

Reiss, Steven A. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports*. Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 332. Tables, maps, illustrations, index

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Volume 19, numéro 2, 1990

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017684ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017684ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Robertson, J. O. (1990). Compte rendu de [Reiss, Steven A. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports*. Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 332. Tables, maps, illustrations, index]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 19(2), 146-146. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017684ar>

well. His main concern is, perhaps as it must be, to disentangle the ways in which the MTHC responded to changes in the political and policy environment. The status of the Company was called into question several times, and its story is, in large part, one of adaptation and survival. McMahon is especially good at setting the scene for the Company's birth. It is probably here that he drew most heavily upon the acknowledged assistance of John Bacher, a colleague in the Metro Archives whose PhD thesis is the definitive history of federal housing policy up to the 1940s. McMahon says rather less about the administrative policies of the Company and very little, except by implication, about what it meant (and means) to live in Housing Company projects. He notes that, after an initial phase of low-rise construction in Metro's suburbs, when the Company began to build in the City it was forced by land costs to experiment more and more with high rise slabs. He is aware of the social implications of this decision. A grainy reproduction of his own photograph, showing a man with a cane walking home to his unit in one of the larger slabs, marked the frontispiece. But in the text he passes over such issues lightly.

It should not be surprising if the balance is weighted a little. The impetus for the volume came from the Company itself, which wished to produce a commemorative history. Such volumes can become mere catalogues of achievement. *Metro's Housing Company* is far more than that: it marks the real accomplishments of the Company by setting them in their political context, and shows where difficult decisions had to be made that some might regret. It needs a map, ideally one keyed to the list of projects in appendix 6, and the illustrations of people and projects might usefully have been referred to specifically in the text. But there is a good deal of useful material here for the history of public and social housing in Toronto which, one day, someone should write.

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Reiss, Steven A. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 332. Tables, maps, illustrations, index.*

City Games is a very badly written book about a very interesting topic: the relationships between the development of American cities and the development of organized sports. The book is valuable to anyone trying to understand or teach American sports history because it is a compendium of most of the important developments in American spectator sports. It has the added value that the sports are discussed particularly as they have related to urban ethnic groups.

Steven A. Reiss, who is professor of history at Northeastern Illinois University and editor of the *Journal of Sport History*, has organized the book around important questions in sports history. The focus of his discussion is on the development of cities and urban culture between 1870 and 1960. In that period, Reiss reviews in detail the relationship of sports to urban social structure, to racial and ethnic groups, and to urban spaces. Organized youth sports, the development and commercialization of professional spectator sports, and the relationship of sports to urban politics, organized crime, and American business are all discussed at length. A final chapter examines sports in what Reiss calls "the Suburban Era" from 1945 to 1980.

There is, however, little clear analysis of any of the questions the book covers. Reiss takes little care to portray human beings, individually or in the aggregate, who are subject to human passions, desires, habits, abilities or limitations and who actually lived in the past Reiss covers. The writing is imprecise, repetitious, and full of vague, ill-

defined phrases and neologisms — for examples, "zone of emergence" is used a multitude of times, "sports" and "sport" are used interchangeably, and the following sentence opens a concluding paragraph: "Urbanization's impact upon sport in the radial city was particularly crucial because of changing spatial relations."

Reiss expects his often misused words to carry substantive historical content or precise analytical meaning, but he rarely provides the content or the meaning. In his conclusion, for example, he writes: "The importance of athletics to city folk was stressed by the widely accepted positive sporting creed which by the turn of the century had become the conventional wisdom. Athletics and, in particular, team sports were regarded as symbols of democracy and as integrative mechanisms which taught traditional small-town values to urban youth. Many agencies tried to implement the ideology to Americanize and assimilate urban boys, especially impoverished second-generation inner-city lads . . ." There is no further definition of "sporting creed" or "ideology," no explanation of "integrative mechanisms" or "assimilation," and no description of any "agencies" or of the real people who "stressed" or "regarded." It is a shame a book so full of potential interest, which brings up so much of importance about its subject, was so inadequately edited.

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Kemble, Roger. *The Canadian City St John's to Victoria: A Critical Commentary. Montreal: Harvest House, 1989. Pp. xiii, 220. Illustrations, appendices. \$19.95. Paper.*

Books on the topic of Canadian cities, particularly those that set out to address the physical, phenomenal environment, are not common. The publication of such a text is therefore welcome, sight unseen.