

Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Burley, David G. *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario.* Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. Pp.309. Tables. \$39.95 cloth

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Volume 24, numéro 2, march 1996

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016601ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016601ar>

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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

Kenny, J. (1996). Compte rendu de [Burley, David G. *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario.* Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. Pp.309. Tables. \$39.95 cloth]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 24(2), 59–60.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1016601ar>

"interior", we discover items previously unseen from the street. The insistence on prettifying and perfuming domestic animals reflected a desire to contain a bestial Nature, red in tooth and claw. The custom of "infantilizing" those same pets, dressing them up like dolls, spoke not only to an anthropomorphic urge, but also to one of feminizing them according to male expectations of female behaviour. The bourgeois fear of rabies was even more suggestive. This disease was said to be spread either by the unkempt and infected dogs of the working class quarters, or induced spontaneously by an animal's sexual frustration. Thus it had connotations about class, and the primitive well-spring of sexual behaviour, as well as about a middle class horror of losing control—especially to a malady known to produce a gnashing of teeth and foaming at the mouth.

That said, these ideas and arguments are more often affirmed than developed. Part of the problem lies in the use of language. While most of the descriptive text is perfectly straightforward, the same cannot be said of the sections addressed to ideas and significance. Too often the latter turn opaque, clouded by such droplets as "dialectics at a standstill", or "metaphoric space outside of conventional time", or "omnipresent arrangement of the imaginary in ordinary life." (p.75) Part of it lies in the author's self-assigned brevity, a condition which makes it difficult for readers to connect feminist leadership against vivisection with the feminization of family pets, and these in turn with the growing popularity of cats—a species long associated with female sexuality—and the allegedly related transformation of bourgeois culture at the turn of the twentieth century. (p.135)

Finally, part of the problem lies with the failure to situate these petkeeping bourgeois within the setting of their class cul-

ture. The fact is that readers are expected to deduce the degree to which Paris had been "embourgeois,e" by the mid-nineteenth century. But if we are to understand middle class concern about social order, scientific progress and the alienation of individuals in modern society, if we are to grasp their sense of what was crude and what refined, their appreciation of appropriate gender roles, we need to be told something directly—rather than inferentially—about the nature of that culture: their numbers, their sources and levels of affluence, their lifestyle, above all their values and the perceived differences between those values and those of other classes. In the absence of such a class portrait, and without prior knowledge, readers may have some difficulty relating the rich and explicit details of Parisian petkeeping to the sparse and implicit treatment of French middle class culture.

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Burley, David G. *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. Pp.309. Tables. \$39.95 cloth.

For some time now social historians have focused on the formation of a Canadian working class during the industrialisation era of the mid and late nineteenth century. In this clever and well-researched study historian David Burley changes this focus to explore the "making of the middle class"—surprisingly, a rather under-studied topic in Canadian history—in the urban setting of Brantford, Ontario. Concentrating his inquiry on one segment of the middle class, Burley explores how the economic restructuring brought about by industrialisation affected

Brantford's self-employed in both structural and subjective terms. The result is a successful book, rich both in evidence and analysis about the process of middle class formation during Canada's industrialisation era.

The author makes excellent use of census data from the 1830-81 period to chart the rise and fall of a golden era of self-employment in Brantford. Until the late 1850s self-employment was common; it was also deeply cherished by many immigrants who were accustomed to the artisanal shop cultures of their native countries. Newcomers found in the relatively isolated town a "frontier" of self-employment opportunities no longer available in Britain or the northeastern United States. In Brantford, young men—and a few women—could realistically aspire to working for themselves in a modest enterprise at some stage in their life, a circumstance that permitted strong community cohesion both politically and socially. This consensus began to break down in the 1850s and 1860s as industrialisation took hold. As better transportation links drew the community into the industrialising national economy, small single person businesses and partnerships that served the local area gave way to larger, better capitalised industrial enterprises financed by the most successful local businessmen and outside capital. This trend was facilitated further by a tightening of credit that followed a major economic collapse in 1857. Successful local businessmen, who used to loan money to self-employed individuals on the basis of good character alone, increasingly invested in large, secure industrial enterprises that promised a return. Although modest self-employment opportunities continued to exist (particularly in the commercial sector), industrialisation significantly altered the structure of wealth in Brantford, putting more of it in the hands of those at the top at the expense of

those in the middle. Increasingly one needed the received advantage of family wealth or an established business in order to be successfully self-employed, a circumstance that reduced social mobility, turned many self-employed into proletarians, and ultimately increased social and political conflict between the town's haute bourgeoisie and the working and lower middle classes...

Class membership in mid-Victorian Ontario was changeable and Burley is careful to define his focal group by their *persistence* in self employment over time rather than by their occupation at any one point. He notes that "[a]s a social boundary, self employment was permeable to crossings in both directions several times in a man's life, and so probably conformed as much to a stage in life, another manifestation of social maturity, as to class division." Indeed, an important theme of this book is that, during the mid-nineteenth century, self-employment was valued less for its financial possibilities than for the independence—and, thus, maturity—it gave an individual. Diminishing self-employment opportunities and the demotion of formerly self-employed tradesmen to the working class during the post-1860 period was thus socially disruptive less because it reduced standards of living—indeed, in many case these standards rose—but because it reduced a man's independence, or at least the opportunity of becoming independent. Recognizing how industrialisation altered this important benchmark of male maturity, Burley argues, goes a long way to understanding what some have characterized as the mid-nineteenth century's "crisis in masculinity".

Historical memory plays an important role in Burley's understanding of the particular process of class formation and conflict in mid-nineteenth century Brantford. Memories of a pre-industrial econ-

omy and society—in which self-employment and social mobility were common—shaped industrial relations. Disputes during the 1860-80 period were as much about negotiating "the social meaning of wage labour in a community previously characterized by pervasive self-employment" as they were about wages and working conditions. Relations between formerly self-employed tradesmen—whose work background led them to believe that wage labour would only constitute a stage in their career—and their bosses involved elements of both explicit class conflict and a "negotiated paternalism" borne in a common craft culture experience.

Memory is also central to Burley's analysis of the evolution of a middle class consciousness based on the liberal ideology of the self-made man. This "success ideology" was a response by those who had succeeded under the new industrial order to the contradiction between their memory of a pre-industrial Brantford in which social mobility was common and the reality of the town in the 1880s when opportunities were limited. Struggling to understand the failure of so many other self-employed men in the 1870s and 1880s, Brantford's middle class attributed their own earlier success to individual character and self-help, an analysis that ignored structural changes created by industrialisation. Although Burley devotes an entire chapter to this important topic, his argument relies on limited evidence. His analysis of the middle class's "success ideology" is based almost exclusively on a biographical dictionary written by "Brantford's leading intellectual".

For the most part, though, Burley's evidence is strong. He makes interesting use of the records of the Mercantile Agency of R.G. Dun and Co. to argue that, during the mid-century period, the measure of credit worthiness transformed from an individual's character to his material assets. Moreover, Burley's

generalisations regarding important conceptual issues are cautious and always stress the particularities of place. The book interacts nicely with the Canadian and international literature on class formation and offers important qualifications to existing wisdom. For instance, Burley shows that Brantford provides an exception to Ben Forster's thesis that pro-tariff businessmen formed an "ascending" and dominant elite during the 1870s. Brantford's leading businessmen remained "uncommitted to tariff protection" during this time and, indeed, many saw their interests best served through reciprocity.

If there is a weakness in this book it may lie in Burley's somewhat romantic portrayal of a golden pre-industrial age filled with opportunity and lacking in social conflict. His census evidence certainly reveals that self-employment opportunities existed and that social mobility was not uncommon. But much of the book's subjective and documentary evidence tends to focus on the transition to industrialisation, leaving one wanting to know more about social relations during the earlier period. Would a closer look at this period reveal more conflict than Burley suggests? On a more stylistic note, the volume would have been enhanced by the inclusion of maps and illustrations or photographs of the town and some of the individuals discussed. Urban historians might also be interested in a discussion of how industrialisation and middle class formation affected the spatial patterns of class-based residency within the town.

Despite these criticisms, this is an important book that offers a fresh look at class formation and business culture during the industrialisation period.

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