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Russo, David J., *Keepers of Our Past: Local Historians Writing in the United States, 1820s-1930s.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988. Pp. xiv, 281. Index.

Standard texts on historiography and primers on historical method and writing usually ignore antiquarianism, local history and genealogy. David Russo believes that an unwarranted snobbery in the academic historical profession is responsible for these omissions. At the same time, most college and university calendars in the United States and Canada list at least one course on local history. Many boast of public history programmes, which on close examination turn out to be academic training for careers in small museums, heritage foundations, and genealogical institutes. Some 13,000 such agencies existed in the United States and Canada in 1986 and Dale Steiner's handbook on historical periodicals shows ninety-five titles under the state, provincial, and regional category. In short, academic historians seem no longer to disdain local history practitioners.

Russo's complaint about academic snobbery may have less substance than he believes. Has academy history fixed on concepts, models and patters and removed the average people from America's past? Russo is certainly right to insist that from the colonial period to the 1930s most historical study in America was local, "nearby history," to borrow an apt and charming phrase. We owe these largely unknown amateur antiquarians and genealogists much, he argues, and he makes a personal partial repayment in this largely descriptive discussion of a variety of these writers and their works. Russo believes that American life remained largely decentralized until the Great Depression and that is why he closes with the 1930s.

Local histories through this century were community, town and city oriented, so Russo's discussions will interest urban historians. New England's puritan sense of mission, town settlement pattern and concentrated populations led Yankee antiquarians to rummage in their backyards for a usable past. Men (rarely women) in other states copies New England's example. As America urbanized, authors exalted founders and descendants, and to some extent celebrated urban growth as progress. These city histories provide a window on the attitudes of their time, as well as more concrete material for modern urban historians. John F. Watson's work on Philadelphia recaptured the range of the city's life in great detail. Many in the northeast, notably in New York, followed his example. Beyond that, the people Russo describes were indefatigable collectors of local lore, documents and materials. They founded what have become indispensable depositories for academic scholars.

Rooted in spontaneous localism, these people reflected community self-consciousness but did not generate an historiographical trend. Lone authors laboured to recapture, but not explain, their community's past. The works detailed material culture and personalities, and occasionally described social life, economics, or living patterns. Increasing detail and complexity notwithstanding, it is difficult to see how a local history of the 1830s differed much from one published nearly a century later. Authors almost never conveyed a sense of change over time, accepted the prevailing elites' social and intellectual values, and stereotyped non-Anglo Saxon peoples. They would not, therefore, qualify as historians in any contemporary sense.

The authors did respect accuracy and truth, however subjectively defined. Some, however, unabashedly sought heroics, and few were critical of their locale's past. They relied on the same techniques throughout. Boosterism, pride in forbears, or an impulse to record for posterity provided the motivation for this wide variety of compilations, annals, narratives, and edited collections.

At times these authors and their works seem displaced from their world. The Civil War and the American centennial intensified interest in local history and informed changes in American education from 1890 to the First World War. But did progressivism or America's intellectual ambivalence about Europe after 1919 affect local historians? What about the Great Depression itself, that wounding of the American Dream? What about shifting literary trends? At times the distinctions Russo makes among antiquarianism, local history and genealogy become fuzzy. Finally, he does not deal effectively with the rise of antiquarianism as a profession.

Given changes in the study of local history since 1940, Russo might have brought his subject up to date rather than stopping in the 1930s when he saw academic and local history beginning to

merge in such men as Justin Winsor and Albert Bushnell Hart. The American Association for State and Local History deserves more time than Russo grants here. And working in Canada, he might have ventured some cross-border comparisons. Did monarchist loyalism generate a different approach to local history or genealogy than republican Puritanism?

That said, one must not upbraid authors for the books they did not write. Russo makes an important point. Those who recapture the past are partners with those who seek meaning and significance in history. Local history has been, and remains, appropriate to American (and Canadian) society, as travel beyond our cities and suburbs should remind us. The astonishing devotion and enterprise Russo captures in this monograph, has indeed helped to keep the past for citizens and academics alike.

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Morrison, Daniel., *"Trading Peasants" and Urbanization in Eighteenth-Century Russia: The Central Industrial Region.* Garland Series of Outstanding Dissertations, William H. McNeill, Gen. Ed., New York and London: Garland, 1987. Pp. 415.

At first glance, Russia's impressive achievements under Peter the Great and Catherine the Great barely mask the miseries caused by a rigid feudal society (a "service" society in the terminology of Russian historians) in which peasants could not leave the land or own it, and city-dwellers paid high taxes for the bare privilege of escaping agricultural serfdom. Static Russian cities lacked the self-governing rights of Western and Central European cities, and the Russian burghers lacked the initiative and self-confidence of Western burghers.

This impressive Ph.D. dissertation from Columbia University shows convincingly that this picture needs some modification. The author, Daniel Morrison, studied Russian archival and published sources on immigration to Central Russian cities in the 18th century. He concentrates on Moscow, which enjoyed by far the quickest growth, without neglecting provincial centres.

The principal periods of urbanization occurred at the beginning of the century under Peter I and at the end of the century under Catherine II. The obstacles put up by the city governments to receiving commercial competitors were generally overcome through the expansion of previous commercial links between country and urban businessmen and, eventually, through intermarriage. At the end of the 18th century, merchants and artisans of peasant origin comprised over 30% of Moscow's 175,000 inhabitants (another 30% consisted of house serfs of local nobles). In addition, numerous peasants came to Moscow each winter to trade, manufacture or supply unskilled labour before returning to their villages in the spring. Going beyond Morrison, one might compare the economic role of the Russian peasants to the role of the Jews of central European regions evading restrictive legal structures in order to take advantage of commercial possibilities; the Russian Empire barred its few Jews from living in Central Russia.

Expanding on earlier research, Morrison shows that peasants from Central Russia devoted much of their time to commercial and artisanal activity with the approval of their noble landlords. Many of these "trading peasants" were "house serfs" whose domestic services were not needed while others were agriculturalists who gained permission to supplement their farm activities with commerce in order to satisfy their serf obligations with monetary payments. Such serfs easily gained noble consent (generally in exchange for a lump sum payment) to move to a city permanently, particularly in the late 18th century when new laws made voluntary manumission easier.

Morrison's brief conclusions show an understanding that his research implies a much higher degree of social mobility than is generally accepted at present, but unfortunately the dissertation format prevented him from expanding much on them. One hopes that he will do so soon.

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Galishoff, Stuart., *Newark: The Nation's Unhealthiest City, 1832-1895.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988, Pp. xii, 260. Tables, maps, index. $38.00 (U.S.).

The United States Census of 1890 designated Newark as the unhealthiest city in America. It had the highest death rate for cities with over one thousand in population and led the country in the rate of infant mortality and deaths from scarlet fever. Newark also stood among the top ten for communicable diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and