

Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Canadian Issues, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1975. "The Canadian Urban Experience."

John H. Taylor

Number 1-76, June 1976

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019553ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019553ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Taylor, J. H. (1976). Review of [*Canadian Issues*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1975. "The Canadian Urban Experience."]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (1-76), 32–33. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019553ar>

Canadian Issues, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1975. "The Canadian Urban Experience."

A year ago the first number of Canadian Issues was produced by the Association for Canadian Studies. The theme of this number was "The Canadian Urban Experience" and, apart from one article, comprised papers delivered at the annual A.C.S. conference in Toronto in 1975. The theme is thus cast within a broader context of "providing a forum" for discussion of "interdisciplinary material organized around a single theme", and for "making available textual material for many of the newly emerging interdisciplinary courses appearing on Canadian campuses."

An appraisal of such a venture cannot in fairness be based upon the pioneering issue and must necessarily await further publication, though at least two problems of the urban theme may well anticipate problems for both the journal and the association. One problem, familiar to many working in the urban field, is whether the study of the city is susceptible to a "disciplined" approach or merely an eclectic one. Despite Stanley McMullin's brave attempt in the "Conclusion" to argue (at least in part) the former, the impression from the actual material is more that of the latter. A second problem, equally familiar, is whether the "Canadian" urban experience is indeed "Canadian". Certainly there has been an urban experience "in" Canada, but to carry the discussion beyond that point requires some consideration of what in the urban milieu is Canadian, what is less than Canadian (regional, provincial or local), and what is more (North American, European, International). By implication or assertion--"Canadian urban experience has not been different from urban experience in other nations"--though rarely by argument is a case made for the amount or nature of the Canadian content.

To evaluate the material itself is difficult, partly because some of it is tentative, partly because much of it represents variations on familiar themes, and partly because it seems to be pitched to a student rather than an academic audience. Still there is enough solid, original

and sophisticated material to make the number a worthwhile buy at \$3. The articles included in the number are: Lloyd Axworthy and Donald Epstein, "Public Policy and Urban Neighborhood"; Tom Pinfold, "The Role of the Land in the Urban Economy"; Alan Gowans, "Towards a Meaningfully Built Environment"; Terry Copp, "The Montreal Working Class in Prosperity and Depression"; Gilbert Stelter, "The Urban Frontier in Canadian History"; and Paul M. Koroscil, "Urbanization in the Canadian North: Yellowknife, N.W.T.".

Subscriptions or single copies may be obtained from S.E. McMullin, Director, Canadian Studies, University of Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1.

John H. Taylor
Carleton University

* * *

Bender, Thomas. Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975. Pp. xv, 277. Illustrations. \$14.50.

This book examines intellectual and institutional responses to unprecedented urban and industrial growth in nineteenth-century America. In the rapid urban and industrial growth of this period, ideas inherited from Jefferson's generation no longer enabled men and women to make sense of their increasingly urban experiences. New ideologies were therefore sought to supply the meaning that older patterns of belief no longer produced. Professor Bender argues that the cultural crisis produced by urban industrialism was felt by a wide spectrum of Americans - ranging from sophisticated thinkers and middle-class gentlemen to reformers and the "mill girls" of Lowell, Massachusetts. By the mid-nineteenth century a new urban vision had developed out of the interplay of a New England version of early American agrarian ideals and the modernizing forces associated with the industrial city. It sought to bring city and country, and the values they respectively stand for, into a contrapuntal relationship.