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Wynn, Graeme and Oke, Timothy, eds. *Vancouver and its Region*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992. Pp. xvii, 333. Illustrations, figures, tables. \$45.00 and \$29.95 (paper)

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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view of the many social benefits and costs to residents in this form of socially mixed housing. Conflicts between private and public interests, which can be expected in a society with a mixed socio-political economy, were explored in detail. These conflicts reveal the social disharmonies that can be aroused by the diverse social composition in cooperative housing. However, social distance was reportedly overcome by cooperative management and through joint participation in social functions. However, lack of systematic inquiry to isolate the impact of social mix seems to have led Cooper and Critchlow Rodman to a conclusion similar to that of many other authors writing on the topic—a faith in the value of integrated housing without much solid evidence about how it 'works'.

The discussion on member participation, democracy, control and empowerment is perhaps the most controversial section of the book and one which will interest many readers since these are the factors most often associated with living in cooperatives. Issues of relative deprivation, creaming, rub-off effects, sexism, stigma, privacy, management, unit allocation and residential choice are all dealt with in the context of member participation.

New Neighbours may have attempted far too much in one study. As a result it has dealt too lightly perhaps with historical accuracy. For example, the assertion that Regent Park North was developed by the municipal government (p.40) leaves the reader with the impression that there was no level of senior government involved, which is largely true as the City paid 83% of the cost. However, the Province of Ontario did contribute over \$1000 per unit and the federal government, through Section 12 of the *National Housing Act*, pertaining to slum clearance, paid about two and quarter

million dollars to assist the City of Toronto Housing Authority.

The book reads quite smoothly even though there are occasional lapses in editing. Despite its shortcomings, *New Neighbours* is one of the most in-depth studies of life in cooperative housing published to date. It is ironic that this book, that emphasized the need for government subsidies, was written at a time when the federal government was about to withdraw its support for new cooperative housing development. The many aspects of quality of life in cooperative housing studied by Cooper and Critchlow Rodman should contribute to a growing interest in conducting social audits on this integrated approach to the provision of subsidized housing.

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Wynn, Graeme and Oke, Timothy, eds.
Vancouver and its Region. Vancouver:
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1992. Pp. xvii, 333. Illustrations, figures,
tables. \$45.00 and \$29.95 (paper).

The editors of *Vancouver and its Region* have addressed the important challenge of presenting a broad geographical interpretation of their city and region. They have done so in a way that may stand as a model for their discipline and command the attention of readers with a serious interest in cities as places where human and physical environments are intimately interrelated. One of the editors' aims is to convince us of the mutual dependence of one on the other: urban climate reflects human use of the earth; the built environment cannot disregard the physical structure of the land on which it is constructed. Here we have a rare and successful interpretation of a city's development as seen through the eyes of a group of geographers—

climatologists, geomorphologists, biogeographers, economic geographers, urban and historical geographers among others—whose insights are skillfully melded into a highly readable and instructive collection of essays.

This is a work of interpretation. The editors have chosen to emphasize three themes; the remarkably rapid and dramatic changes in the cultural landscape of the region as European populations swept away the native cultures; the transformation of the land by human societies; and the "relevance" of this particular story to an appreciation of the sense of place as defined by its local identity and by its ties to the larger world beyond the local region. Eight substantive chapters comprise three that assess the biophysical environment, two devoted to historical human geography, two concerned with economic geography, and one treating contemporary social geography. The themes explored in the book are effectively illustrated with black and white photographs. A brief introductory photo essay admirably instructs the unfamiliar reader on the dramatic range of landscapes within so small a compass.

The best essays are those that stretch the reader's imagination and challenge conventional thinking. Reviewers will make their own choices, but for myself two chapters dealing with processes of historical change stand out. In his discussion of the Lower Mainland, 1820 to 1881, Cole Harris offers a fresh and invigorating perspective on native-white relations. He portrays the complex annual round of land and resource use by native peoples, and the limited disruption first brought to the local peoples by permanent white presence. However, when the full panoply of imperial purpose, and the modern technology that implemented it, came to bear on the region the results were different. With amazing speed and

brutal completeness native cultures gave way and a replica European society grew in its place. The story is important beyond the particulars of this case, as is the discussion by editor Oke and his colleagues, M. North and O. Slaymaker, who discern a century of environmental change. The environment has been remade, just as has human society. "Verdant forest has been transformed into urban 'jungle,' ... and the haunts of the cougar and eagle are now the home of the cat and budgie" (p. 147). The changes are visible (dyking of flood lands and control of Fraser River tributaries) and invisible (the redirection of streams into sewers), large (the destruction of the forests) and small (the disturbance to the forest hush in Stanley Park by the intensity of road traffic through it). The authors are not decrying change; they note that it is continuous under any circumstances. Rather, they wish to alert city dwellers to the nature of the processes to which their actions contribute. The question of the quality of urban life is intimately related to the quality of the environment, where human agency is a vital element.

Vancouver is an emotive word: it connotes pleasures and opportunities, almost a vision of Eden, as an author sees it. This, as the authors note, is part of the explanation of its growth and future prospects. In light of this widely held assessment of the place it is surprising how little attention is given in the book to the realization or attempted implementation of the dreams that lead to Vancouver. The social texture of life receives remarkably little attention. What should we expect beyond a visual description of orderly suburbs, older inner city neighbourhoods and downtown high rise living? A diverse, contentious and lively society has taken root in Vancouver, yet its shadow can scarcely be discerned beyond the figure detailing the evolving floorplan of a gay bar or the illustration of a yuppified commercial strip. For a

geographical appreciation of this place, is it significant that we understand such matters rather than its role and function in international trade or in processing the raw materials of the land? The balance of treatment of these topics is not what the reader of the editors' commentary would expect.

Nevertheless, the editors and authors, all colleagues in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia, have given us a perspective which might well be emulated. Here is a broadly conceived and well rounded view of the science and art of geography harnessed to an interpretation of one of the most significant of human creations: the city. There is much in these pages to appeal to the scholar and the more casual reader.

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The Spirit of Africville (selected and edited by the Africville Genealogy Society) Halifax: Formac Press, 1992. Pp. 124 (60 pages of colour and b&w photographs) Paperback \$19.95 Cloth \$34.95.

This book is the end-product of a remarkable collaborative effort spanning the past few years. In 1988 Mary Sparling of the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery joined with members of the Africville Genealogy Society and the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia to exhibit photos and artifacts reflecting the history of a community that was bulldozed to the ground two decades earlier. A tiny enclave of black residents that had survived for almost two centuries on the shores of Halifax's Bedford Basin, Africville had been victimized by the combination of bureaucratic idealism, land greed and outright racism that was so characteristic of late 1960s Nova Scotia, when

there was so much hope for a better future and so much despair regarding the capacity of the state to reform.

Titled *Africville: A Spirit that Lives On*, the exhibit is still travelling throughout Canada and continues to be a remarkable success, as was the conference/symposium it spawned to discuss the process and implications of the removal of Africville's people from their homes. Material gathered from that symposium, along with a great deal of supplementary oral history, provided the stuff for a National Film Board production *Remember Africville*, released in 1991. Distributed on VHS format through NFB outlets, it also utilizes archival footage, official photographs, home movies, privately-held photographs, extracts from contemporary TV broadcasts that discussed demolition of the community. From the conference itself, former residents and politicians and planners reflected on the decision to destroy the community's homes and church.

This book is the latest stage in development of the project, which also includes a heavily attended and highly visible annual reunion of Africville residents and their children at tiny Seaview park now occupying the former site of the community. It is superbly presented in a large page format with excellent photo reproduction. It opens with a *Visit to Africville* as it was before 1966 conducted by former resident Charles R. Saunders, a Halifax-based journalist. It has been adapted here from its earlier incarnation in the catalogue accompanying the travelling exhibit. Saunders was helped along by members of the genealogy society, who appear to have had a remarkable input into every aspect of this project and deserve credit for its matter-of-fact directness, something quite unusual for museum exhibits. By focusing on everyday occurrences—the sites and sounds of the community in motion—