

**Barth, G. *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp. xxv, 310. \$13.75**

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Numéro 2-76, octobre 1976

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019535ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019535ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Artibise, A. F. J. (1976). Compte rendu de [Barth, G. *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp. xxv, 310. \$13.75]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (2-76), 71–71. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019535ar>

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Although this book is a fairly detailed history of San Francisco and Denver, it is also much more than this since it places these two cities in the larger historical context of western civilization. Instant cities were not peculiar to North America; they go back at least to the Hellenic migration, and they dotted the landscape of Europe in the Middle Ages. In the first chapter of this book, Professor Barth unfolds the story of instant cities in Europe; and in chapter two he contrasts and compares chaotic San Francisco and Denver with the Mormons' planned instant city in Utah. The third chapter describes the differences between the two cities and the older, more static far western communities, particularly Santa Fe, New Mexico; Monterey, California; and Champoeg, Oregon. The balance of the book carefully weaves the San Francisco and Denver experiences together, explaining how and why the cities grew, and when and why they evolved into ordinary cities. Much of this part of the book deals with quality of life in these two cities and illustrates what the obsession with making money did to environment, social status, dreams and culture.

Instant Cities is the seventeenth volume to appear in "The Urban Life in America Series" under the general editorship of Richard C. Wade. Although this book is not the first in the series to examine "boom cities", it is the first to place them in such a broad context, and to compare them with more conventional urban experiences. [A.F.J. Artibise, University of Victoria].

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McGowan, Don C. Grassland Settlers: The Swift Current Region During the Era of the Ranching Frontier. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1975. Pp. xii, 205. Maps. Illustrations. \$5.50.