

Notes and Comments

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Interior of a Macedonian boarding house, 1913. Photo reproduced courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives.

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An index covering the years 1972-1977 is also available at no charge. When ordering, please indicate Urban History Review Index, 1972-1977.

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URBAN HISTORY GROUP OF THE
CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Several changes have been made in the urban history group and the editorial advisory board of the Review in the course of the year. As of

July 1, 1978, John Weaver, History, McMaster, assumes the chair of the group, in addition to his duties as book review editor of the Review. Suggestions for both reviews and reviewers from readers are invaluable and a note to John will suffice to initiate the necessary arrangements. As for other changes, joining the group and the board will be Brian Young, History, McGill; Peter E. Rider, National Museum of Man, Ottawa; and Joy Woolfrey, Regional Planning, University of Ottawa. Leaving the board will be Michael Katz, History, York; John Hiller, History, Memorial; and Del Muisse, History, Carleton.

Sessions for the Saskatoon meetings of the CHA on City Boosting and Comparative Urban Development in Upper and Lower Canada have been set. Initiatives are now being made for sessions in Montreal in 1980. Suggestions or offerings from readers should be directed to John Weaver. It would be particularly valuable if some inter-disciplinary sessions could be offered, and those in disciplines other than history are particularly urged to write John with ideas.

This brief note would not be complete without offering Del Muisse a special goodbye on his retirement from the group and the Review, and our best wishes for every success in the future.

Del was one of the originals, a veritable midwife of both the urban group and of the Review. He was present at the organizational meeting at Carleton in the fall of 1970 and at the benediction of the group by the CHA at its meetings at Memorial in the Spring of 1971. It was Del who proposed the relationship of the Review and the Museum of Man, and for many years and through much trial established and managed the working arrangement that made publication of the Review possible. He was also an editor who often saved us from our own mistakes, as well as a valued contributor in his own right. He was a faithful attender of meetings of the group and the source of much good advice and good humor.

Del's contribution to urban history, of course, went well beyond the Review and the group. His wide knowledge of the historical profession and his many contacts outside it were often responsible for bringing to the group and the Review individuals who made a signal contribution to the study of urban development. In this way he gave us breadth as he had given us the vehicle in which this is being published.

In addition, Del, through the museum, did much to encourage and raise urban history to the modest prominence that it now enjoys both inside and outside the profession. The urban dimension of the historical exhibit at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa owes much to Del's initiatives. Equally, the urban presence in Canada's Visual History Series stems from his continuing interest. And, finally, the History of Canadian Cities Series, now emerging, is a reflection of his influence and support.

Del left the museum July 1 to join the History Department of Carleton University, and he left at the same time the urban group and

the Review to devote himself more exclusively to his studies of the Atlantic Provinces. His service in the development of urban history in Canada can scarcely be over-estimated.

John H. Taylor
Chairman
Urban History Group
1977-1978

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THE MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, directed by Professor Robert F. Harney, was formed in the autumn of 1976 by a group of academics, civil servants, archivists, and librarians who saw a need for a special effort to record the province's immigrant and ethnic past. The Society is committed to the belief that a complete and well-catalogued archival and library collection of ethnocultural material is one of the first steps toward a province which understands and appreciates its past and present, and has, to this end, established a number of objectives-- 1. to promote and advance studies of all ethnocultural groups in the province; 2. to collect and catalogue materials relevant to the history of these groups; 3. to arrange for the safekeeping and accessibility of all archival materials collected; 4. to encourage the publication of primary research on ethnic groups in Ontario; and, 5. to publicize the important contribution by all communities to the growth and development of our country.

Researchers who are members of ethnic communities have been hired by the Society to gather written, photographic, and oral sources from individuals and organizations within the province, and all community groups have been invited to participate through their own archival institutions in transforming the province's archives, libraries, and universities into centres of ethnocultural learning. The Society has also begun its publishing programme with the publication of Polyphony, the Society's bulletin, and a research manual which includes a booklet on "Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies." Autobiographies and diaries written by community members covering areas like the ethnic press and ethnic parish are being prepared for the Society's series on ethnocultural source material.

Anyone wishing information about the activities of the Multicultural History Society should write to St. Michael's College, 81 St. Mary Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1J4.

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THE HISTORY OF CANADIAN CITIES SERIES

The second volume in the History of Canadian Cities Series was published in October. It is Max Foran, Calgary: An Illustrated History. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company and National Museums of Canada, 1978. Volume one in the series is Alan F. J. Artibise, Winnipeg: An Illustrated History, published in 1977.

The series format features a large number of photographs and a standardized presentation of cartographic materials and statistical appendices which make the volumes invaluable references for comparative urban studies. Other volumes in preparation include Whitehorse, Toronto, Montreal, Saint John, Vancouver, Quebec, Kitchener, Hamilton and Fredericton.

The History of Canadian Cities Series is a project of the National Museum of Man and volumes are published by James Lorimer and Company in association with the Museum. The series is under the general editorship of Alan F. J. Artibise.

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HOUSING IN NORTH AMERICA AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

On November 9th and 10th, 1978, the Institute for Canadian-American Studies will present the twentieth annual Canadian-American Seminar focusing on "Housing in North America and the Public Interest." The seminar will be held at the University of Windsor. Included among the Canadian speakers are: Robert T. Adamson, D. J. Beesley, Bernard J. Bernard, Douglas Caruso, William Haviland, A.B.R. Lawrence, James R. Markusen, Robert E. Millward, Barton Myers, Peter Oliphant, R. A. Phillips, J. Richard Shiff, Peter R. Spurr, and William Teron. For further information contact:

The Director
Canadian-American Seminar
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4

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THE CENTRE FOR URBAN AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

The Centre is but one of several divisions of the University of Toronto concerned with urban research and policy issues. The Centre was established in the mid-1960s to facilitate interdisciplinary research in the broad and somewhat nebulous fields of urban and community studies.

The inclusion of the term community in the title was intentional in that it would not discourage participation by members of the University with an interest in social research but not necessarily in urban studies per se.

Objectives

The Centre is primarily a research institution which aside from a small administrative budget from the University's School of Graduate Studies, relies primarily on external funding to support its research and educational activities. The objectives of the Centre are threefold: 1) to act as a neutral meeting ground, co-ordinating office and information service for graduate students and faculty drawn from different departments and divisions of the University; 2) to stimulate interdisciplinary research on critical social issues; and 3) to provide a research capability which can be made available to external agencies and institutions. In addition the Centre offers space for research projects, administrative assistance, some start-up funds, seminars, student fellowships and research internships and an extensive publication program.

The Centre does not have a teaching program, although it does provide fellowships, assistantships, office accommodation and on-the-job experience for graduate students. Instead of establishing its own teaching program the Centre has relied on the considerable urban expertise of faculty in cognate departments within the University of Toronto. Among these the most obvious are the Departments of Urban and Regional Planning, Geography, Sociology and Political Economy, and in specialized fields such as housing and transportation relevant teaching programs are available in, for example, the Faculty of Social Work, Architecture and Civil Engineering. Given the continuing relaxation of formal course requirements for graduate degrees in most of the traditional disciplines, this approach is not as restrictive as it seems. Students can now more easily put together an interdisciplinary program concentrating on urban studies or related fields. It is of course true that the age and complexity of the University, and the independence of its departments and facilities, renders the introduction of interdisciplinary teaching programs more difficult. On the other hand, there is a general feeling that interdisciplinary needs can be met to a reasonable extent, without eroding the integrity of disciplines, through cooperative programs and a wider student choice among courses in different divisions.

Research Themes

The Centre has maintained an interest in a wide range of research topics: housing, urban transportation, social service provision, self-help networks, land use, migration, urban systems development and national policies, planning and development controls neighbourhood change and the inner city. These studies vary from highly theoretical and quantitative to essentially personal interpretations and participant observation and from basic to essentially applied contract research. Among the largest current projects are those concerned with the changing supply and demand for housing, the nature of the land development industry,

the role of social networks in helping people in time of need, the effect of the changing structure of the city on access to jobs and housing, and the impact of a rapidly changing urban environment on children.

The Historical Dimension

To date, this activity has concentrated primarily on contemporary issues and the analysis of current data sources, rather than on the historical dimension of urbanization. The relative weakness of the Centre's contribution in the historical field is not by design, but reflects the individuals initially involved in establishing the Centre and the traditional paucity of funding in that area. To an extent perhaps it reflects the lower priority attached to urban studies within the historical discipline and the inclination of historians generally to undertake research individually rather than to become involved in interdisciplinary team efforts.

Whatever the background reasons, there are signs of a substantial change in attitudes. Students and faculty in other disciplines are increasingly taking a historical approach in their own research. Student theses and faculty papers are appearing on such diverse subjects as the history of zoning, urban social structure in the nineteenth century city, the evolution of community movements and the history of planning, to name but a few. The Centre has just recently published a three-volume bibliography on the history of planning and social welfare in Canada (see next section). Plans are now underway to encourage a much more expanded effort on topics such as the history of planning and local government reform, demographic change and the process of industrialization and urban concentration.

Who Cares?

Why should urban historians, and readers of the Urban History Review, be interested in the activities of this Centre, or of similar institutions? As the strength of urban historical research undertaken through or in association with the Centre increases this question may answer itself. In the meantime, however, it is my view that urban historians can benefit from an increased awareness of research on contemporary urban topics. Not only is the past reflected in the present urban fabric, but the more elaborate data sources, methodologies and analytical frameworks of urban studies research can often be of immediate value to historical researchers. Moreover, urban historians can, to an extent, use the results of recent research to evaluate some of their hypotheses on historical trends and relationships.

A similar degree of complementarity exists for researchers concerned exclusively with contemporary trends. One of the most striking conclusions to derive from our research on urban development in Canada during the post war period is the degree to which these trends can only be understood when set in their appropriate historical context. Although this context will clearly vary with the subject under study, there is now

little doubt of the importance of a long-term historical perspective in most urban issues. For example, work by Simmons has shown that the outline, the geometry of the Canadian urban system was laid down by the end of the nineteenth or early twentieth century, not since 1951 as some texts would have us believe. Since then we have added some new cities, but for the most part we have simply added flesh to the old skeleton.

The historical dimension also helps in evaluating the uniqueness of current trends. By way of example, the dramatic decline in birth rates and population growth in Canada during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s is not, as some observers argue, unique. Even slower rates of population growth were recorded in the decade of 1930s, the depression era, and previously in the 1890s. In some instances we can learn a great deal from the analysis of conditions which produced these historical demographic trends; those which are similar to and different from the current situation.

Urban historians in turn can help provide answers to contemporary urban questions in almost all of the research areas identified above. We need more "concrete" analyses of the effect of economic change on city growth. How important were particular staple products? How did the larger centres extract the local surplus to augment their own growth? How did industrialization shape the spatial structure of the city? Was accessibility to jobs and services greater or less in the nineteenth century city? How geographically segregated was the city? Where inequalities in housing quality greater or less? How socially confined were personal and support networks? How did the city respond to periods of slow population growth? To what extent did increasing city size have a differential impact on the population? Who benefits? Who loses?

Responses to these and similar questions would have greater relevance if the conceptual and methodological frameworks employed in urban history were sharpened. Similarly, the links to current research would be strengthened if more of an attempt was made to incorporate a developmental perspective in urban historical research; that is, to identify consistent paths of motion in urbanization and urban life which could perhaps be traced through (even projected on) to the recent past as well as the present.

Some historians might argue that the more urban history becomes "analytical," and certainly more quantitative in orientation, the more it becomes simply urban studies based on old data. I for one do not buy this argument. In one sense, at least for empirical research, we are all urban historians. What I am arguing is that some but not all of urban history could benefit by greater exposure to or training in the concepts and methods of urban studies. The reverse case also holds true.

Prognosis

I am convinced that the perspectives of the contemporary urban researcher and the urban historian are and should be converging. Many

urban topics of course will remain the sole province of one or the other, and research styles will inevitably differ in many instances. But increasingly the relevance of each approach is becoming more obvious. As students of the contemporary city become more sensitive to the historical inheritance which has shaped the city and to the subtleties of historical research, and as students of the historical city become more conversant with the theories and methodologies of current urban research, productive exchanges will grow. These random notes, and an expanded effort in urban historical research by institutes such as the Centre for Urban and Community Studies, might assist in accelerating this meeting of minds.

L. S. Bourne
 Director
 Centre for Urban and Community
 Studies
 University of Toronto

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For further information on the Centre, including an up-to-date list of its extensive publications, write:

Centre for Urban and Community Studies
 University of Toronto
 150 St. George Street
 Toronto, Ontario
 M5S 1A1

Recent publications include the following three volumes in the Centre's bibliographic series:

I. Cooper and J. D. Hulchanski. Canadian Town Planning, 1900-1930: A Historical Bibliography. Volume I - Planning. Report No. 7 (April 1978), 84 pp. \$2.50.

I. Cooper and J. H. Hulchanski. Canadian Town Planning, 1900-1930: A Historical Bibliography. Volume II - Housing. Report No. 8 (April 1978), 23 pp. \$1.50.

I. Cooper and J. H. Hulchanski. Canadian Town Planning, 1900-1930: A Historical Bibliography. Volume III - Public Health. Report No. 9 (April 1978), 26 pp. \$1.50.

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PAPERS ON PLANNING AND DESIGN

Three publications in the "Papers on Planning and Design" series, published by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Toronto, relate to urban history. They are:

John Dakin. Toronto Planning: A Planning Review of the Legal and Jurisdictional Contexts from 1912 to 1970. Paper No. 3 (February 1974), 76 pp. \$2.00.

Nino Hanson. The Emergence and Development of Zoning Controls in North American Municipalities: A Critical Analysis. Paper No. 13 (August 1977), 68 pp. \$2.50.

John David Hulchanski. Thomas Adams: A Biographical and Bibliographic Guide. Paper No. 15 (April 1978), 42 pp. \$2.50.

To order these, or other papers in the series, contact:

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