

## Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW  
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

The Carleton University History Collaborative, *Urban and Community Development in Atlantic Canada 1867-1991*. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, History Division, Mercury Series Paper 44,1993. Pp. 146. 16 maps and 23 B&W photos. \$19.95 paper

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Volume 24, numéro 1, octobre 1995

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019232ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019232ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Thornton, P. A. (1995). Compte rendu de [The Carleton University History Collaborative, *Urban and Community Development in Atlantic Canada 1867-1991*. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, History Division, Mercury Series Paper 44,1993. Pp. 146. 16 maps and 23 B&W photos. \$19.95 paper]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 24(1), 55–55.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1019232ar>

**The Carleton University History Collaborative. Urban and Community Development in Atlantic Canada 1867-1991. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, History Division, Mercury Series Paper 44, 1993. Pp. 146. 16 maps and 23 B&W photos. \$19.95 paper.**

This book stems from a graduate seminar in maritime history at Carleton University. As a collaborative effort it is unusual in its coherent and integrated approach, but it suffers from numerous editorial errors, and the maps in chapter 1 are too small and cluttered with information to be readable.

The book sets out to reassess the rise and fall of Atlantic Canada from the perspective of the rise and fall of its urban places, on the premise that towns are linked demographically, economically, and socially to their surrounding regions. The authors argue that what distinguishes this region from the rest of Canada is not the inability of its rural populations to absorb their natural increase but the fact that, except for a period between 1880 and World War I, its towns and cities were equally unable. Scholarly focus on out-migration from the region has tended to obscure significant flows of population within the region.

Cities across the region have experienced very different demographic and community dynamics. To understand these, the authors develop a typology of regions, each containing today about a quarter of the region's population. *Metropolitan centres* (Halifax, Saint John, and St. John's) dominate their surrounding regions (75–90% urban), providing services for large hinterlands and acting as diverse centres of industry and/or commerce. They are the only urban places to have grown continuously, but especially

since World War II, as governments have played an increasing role. *Industrial centred towns* (Moncton, Sydney, Pictou, and Grand Falls/Corner Brook) are situated in somewhat less urbanized regions and are less integrated with their hinterlands. Based upon primary manufacturing, coal mining, or other resource processing these towns grew rapidly when the region industrialized, then stagnated as industry declined. In the Maritimes growth occurred between 1880 and 1920 associated with the railways and the National Policy; in Newfoundland after 1920, growth was based on pulp and paper. Both types of region have remained predominantly urban and urbane.

By contrast, *farming districts* and *coastal littorals* are predominantly rural (about a third to one quarter urban), have remained remarkably stable in population and rural/urban ratio since Confederation, and retain a rural culture. Towns in farming districts are predominantly central places for their surrounding populations; in coastal littorals they were primarily gathering points for fish and lumber.

The strengths of this book lie in the detailed description of the process of individual urban and community development contained in chapters 3 and 4, as well as the 11-page appendix of census population estimates for all urban places (over 1000) from 1871–1991, and a comprehensive 20-page bibliography. The authors demonstrate how urban and community development based on resources have always been shaped by agencies external to the communities and often the region, and how these dependencies have increased and expanded over time, culminating in large-scale government intervention.

There are several weaknesses, however. Except for the typology, the first two chapters are surveys: a superficial one of the region's contemporary urban system (hardly the domain of historians), and a more thorough one of aspects of her political economy since Confederation. Neither is new, and their contribution is unclear. More fundamental is the lack of convincing evidence of how the typology is useful in understanding urban and community dynamics in any profound way. Indeed, while the authors look at urbanization in each type of region, the description proceeds province by province and even town by town. Few generalizations are drawn. The methodology is also problematic. Regions are based upon census districts. These are gross and often heterogeneous, obscuring as much as they illuminate. Finally, if the typology reflects different demographic patterns of community growth, where is the demography? We are told nothing about the flows of migrants or the sex ratios of the towns relative to the surrounding rural populations; did more women go to metropolitan centres and more men to resource towns, for instance, and if so, what was the impact on community development?

Despite its shortcomings, this book poses an interesting idea that urban and community development can best be understood in the context of the social and economic orientation of their regions, and provides a useful descriptive overview of that experience based upon published census returns and a comprehensive review of the regional literature.

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