats

Volume 12, numéro 2, october 1983

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1018969ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018969ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Krats, P. V. (1983). Compte rendu de [Karni, M.G., ed. *Finnish Diaspora I: Canada, South America, Africa, Australia and Sweden. Finnish Diaspora II: United States*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981. Vol. I. Pp.. xiv, 305. Vol. II. Pp.. xii, 319]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 12(2), 148–150. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1018969ar>

community staging and the characteristic form(s) of Vancouver's urban environment today.

A reprint article (1978) on resource towns by Stelter and Artibise winds up the fifteen essay collection. Resource towns constitute a distinct urban species within the economic and cultural geography of Canada. They are very much a part of economic development history, and also intimately linked with the history of ideational themes in planning. The Stelter/Artibise essay essentially synthesizes extant research, providing thereby a decent overview of the role of resource towns in the frontier economy, their social character, and the evolution of plan motifs. It is, however, much too light on the discussion of "function" and "form." There are a couple of impressions conveyed by this essay that are, in my view, erroneous. While the earliest resource towns were, strictly speaking, "company towns" by virtue of the authorities who designed, built and ran them, and the more recent ones are not company creations in the same terms, the latter are *in reality* company towns in social-cultural and political meaning. The newer public institutional formalities governing resource town planning and municipal governance have not altered (or remedied) significantly the social issues that flow from the single enterprise structure. In another vein, Stelter and Artibise are not correct in giving the impression that no cognizance was given to the British models of Port Sunlight, Bourneville, and other such garden-city schemes. True for the pre-1920 period; but in the "interwar-years" episode of new town building, Canadian company managers and experts were being sent to England to study ideas and accomplishments of these model towns. All in all, however, the essay on resource towns does provide a good rounded introduction to the topic as well as an historical appreciation according to chronological phases.

In summation, this collection is a valuable reference for a variety of students of Canadian history, and not just the "urbs." I would hope, too, that selections from it will find their way into Canadian planning schools' curricula, government studies and political science.

Finally, *Shaping the Urban Landscape* provides a good set of building block materials for researchers working in the design history fields, such as architecture, civic design, and planning. There are a number of stages set in the book upon which the particularized and the comprehensively interpreted dramas in historical Canadian urbanism can be played.

William T. Perks
Professor of Urbanism and Planning
University of Calgary

NOTES

1 Earlier co-edited works by Artibise and Stelter are *The Canadian City*, no. 109 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1977); *The Usable*

Urban Past, no. 119 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1979); and *Canada's Urban Past: A Bibliography to 1980* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981).

2 See E.W. Cooney, "The Origins of the Victorian Master Builders," *Economic History Review*, vol. VIII (1955), cited by Buggey in footnote 32.

Karni, M.G., ed. *Finnish Diaspora I: Canada, South America, Africa, Australia and Sweden. Finnish Diaspora II: United States*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981. Vol. I. Pp. xiv, 305. Vol. II. Pp. xii, 319.

I was born a Finn
I had to leave my childhood home
In search of work, in order to live
To a foreign land I had to roam.¹

A major demographic factor, Finnish emigration has drawn the attention of scholars in that country. Meanwhile, the Finnish immigrant community has produced "ethnic" histories of widely varying quality. The latter have played an important role in the collection of a surprising volume of resources which, of late, have found archival protection.²

These beginnings have promoted further study of the Finnish immigrant experience. Scholars of emigration and immigration came together in conferences held in Duluth (1974) and Thunder Bay (1975).³ Their efforts, supported by a growing body of graduate research, moved Finnish immigration studies beyond fileo-pietism or ethnic antiquarianism. Indications of the progress made, and the questions which remain, can be had in *Finnish Diaspora*.

The papers in these volumes were presented at the "Finn Forum" held in Toronto, November 1979. Some essays are quite reflective of their "Forum" counterparts; others, more finished than the busy schedule of that conference would permit. In any event, these papers suggest they myriad of approaches pertinent to immigration studies. Contributors include non-academics as well as specialists in sociology, linguistics, geography, history and other disciplines. These studies stretch beyond national, or even continental boundaries: Finns in Latin America, South Africa, Australia and Sweden, as well as North America, are discussed. Given this geographic and disciplinary range, it is hardly surprising that this is a rather uneven collection. Nevertheless, *Finnish Diaspora* sports more merits than flaws.

To the uninitiated, these papers, as summaries or continuations of fuller studies, touch upon many important issues. While their notes are, therefore, useful, it is to be regretted that no introductory notes or bibliography are provided. Furthermore, the geographical arrangement of these volumes seems less conducive to comparison than the thematic format of the "Forum."

What of the contents? The thirty six papers are generally brief and preliminary, reflective of the immaturity of the field of study and the nature of conference papers. These papers take many formats. Scholarly works follow hard upon the heels (or vice versa) of reminiscences or conclusions of a lifetime's research. While lacking academic paraphernalia, such observations have merit. W. Eklund's views reflect caution and commitment emerging from longterm participation in the Finnish Organization of Canada (I, pp. 45-49). Meanwhile, Dr. Kelehmainen's opening remarks have a vitality lacking in more sombre, academic papers (II, pp. 1-11). Similarly, a remembrance of the Finnish immigrant theatre, a welcome respite during a busy conference, suggests culture and recreation helped move immigrant life beyond bleak struggle (II, pp. 291-301).

Notwithstanding these papers, the bulk of *Finnish Diaspora* is "scholarly." These more formal essays pivot around immigration and settlement, particularly the process of adjustment. Dominant issues include women's roles, urban lifestyle and politico-cultural activity. One theme stands out: the "energetic" Finn, a figure reflective both of reality and the study of one's heritage.⁴

Understanding these Finns is predicated by comprehension of the causes, nature and destination of their migration. Of considerable use in this regard are papers on minor Finnish movements to South Africa, Latin America and Australia. While dealing with numbers virtually negligible in comparison to the North American context, these papers are useful micro-studies of the forces encouraging emigration and the difficulties posed by this process (I, pp. 255-301).

A heretofore neglected aspect of this immigration, the women's experience, receives valuable coverage in *Finnish Diaspora*. K.M. Wargelin-Brown provides insights into the role of women in the formalization of Finnish institutions (II, pp. 213-237). R. Starnsdelt narrows the perspective: the important, yet limited, role of women in the Finnish "labour" movement draws her attention (II, pp. 259-276). On a somewhat different level, C. Ross examines the trials and tribulations of the Finnish domestic servant (II, pp. 239-255).

These domestics, like other Finns, faced many occupational and lifestyle difficulties. When combined with the high degree of Finnish literacy and previous developments in Finland, these problems inspired a great deal of institutional activity. Not surprisingly, these groups have received considerable scholarly notice. Almost all of the papers in *Finnish Diaspora* touch upon this topic with the "radical" Finns being most prominent. The "split" between radical and conservative Finns draws the attention of Karni (II, pp. 163-174) and Puotinen (II, pp. 143-161). Unfortunately, *Finnish Diaspora* falls, in the main, into the general historiographic trend: the left is somehow more pertinent than the right, the latter being of interest largely in its more colourful manifestations (II,

pp. 193-211). Most crucially, these essays generally fail to perceive the attractions of the apolitical stance. Surely Finnish halls *and* churches received a great deal of pragmatic rather than ideological support.

The ordinary, pragmatic Finns emerge, to some extent, in M. Kaups's study of Finns in Duluth, Minnesota. Through use of census, and other, materials, Kaups locates four "periods" of Finnish urban life: a "growth" or entry phase, growing permanency, a "saturation" phase marking the high point of Finnish activity and a "final regression" phase as Finns meld into the cityscape. In addition, Kaups argues for study of Finns as part of the whole rather than in isolation, an often overlooked factor in Finnish studies (II, pp. 63-86).

Duluth's Finns were one type of urban Finn: others, employed in resource areas, often lived a basically urban lifestyle, albeit surrounded by rural isolation. A. Alanen's study of camps in the Lake Superior region of the United States develops a five stage model of these camps ranging from simple squatting to full-fledged company towns. His paper provides detailed and invaluable recognition of these often overlooked communities (II, pp. 33-62).⁵

Impermanence was a major feature of these camps, and a reason for their lack of historical recognition. This impermanence, and the mobility it created, is central to M. Loukinen's study of Finnish migration to Detroit (II, pp. 107-126). In a remarkably short time, rural and village based Finns from northern Michigan adapted to Detroit, becoming a colourful, albeit minor, part of that centre's character. Loukinen provides a useful case study; moreover, he reminds us that mobility and change are as real as permanence and stability.

Mobile or stable, urban or rural, Finns were an interesting factor in European migration. Finnish literacy, their love of institutions and their vitality gave Finns an impact beyond their limited numbers. Although these volumes have flaws, *Finnish Diaspora* provides valuable insights into this active group. Marred by the unrefined "state of the art" and by the "conference factor," these volumes will be surpassed as Finnish studies continue to grow. Nevertheless, they serve as welcome guide to the field, both for the immigration specialist and, perhaps more particularly, for the neophyte.

Peter V. Krats
Department of History
University of Western Ontario

NOTES

- 1 Quoted in John Kelehmainen, "The Finnish Experience in the United States," in *Finnish Diaspora II: United States*, ed. M. Karni (Toronto, Multicultural History Society of Ontario 1981), 4. Hereafter, articles from these volumes will be cited by volume and page in the text.

- 2 One bibliography is O. Koivukangas and S. Toivonen, *Suomen siirtolaisuuden ja maassamuuton bibliografia. A Bibliography on Finnish Immigration and Internal Migration* (Turku, 1978). Major Finnish immigrant archives include: the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota; the Finnish American Historical Archives, Suomi College, Hancock, Michigan; the Finnish Canadian Historical Society Collection, Public Archives of Ontario and the Finnish Organization of Canada Collection, Public Archives of Canada.
- 3 On Duluth: M. Karni and M. Kaups, eds., *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives* (Turku, 1975). Some Thunder Bay papers are in *Lakehead University Review*, Vol. 9 (Spring, 1976).
- 4 Given the language difficulties, it is hardly surprising that virtually all of the contributors are of Finnish or Swedo-Finnish descent. See the notes on contributors.
- 5 Alanan's model is generally quite similar to that suggested for the Canadian case in G. Stelter and Alan Artibise, "Canadian Resource Towns in Historical Perspective," in *Shaping the Urban Landscape*, eds. Stelter and Artibise (Ottawa: Carlton University Press 1982), 413-434.

Whitehand, J.W.R. ed. *The Urban Landscape: Historical Development and Management: Papers by M.R.G. Conzen*. Toronto: Academic Press, 1981. Pp. x, 166. Illustrations. \$30.00.

J.W.R. Whitehand has collected four papers by M.R.G. Conzen and contributed introductory and concluding essays of his own, assessing the background to and influence of Conzen's work. The four works, published between 1962 and 1978 and including one that has been translated from German, do not include Conzen's best known study, of Alnwick, Northumberland, the influence of which suffuses this book. This masterpiece, perhaps the most effective demonstration of Conzen's methodology and its value, validates the subsequent publications presented here and is a touchstone for those who would seek to learn from this research tradition.

Urban morphogenesis, in the coded brevities of social science, describes Conzen's approach to the historical investigation of change in the landscape of towns. Whitehand, in tracing the morphological approach adopted by Conzen to the German context of his scholarly origins, also helps us to understand the remarkable isolation of this man's work from contemporary currents in urban geography in the English speaking world. Signs of increased interest in the historical evolution of town plans, and in such of the components of this analysis as the minute examination of changes in the intensity and use of individual land parcels, are carefully outlined in Whitehand's concluding chapter. Whitehand recognizes some apparent barriers to the adoption of such an approach to the study of cities in America where until recently neither geographers nor other social scientists interested in towns considered their historical development to be worth the serious study that attends issues of practical or theoretical significance. There are, however, now signals of

a change of mind, not least in the interest governments are taking in studying and preserving, or even recreating where it be deemed necessary, crucial historical elements of townscapes.

In this context, on this side of the Atlantic, there is immediate value in being reminded of Conzen's research and in having conveniently to hand some of his critical and interpretive writings. Many of us will benefit from closely examining these thoughtful essays that should convince us, if of nothing else, that there is a need to study the whole and to see the most interesting parts in the context in which they were set.

Peter G. Goheen
Department of Geography
Queen's University

Hayden, Dolores. *The Grand Domestic Revolution. A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, and Cities*. Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: The MIT Press, 1981. Pp. 367.

The Grand Domestic Revolution — a term coined in 1855 by anarchist Stephen Pearl Andrews — was to socialize housework by moving cooking, laundry and child care out of the home into communal settings and thus not only revolutionize the life style of Americans but also the architecture and design of their living-space. Dolores Hayden's painstakingly researched work presents the protagonists of that revolution, those "material feminists" who, since the middle of last century, have linked women's emancipation to their economic independence, and their economic independence to their freedom from domestic work. What Hayden offers is no less than a reinterpretation of nineteenth and early twentieth century feminism, basing it on the feminists' struggle "to overcome the split between domestic life and public life" and accepting *both* spheres. This projection of the private sphere into the public arena permeated the various campaigns for the vote, temperance, higher education and other social reforms.

The material feminists who elaborated their daring schemes between the Civil War and the Great Depression were inspired by the optimism generated by nineteenth century beliefs in evolution, progress and unlimited technological innovations. The new urban space was to reflect these ideas and provide the setting for social and economic experiments. As domestic industries moved to factories, housework was to leave the home for communal kitchens, apartments houses, cooperative or commercial laundries and day care centres (there is little discussion of maintenance and cleaning which unfortunately couldn't be moved anywhere).