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Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986. Pp. xi, 244. Illustrations

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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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two-thirds of these households employed only one servant, and most employers came from the commercial and professional classes. By contrast, the sex, age, and ethnicity of servants did change from one period to the other. While half of the servants in Quebec City in 1818 were male, by the 1870s, 90 percent were female. There were more servants under the age of 16 in the early period, when service might be construed as a form of apprenticeship as well as a means of support. Increased immigration and mobility also affected domestic service. The majority of servants in the early period were born in the city where they were employed, but, by 1871, the majority were immigrants or migrants from rural areas. As in the United States, Irish women were over-represented in domestic service in all cities, including Quebec City, where they constituted a third of those employed.

Although Lacelle argues that domestic service in both periods was based on a contractual rather than paternal relationship, she portrays the conditions of service as being more onerous in the latter part of the century. She shows the existence of a more formal separation between master and servant in the 1870s, as demonstrated by the adoption of uniforms rather than the ordinary clothes worn in the earlier period. The incorporation of back stairs in house design also created a clear line of demarcation. In addition, servants had to work longer hours, as "polite society" chose to dine later in the evening. Lacelle accepts the thesis that technological change did not lessen work because it was accompanied by a demand for high standards of performance. Somewhat surprisingly, however, is the little attention she gives to the impact of technology on conditions of work.

The greatest strength of this study is its meticulous and innovative use of a wide range of documents to recreate the lives of servants, who left no written record. Census records are the most important source but they are reinforced by many other types of documentation. House plans reveal the cramped rooms beside kitchens that were provided to servants as bedrooms, and the narrow stairs, introduced after 1850, that served to separate them from the rest of the household. Household inventories complement the plans by showing the spartan nature of their bedroom furnishings, sharply contrasting with opulence found in the rest of the house. Wills detail the bequests sometimes left to the few fortunate servants, as well as the lack of such consideration in the majority of cases. Court records indicate that servants, like other young people, committed crimes, but, despite the difficult conditions of life, only a small proportion appear to have turned to theft, drunkenness or prostitution. Evidence given at trials also gives some sense of how servants spent their leisure time in the early part of the century. These records compensate for the lack of literature, household manuals, memoirs and diaries dealing with servants in Canada. Even though problems created by the absence of records is a frequent refrain throughout the book, Lacelle has succeeded in recreating the everyday life of urban domestics during the 19th century.

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Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986. Pp. xi, 244. Illustrations.

In 1983, rock star Cyndi Lauper popularized the lyrics "when the working day is done, oh! girls just want to have fun." Kathy Peiss, in her groundbreaking and highly entertaining study of working women and leisure in turn-of-the-century New York, convincingly argues that the preoccupation with leisure by young women has both a long history and serious implications for historians. Peiss's examination of the culture of young, working women, which includes "the customs, values, public styles and ritualized interactions expressed in leisure time", is set in the larger context of redefinition, reorganization and commercialization of leisure that took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In keeping with much of the recent literature in the relatively new field of "leisure history", Peiss rejects the "trickle-down" theory of cultural change, which assumes that new social forms were pioneered by bohemian intellectuals, then transferred to a wider middle-class audience and finally to the working classes. Models of cultural hegemony and social control employed by historians in the 1960s and 1970s, she notes, tended to reinforce the view that the working classes, controlled and manipulated by social reformers and entrepreneurial promoters of new cheap amusements, were passive recipients of cultural messages. Recent interpretations have shown a greater sensitivity to cultural change as a complex and dynamic two-way process in which, Peiss argues, "hegemonic intentions are accommodated, resisted, and reshaped in a variety of ways." The singular contribution of *Cheap Amusements* to this growing literature is its convincing demonstration that the new leisure culture was clearly delineated along gender as well as class lines; and that working women were not mere bystanders observing the process of cultural change, but active participants in the creation of a new heterosocial and sexually expressive working-class youth culture that was ultimately popularized for a broader audience. The experience of a relatively small population of young, white working-class women in Manhattan - identified by some historians as the foundry of the new mass culture - thus has ramifications beyond the boundaries of New York City.

In the first three chapters Peiss examines the relationship of working women's leisure to the larger pattern of working-class social life. In the "homosocial world" of working-class

amusements in the late 19th century, workingmen, she argues, took their leisure in saloons, lodges, fraternal societies and a variety of other institutions that, for the most part, excluded women. Married women's leisure time, shaped in large part by the work rhythms of the home, was intermittent and much more restricted than that of their husbands. An exception to this homosocial pattern of recreation were young, single, wage-earning women, who had more opportunities for leisure than their mothers. According to Peiss, changes in the social organization of labour, expanding job opportunities, shortened hours, and the development of women's work cultures, which varied according to ethnicity and occupation, fostered "the perception of leisure as a separate sphere of independence, youthful pleasure, and mixed-sex fun, in opposition to the world of obligation and toil."

Low wages, however, made access to leisure problematic for the majority of young working women, forcing them to scrimp on essentials and to depend on men for financial assistance and gifts, giving rise to the widely accepted practice of "treating." In the company of young men, these women developed a heterosocial, working-class youth culture based in the streets and "pleasure clubs." A degree of autonomy was asserted through the pursuit of fun and romance, sexual experimentation, the use of slang and "rough talk" and putting on style - promenading through the streets in finery that both emulated and parodied the fashion of rich women and prostitutes alike. Young working women who valued their "respectability" often found themselves unable to participate in youth culture, and those who participated often did so at the cost of financial hardship, the sacrifice of educational opportunities and conflict with parents and social reformers.

In the second, and strongest, section of the book, Peiss offers three detailed case studies set in the context of the dance halls, amusement parks, cheap theatres and nickelodeons. Traditional working-class leisure pastimes centred on kinship and organizational ties were transformed by the rise of new commercialized recreations which, in their turn, drew upon the cultural forms developed by the youthful working-class who frequented the of the streets and pleasure clubs. These cultural forms became increasingly sanitized and popularized for a middle-class clientele. Peiss notes the particular importance that entertainment entrepreneurs attached to encouraging female participation in the new commercial amusements, knowing that male participation would follow. As a result, the freer sexual expression long enjoyed by working women became increasingly commodified and "an ideology took shape that fused notions of female autonomy and pleasure with heterosexual relationships and consumerism."

These case studies make skilled and imaginative use of the wealth of resources available to historians studying the complex culture, including published and unpublished reminiscences and interviews with working women, reports of journalists, vice committees and settlement workers, and the records of organizations such as the Y.W.C.A., Girl's Friday Society and working girl's clubs. Stripped of its moralism, the extensive documentation produced by a veritable army of middle-class observers provides remarkable insight into the morals and mores of working women. In a fascinating concluding chapter, the same sources are used to explore the campaign by middle-class women to reform working women's recreation as a clash between conflicting versions of women's culture. Middle-class women's organizations failed to persuade the majority of working women to embrace their commitment to a homosocial, private familial world characterized by an ethos of cooperation and sisterhood. Instead, they found themselves forced to adapt to the heterosocial culture they opposed.

Cheap Amusements suggests the need for greater sensitivity by historians towards the complex dynamic of class and gender in studies of urban culture. Peiss argues not only that developments in Manhattan signalled the decline of a genteel, middle-class cultural hegemony, as other historians have, but also that the rise of heterosocial culture derived from the structure of working-class social life, and reflected the delineation of recreation along gender as well as class lines. Even more significantly, however, this study is an important contribution to the small but growing body of literature on the experience of women in the city. Peiss demonstrates that the culture of urban women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was by no means monolithic. She rescues working women from stereotyped portrayals as the downtrodden victims of the factory system by documenting their struggles to achieve a limited degree of autonomy and self-assertion through their affirmation of a vital and flamboyant leisure life.

Yet the author never romanticizes the experience of young working women, recognizing that so long as the pursuit of style occurred in the context of economic and sexual dependency, these women remained vulnerable to exploitation. As settlement leader Mary Simkhovitch warned: "The young men of the big cities today are not gallantly paying the way of these girls for nothing." Peiss makes it clear that urban public space was not neutral territory and that women negotiated it at their peril, lending credence to the claim by feminist scholars and activists that the city has long been a locus of both pleasure and danger for women. She calls for historians to adopt a "double vision" that encourages the perception of working women's culture as "a source of autonomy and pleasure as well as a cause for their continuing oppression." Cheap Amusements presents a model of this

double vision that may be emulated to the profit of urban and women's historians alike.

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Town Halls of Canada. Ottawa: Environment Canada, 1987. Pp. 343. 281 black and white photos and drawings. $21.95.

One might well ask whether the subject of town halls in Canada is worthy of a generic publication. Perhaps this review will answer that question. Town Halls in Canada has the subtitle "A Collection of Essays on Pre-1930 Town Hall Buildings." The essays were written by five architectural historians on the staff of the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch of Environment Canada, publisher of the volume.

The first of the six essays, "Types and Trends: An Introduction to the Study of Early Canadian Town Halls," by Margaret Carter, describes the methodology of the original research on town halls conducted between 1978 and 1981 by the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building. Carter also attempts to draw together the themes and conclusions of the other five essays. She describes the taxonomy developed for early town halls, reducing the population to 3 types of structures: simple, intermediate and monumental. Such an exercise might be useful, but in the practice of heritage preservation, it can also be hazardous. For instance, Carter refers to an entire class of intermediates as having exteriors that are "relatively undistinguished." Once in print, such an observation may come to be used as an argument against preserving particular structures.

Each of the five essays that follows develops a particular theme in the history of town halls in Canada. The first two, both by G.E. Mills, address antecedents and Canadian high-style town halls respectively. Mills discusses the origins of European city halls and the emergence of the civic centre, and then links these with the succession of prominent city halls in Canada: Victoria Hall, Cobourg, Montreal's Bonsecours Market, Kingston City Hall and the majestic Toronto City Hall of 1887, among others. Mills' work is solid and his sources are extensive. His two essays could easily be expanded into a discrete publication.

The fourth essay, C.A. Hale's "Rural, Village and Town Halls in Canada" provides a quintessential example of the difficult task of drawing together coherent themes in architectural history embracing all regions of Canada. Hale does it well, both in her selection of characteristic types, from utilitarian to high-style, and in revealing vernacular variations. She concludes that all regions can boast noteworthy surviving examples of several types.

In his essay entitled "With Our Tax Money": The Thorny Problem of Town Hall Construction", Marc de Caraffe addresses the legal issues surrounding the building of early town halls in Canada. Region by region, he explores the dynamics of municipal rates and civic aspirations, which were, in the 19th century as today, often at odds. His essay is packed with references to legislation and taxation practices, as well as important historic dates, facts and statistics. Those interested in municipal history will find the essay useful.

The final essay in the series is entitled "For Generations to Come: The Town Hall as a Symbol of Continuity." Written by Dana Johnson, this essay discusses the fundamental question of the relationship between town hall architecture and the society that produced it. Johnson's focus is the symbolic value of civic architecture. His interpretation draws upon information presented by his colleagues, and he does a commendable job in weaving together their themes. He argues that the architecture of historic town halls, perhaps more than any other type of public building, needs to be understood on the basis of what it did in and for the society that produced it. He illustrates his argument by discussing the commissioning and building of Kingston City Hall and Montreal's Bonsecours Market. Both structures were deliberately conceived to be imposing, both emulated British Classical Revival antecedents, both were planned to serve as visual centre-pieces in their communities, and both were executed at a huge cost disproportionate to their municipal treasuries. Still, most citizens saw ample merit in their construction because these buildings were not merely central to utilitarian needs, but also to aspirations of civic virtue with their communities.

Johnson's essay is thus central to the entire volume and, ideally, it have served as the introduction to the other essays. Carter's essay might have made a better conclusion to the study. There are other indications that the publisher should have given higher priority to editing. For example, reference to the important work by Asa Briggs on the subject of Victorian cities is conspicuously absent. Another shortcoming is the lack of references to architectural city planning and the emphasis it placed on the civic centre in the earlier part of this century.

Returning to the original question posed, I believe that someone should indeed write a definitive study of town hall architecture in Canada. The collection of essays in Town Halls of Canada provides an important prototype for such a work.

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