

Tulchinsky, Gerald, editor. *To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976. Pp. xiv, 402. Illustrations. \$18.00

J. E. Rea

Numéro 3-78, february 1979

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019411ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019411ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Rea, J. E. (1979). Compte rendu de [Tulchinsky, Gerald, editor. *To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976. Pp. xiv, 402. Illustrations. \$18.00]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (3-78), 128–129.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1019411ar>

Social, political and economic problems. The most ambitious socio-economic analysis is offered in the McCann article, which makes use of demographic data from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to develop a description of changing social patterns in resource towns. The analysis yields two facts which constitute a very interesting commentary, not only on social change in resource towns, but also on the planning profession and on our society as a whole. The facts, based on a comparison of the relatively new town of Kitimat with older resource centres, are as follows: 1) Modern planning principles -- despite the rhetoric of social concern which accompanies them -- have served only to reaffirm the sharp residential segregation by class which existed in the notorious "company towns" of the past. At the same time, 2) residential segregation along ethnic lines appears to have disappeared, or at least to have been very much ameliorated. Unfortunately, having stated those facts, McCann leaves the reader dangling. He offers no discussion of their significance and reproduces them inaccurately in his concluding remarks.

Details of historical development. The most successful article -- both generally and as a social and political commentary -- is one which does not put forward an elaborate "analysis." "The Development of an Unplanned Community: Cobalt, 1903-1914," by Douglas Baldwin, offers a vivid description of how the hardships of life in early Cobalt were forged out of the citizen's helplessness in the face of development pressures from transportation and mining companies. Baldwin's success is a product of the historian's most tested tools: strong research -- leading to a rich accumulation of telling detail -- and clear writing.

In short, the March issue of Plan Canada is recommended reading for anyone interested in the development of Canada's remote communities. Despite a number of shortcomings, it offers an interesting glimpse of an area in which there is much room for further scholarly work.

Christopher Leo
Department of Political Science
University of Winnipeg

* * * * *

Tulchinsky, Gerald, editor. To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976. Pp. xiv, 402. Illustrations. \$18.00.

Visitors to Kingston, Ontario may react to this eastern Ontario city in various ways. Some would find its essence in the forbidding gloom cast by its many penal institutions and wonder about the cumulative effect on the community of succeeding generations of such a custodial function. Others might respond to the substantial achievements of Queen's University,

a national university in a small city setting (a circumstance which creates its own set of peculiar problems). Still others might reflect on the long military tradition of Kingston, including the Royal Military College, which has imprinted itself on the character of the city. Like most tourists, however, they would have sampled the icing, but tasted little of the cake.

Unhappily, this study of Kingston contains some of the blind spots of a tourist's later recollections. More celebration than analysis, it was sponsored by the Kingston Historical Society to mark the tercentenary of the city. The eighteen essays are arranged in five sections; the shape of the city, fortress Kingston, economic development, politics and social change. While not entirely laudatory, the collection generally avoids any rigorously critical approach to Kingston's past. The quality of the various contributions ranges from the superficial to one or two quite penetrating essays.

There is about Kingston an aura, if not of failure, then of ambition thwarted and prospects denied, rather a sense of offended gentility. In his excellent introductory essay, editor Gerald Tulchinsky provides an overview of the century in which Kingston's initial prosperity as an important trans-shipment point in the St. Lawrence - Great Lakes communications network was gradually undermined and the city was increasingly drawn under the dominant influence of Montreal's control of banking and forwarding. The sense of having been tried and found wanting (as in Kingston's brief career as capital of the Province of Canada) led, by the end of the century, to a resigned acceptance of a secondary political and economic future. The less dynamic, but yet sustaining, military and institutional role came to characterize the life of Kingston. The name of "Limestone City" was a comment not only on its often beautiful stone architecture.

The social life of Kingston was dominated by a Scottish political-commercial elite, and this element is given extensive consideration in these essays. More probably than it deserved. For much of the nineteenth century, the majority of the population was Irish working class, yet little attention is given to them. Only in Patricia Malcolmson's fine article, "The Poor in Kingston" is the underside of the city's people and their way of life examined at any depth.

A few of the other contributions deserve mention. Kingston Toryism is well sketched by Sydney Wise through the career of John Macaulay. Keith Johnson has written a very able view of "John A. Macdonald and the Kingston Business Community." A case study of the Orange Order in the 1861 election is well handled by J. D. Livermore; and Alan Green's use of the 1871 Census Manuscripts is excellent.

Finally, it ought to be noted that this is a beautifully made book. Historic Kingston has, on balance, been well served.

J. E. Rea
Department of History
University of Manitoba

* * * * *