

**Cheape, Charles W. *Moving the Masses: Urban Public Transit in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, 1880-1912*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980. Pp. vii, 285. Maps, illustrations, tables, figures. \$18.50**

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The procedure for establishing a new governing arrangement for a metropolitan area was, in many cases, complex, cumbersome and time-consuming. Generally this required a new charter. Under the state constitution in Ohio, for example, a commission had to be elected to draft a charter. Any charter drafted by a commission elected in this manner then had to be approved by a majority of voters in the county, a majority of voters in the central city, a majority of voters outside the central city, and a majority of voters in a majority of the county's political units. Teaford provides vivid descriptions of attempts in the 1920s and 1930s to secure new governmental arrangements in such areas as St. Louis, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. To a large extent the extensive fragmentation arising from easy municipal incorporation was protected and maintained by state constitutional requirements which made change difficult if not impossible. "Local self-government," suggests Teaford, "meant that each fragment of the metropolis would enjoy the right to govern itself and to decide its destiny." It became "a sacred element of the American civil religion and the nation's lawmakers were devout in their adherence to the faith."

For the serious student of metropolitan government, this book provides fascinating historical insights which help to make clear the forces that continue to inhibit U.S. efforts to provide for the effective governance of the metropolis.

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Cheape, Charles W. *Moving the Masses: Urban Public Transit in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, 1880-1912*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980. Pp. vii, 285. Maps, illustrations, tables, figures. \$18.50.

Throughout its existence urban historical research has been characterized by what might be termed the "case-study approach." Most practitioners have focussed their analyses upon single communities, often of rather small size. Charles Cheape's *Moving the Masses* is a welcome departure from this parochial tradition. Not only does Cheape present a comparative assessment of the evolution of urban mass transit, but he does it for New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, three of the largest cities in North America during his study period.

*Moving the Masses* is an engaging, well organized, and well researched volume. For each city a separate chapter is devoted to both surface lines (horsecars, cablecars, and electric streetcars) and rapid transit facilities (elevated and subway schemes), with New York receiving a third chapter to underscore the importance of early steam-powered elevated railways in that metropolis. Primary and secondary sources are skillfully interwoven throughout the book. Each chapter contributes to an understanding of the two dominant themes of the study: "the constant pressure of rapid growth in city population and area and the requirements of the technology developed to service that growth" (pp. 1-2).

In all three of the cities studied the relationships between technology and policy were extremely dynamic and complex. New

technology in mass transit frequently solved old problems for both transit companies and their riders, while creating even more perplexing new ones. Inevitably, the response to such new difficulties involved both more technology and new organizational structures. In fact, transit evolution in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia was similar in several respects. The early years, in each case, were characterized by fierce competition among several horsecar companies. This proved contrary to the transit needs of each city and was followed by a period of consolidation of these separate operations. While this generally provided better service in the short run, by the late 1880s the horsecar technology was no longer adequate to service the ever expanding suburbs. Experiments with various types of mechanized technology followed, with the electric streetcar emerging as the eventual choice in all three communities. Even this technology could not cope with the continual urban growth of the age, and all three cities finally turned to rapid transit. At each step in this technological progression, new organizational structures emerged along similar lines in all of the cities examined. Over the period covered in this book, these structures shifted from *laissez faire* competition among numerous small companies to private monopoly control of transit systems to public financing (for rapid transit) and, finally, to public operation. Cheape's careful documentation of the increasing public involvement in mass transit is one of the real strengths of this book. As he notes for Boston, "in a pattern remarkably similar to the New York case, public transit operation and policy had been radically altered to fit the

requirements of the changing city" (p. 152). Generalizations do not always dominate the analysis, however, as Cheape is fully aware of the importance of place in the evolution of mass transit. As he notes:

a configuration of local factors, including size and rate of growth, city and state politics, urban leadership, and the law and traditions of public control of transit, shaped the system's evolution (p. 209).

Particularly revealing in this regard is his discussions of the organization and operations of the various transit companies and of the political ties and activities of transit officials in each city. *Moving the Masses* provides a nice balance between general themes and specific events, no mean task with so many individuals and firms involved.

Not surprisingly in such an ambitious undertaking, this book has shortcomings. For one thing, the use of illustrative material is quite poor. Maps of the various transit systems are very badly reproduced, and often verge on the illegible. Furthermore, no photographs of either construction or rolling stock are included. Given the magnitude of some the projects discussed, these could have been both extremely useful and interesting. Another problem is that the book is rather superficially indexed. For example, one recurrent theme is the interrelationship between land speculators and transit companies in all three cities, yet there is no obvious reference to this in the index. The concluding chapter, moreover, is quite thin and really fails to provide either a proper

synthesis of the analysis or suggestions for future research. Nor are the implications of the processes outlined in the book fully examined. Finally, while some attention is paid to research on transit development in European cities, no mention is made of the several Canadian studies in this field.\* Nevertheless, the strengths of this volume far outweigh its weaknesses. It may be recommended highly, not only to students of urban mass transit, but also to all who pursue historical urban research. Our field of study could use many more comparative investigations of this type. It is to be hoped that *Moving the Masses* represents the wave of the future.

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\* Such works include Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles, *The Revenge of the Methodist Bicycle Company: Sunday Streetcars and Municipal Reform in Toronto, 1888-1897* (Toronto, 1977); M.J. Doucet, "Mass Transit and the Failure of Private Ownership: The Case of Toronto in the Early Twentieth Century," *Urban History Review*, 3-77 (1978), pp. 3-33; and D.F. Davis, "Mass Transit and Private Ownership: An Alternative Perspective on the Case of Toronto," *Urban History Review*, 3-78 (1979), pp. 60-98.

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Lagemann, Ellen Condliffe. *A Generation of Women: Education in the Lives of Progressive Reformers.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979. Pp. viii, 207. Illustrations. \$15.00.

*A Generation of Women* examines the lives of Grace Dodge, Maud Nathan, Lillian Wald, Leonora O'Reilly, and Rose Schneiderman. As progressives all had "a compelling interest in finding solutions to the social problems of the day." Dodge was involved in the New York Association of Working Girls' Societies, the New York College for the Training of Teachers, and the YWCA. Wald founded the Henry Street Settlement House; Nathan was a moving force in the Consumers' League, and both O'Reilly and Schneiderman were committed to the Women's Trade Union League.

The book focusses on the educational development of the five women, education being broadly defined as the "process of interaction by which individual potential (instincts, propensities, talents) is activated, shaped, or channeled and a change (an observable or consciously felt difference) thereby produced in the self." Unfortunately in looking for the changes which occurred in these women, the author tries to "psychologize" each experience, to assess whether it was indeed significant. As a result the book often loses sight of the wider social context in which all five women acted. For example, we learn very little about the progressive era from this book on progressive reformers. Even the life of each woman is somewhat distorted. Each did so much, but because the focus is on "turning points," accomplishments become mere recitals of tasks done and lessons learned. The spark of individuality is lost.

Despite these difficulties *A Generation of Women* does raise important points. It concludes that formal education in itself was