

## Urban History in Canada: Present State and Future Prospects

Frederick H. Armstrong

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URBAN HISTORY IN CANADA:

PRESENT STATE

AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Frederick H. Armstrong

University of Western Ontario

When I prepared an article on "Urban history in Canada" for the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee's Urban History Group Newsletter in December, 1969, I felt that it was best to include a note that "so many developments are taking place, these comments will probably have to be amplified and modified before long". If anything this was an underestimate: new urban history courses continue to appear, the rapid flow of books continues to build up, more source materials are available, the first urban history session of the Canadian Historical Association was held at St. John's and now we have a Canadian urban history newsletter.

One aspect of this interest in urban history is represented not only by the appearance of courses in various phases of urban development, but also by the establishment of special institutes and faculties for urban studies. The University of Toronto's Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Western's Urban and Regional Development Group and York's more formal Faculty of Environmental Studies are relatively "long established". Now, in addition, Waterloo set up a Division of Environmental Studies in 1969 and Brock has established an Urban Studies

Programme in 1971. Many of these organizations do not have a specific urban history slant, although this is bound to develop in some cases.

Most fortunate, for the scholar who is trying to find data on the maze of urban courses, has been the appearance of Opportunities in Canadian Universities for Education in Urban and Regional Affairs. This was begun in 1969 and the third edition, for 1970-71, edited by Colin MacAndrews, has recently been published. The work, which lists courses in all fields, has appeared under the auspices of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which has done a great deal in support of Canadian urban history research. Another federal organization with an interest in urban development is the Science Council of Canada. Its Report No. 14, entitled Cities for Tomorrow, appeared in September of this year.

With the creation of the new federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs we can expect to see even more Dominion aid to urban research. Working papers are already appearing, such as R. W. Crowley Labour Force Growth and Specialization in Canadian Cities (Ottawa, July, 1971) and it is to be hoped that these will extend into the historical field. Various provincial departments are also now taking an interest in urban history. The Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs has produced "A programme for the preservation of

buildings of historic or architectural value in Ontario" [1971]. In Quebec the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles has just issued a series of books on the Place Royale in Quebec's Lower Town, including a general survey by Michel Gaumont, Place Royale: Its houses and their occupants, which is available in both English and French.

Returning to the area of useful reference works for the urban historian, the Canadian Council on Urban and Regional Research has just published both a summary of its earlier bibliographies in Urban & Regional References 1445-1969 and a Supplement for 1970. These contain considerable urban historical material, although the concentration is not in this field. The Council also publishes a Urban Research Bulletin, which both describes its activities and lists urban research projects, and has produced a booklet, by Michel Barcelo, Henry C. Campbell and Dennis A. Young, entitled Information for Urban Affairs in Canada (Ottawa, 1971). In addition, of course, The National Library's Canadiana, as well as The Canadian Periodical Index and the notices of new works in the Canadian Historical Review, continue to provide a picture of current publications. For Quebec the Quatrième colloque de la revue Recherches sociographiques: L'Urbanisation de la société Canadienne-française (Québec, 1968), edited by Marc-André Lessard and Jean-Paul Montminy,

provides a detailed bibliography of the cities of Québec, which, although not basically historical, contains much of interest for the historian.

For those searching for unpublished material on urbanization in Canada the last few years have also brought forth fruitful developments. The Public Archives of Canada have put out the first edition of the Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories (Ottawa, 1968), and the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association recently issued the first Directory of Canadian Archival Repositories (Ottawa, 1971). The Quebec Archives has its own catalogue in L'Etat général des archives publiques et privées du Québec (Quebec, 1968). Also, of course, there is the Register of Post-Graduate Dissertations in Progress in History and Related Subjects, No. 6, 1971, edited by Michael Swift of the Public Archives, and the mimeographed lists of completed theses, Canadian Theses on Microfilm, put out periodically by the National Library, Supplement No. 6, covering up to No. 7450, appeared in August, 1971.

Outside Canada publications of direct interest to Canadian Urban historians continue to appear. The already mentioned University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee, Urban History Group Newsletter, regularly lists Canadian works in its bibliographies and includes reports on Canadian research. Also the British Urban

History Newsletter, published by the University, Leicester, reviews Canadian publications. Of particular interest are the Exchange Bibliographies, now numbering well over 200, issued by the Council of Planning Librarians of Monticello, Illinois, which cover a wide variety of topics of urban interest. One article which should be of considerable use to Canadian urban historians, both for the parallels it presents and its useful summary biography of American urban history, is Dana F. White, "The Underdeveloped Discipline: Interdisciplinary Directions in American Urban History". This appeared in the spring, 1971, (Vol. IX, No. 3), issue of American Studies.

Within Canada some of the most interesting work has been done by one of our most senior historians, Professor Arthur R. M. Lower, after noting his interest in the field in his memoirs, My First Seventy-Five Years, two years ago, he has gone on to produce three thoughtful articles on the contrast between the city and the country side that will be of interest to all urban historians: "The Metropolitan and the Provincial", in Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LXXVI, No. 4; "Townsmen and Countrymen: Two Ways of Life", in The Dalhousie Review, Vol 50, No. 4; and "Metropolis and Hinterland", in The South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. LXX, No. 3.

Also, the amount of new work related to individual cities continues in a flood. For Toronto, there is not only Peter G. Goheen's geographical study, Victorian Toronto, 1850-1900 (Chicago, 1970), and two general picture books by Mike Filey, A Toronto Album: Glimpses of the City that Was (Toronto, 1970), and Look at Us Now (Toronto, 1971), but also a specialized study of the St. Lawrence Hall (Toronto, 1969) and David and Nadine Nowlan's topical, The Bad Trip: The Untold Story of the Spadina Expressway (Toronto, 1970). Further, in 1970 Cole's went into the urban reprint series with two works in their Canadiana Collection: C. A. Clark, Of Toronto the Good: A Social Study, (Montreal, 1898) and C. Pelham Mulvany, Toronto Past and Present (Toronto, 1884).

Toronto, of course, is far from the only subject of urban biography. Montreal has received its third history in quick succession in Leslie Roberts Montreal: From Mission Colony to World City (Toronto, 1969), as well as being the subject of some interesting specialized works, such as Léon Trépanier, Les rues du vieux Montréal au fil du temps (Montréal, 1898) and Georges E. Baillargeon La survivance du régime seigneurial à Montréal (Ottawa, [1970]). Such new studies, however, are not limited to the largest cities and the capital. At the other end of the magnitude scale there is a fine architectural history by Peter

Stoves entitled Old Niagara on the Lake (Toronto, 1971). Nor are new studies limited to the central cities. The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia continues its fine work with a special examination of one historic street in A Sense of Place: Granville Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia (Halifax, 1970). But space precludes any attempt at full listing.

What is disappointing to the urban historian is that there are still so few overall examinations that he can use for a Canadian Urban history course. James and Robert Simons, however, have written a useful urban geography in Urban Canada (Toronto, 1969) and Bellhaven House Limited are putting out an Urban Studies Series, beginning with Eric Winter's Urban Landscapes

(Toronto, 1969). It is clear that more publishers will soon follow into what appears to be a potentially lucrative field.

In conclusion, all that one can say is that we can expect a continuing period of rapid development, in which publishers will constantly put out new books to tempt the public, or the textbook market. Meanwhile, some urban historians will be proclaiming the "new" urban history of quantification, while others are still trying to find out what the "old" urban history is all about. The results should be exciting, even if the confusion is compounded, and doubtless another survey of the state of urban history in Canada will quickly become necessary.