

Urban History in Canada: A Conversation with Alan F. J. Artibise

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URBAN HISTORY IN CANADA:
A CONVERSATION WITH ALAN F.J. ARTIBISE

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Bruce M. Stave

INTRODUCTION

When the editors of the Journal of Urban History began planning for publication during the early part of the 1970s, there was a desire to offer to our readers features that were not the ordinary fare for academic periodicals. One of these, a series of conversations with leading urbanists, continues.

That series, which employs the technique of oral history to explore the development of urban historiography, aims to ask and answer many of the questions raised by scholars and students about the work of others in their field of interest. The initial interviews concentrated upon United States urban history and were compiled into a single volume, The Making of Urban History: Historiography Through Oral History (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977). While the national framework emerged as a result of my own scholarly pursuits, the readers of the J.U.H., published both in the U.S. and England, represented an audience with a vastly wider range of interests. Moreover, the general nature of urbanization and my own desire to explore any national and cultural differences that might exist in the process--and the way these might be studied--prompted me to both physically and intellectually move beyond the borders of the United States. (a)

(a) *An early conversation dealing with Latin American urban history appeared in the J.U.H. See Paul Goodwin, Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., and Bruce M. Stave, "A Conversation with Richard M. Morse," Journal of Urban History, Vol. 2, No. 3 (May 1976), pp. 331-356. This interview, however, was undertaken with a leading American scholar in the field rather than with a native of the nation being discussed as was the case in my British, Australian and Canadian interviews.*

As a consequence, interviews concerning Australian^(b) and British^(c) urban history have appeared in the November, 1978 and August, 1979 issues of the Journal. The latter, a conversation with the late H.J. Dyos, may be of special interest to Canadian readers. More to the point, however, are two conversations dealing expressly with Canadian urban history. Both the one that follows with Alan Artibise and an interview with Gilbert Stelter to be published in the February, 1980 J.U.H. demonstrate the rich potential of the field as well as the maturity it has already reached.

It appears that many of the same influences that shaped urban history in the United States have similarly affected scholarship about the development of the Canadian city. Moreover, as Professor Artibise's experience indicates, the field (or subfield) as it emerged in the U.S., itself influenced trends to the north. It is clear, however, that the differences between the two urban experiences and the scholarship which studies them are significant.

The Canadian emphasis on metropolitanism, the role of geography and geographers in the historical study of urban development, and the differences between eastern and western Canada are some of the factors that establish a distinct identity. Scholars also must pay attention to a more general factor. As Gilbert Stelter remarks in his J.U.H. interview, "To fully appreciate any differences that might exist between Canadian and American cities, it is essential ... to go beyond urban development and examine the extent to which the Canadian experience differs from that of the United States. The basic distinction, of course, is the Revolution."

As one considers the distinct nature of Canadian urban

(b) Bruce M. Stave, "A Conversation with Graeme Davison: Urban History in Australia," Journal of Urban History, Vol. 5, No. 1 (November 1978), pp. 69-91.

(c) Bruce M. Stave, "A Conversation with H.J. Dyos: Urban History in Great Britain," Journal of Urban History, Vol. 5, No. 4 (August 1979), pp. 469-500.

history, the several volumes of this Review serve as an excellent starting point as does Stelter and Artibise's The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1977).^(d)

By stressing such themes as economic development and metropolitan growth, population growth and change, the physical environment, and society and politics, both the past and future of Canadian urban history are being charted. In so doing, the many scholars involved are assuring the importance of their nation's place in the study of modern urban industrial societies.

* * *

STAVE: In the introduction to your book Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914¹ you have some comments about why it took a long time for Canadian urban history to develop, and I think you list a number of reasons. You point out that Canadian urban history seems to have finally taken off, but it was retarded by attitudes toward local history, the emphasis on political history, the French attitude toward the city and the British attitude toward open spaces, and the language question in Canada. Yet it seems to me from your own work and the work you have done with Gilbert Stelter that there is a lot of urban history going on now. But this is relatively recent. So what I want to do is to inquire into the development of this whole process of urban history in Canada and into your own development, your own work, how it fits into the trends in Canadian history and where you think those are going to go. First let's start off with your own background and then we can move into the other questions. Do you come from an urban background and how did you get interested in urban history?

^(d) The Canadian City was reprinted by Macmillan of Canada in 1979. It is volume #109 in the Carleton Library Series.

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: This interview was conducted in conjunction with another on Canadian urban history with Gilbert A. Stelter, which will appear in the February, 1980 issue of the Journal of Urban History. I wish to thank Messrs. Artibise and Stelter for sharing their insights into Canadian urban history and Alan Artibise for his most helpful assistance in revising the original transcript of this conversation. Equally appreciated is the general assistance of Kathleen Madden in preparing this interview for publication and the grant awarded by the University of Connecticut Research Foundation, which has supported my work in oral and urban history.

¹ Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975.

ARTIBISE: Well, I come from a relatively small town in western Canada -- Dauphin, Manitoba.

STAVE: How big was it?

ARTIBISE: About 8,000. It is still roughly that. I was born there and remained there until age seventeen. Then I took my senior matriculation in another small town just across the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border, Yorkton, Saskatchewan. It had a population of ten or eleven thousand in 1963 when I arrived. It was really a rural childhood in one sense. Both Dauphin and Yorkton were small, farming-service communities. So I have no urban background to speak of. In fact, I still remember my first visit to the big city -- Winnipeg -- when I was about 13 or 14. I went there to play hockey.

STAVE: How big was Winnipeg at the time?

ARTIBISE: The city itself had a population of 265,000 in 1961. Metropolitan Winnipeg, including the adjacent suburbs, had a population of almost 500,000. So it was quite a contrast for me. I remember driving down one of the main streets, Portage Avenue, and looking at what I considered then to be very huge buildings. They weren't, but they seemed to be then.

STAVE: This would have been what year?

ARTIBISE: That would have been 1959 or 1960.

STAVE: Now how far away were you from Winnipeg?

ARTIBISE: About 220 or 230 miles. But I come from a big family and our entertainment and life style was very much related to the outdoors. My father, who was a barber, loved to fish and hunt. We always went to the lake for our holidays and big trips, usually travelling a few miles to one of the many lakes surrounding Dauphin. And we rarely went to Winnipeg. There wasn't any need to. Trips to the city did become more frequent in the early 1960s, however, when my mother, who was a teacher, began to attend summer sessions at the University of Manitoba. And that's where I went after I completed high school. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Manitoba. But at that time I had no interest in urban history. It wasn't part of any of the lectures I took in any of my courses. It was something that really didn't develop until I went to the University of British Columbia to pursue graduate studies in 1968. And even then I was majoring in American History, planning to write a thesis on the "Confederate Congress and the Army" under Professor Grady McWhiney. The reason for this was that my most influential teacher at Manitoba, J.E. Rea, had suggested that I should work with McWhiney who had a good reputation in military history. In fact, I had also applied to do graduate work at Louisiana State University under T. Harry Williams and had been accepted. My decision to go to the University of British Columbia hinged on two things: a desire to stay in Canada and the offer of a good scholarship.

STAVE: That is a long way from Winnipeg.

ARTIBISE: It certainly is! Had I pursued my studies in this area we certainly wouldn't be talking now. But, after I completed my first year of graduate studies in 1968, I made a significant change in my program. I realised that regardless of the quality of my work in American history, job prospects were not good. American historians weren't being hired at the time, whether they were American or Canadian citizens. On the other hand, Canadian history was a field of substantial growth. So in the summer of 1968 I decided to switch from American to Canadian history. I found, however, that the choices for graduate courses in the field did not suit my tastes. Most of the Canadian historians at U.B.C. at the time were graduates of Ontario universities and they tended to offer courses in political history which simply didn't interest me. I can't really explain why. It was just not something that I wanted to pursue. So I took a course from Norbert MacDonald who is an American historian doing comparative work on Vancouver and Seattle.² He offered a course on American urban history. So I began my interest in urban history by looking at American urban history. But the seminar paper I did for him was on Winnipeg. It struck me as very strange that very little had been written on Winnipeg.³

STAVE: That has changed since then.

ARTIBISE: Yes. In fact, I am always kidded about it by all my colleagues. I have turned Winnipeg into sort of a growth industry. In any case, I wrote a long paper on the city which formed the basis for my Ph.D. thesis. And I picked Winnipeg not only because I knew it better than other cities but because it also seemed to be a very interesting city because of its ethnic makeup, its rapid growth and its dominance in western Canada until the 1950s. There were all kinds of questions that came to mind and I found working in this area of history quite exciting. But what you mentioned earlier about attitudes toward urban history has relevance

²MacDonald's publications include the following: "Seattle Vancouver and the Klondike," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 49 (1968), pp. 234-246; "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 39 (1970), pp. 279-321; "Vancouver in the Nineteenth Century," Urban History Review, No. 1-75 (1975), pp. 51-54; "A Critical Growth Cycle for Vancouver, 1900-1914," in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, eds., The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History (Toronto, 1977), pp. 142-159; "The Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver's Development to 1900," BC Studies, No. 35 (1977), pp. 3-35; and "'C.P.R. Town': The City Building Process in Vancouver," in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, eds., Shaping the Canadian Urban Landscape: Essays on the City Building Process (forthcoming 1980).

³For a comprehensive list of material on Winnipeg see Alan F.J. Artibise, Western Canada Since 1870: A Select Bibliography and Guide (Vancouver, 1978), pp. 103-116; or Artibise, "Canadian Urban Studies: A Select Bibliography," Communique: Canadian Studies, Vol. 3 (April 1977), pp. 96-101.

here. When I spoke to various members of the department about doing a thesis on Winnipeg, the idea was not received enthusiastically. It wasn't that they were negative about such a topic but rather that they didn't know whether or not Winnipeg had a city archives or what kind of records were available. And, finally, neither they nor I knew precisely what I wanted to do other than write a thesis on Winnipeg. In fact, the strongest memory I have about my introduction to the field of urban history was that there was a great deal of debate about how to do urban history coupled with little work in the field. That impression came, of course, from reading a great deal of methodological material. For example, two of the books I had been exposed to at an early stage of my studies were Callow's American Urban History and Lithwick and Paquet, Urban Studies: A Canadian Perspective.⁴ In any case, I decided that I was going to go to Winnipeg and that I was going to look at all the records I could find. And I was sure that something would come out of it. I wasn't very worried. But I didn't know what directions it would take.

STAVE: How much guidance did you get from MacDonald?

ARTIBISE: On the one hand, not a great deal. On the other hand, a great deal. I will explain. He knew very little about Winnipeg. And he didn't know a great deal about Canadian urban history. There simply wasn't much literature around to read, but it was in MacDonald's urban history course that I had been introduced to Sam Bass Warner's work. I still remember reading his scaffolding article and using it as a model for my seminar paper on Winnipeg.⁵ I was very impressed with Warner's work, particularly when I found that he had taken his own advice and written a book based on his article.⁶ Many urban historians kept writing about methodology and never seemed to come up with a book that dealt with a particular time and place. What I liked about Warner, first of all, is that he said this is how you should do urban history and then went out and did it. I was also quite taken with his concept of privatism although I quickly found that there were many differences between Philadelphia and Winnipeg. What was important at the time was that through my exposure to the more advanced field of American urban history I was able to write an urban history of Winnipeg, rather than a local history, a distinction in my mind based on what questions you ask and how you organize the material. Whenever I sent Norb MacDonald a chapter of my thesis he would

⁴Alexander B. Callow, ed., American Urban History: An Interpretive Reader with Commentaries (New York, 1969); and N.H. Lithwick and Gilles Paquet, eds., Urban Studies: A Canadian Perspective (Toronto, 1968).

⁵Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "If All the World Were Philadelphia: A Scaffolding for Urban History, 1774-1930," American Historical Review, Vol. 74 (1968), pp. 26-43.

⁶Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth (Philadelphia, 1968).

provide a detailed response that always included suggestions about what I should be reading.

STAVE: What kinds of distinctions did you make? I think in some of the reviews it is referred to as an urban biography of the city. As you know in the United States the urban biography is a passee kind of notion. Now I would gather that you don't feel that your book is passee, that your approach was urban biography in the sense of Bessie Pierce or someone of that sort, and maybe even of Blake McKelvey who has done some very good work. How would you distinguish the urban from the local and the biography?

ARTIBISE: I think that there are several distinctions. They are the key things that I try to get across to my students when they are doing papers for me. The local histories I have read, and I have read a lot of them, are very, very difficult to plow through. Usually, they are organized chronologically. They do not have any thematic basis to them. It is really a distinction about the questions that you ask. I tried in my first Winnipeg⁷ book and in my volume in The History of Canadian Cities Series⁸ to establish an organizational framework where the chronology is not forgotten but where within each chronological period you ask a number of thematic questions. In other words, an urban study is approached through such themes as economic development and metropolitan growth, population growth and change, the physical environment, and society and politics. And within each of these themes there are certain questions that must be answered. It is not so much a model or conceptual framework, as the social scientists would say, but rather a set of questions or check points. The goal being, of course, to get away from writing a series of disconnected local histories that do not allow the reader to compare the history of one city with the history of another.

STAVE: This seems to come out in your writing in The Canadian City book, the way it is organized and some of the historical articles that have been developed, the three or four aspects of urban history that all come together. And looking at your syllabus very quickly it seems that this is the approach that you are telling your students to take as well.

ARTIBISE: Right. Well, the check list is something that Gilbert Stelter first developed. It made a lot of sense to me and I've added some things to it since. I've not yet found any other list of questions that is better. This approach seems to deal with all aspects of the city. What I was trying to do in both my books on Winnipeg was to write books that other people could use, because while I'm not one of those people who are interested in building models that attempt to explain urban development, I recognize the need for them and I think work should be available in a usable form to other people. Indeed, this concern with

⁷Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914.

⁸Winnipeg: An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co. in co-operation with the National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1977).

comparability is again something that came across rather forcefully in my reading of American urban history. As a consequence, I am always very cognizant of the need for one's own work to be of use to others. I am, of course, aware that historians must, first and foremost, provide a sense of time and place, but we must also go beyond that. We must separate out what was unique in a particular community's history and what was commonplace, or at least shared with many other communities. In this way we can work toward specifying the relationships that determine urban growth.

STAVE: How do you apply this to your Canadian Cities series? You have the first book that came out on Winnipeg, and there will be many others that will be coming out in this series.⁹ How are you going to define a comparative base so that you avoid a series?

ARTIBISE: Well, each author is writing a book for a series. They are not writing individual monographs where they have free sway. I give them a ten page outline. I ask them to write to that outline. The outline includes both a set of detailed questions and a detailed listing of materials for the authors to consult. These materials include what I consider to be some of the best writing in the field, whether Canadian or American. I ask them, for example, to read such things as Goheen's Victorian Toronto,¹⁰ Warner's Streetcar Suburbs,¹¹ Weaver's article on urban reform,¹² MacDonald's articles on Vancouver,¹³ and the work of such

⁹ Artibise is the general editor of The History of Canadian Cities Series. The series is sponsored by the History Division of the National Museum of Man. Published volumes include Winnipeg and Max Foran, Calgary: An Illustrated History (Toronto, 1978). Volumes currently in preparation include Whitehorse, Vancouver, Toronto (two volumes), Hamilton, Ottawa, Kitchener, Windsor, Montreal (two volumes), Quebec to 1870, Halifax, Saint John, Regina, Kingston, Charlottetown, and Fredericton. Volumes under consideration include St. John's, Sherbrooke, Sudbury, Guelph, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and Victoria.

¹⁰ Peter G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900: Pattern and Process of Growth (Chicago, 1970).

¹¹ Sam Bass Warner, Jr., Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

¹² John C. Weaver, "'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform in Canada, 1890-1920," in Stelter and Artibise, The Canadian City, pp. 393-418.

¹³ Norbert MacDonald, "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 39 (1970), pp. 279-321; and MacDonald, "A Critical Growth Cycle for Vancouver, 1900-1914," in Stelter and Artibise, The Canadian City, pp. 142-159.

people as J.M.S. Careless,¹⁴ Michael Katz,¹⁵ Sam Hays,¹⁶ Gil Stelter,¹⁷ and Richard Wade.¹⁸

In the process of consulting with authors, however, I recognize that every city being studied is, quite obviously, unique. So I say "In some cases the questions I want you to answer may not be applicable to your city. But rather than ignoring the question and having a reader come along and wonder if it was just something that was not studied, I want authors in the series to explicitly state that urban reform in, let's say Calgary, was very different from reform in Toronto or Vancouver." Of course, this attempt to place each city in a larger framework is something that will begin to appear in the series only slowly. My study on Winnipeg does not have as much of this kind of material as I would have liked. But I had little to work with in terms of published studies.

STAVE: Does this make it more difficult for the author in the sense that they have to go outside of Calgary for sources to determine this?

ARTIBISE: It does. It puts considerable strain on the authors. It also means that I must be very careful to choose scholars who have both a solid background in terms of the city being studied and a familiarity with urban history generally. This is not always possible in a country like Canada where there are still very few urban historians. As a consequence I have in a few cases gone to urban geographers and to people who do not have backgrounds in urban history. This is also why I attempt in my series guidelines to provide not only a set of questions but a reading list as well.

¹⁴J.M.S. Careless, "Aspects of Urban Life in the West, 1870-1914," in Stelter and Artibise, The Canadian City, pp. 125-141; Careless, "The Business Community in the Early Development of Victoria, British Columbia," in David S. Macmillan, ed., Canadian Business History: Selected Studies, 1497-1971 (Toronto, 1972), pp. 104-123; and Careless, "The Development of the Winnipeg Business Community, 1870-1890," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Ser. 4, No. 8 (1970), pp. 239-254.

¹⁵M.B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge, Mass., 1976).

¹⁶Sam Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," in Callow, American Urban History, pp. 421-439; and Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America," in Journal of Urban History, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1974), pp. 6-38.

¹⁷Gilbert A. Stelter, "A Sense of Time and Place: The Historian's Approach to Canada's Urban Past," in Stelter and Artibise, The Canadian City, pp. 420-441; and Stelter, "The Urban Frontier in Canadian History," in A.R. McCormack and Ian MacPherson, eds., Cities in the West: Papers of the Western Canada Urban History Conference (Ottawa, 1975), pp. 269-285.

¹⁸Richard Wade, The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830 (Cambridge, Mass., 1959).

In general terms, the series has had some start-up problems. The "pioneers," the first three or four authors (including myself), had to go through more drafts of our manuscripts than will later contributors. In the process, however, we all learned a great deal about urban history and about what can and cannot be done in a series like this. I must say, though, that I continue to be confident that the series, as a series, will make a significant contribution to Canadian urban history, to say nothing of the fact that in many cases the volumes will be the first comprehensive studies of many cities. Also, as I point out in my general foreward to the series, I hope some day to see a general history of Canadian urban development written based on the thirty or so volumes that will be published over the next decade. Gil Stelter and I have already begun planning such a book.

STAVE: You mentioned the geographers. It seems to me from the material that I have read that they play a major role in urban history in Canada as it stands now, perhaps much more so than they ever played in the United States, although they have certainly been influential. People like Goheen, for example. Why is this the case and how do the urban historians and the urban geographers mesh in the study of the urban process in Canada?

ARTIBISE: It is a good question. I am not sure of the correct answer to it. There are at least two observations I can make. History has always had a branch called "local history" that professional historians conceded to the amateurs and antiquarians. It is only very recently that professional historians have taken an interest in this area, a process that, if I had to date it, began with the Canadian Historical Association presidential address by Maurice Careless in 1968.¹⁹ The change is reflected in the fact that we are careful to call ourselves "urban" as opposed to "local" historians. In contrast to this situation there has never been, at least to my knowledge, a negative connotation in geography about local studies. Communities were integral parts of their larger studies of regions and systems.

During the past decade the two disciplines have begun to work together. The reason is that urban historians and urban geographers are very useful to each other. The models that geographers build provide historians with new and often stimulating questions to ask of their sources. I find that although I often do not agree with the geographer's models or emphasis, they have certainly enriched my work. Geographers, on the other hand, find our empirically based studies necessary when they try to write about regions or systems.

STAVE: How?

ARTIBISE: Well, take the example of central place theory. This is a theory that was developed by a German geographer, W. Christaller, in the 1930s. Canadian geographers have borrowed the concept and attempted to

¹⁹J.M.S. Careless, "Somewhat Narrow Horizons," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers 1968, pp. 1-10.

apply it to the Canadian situation.²⁰ The same is true in regard to the gateway city hypothesis.²¹ But when Canadian geographers attempt to apply these theories to the Canadian situation they find that it is difficult to do because the basic studies are not there; the empirical base they need to generalize has not been developed. So both geographers and historians are now reading and reacting to each other's work.

In my own case, for example, I am having an ongoing debate with my colleagues in geography, people like Larry McCann,²² about the elements that determine urban growth and change. Generally speaking they emphasize the broad, impersonal factors such as resource bases and transportation systems, while historians emphasize the human factors such as the nature of entrepreneurial leadership. It is a very stimulating interchange. Indeed, the amazing thing is, I think, that both sides now recognize the validity of the two approaches. Many geographers in Canada are now more willing to give attention to such factors as leadership, while historians are learning to appreciate the need to examine such things as intercity dependency, city location, and resource base.²³

STAVE: Before you go on I think it appropriate to ask the following. One of the interesting things I noted in your Winnipeg monograph was your stress -- It says this: "While the ecologists take the aggregate as the frame of reference, I have tried to emphasize the human and accidental, the contingencies of events and personalities." This is separating you off from more ecological analysts. What do you mean by this, the human and accidental? As you just said now you are more interested in studying people.

²⁰For a Canadian example see George A. Nader, Cities of Canada: Theoretical, Historical and Planning Perspectives (Toronto, 1975).

²¹See A.F. Burghardt, "A Hypothesis About Gateway Cities," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. LXI (1971), pp. 269-285; and Tony J. Kuz, "Metropolitan Winnipeg: Inter-Urban Relationships," in Tony J. Kuz, ed., Winnipeg, 1874-1974: Progress and Prospects (Winnipeg, 1974), pp. 7-20.

²²L.D. McCann is a member of the Department of Geography, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick. His recent publications include "Urban Growth in a Staple Economy: The Emergence of Vancouver as a Regional Metropolis, 1886-1914," in L.J. Evenden, ed., Vancouver: Western Metropolis (Victoria, 1978), and "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Halifax," in Stelter and Artibise, Shaping the Canadian Urban Landscape. McCann is currently preparing the volume on Halifax for The History of Canadian Cities Series.

²³See Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, "Urban History Comes of Age: A Review of Current Research," City Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 1 (October, 1977), pp. 22-36.

ARTIBISE: As I look at cities I'm always struck by the perception that the people in the cities themselves had about how important what they did was to the growth of the city. In other words, at least until about 1950, urban residents felt, rightly or wrongly, that their community spirit, energy, and adaptability played an important role in determining the rate of growth, degree of prosperity, and the shape of a city. Now, while it is possible to argue that residents of communities had an inflated notion of their own importance, these perceptions did exist and are thus worthy of study by the historian. But I think it goes far beyond this. The skill and initiative of residents was essential at certain crucial periods in the history of cities. Without skilled leaders many places which are today large cities would certainly have remained as towns or villages. This is particularly so in western Canada. Here every major city except Victoria grew up and achieved big-city status because they were able to attract the main lines of Canada's transcontinental railways. The leaders of such cities as Winnipeg and Edmonton realized that without railways they could not grow and they acted accordingly. So, in the first instance, Winnipeg succeeded in bypassing such rivals as Selkirk by convincing the Canadian Pacific Railway to go through the community. The C.P.R. was "convinced" when Winnipeg's city council offered large sums of money, a free bridge, free land, and generous tax exemptions. Now one can say that whether it was Winnipeg or Selkirk that became the metropolis of the west is not an important issue in that the two communities are only a few miles apart; that Winnipeg's growth was really a result of its strategic location as the "gateway" to the west. This is true to a certain extent, but the role of leadership in shaping urban growth goes far beyond attracting railways. It included an entire mind-set that influenced decisions that involved the attraction and location of industry, campaigns to encourage immigration, and the whole approach to laying out the city. Had the leaders of the various cities not been making very conscious decisions about a whole range of issues, had they let things happen on their own without discussing them in city council or board of trade meetings, the end product would most certainly have been very different. In short, while I recognize that Winnipeg's growth was tied to its location, its resource base and its relationship to Montreal and Toronto, its growth was also partially the result of a particular growth strategy developed and practised by its political and business leaders. Without this strategy, the city almost surely would have grown more slowly and looked considerably different in, say, 1914. The problem with this approach, however, is that it is impossible to measure the impact the leadership element had. I'm convinced, for example, that the strategy of Winnipeg's elite influenced the flow of immigrants and capital into the prairie west in the crucial period from 1900 to 1913. However, as a historian, I must admit that I will never be able to completely understand the relationship between leadership and urban growth. And this is what bothers the social scientists. We hesitate to generalize from the particular, to build from our empirically based studies a compelling model that attempts to explain urban growth. Yet, using our experience, we do subject the models of others to criticism. As a result of my work on prairie urban development, for example, I'm now suspicious of any study which seeks to explain why cities grow and does not discuss the role of leadership.

STAVE: You are now studying boosterism in prairie cities?

ARTIBISE: That's right. I'm in the process of writing a monograph on the development of prairie cities during the years 1871-1931. I've presented some of my findings already²⁴ but the work is still underway.

STAVE: Your study seems to be much like the work of Charles Glaab or Blaine Brownell which is seen as one facet of U.S. urban history, but as a facet that has been diminished over the years. Now do you think that this is a stage of Canadian urban history or do you think that this is something that is not going to be shunted off to the side of other approaches such as the social history approach?

ARTIBISE: Well, in one sense it is a stage. In other words, one of the main distinctions between Canadian and American urban history is that there has been so much more of it done in the United States. In relative terms, there are a lot of very basic things to be done here that have already been done south of the border. I have, for example, been influenced in my own work by realizing that Canada does not yet have studies comparable to those of Glaab,²⁵ Brownell,²⁶ Boorstin,²⁷ Wade²⁸ or Dykstra.²⁹ In one sense, then, my own work is an attempt to fill in very obvious gaps in our knowledge of the urban past. And, perhaps, after my work on boosterism is completed others won't find it a topic that deserves more study. However, I think the booster concept is an extremely crucial idea both because it was very important in the past and because it still is

²⁴One paper was presented at the Guelph Urban History Conference in May 1977. It was "Boosterism and Prairie Urban Development, 1871-1913," and will be published in Stelter and Artibise, Shaping the Canadian Urban Landscape. A second paper entitled "Patterns of Prairie Urban Development, 1871-1951," was presented at Calgary in February 1978 and at Fredericton in April 1978 at the joint meetings of the Western Canadian/Atlantic Canada Studies Conferences. It will be published in 1980 in a volume containing selected papers from the conferences. The editors are D.J. Bercuson and P. Buckner. The publisher is the University of Toronto Press.

²⁵Charles N. Glaab, Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis (Madison, 1962).

²⁶Blaine A. Brownell, The Urban Ethos in the South, 1920-1930 (Baton Rouge, 1975).

²⁷D.J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York, 1965), especially pp. 113-168.

²⁸Wade, The Urban Frontier.

²⁹R.R. Dykstra, The Cattle Towns: A Social History of the Kansas Cattle Trading Centers, 1867-1885 (New York, 1968).

very much a part of the urban scene. Many of our cities still elect booster oriented mayors, such as Jean Drapeau in Montreal, or, until recently, Steve Juba in Winnipeg. As Brownell points out in his study, boosterism is far more than mindless rhetoric or super salesmanship. It is a complex concept that has played, and continues to play, an important role in shaping our cities. I don't mean to suggest that boosterism is the way or even the most important way to approach urban history. It is, however, a very useful approach that can help organize the material that we must deal with. It is one of many frameworks that provide a set of questions that one can ask about every city. Indeed, it is one area where the possibilities for comparability are immense. I've been struck, for example, with the similarities between the "urban ethos" in the American South and the Canadian West.

STAVE: Is it a framework that depends more on rhetoric than other kinds of sources? Is it more impressionistic?

ARTIBISE: That is part of it. For example, in Brownell's study that seems to be the level he is dealing with. My own work, however, attempts to go beyond an examination of the rhetoric and answer the question of what impact did boosters and boosterism have on urban growth rates, urban society, and the shape of the city? How important was bonusing? Did it actually make any difference?

My tentative conclusions at the moment go something like this. First, in the initial period of prairie urban development from 1871 to 1913, every aspiring prairie urban center adopted a growth strategy. It included a variety of mechanisms designed to facilitate growth including early city incorporations, massive boundary extensions, huge public works programmes, deficit financing, special tax policies, municipal ownership, efforts to attain status as provincial capital, and so on. Second, while the strategies pursued by Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina and Saskatoon were successful in so far as these cities were the largest on the prairies by 1913, there is evidence to suggest that other centres, including several with superior initial advantages, lost out at least in part because their leaders' initiatives and policies were inadequate in some respects. Third, the booster policies had an impact both on the rate of development and the pattern of the prairie urban system. In the absence of these efforts a more diffuse or different urban pattern would probably have emerged. Fourth, and most important, all five prairie cities had a firmly established framework for future development by 1913. This framework included a variety of elements ranging from particular patterns of physical development to special tax policies and government structures. The key element, however, was the attitude of the decision makers. The pre-1913 experience confirmed in the minds of the urban elites that their strategy was successful. But while the boosters' approach was well suited to the fluid pre-1913 period it became a liability in the post-1913 period. Conditions had changed dramatically by World War I but the very success of the old formula made changes to it unlikely; the old formula was viewed as the successful one and new, "radical" approaches were not easily adopted. It was a serious mistake. In the years after 1913 many of the structures, ideas, and routines that had worked in the past to fuel growth were no

longer adequate and became, in many cases, obstacles to continued or renewed growth. In other words, boosterism in all its manifestations helps explain the pattern of prairie urban development right through to today.

I must emphasize, however, that I do not claim that local leaders through their actions were alone responsible for the pattern of prairie urban development. Rather, I am attempting to argue that the scope, character, and direction of a booster-inspired growth strategy, conditioned by a complex framework of geographic and economic influences, did play a major role. In short, leadership, at least on the prairies, must be considered as an integral part of any explanation of urban growth.

STAVE: Now the work you are doing on prairie cities is comparative, right?

ARTIBISE: Yes, I am studying the five major cities -- Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon. And, for the sake of comparison, I am looking at a few other, smaller communities like Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, and Prince Albert.

STAVE: How much of the frontier spirit is there and how much of the Turnerian kind of view do you find in Canadian history? How does this influence the kinds of things that you are doing and have been done in urban history. In my view much of U.S. urban history is a reaction to Turner. In Australia you have the image of the bushmen, the great Australian bush, as having played a major role and diverted the Australians away from what urban history is until relatively recent years. The most urbanized country in the world for a hundred years, and they didn't study it. With respect to the frontier myth here, is there much of it and how has it affected your own work?

ARTIBISE: Frontierism never achieved the same dominance here as it did in the United States. Instead, the work of the "Laurentian School" of historians has been far more influential.³⁰ Out of this broad approach developed an attention to the metropolitan-hinterland relationship. For a variety of reasons this set of ideas has long been a major force in Canadian history in general and urban history in particular. The work of Maurice Careless, is critical here; he has not only written a good

³⁰See Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English Canadian Historical Writing, 1900 to 1970 (Toronto, 1976). See also Stelter, "A Sense of Time and Place."

deal on the subject himself,³¹ but has had his influence extended through a large number of graduate students that he has trained at the University of Toronto. Furthermore, he has certainly played an influential role encouraging younger historians. He is acquainted with virtually all the urban historians in the country and regularly participates in conferences devoted to urban history. At a more personal level, he is a good friend of both Gil Stelter and myself. He was, for example, the outside reader for my Ph.D. thesis and he helped me turn the thesis into a publishable book. In any case, virtually every Canadian historian must sooner or later come to grips with his ideas.

STAVE: Can you expand on this metropolitan concept?

ARTIBISE: It is difficult to define it in a few words but I will try. A metropolitan approach seeks to study the complex of reciprocal relationships between the concentrated population centre (metropolis) and the extended community beyond it (hinterland). Put another way, the metropolitan approach is not primarily concerned with how the city affects those within it, but how the city affects and is affected by those outside it. It is, in short, "exo-urban" history as opposed to "intra-urban" history. In other words, while the "intra-urban" historical study might deal with land use, occupational patterns, class relationships, political organization, the provision of services, and so on, the "exo-urban" historical study would be more concerned with how a metropolitan centre had affected all these things outside and beyond its borders, from the immediate suburban area to the farthest reaches of the hinterland. For example, it would study the metropolitan influence of a Toronto or Montreal over the cities of the Maritimes or western Canada. But the metropolitan concept is also concerned with the interplay between the concentrated and relatively complex communities called urban and the extended and relatively less complex communities found in the hinterland areas. How do hinterland resources, markets and potentialities for being serviced and directed influence the metropolitan centre itself? In short, to attempt to briefly summarize a complex concept, the metropolitan approach suggests at least two things. First, the key role of the urban centre or metropolis in organizing successive and ever changing frontiers or hinterlands. And, second, the reciprocal or organic nature of the metropolis/hinterland relationship. What is especially important about this is that an awareness of the concept prevents urban historians from abstracting cities from the life of the larger community.

³¹Important articles by J.M.S. Careless, besides those already mentioned above, include: "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 35 (1954), pp. 1-21; "Aspects of Metropolitanism in Atlantic Canada," in Mason Wade, ed., Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867-1967 (Toronto, 1969), pp. 117-129; "Some Aspects of Urbanization in Nineteenth Century Ontario," in F.H. Armstrong, H.A. Stevenson, and J.D. Wilson, eds., Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario: Essays Presented to J.J. Talman (Toronto, 1974), pp. 65-79; and "Metropolis and Frontier: The City and Region in Canada Before 1914," Urban History Review, No. 3-78 (February, 1979), pp. 99-118.

So the metropolis/hinterland concept is not really a theory that explains Canadian urban development. Rather, it is an important approach to the study of Canadian history generally. It is one of those crucial organizing ideas that are so essential to historical studies. It provides researchers with a ready-made check list of questions. But I emphasize that it is not a theory; it does not seek to, nor can it, explain every situation. Indeed, the more work I do and the more I read in both Canadian and American urban studies, the less convinced I am that we will ever be able to develop a model or theory that will explain urban development. Cities and towns are simply too complex and too difficult to learn about in all their varieties of time and place for anyone to find a framework which will explain every situation within it. Even in my prairie cities study I am finding that generalization is difficult. Here we have what appears to be a relatively homogeneous region developing at roughly the same time. Yet the questions and conclusions I generated from my work on Winnipeg do not apply in many cases in other western cities. As much as I would like to find a great deal of similarity -- it makes writing a book much easier -- I must say that I have found far less than I anticipated.

STAVE: Can you give an example?

ARTIBISE: Take Edmonton as a case in point. It does not seem to fit the booster model to the same extent as the other four prairie cities I am looking at. One of the reasons, I suspect -- although I am still doing research -- is that Edmonton, unlike say Winnipeg, does not have a large working class. So many of the generalizations I made about both business and labour in Winnipeg don't apply in Edmonton. Factionalism among businessmen in the Alberta city is very pronounced, whereas in Winnipeg, where the businessmen perceived labour as more of a threat, the commercial group works together very well. I know this is a cliché, but what I'm discovering is that Edmonton, like all cities, is unique. The point is that generalizations, even in a region like the prairie west where cities grow up side by side, is difficult.

STAVE: Well, do you think there are any universals in the process of urbanization? You may be familiar with Brian Berry's work The Human Consequences of Urbanization and the question of whether there are cultural differences or not about the process of urbanization and you can extend it to whether there are regional differences or just local differences as you are indicating now. What does this do to urban history if you come up with an Edmonton every place you try to study?

ARTIBISE: Well, I think one shouldn't be nihilistic about it. I believe there is a historical reality which we, as historians, seek to discover and can come closer and closer to grasping. There are many things that we can agree on. For example, in Canada historians tend to agree on many things connected with the nature and role of the political structures and processes that exist in urban communities. The most important consensus has been reached on the point of the continuing influence of past decisions, particularly those made during the important reform era that lasted from the 1880s to the 1920s. The structural forms and the

accompanying ideology of local government formulated during this period -- such structures as at-large rather than ward elections, boards of control, commission government, and city managers, and such ideas as non-partisanship and municipal politics as business -- are still with us. In many cities, the form of government instituted at the turn of the century remains intact or has been only slightly modified. The ideology of the urban reform government appears to have congealed as an important component of the Canadian urban political culture. It has not only removed many issues from the arena of political debate, but it often affects present-day decision making in crucial ways. Elected and appointed officials, for example, inherit a "system" that was established or evolved in response to the needs and values of a society quite different from that of the present. It is then difficult for these officials to redirect or change the structures and processes of local government to focus on issues now considered vital to urban residents.³²

Having made these generalizations, I hasten to add that while we can agree as historians that political structures and processes play an important role in urban development, we must still determine the precise nature of this role in each city. And in some cases there are distinct differences.

STAVE: What factors make a difference? You mentioned Edmonton, the lack of a working class.

ARTIBISE: Ethnic mix is also very important. It is one element that distinguishes Ontario and Prairie cities. It is striking to point out, for example, that in 1911 the city of Toronto was almost 90 per cent W.A.S.P., whereas in Winnipeg the figure was closer to 60 per cent. Winnipeg had large numbers of both Jews and Slavs. So there is real concern among the city's Anglo-Saxon elite about who has the vote and about how they are going to control local politics in order to prevent this European element from taking over.

STAVE: The voting was on a property basis, right?

ARTIBISE: Yes. And not only did the Anglo-Saxon elite in Winnipeg control the vote by retaining property qualifications for the municipal franchise, they altered the structure of government by creating a kind of executive group called the Board of Control. They also increased the role appointed officials played in civic government and made, in 1919, major alterations to the city's ward system. Well, the concern of Toronto's political elite was different in part because of the different ethnic composition in that city. Of course the business groups expressed concern about the Anglo-Saxon working class but the added ethnic element was not so clearly present.

³²These ideas are developed in several articles in Alan F.J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter, eds., A Usable Urban Past: Politics and Planning in the Modern Canadian City (Toronto, 1979). See also the special issue of the Urban History Review, No. 2-76 (October, 1976), devoted to the urban reform movement in Canada.

STAVE: There was concern over class rather than culture.

ARTIBISE: Yes. And another distinction has to do with differences from province to province in the nature of the municipal franchise. In Canada this is determined by provincial legislatures setting out certain rules for urban centres in the province. In some cases, however, there are even distinctions within a province since some communities, especially large cities, have their own charters. In the years prior to World War I the franchise is based on a fairly high property qualification. In subsequent years, however, while the property qualification is still maintained, it is usually so low as to permit practically all owners or tenants of real property to qualify as electors. But this relaxation of standards occurs at different times in different cities.³³

There are also distinctions among Canada's cities as to who can run for office. These distinctions include, again, different levels of property qualifications, literacy requirements, and residency requirements.³⁴ In short, any attempt to generalize about Canadian municipal politics is difficult because of this myriad of differing standards.

STAVE: How long did this go on?

ARTIBISE: Well, while it starts to break down after World War I, it never entirely disappears. There are still important variations from city to city. The plural vote is a good example. At some points in Canadian urban history residents could vote more than once; in fact, as often as they had a certain value of property in a particular ward or voting district. In one case, some individuals in Winnipeg had as many as sixty votes. Some cities also allow non-residents and corporations to vote because they own property. So the property principle is still very much a part of Canadian municipal politics.

Another very interesting aspect of Canadian urban government is the non-partisanship idea. You will find that at the municipal level there is a strong belief among Canadians that provincial or federal political parties should not participate in local politics. Rather, it is argued, there should be a concern for electing the best men or women running based on their abilities as administrators rather than their political beliefs. But while most Canadians will express these views openly and loudly, they are simply perpetuating a myth that Canadian municipal politics are practised along non-partisan lines. We have really had political parties all the time. They just haven't been called by the same names as parties at the provincial or federal level and, until recently, have not been recognized as political parties. When business groups in cities got together they did so with a very important idea in mind and that was to keep labour from gaining control of the municipal

³³ See, for example, Donald C. Rowat, The Canadian Municipal System: Essays on the Improvement of Local Government (Toronto, 1969), pp. 18-19.

³⁴ For a complete list of qualifications required as of 1954 see K.G. Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government (Toronto, 1954), pp. 159-161.

corporation. This still goes on today in virtually all cities. Yet all the non-partisan leagues or associations, or whatever the groups call themselves, steadfastly refuse to admit they are political. It is really amazing that they have got away with it for so many years. They still do.

STAVE: I noticed in your book, Winnipeg: An Illustrated History, that you have a list of the various groups and their names: the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand, The Citizens' League of Winnipeg, the Civic Progress Association, and so on through to the 1971 Independent Citizens' Election Committee.

ARTIBISE: Every city has something similar. Winnipeg is different only to the extent that, as a result of the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 -- which was a pretty traumatic event for the city's businessmen -- the organizations tend to be highly organized and fairly stable in terms of ideology and composition. But nonetheless every city follows this pattern. So that's another generalization we can make.

STAVE: O.K., this is a generalization that goes beyond Canada of course. You find that at least in most American cities you have the same kind of upper class elite citizen participation.

ARTIBISE: Of course, but not this myth of non-partisanship. In Canada there are still many, including some political scientists, who write as if there is non-partisanship at the local level. It is a myth about the past that is so deeply embedded in peoples' minds that it is going to take historians some time to convince people that it just didn't happen that way.

STAVE: I was reading in the summary article you did with Gilbert Stelter on the Guelph Conference that the issue of urban reform had come up and the comparisons between the Canadian model and the United States model and the influence of, say, Sam Hays which seems to be the kind of view you are following.

ARTIBISE: Yes. The Hays article³⁵ on progressivism is one that I have read and found very helpful. Although now, as my knowledge of Canadian urban reform broadens and deepens, I'm finding that there are many regional distinctions in Canada and major distinctions between municipal reform in Canada and the United States.

STAVE: Well, apparently at least one of the papers at the Guelph conference considered the differences and the question of centralized decision-making, elite control, and so on.³⁶ I don't remember offhand

³⁵Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era."

³⁶Stelter and Artibise, "Urban History Comes of Age: A Survey of Current Research."

which paper it was.

ARTIBISE: I think that the paper you are referring to is "The Municipal Reform Movement in Western Canada, 1880-1920," by Jim Anderson.³⁷ What he effectively argues is that while the influence of the American urban reform movement must be acknowledged, the fact that local government reform in Canada was unique in some respects and that it differed in degree if not in kind from its American counterpart in other respects, makes it inaccurate to assume that the Canadian municipal reform movement was simply an imitation. Regional differences within Canada are also present; the west, for example, did not simply copy what was going on in Ontario. Experiments in revamping civic government in western Canada were not nearly as benign as in Ontario or Quebec. On the prairies, in particular, social and economic forces which differed from central Canadian patterns in crucial respects influenced the reform movement. Labour militance was greatest in the west and this, along with a massive influx of what were considered to be unassimilable non-English speaking immigrants, were factors in the way in which municipal reform developed.

STAVE: Why this kind of immigration? You say in Winnipeg 15 per cent were Slavic in 1911 and some figures that I was looking at in a study comparing Canada and Australia by L.S. Bourne and M.I. Logan show that 50 per cent of Canada's urban population has been added since 1951.³⁸ And in 1971, 34 per cent of Toronto was foreign-born; Vancouver, about 26 per cent. The role of immigration obviously plays a major role in Canadian history. This has been going on now for at least the entire century from what you are saying. What are the implications aside from the ones that you have already mentioned of the ethnic factor in Canadian urban history?

ARTIBISE: If one is dealing with the question of urban growth, the figures you just mentioned indicate that since World War II Vancouver and Toronto have been the most attractive Canadian cities for the foreign immigrant. And when one wants to answer the question why they want to go there, the answer obviously lies in two general areas. First, it is a matter of jobs. But, second, and even more interesting, is the matter of culture and environment. Ethnic communities, once established, tend to attract still more people to that community and away from others. In one sense, at least, it relates back to what I was saying earlier about boosterism. One of the arguments made by some people in prairie cities in the pre-1914 period, people who were often seen by the boosters as "knockers" or anti-boosters, was that the best way to achieve growth was to make the cities safe, healthy communities with adequate public services,

³⁷ In Artibise and Stelter, A Usable Urban Past.

³⁸ L.S. Bourne and M.I. Logan, "Changing Urbanization Patterns at the Margin: The Examples on Australia and Canada" in Brian J.L. Berry, Urbanization and Counter-urbanization (Beverly Hills, California, 1976), pp. 111-143.

enlightened labour policies, and so on. Without actually stating it in so many words, they were arguing that there was more to urban growth than simply boasting about railways and wholesale and retail trade, or bonusing industry to locate in the city. Infant mortality figures were also important. Well, one could argue that in some senses, either by luck or by design, Vancouver and Toronto made it; they are very healthy cities, economically and culturally. And this, to a certain point, attracts further growth. Whereas Winnipeg overexpanded and seriously antagonized labour and some of the ethnic groups. In the post W.W.I era it had continued problems; it never really recovered from the great first attempt to make itself the metropolis of western Canada.

STAVE: Why the immigrants? Why the large population, Slavic population around 1910?

ARTIBISE: This is where anyone trying to write urban history has to be very familiar with Canadian history generally. The answer to your question lies in the attempt by the federal government to settle western Canada. Specifically, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier [1896-1911] through his Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, attempted to attract Slavic immigrants because it was felt that they would make the best kind of farmers for western Canadian conditions. Sifton placed great faith in these people, as he indicated in his well-known summary of his immigration policy: "I think a stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality." And tens of thousands of them came, stopping off in urban centres such as Winnipeg or Edmonton so they could make a few dollars to use as a stake in establishing themselves on a homestead. Of course, many just never made that transition. They remained in the cities. Once Winnipeg, for example, began to receive significant numbers of Slavs, other groups followed, such as the Jews. They could speak the language of many of the eastern European immigrants and soon were acting as the city's middlemen. In any case, Winnipeg's "North End" was, by the early 1900s, in the words of contemporaries, known as the "foreign quarter" or "New Jerusalem."

STAVE: This is interesting. Looking at some of your tables, I noticed that the Jewish population was about 8 per cent back 50, 60, 70 years and it has diminished. What has happened to these people? Where have they gone? Have they simply assimilated into the population? Have they left the cities? And does the immigration process in Canada lead to a flight out of cities by others who don't like the immigrants that come in?

ARTIBISE: No, I don't think it does. The percentage decline of Jewish people in Winnipeg is apparent and there has certainly been some assimilation. But there is still a vibrant Jewish community in the city. Next to Montreal and Toronto, it is probably the largest and most active in the country. And of all the groups they have been the one that assimilates at one level but, because being Jewish involves both a particular cultural background and a particular religious faith, they have maintained a certain level of distinctiveness.

One result of this maintenance of their ethnicity was a good deal of nativism by the Anglo-Saxon charter group directed at the Jews and others. Winnipeg has also had its share of anti-semitism. No one can deny that. But, particularly since World War II, the Jews have done quite well. As the old Anglo-Saxon business leadership in Winnipeg lost its dynamism, that void was filled by ethnics, many of them Jewish. They are today an important force in the city.

STAVE: Boosters?

ARTIBISE: Yes, boosters, but it is a different kind of boosterism, more European in the sense that more emphasis than before is placed on such things as culture. If you talk to most Canadians, they will remark that despite Winnipeg's size, weather, and location it has developed a reputation as a thriving centre for literature, sport, and culture. And it was Winnipeg's Jews, Ukrainians and Poles who led the way in these developments.

STAVE: I saw a sign when I came to your office about some conference on Ukrainian influence in Canada. This is another large group in Winnipeg and in Canada generally, I gather.

ARTIBISE: In the west, especially in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

STAVE: Well, again, when ethnic groups or ethno-religious groups like the Jews or ethnic groups like Ukrainians come into an area, is there -- you mentioned nativism and anti-semitism in the 1920s -- does this affect the development of the city? I mentioned my theory about running away in the American city. But do you have this? Now you don't have the same racial issue that you have in the United States. So that is one variable that is factored out. But on the cultural issue, the notion of the spatial differentiation in neighborhoods, is there a running away element? That as the Jews move in somebody else moves out, as the Ukrainians move in someone moves out and you have this pattern developed?

ARTIBISE: At the individual city level, that certainly does happen. There is residential segregation according to ethnicity in most communities. In Winnipeg there is the famous "North End" which is the ethnic area of the city, and most Canadian cities have a similar area. But over time ethnic residential segregation is complicated by the addition of residential segregation according to class. So, for example, to speak of one group in that vein, the Jews begin by living in Winnipeg's North End. As some of them move up the economic ladder they also move up in a residential sense, moving to one of the more prestigious areas of the city. In other words, Canadian cities are rearranged according to class and ethnicity. And in this sense there is, as you say, an element of "running away." But I'm not so sure about this in a larger context; that is, people fleeing the city to reside in surrounding suburbs, towns, and villages. While I'm sure some of this goes on in Canada, I would suspect it is far less pronounced than in the United States.

STAVE: Aside from the obvious French influence in Quebec, what would be the major differences between eastern and western cities in Canada?

ARTIBISE: Now or in the past?

STAVE: Over the past century, or throughout Canada's urban history.

ARTIBISE: There are many differences, but a few come immediately to mind. The main distinction right off the bat is the importance of the railway. In central Canada the railway was important but not crucial; communities could survive without it because of the importance of water transportation. In the west, however, the absence or presence of the railway was the difference between life or death. The long-term implication of this fact is that western communities began to compete among themselves from the start and continued to compete well beyond the time when it was rational to do so. And this aspect of western history has an important relation to western Canadian regionalism. Westerners have for decades felt that they have not been treated fairly in Confederation and there have been many attempts to alter this situation. In the 1920s, for example, the Progressive Party challenged the control of central Canada on such matters as railway freight rates. The intriguing thing I've found about this protest is that almost without exception the cities of the west did not participate in it in any meaningful way. The cities were unable to work with the hinterlands to form a common front against the centre. In many cases, western urban businessmen had more ties with eastern businessmen and other institutions than they did with their own rural hinterlands. Also, since cities had developed in the pre-1913 period by competing with each other, they did not learn to co-operate in the post-war period. In other words, a good part of the explanation of the failure of western protest can be found in the region's cities. It is something the west has still not overcome.

STAVE: O.K. Let's move off this and on to the work you do as editor of the Urban History Review. Can we talk a little about the origins of the journal, what you are trying to do with the Urban History Review, and how wide is the circulation?

ARTIBISE: The credit for beginning the Urban History Review belongs to John Taylor and Gilbert Stelter. They published the first issue in February 1972 with the support of the National Museum of Man, and particularly the support of Del Muise. Del was at that time a historian with the Museum. He is now in the history department at Carleton University, Ottawa. John was then and is still with Carleton's history department. John and Gil had been discussing such a journal since about 1970 and, when they talked to others about it, were encouraged to go ahead. The U.H.R. had modest goals at the outset. It was "to be something less than a learned journal but something more than a newsletter." It grew very slowly at first, both in terms of contents and subscriptions. But it was breaking new ground, bringing together for the first time people from all over the country who were interested in studying the city. In these early years, the U.H.R. usually was about twenty or thirty pages in length and contained two or three short articles and a "notes and comments" section. The notes were especially important in a large country like Canada since they allowed an exchange of information that would otherwise have not taken place.

I became involved with the U.H.R. in 1975 when I joined the National Museum of Man as western Canadian historian. I became a co-editor along with Del Muise and John Taylor. I had already contributed to the U.H.R. and was anxious for it to grow. And it did. Since 1975 the U.H.R. has increased its size to an average of about 130-150 pages per issue, has added a book review section, and has increased the number and length of articles published in each issue. We now have about 500-600 subscribers. This dramatic growth reflects, on the one hand, energetic efforts on behalf of the editors and editorial board and, on the other hand, the rapid growth of the field of urban history.

At the moment the Urban History Review has six specific goals. First, like every journal, we want to increase the number of subscriptions to, say, 1,000. We think this is important since at that number we know we would be reaching more than just urban historians since there simply aren't that many urban historians in Canada. Second, we are attempting, quite successfully I think, to publish methodological and review articles on the field of urban studies in Quebec.³⁹ And in the past we have published similar articles.⁴⁰ We hope these articles will not only tell readers what has been done but will, as well, help locate areas of insufficient research and facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to the study of the Canadian city. A third goal we have is to attract contributions from American and European scholars. Here we want articles of two types -- those which tell us what is going on in those two areas and those which comment on how non-Canadians view developments here. Do they think we are making mistakes that they made or going in directions that we are going to find are not very fruitful in the long run? We have published an article by Sydney Checkland on "Urban History in the British Idiom," that does some of these things.⁴¹ This was a commissioned article and we intend to include more of these. I would, for example, like to have an American scholar review several volumes in the History of Canadian Cities Series in a few years.

A fourth goal is to maintain our excellent relationship with urban archivists. Over the years we have published articles on the holdings and organization of archives in such cities as Vancouver, Quebec, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary, and Kingston. And we have had articles on urban records in the various provincial archives and the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. To maintain this healthy relationship, we have always had an archivist on our editorial board. At present he is Scott James from the City of Toronto Archives. A fifth goal is to

³⁹ Annick Germain, "Histoire urbaine et histoire de l'urbanisation du Québec: brève revue des travaux réalisés au cours de la décennie," Revue d'histoire urbaine, No. 3-78 (février 1979), pp. 3-22.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Gilbert A. Stelter, "Current Research in Canadian Urban History," U.H.R., No. 3-75 (February 1976), pp. 27-36; John C. Weaver, "Approaches to the History of Urban Reform," U.H.R., No. 2-76 (October 1976), pp. 3-11.

⁴¹ U.H.R., No. 1-78 (June 1978), pp. 57-76. Checkland is a professor at the University of Glasgow.

bring historians and social scientists together in our common study of urban development. This is something that John Taylor has been particularly interested in. To date we have had some success. Our editorial board includes two geographers and recently a sociologist was invited to participate. We have also published several articles by social scientists including, most recently, an article by Professor Larry Bourne of the Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto.⁴² Among other things, he wrote about how he saw the relationship between history and the social sciences in the urban field. There is, quite obviously, a great deal we can learn from each other and I hope there will be more exchanges of this kind.

Finally, we intend to continue a tradition we have followed since 1975 of producing theme issues. To date we have done four: one on "The Canadian City in the Nineteenth Century,"⁴³ one on "Urban Reform in Canada,"⁴⁴ another on "The Immigrant and the City,"⁴⁵ and, most recently, an issue devoted to "Fire, Disease, and Water in the Nineteenth Century City."⁴⁶ Several others are being considered. These issues have been particularly popular since they can serve as valuable teaching tools.

STAVE: Much of your work is aimed not simply at a scholarly audience but things that are done for the National Museum of Man are aimed at a general audience. You have published in journals like City Magazine and Plan Canada. And you have a book out called The Usable Urban Past with Gilbert Stelter. How do you see history, urban history particularly, being used as part of the usable past and what do you see occurring as you try to broaden the audience for urban history? Do you see it as having advantages and disadvantages, or just advantages?

ARTIBISE: That is a very broad question. Perhaps I should begin by saying that my experience at the National Museum of Man was very useful to me as a historian. It's an experience that most historians don't have.

STAVE: Can you tell me a little about it? I don't know very much about this.

ARTIBISE: Certainly. One of the objects, quite obviously, of the National Museum of Man is to serve the entire country. In terms of its publication programme which is, of course, only one aspect of the activities it is engaged in--the Museum has two goals. First, they

⁴²U.H.R., No. 2-78 (October 1978), pp. 101-104.

⁴³U.H.R., No. 1-75 (June 1975), pp. 2-55.

⁴⁴U.H.R., No. 2-76 (October 1976), pp. 3-66.

⁴⁵U.H.R., No. 2-78 (October 1978), pp. 3-94.

⁴⁶U.H.R., Vol. VIII, No. 1 (June 1979), pp. 7-116.

attempt to serve the scholarly community in whatever ways they can. This part of its activities is fairly well developed and includes such things as the Urban History Review, another journal entitled the Material History Bulletin, and a series of monographs published under the general title of the Mercury Series. In the urban area this series has included a volume entitled Cities in the West.⁴⁷ The second goal is to serve a wider audience, from teachers to the "man-on-the-street," someone we used to jokingly refer to as "Joe Crankcase." But despite the implication, we did take this goal seriously. One of the best examples of the Museum's activities in this area is Canada's Visual History Series. This began when two historians, Ian MacPherson of the University of Victoria and Gerry Friesen of the University of Manitoba, approached the Museum with an idea designed to meet what they perceived to be two specific needs. First, they wanted to bring to the teacher the most recent research on a variety of topics relating to the social and economic history of Canada, combining these insights with illustrations and photographs gleaned from collections not readily accessible to teachers and students. And, second, they wanted this material presented in a dramatic format; to use visual material to make history come alive. The result was that with the active co-operation of the History Division of the Museum, particularly Del Muise and the National Film Board of Canada, the visual history series began. Since 1975, more than forty volumes have been produced and the series has received an enthusiastic reception. It includes, by the way, several volumes on urban history.⁴⁸

STAVE: Each volume includes text and slides?

ARTIBISE: That's right, thirty slides with a description of each, and an essay. There is, as well, a section of "suggestions for classroom activities," and a bibliographic essay.

Another initiative that the Museum has taken is, of course, the History of Canadian Cities Series. This was something Del Muise and I worked out and got underway during my year with the Museum. The series

⁴⁷A. R. McCormack and Ian MacPherson, eds., Cities in the West: Papers of the Western Canada Urban History Conference, Mercury Series #10 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1975).

⁴⁸Urban volumes are: Alan F. J. Artibise, Winnipeg: The Growth of a City, 1874-1914, Vol. 1; Terry Copp, Poverty in Montreal, 1897-1929, Vol. 5; Gilbert A. Stelter, The Northern Ontario Mining Frontier, 1880-1920, Vol. 10; J.M.S. Careless, Urban Development in Central Canada to 1850, Vol. 17; Norbert MacDonald, Vancouver's Early Development, Vol. 23; Gregory Kealey and Linda Kealey, Poverty and the Working Class in Toronto, Vol. 33; John Taylor, Cities in Crisis: The Great Depression, Vol. 36; David Sutherland, Halifax, 1749-1849: Garrison Into Metropolis, Vol. 37; Jean Morrison, Thunder Bay: Gateway Between East and West, Vol. 38; Paul-André Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert, Pre-Industrial Montreal, 1760-1850, Vol. 39; and Frederick H. Armstrong and Daniel J. Brock, London, Ontario: A Case Study in Metropolitan Evolution, Vol. 40.

was originally entitled the Urban Biography Series but the co-publisher liked the other name better. This series is somewhat different than the visual history series. It was designed to make accessible recently completed research by a wide variety of scholars; to overcome the long time lag that often exists between the completion of research and publication. But, although it used a unique format, Canada's Visual History Series was not really popular history. The History of Canadian Cities Series was designed to be popular.

STAVE: How do you define popular history?

ARTIBISE: Well, to answer that question I must first say something about what is generally seen as popular history to indicate that my goal was very different. Like all historians, I have read a good deal of history written by antiquarians, amateurs, non-professionals. And rarely is it very good since most of these people have little appreciation of the historical method. They tend to make sweeping, unsubstantiated generalizations that simply are not based either on in-depth research or on the evidence they have marshalled. Yet these books were being purchased by the public, so there was obviously a demand for history, a demand that the historical profession rarely tried to meet. Our attitude was either that popular history was not worth doing--because it was something scholars should not waste their time on--or that it was something that could not be done--because it was impossible to describe the historical reality in a popular way. In short, popular history was something that professional historians simply did not want to do. Part of this came from peer pressure. Quite frankly, I have the feeling that some of my colleagues feel that Winnipeg: An Illustrated History was something I did in my spare time, on the weekends. When it comes to promotions or general respect for one's scholarship, they want to see lengthy scholarly studies, with numerous footnotes and so on. And this, despite the fact that volumes of this kind do well in Canada if they sell 2,000 copies. With this small market, prices are high and with high prices only other scholars buy the volume.

So it was this kind of thinking on my part that led to The History of Canadian Cities Series. The volumes in the series are meant to be popular history. But it also means doing popular history very consciously so that we are giving our best to it. It is not something that is a sideline. It means writing in a very particular style and taking a certain approach. On the one hand, the authors in the series are told to avoid jargon and to be very concerned about style. On the other hand the authors also realize that their prose must stand up to the scrutiny of other scholars. All the volumes in the series include footnotes and detailed bibliographies. They are read by several specialists before going to press. We also attempt by the use of photographs and maps to make the volumes appealing to the public. In short, we are trying to put together in one package volumes that will appeal to both the general public and the academic community. It is too early to tell how successful we've been since only Winnipeg has been widely reviewed. But it is encouraging to note that both the academic journals and the media--radio and newspapers--have given the book a good

reception. It can also be noted that my first scholarly study on Winnipeg, published in 1975, has sold about 2,000 copies. Winnipeg: An Illustrated History has already sold more than 5,000 copies and has been reprinted. In Canadian terms, this is considered to be excellent.

Also, as someone who is interested in this side of history, I find it encouraging to note that other people are moving into this field. Several publishing houses are moving in the direction of what can be called popular history although, because of the associations of that word, it is rarely called that. One example is the Social History Series, which includes 200 page volumes written in a popular style. My study of prairie urban development will be part of this series, as will Gilbert Stelter's study of early Canadian urban development.

STAVE: Who is editing that series?

ARTIBISE: Michael Cross from Dalhousie University. Seven volumes have been published so far.⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that several of them have done very well in terms of sales; one, I believe, has sold more than 10,000 copies in four years. There is no doubt that a good portion of these numbers are accounted for by the fact that the volumes are used in university courses. But the numbers also indicate that the public is ready and willing to read history written by professional historians if some care is taken to have volumes well written.

STAVE: Do you see any disadvantages in trying to go public?

ARTIBISE: Yes. If I have a single major concern about history it is that we are in danger of becoming too concerned about being relevant. And as soon as we become relevant, as soon as we turn from studying the past for the sake of understanding that past to the use of the past for the purposes of the present, we are no longer historians. Yet there is great pressure on historians from the public, the universities, and from granting agencies to become socially serviceable; to justify our existence by becoming commentators on the present and planners of the future. What particularly concerns me is that many of our colleagues in the social sciences take a view that history is something done by those whose creative powers have failed. Historians are seen as people who

⁴⁹All seven volumes have been published by McClelland and Stewart in Toronto. The seven titles are: Michael Bliss, A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911 (1974); Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (1974); Gregory Kealey and Peter Warrigan, eds., Essays in Working Class History (1976); Alison Prentice, The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada (1977); Susan Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (1977); John H. Thompson, The Harvest of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (1978); and Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (1979).

dabble in the past but who never get down to the nitty gritty of building models and coming up with answers to current problems.

Well, I react very strongly to this kind of simplistic thinking since it misrepresents the role of history. We do have a social function, one that is very important. Gilbert Stelter and I outline this in our introduction to The Usable Urban Past. What we argue is that the past is usable since without an understanding of it, it is impossible to understand the present, and without this understanding one cannot plan the future. But, and this is very important, we do not propose solutions or give final answers to the many urgent urban problems of the country. Instead, we point out that, if anything, history teaches us that there are no final answers--or ultimate master plans. As every good historian knows, human society is far too complex to be explained or planned according to a particular theory or model. And our written work should reflect the view that models and laws, while useful as research tools, do not often reflect reality. Social scientists always assume part of reality away, so much so that they are no longer talking about reality. Historians, however, do not do this and accordingly remain very sceptical of anyone who asserts universal structures in human existence. It is this scepticism, this devotion to empirical historical study, that we as historians contribute to society. In short, what makes history "usable" is the fact that it does not concern itself with being relevant, with the construction of models or laws, but rather with what really happened. And a sceptical society, one that does not easily or often accept claims that this or that program will solve society's problems, is a free society. Of course all this is not to say that those who do build models and propose theories are somehow useless. Obviously, planning is necessary and a society full of historians would be an anarchistic one. But since society does contain more than historians, it can and must retain those who can stand up to the claims and pressures of the developed social sciences.

STAVE: In The Usable Urban Past what kinds of articles will appear and what is the usable urban past?

ARTIBISE: The volume contains thirteen original articles organized around three headings: the economic framework, politics and municipal government, and planning and the realities of development. Gil Stelter and I have attempted to make the volume hang together by writing a general introduction and introductions to each of the sections.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Articles included in the volume are: Artibise and Stelter, "The Past in the Present: Exploring the Relevance of Canada's Urban Past"; James Simmons, "The Evolution of the Canadian Urban System"; John Weaver, "Tidying Up the City: Civic Reform in Toronto, 1900-1915"; James Anderson, "The Municipal Government Reform Movement in Western Canada, 1880-1920"; Terry Copp, "Montreal's Municipal Government and the Crisis of the 1930s"; Alan F. J. Artibise, "Continuity and Change: Elites and Prairie Urban Development, 1914-1950"; J. E. Rea, "Political Parties and

If any single idea pervades the volume it is that an understanding of the present requires knowledge of the past. The choice is not between history or no history but, rather, between explicit history based on a careful examination of the sources, and implicit history, rooted in ideological preconceptions and uncritical acceptance of local, regional, or national mythology. Urban policy makers, whether they are municipal politicians, government bureaucrats, or citizens generally usually have preconceived notions of the past, or at least what they think was the past. As a result, policies as they relate to urban development are usually inadequate. True policy is a decision about where a city or region wants to go, a decision based on a sensitive appreciation and consciousness of where it has been. And this appreciation can come only from the properly practiced discipline of history. What comes out of The Usable Urban Past is a strong statement about the complexity of the past. We hope that those who read the book will become much more cautious when making generalizations about Canada's urban past. Some generalizations can be made but there are no shortcuts. We are in a building stage in terms of Canada's urban history, and there are many bricks to be put into place before we will know what the house looks like.

STAVE: How about teaching urban history? How popular are urban history courses in Canadian universities? Are these courses that students are attracted to vis-à-vis Canadian history generally, or is it still a field in which there are relatively small numbers?

ARTIBISE: The field of urban history has grown dramatically in the last decade. Most history departments now offer urban history in one of three forms: as a separate course, under a "topics in Canadian history" label on an irregular basis, or as an integral part of a survey course or a course in Canadian social history. Equally encouraging, however, is the dramatic growth in interest by non-history majors in urban history. Students in geography, sociology, political science and so on are beginning to recognize that a background in urban history can be very useful to them in their study of contemporary cities.

There is, as well, a "market" for urban history in another area. Both out of conviction and because of failing enrollments, increasing numbers of urban historians are getting involved in offering courses on the history of particular communities. Urban history has an important role to play here. In part, it is a selfish motive. Local

Civic Power: Winnipeg, 1919-1925"; Thomas Gunton, "The Ideas and Policies of the Canadian Planning Profession, 1909-1931"; P. J. Smith, "The Principle of Utility and the Origins of Planning Legislation, 1912-1975"; Walter Van Nus, "Towards the City Efficient: The Theory and Practice of Zoning, 1919-1939"; Shirley Spragge, "A Confluence of Interests: Housing Reform in Toronto, 1900-1920"; Oiva Saarinen, "The Influence of Thomas Adams and the British New Towns Movement in the Planning of Canadian Resource Communities"; Max Foran, "Land Development Patterns in Calgary, 1884-1946"; and Peter Moore, "Zoning and Planning: The Toronto Experience, 1904-1970."

histories are going to be written by members of communities whether urban historians like it or not. But, unless we get involved and attempt to teach members of the community about how to use their sources and so on we will end up with, for our purposes, almost useless volumes. If we get involved, however, we should be able to shape volumes that will be useful building blocks, while at the same time encouraging people to pursue their interest in their own community. I'm happy to say that the profession is beginning to recognize the value of this kind of activity. In Manitoba, for example, several historians have been involved in a series of seminars designed to assist members of the public with their local history projects. They were very successful meetings. And one historian, Gerry Friesen, has written a general guide to local history of Manitoba that will soon be published.⁵¹ The Regional History Committee of the Canadian Historical Association is also active in this area.⁵² It distributes 'certificates of merit' somewhat similar to the awards given out by the American Association for State and Local History.⁵³ The Regional History Committee is also discussing sponsoring a set of guides to local history writing that would eventually cover all of Canada's regions.

At the local level, I hope in a few years to begin to teach a course on the history of Victoria in an off-campus location. I'm convinced there would be a high level of interest in this.

STAVE: Who will sponsor this?

ARTIBISE: The University is doing that sort of thing now.

STAVE: As extension courses?

ARTIBISE: Right. We have a very active extension program, as do most universities. At the moment one of my colleagues teaches a very popular course on British Columbia history downtown. I think an urban course would be even more popular.

STAVE: Are there any other things you want to add on Canadian urban history, your own work, or anything?

ARTIBISE: There are a few things I can comment on. Gilbert Stelter and I have a number of projects at various stages. In 1980 we will

⁵¹The title is An Introduction to Manitoba Local History. It will be published in 1980.

⁵²The Regional History Committee of the C.H.A. has the following membership: Alan F. J. Artibise, Chairman and B.C. representative; Gerry Friesen (Manitoba), Prairie representative; J. K. Johnston (Carleton), Ontario representative; Peter Southam (Sherbrooke), Quebec representative; and W. Hamilton (Atlantic Institute of Education), Atlantic representative.

⁵³Artibise recently received an "Award of Merit" from the A.A.S.L.H. for his work on Winnipeg.

publish another edited volume entitled Shaping the Canadian Urban Landscape: Essays on the City-Building Process. And we have three other projects in various stages. One is tentatively entitled Canada's Urban Past: A Select Bibliography and Guide and grows out of previous work both of us have done in this area.⁵⁴ A second project is a volume on The Canadian City in the Nineteenth Century. This is something that Gil began work on back in 1975 and has since had me join him as co-editor. The goal is to produce an integrated, comparative volume containing original essays on eight cities.⁵⁵ Finally, we are now starting to plan a volume in The History of Canadian Cities Series entitled The Canadian City: An Illustrated History. This would be the major volume in the series, drawing on the work of other, completed volumes and our own knowledge of Canadian urban development.

My own plans also call for three projects to be completed over the next several years once I finish my current prairie study. First, I want to do at least one other urban biography, probably on Victoria. Then I want to write a detailed history of prairie urban development, carrying the story through to 1951 and attempting, as far as is possible, to generalize about urbanization in this region. I have also just completed work on an edited volume of fifteen original articles by various authors to be published by the Canadian Plains Research Center as TOWN AND CITY: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development. This volume of essays should appear early in 1981.

STAVE: Are you optimistic about the future of Canadian urban history?

ARTIBISE: Yes. And I see it developing in two quite distinct directions. There are those--and I count myself among this group--who will pursue urban history in a quite traditional manner, writing histories of individual cities, groups of cities, cities and regions, and so on. There is a great deal of work to do here and, as I am finding out with The History of Canadian Cities Series, a number of urban historians and historical geographers willing to do it. There is, however, another group that takes a more social scientific approach, concerning themselves with larger questions, with what several people in your book, The Making of Urban History, call social history or the "new" social history. They are concerned with broad themes like industrialization, urbanization, transiency, changing class structures, and so on.

STAVE: Do you think part of the reason for these different approaches are a result of the kinds of sources that are available to you in Canada?

⁵⁴ Gilbert A. Stelter, Canadian Urban History: A Selected Bibliography (Sudbury, 1972), and Alan F. J. Artibise, "Canadian Urban Studies: A Selected Bibliography," Communique: Canadian Studies, Vol. 3 (April 1977), pp. 51-124.

⁵⁵ The cities are: Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

ARTIBISE: That's a good point. There are differences not only between Canadian and American sources, but between sources available to eastern and western historians in Canada. For example, census manuscript data here has a 100 year rule. So while people like Michael Katz can use these materials to study Hamilton in the 1850s, the same opportunities do not exist in the post-1871 period which, of course, rules out all the western cities.

But the differences within the profession are more profound than the question of sources. It involves a difference of opinion as to what role historians should play in society. There seems to me to be a trend among some historians to cross a line into the social sciences by adopting large parts of their methodology and applying it to the past. Often this occurs when historians are attempting to deal with large involved issues like the creation of an urban system or whatever. The goals are admirable but I don't believe there are any shortcuts. The vast complexity of human society is there and no amount of manoeuvring or use of new techniques will alone overcome that fact. Historians must continually assert the importance of a sense of time and place. The need to generalize is obvious but when we do move in these directions we must usually admit that we are moving from the realm of history to something else. In other words, the discipline of history has a number of limitations that are often forgotten but which are, in fact, our strength. We admit from the outset that we can never know everything we wish to know and that even our knowledge of a well-known situation will be imperfect. In short, in history there are no closed issues; there is never an end and always more to learn. And it is this attitude that historians bring to the study of society.

STAVE: I think on that point and that assignment for historians we will stop. It is a good point. Thank you.