

Portland State University

**PDXScholar**

---

Urban Studies and Planning Faculty  
Publications and Presentations

Nohad A. Toulon School of Urban Studies and  
Planning

---

9-1-1996

# Thinking About Cities: The Central Tradition in U.S. Urban History

Carl Abbott

Portland State University, d3ca@pdx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp\\_fac](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp_fac)



Part of the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

## Citation Details

Abbott, Carl, "Thinking About Cities: The Central Tradition in U.S. Urban History" (1996). *Urban Studies and Planning Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 65.

[https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp\\_fac/65](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp_fac/65)

This Post-Print is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Urban Studies and Planning Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: [pdxscholar@pdx.edu](mailto:pdxscholar@pdx.edu).

**Thinking about Cities:**  
**The Central Tradition in U.S. Urban History**

Carl Abbott  
School of Urban Studies and Planning  
Portland State University  
Portland, OR

Prepublication version of article in *Journal of Urban History*, 22 (Sept. 1996)

**Thinking about Cities:**  
**The Central Tradition in U.S. Urban History**

Historians of U. S. cities have been working on the same central questions for 150 years.

Urban history emerged out of the intense excitement with which Americans regarded the mushrooming cities of the mid-nineteenth century. Thanks to the careful work of Charles Glaab, Bayrd Still, and other scholars, we can revisit the intellectual ferment of the 1840s, when the first "modern" census provided data for professional and amateur social scientists. Writers in both North and South linked rapid urbanization to "the prospective greatness" of the nation and cited city growth as the most telling measure of national progress. Ongoing revolutions in transportation and production seemed to make urbanization inevitable.<sup>1</sup> George Tucker, professor of moral philosophy and political economy at Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia, summed up the emerging thinking about urban trends in 1843:

The growth of cities commonly marks the progress of intelligence and the arts, measures the sum of social enjoyment, and always implies increased mental activity, which is sometimes healthy and useful, sometimes distempered and pernicious. If these congregations of men diminish some of the common life, they augment others. . . . Whatever may be the good or evil tendencies of populous cities, they are the result to which all countries, that are at once fertile, free, and intelligent tend.<sup>2</sup>

Mid-century writers and social critics also acknowledged cities as sources of creativity. Henry Thoreau may have taken to the woods, but his friend R. W. Emerson argued the merits of cities as centers of intellectual life. "We can ill spare the commanding

social benefits of cities," he wrote in his essay "Culture" in 1844. Nathaniel Hawthorne allowed his protagonist in The Blithedale Romance (1852) to take time off from the rigors of a country commune for the intellectual refreshment of Boston. E. L. Godkin and other political reformers in The Nation looked to cities for "the highest activity of the people" and "the real national life." Revisiting New York, Walt Whitman wrote about the "oceanic amplitude and rush" of great cities, the "electric crowds . . . all this mighty, many-threaded wealth and industry concentrated here" and complained that few Americans of genius had paid adequate attention to great communities like Philadelphia, New Orleans, and St. Louis.<sup>3</sup>

What these writers were beginning to identify were two big questions that have continued to drive much of the enterprise of urban analysis and scholarship. First comes the most basic question of industrial urbanization: "Why and how have all of these people come together in large cities?" A close second is the question of civic order: "How have the members of these aggregations managed to coalesce, interact, and function as civic entities [or metropolitan communities, to use twentieth century language]?"

Efforts to answer these two questions have been central to the urban history enterprise through four earlier "generations" of history writing. At the end of the twentieth century they continue to animate urban history and related scholarship, and to relate the urban history enterprise to the challenge of citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

### **The First Generation: 1840-75**

My jump-off point is the invention of urban history in the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s. We've already seen that a number of Americans in these decades were beginning to explore what we might now call the social science questions of urbanization. In the same years, a

disparate group of local journalists, census takers, and professional men with time on their hands hit upon a surprisingly "modern" way to write about the history of their cities. They drew questions and approaches from a variety of existing genres that included pioneer annals and chronicles, city directories, and urban profiles in the style of Daniel Drake and James Mease.<sup>5</sup> Merging and building on these elements, they produced what we might call histories of the urban past, present, and future.

At least a score of books belong to this new genre of American city history. There is Charles Cist's Cincinnati in 1841: Its Early Annals and Future Prospects (1841). There are William Holloway's Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City, Robert E. Roberts' Sketches of the City of Detroit, State of Michigan, Past and Present (1855), and George W. Ranck's History of Lexington, Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress (1872). There are comparable books for Trenton, Harrisburg, Worcester, New York, Norfolk, Savannah, Baltimore, Louisville, Madison, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco, San Jose. The typical contents are summed up in the title of Elias Colbert's Chicago: Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Garden City: A Chronicle of Its Social, Municipal, Commercial and Manufacturing Progress from the Beginning Until Now, Containing Also Names of the Early Settlers and Office Holders, with Full Statistical Tables.

First generation histories share all or most of the following characteristics: (1) A serious narrative of economic and governmental changes from the outset of rapid growth to the present. In eastern cities, this story may include the colonial years. In cities of the Great West, it starts with the founding of the Anglo-American town. (2) An equally serious effort to quantify community history by assembling time series data on demography, commerce, manufacturing, and public services. Authors counted churches, schools, newspapers,

charities, and fraternal organizations as further evidence of economic and social progress. As one Chicago editor wrote before the Civil War, "facts and figures . . . if carefully pondered, become more interesting and astonishing than the wildest vision of the most vagrant imagination."<sup>6</sup> (3) A narrative style that treats the city as a single entity or object of study. (4) An optimistic assumption that the central theme of local history is progress, conceived in terms of economic growth and/or social refinement.

When twentieth century academics have noticed these works in historiographic essays, this fourth characteristic has caused us to label them pejoratively as "booster" histories and disdain them as serious efforts at community understanding. Without a doubt they were tools for commercial-civic elites to use in contests and competitions for city growth. David Hamer has recently pointed out that one of their purposes was to show history in the making by demonstrating how much and how rapidly things had changed. Their authors were unembarrassed about using past progress to forecast and interpret future success.<sup>7</sup> After all, as Elias Colbert wrote, a city like Chicago was "pre-eminently the wonder of the nineteenth century. . . . her forward march is still so rapid, that it is scarcely permitted to us to ponder the achievements of to-day, ere they are swept out of the memory by the still grander conquests of to-morrow."<sup>8</sup>

However, these early histories were also about the construction of communities. They gave substantial attention to the creation of a public realm of government and private institutions. In the process, they explored the generation of common purpose from the search for prosperity and the emergence of order from disorder. Citing comments by Josiah Royce, Kevin Starr has analyzed Frederic Hall's History of San Jose and Surroundings (1871) as an effort at culture-building. The narrative moved from gunfights and mobs to schools, churches, and a new courthouse. "Details of violence were not ends in themselves, but points

of reference from which the community of San Jose could measure its hard-won struggle for civilization."<sup>9</sup>

Cist, Roberts, and the other didn't tell everything about their cities, nor ask all of the possible questions. In trying to explain how Americans were making points on the map into places, however, they did take on our two central questions: the process by which a city had appeared and grown in this particular place, and the processes by which the residents of that place were constructing community institutions.

### **The Second Generation: 1875-1930**

We reach more familiar territory with the weighty "bookend histories" of the gilded age and progressive era. A cohort of specialized history publishers combined forces with local historians to give new and compendious histories to nearly every important city between 1875 and 1925. Large cities were likely candidates for two or even three write-ups over the half-century. If the first generation of urban history provided tools for the civic leadership, this second generation erected monuments to the same elite.

The national centennial was one motivation for this surge of systematic urban history. A Congressional resolution encouraged the gathering and publication of local history. A committee that met during the Philadelphia exposition devised a standard format and distributed it widely.<sup>10</sup> More basic were the improvement of communication and organizational capacity with the maturing of the railroad system and private corporate organization. Many of the first generation histories had been one-person shows. The second generation include both one-person/one-volume productions and an increasing number of team projects. Several publishing firms that started with county atlases and simple

biographical compendia moved on to the more complex task of city histories. Alfred T. Andreas, for example, published dozens of county atlases but is best remembered for his History of Chicago (1884). Other prominent publishers included J. H. Beers, O. L. Baskin, S. H. Everts, and S. J. Clarke.<sup>11</sup>

Authors were frequently amateurs from the ranks of the literate professions: lawyers, clergymen, journalists, physicians. These men were the social peers but economic servants of local commercial-industrial growth coalitions. A few, such as J. Thomas Scharf, wrote on several cities, matching the professionalization of the publishers. Most of the authors were content to describe their own communities. In so doing they were usually assiduous in interviewing older residents and energetic in searching public records and newspapers for the data of urban development. Virtually every later historian of American cities has mined their information about the city-building process.

The typical history reviewed the pioneer years, described early booms, detailed the expansion of intercity transportation, discussed the emerging city rail system and neighborhood patterns, described public improvements, and noted the appearance of "citywide" social and cultural institutions. As Richard Wade and Howard Chudacoff have noted, one of the common interpretive themes was "progress in the world at large" and the interaction between urban and national development. The second master theme was "the growth of public spirit" in the creation of public and community institutions. Taken together, these are precisely the same topics that had stirred the previous generation.<sup>12</sup>

### **The New Urban History: 1930-1960**



Around 1930, a new group of academically trained and academically oriented historians took over the practice of city history from the amateurs and journalists of the second generation and revitalized the city history. Their well-known product was a formidable set of urban "biographies" researched and published over the next three decades. Bayrd Still, Blake McKelvey, Bessie Pierce, Constance Green, and other professional historians developed detailed portraits of urban communities as complex entities assembled from disparate parts.<sup>13</sup> They worked in the shadow and tradition of Chicago social science and they felt the national urge to define a common identity that was so strong in the 1930s and 1940s.

Again, we are often too quick to connect "old fashioned" and "urban biography" in a single phrase without understanding that the books represented a wave of self-consciously "new urban history." They were undertaken by younger scholars who began their work in the 1930s and published their findings in the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. In part responding to Arthur M. Schlesinger's call to place cities at the center of national history, these young scholars also wanted to portray the integrated functioning of large communities. Blake McKelvey later recalled his goal in writing the history of Rochester as "trying to recreate the experiences of that community, growing into a modern city."<sup>14</sup>

Part of the context for their work was the new cultural history that scholars such as Thomas Cochran, Merle Curti, and Ralph Henry Gabriel explored and delineated at the 1939 meeting the American Historical Association in a set of symposia devoted to "the study of history from the standpoint of total culture." Caroline Ware edited and published the papers and comments as The Cultural Approach to History (1940).<sup>15</sup> The underlying theme was the anthropological concept of culture as a way to integrate diverse information on social,

economic, and demographic patterns. The cultural approach promised breadth with discipline, Ware wrote, and facilitated comparisons across time and space.

The 1940 volume provided a general framework and specific rationale for comprehensive city histories. Included was an essay by Constance McLaughlin Green on the value of local history. The local or city historian, she argued, should explore the city in its entirety. Local studies could test and refine vapid generalizations and bring workers and clerks to center stage along with politicians and factory owners. Her own study of Holyoke, published the previous year, had practiced what she preached, using the mill town to examine the process and consequences of urbanization. Her monograph was informed by sociological theory and offered a comprehensive analysis of economic growth, government, civic reform, and social institutions. Another study in the same mold was Ware's own book on Greenwich Village.<sup>16</sup>

We can also understand this third generation of urban history in relation to the cognate and contemporary social science genre of the community study, which aimed for a comprehensive depiction of a carefully circumscribed settlement as a social and cultural system. As practiced by sociologists between 1920 and 1950, the heart of the community study was the description and analysis of patterned relationships among residents of a single place and the personal and social values that those relationships expressed and supported. In the phrase of Robert Park, the goal of community studies was to understand each community as a moral order or set of shared ideas and attitudes.<sup>17</sup> In the context of the interwar years, the hope was to explore the ways in which cities managed to function as economic and social units despite their fragmentation by neighborhood, class, ethnicity, and race.

However, there was also a substantial difference between the ways in which sociologists and urban historians approached their community studies. Robert and Helen

Lynd, authors of the most influential community portrait, organized their description of Middletown around everyday family and personal life. In contrast, third generation of historians replicated the interests of their own predecessors by seeing the formation of community at its most basic in the expansion of a local economy and in public responses to that growth, both through government and through what we now call the "third sector" of civic and charitable organizations.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Comparative Generation and After**

The field of U.S. city history reformed once again in the 1950s and 1960s, in substantial part because of the precept and example of Richard Wade, who pushed historians to think comparatively and comprehensively about the perennial questions of city growth and civic community. Choosing sets of similarly situated cities, Wade explored their fundamental commonalities and particular differences. Unlike the handful of direct models to which he could turn in the mid-1950s, he tackled much more inclusive questions than Wyatt Belcher and worked with a much stronger sense of theory than Carl Bridenbaugh.

All historians of U.S. cities know the results: The Urban Frontier, published in 1959, followed by Slavery in the Cities in 1964. The former required long months of research in the steamy summers of the Ohio River Valley. The latter required more summers in the equally steamy archives of the Atlantic and Gulf South.<sup>19</sup> Slavery triggered a cluster of amplifying and argumentative studies. The Urban Frontier continues to shape our understanding of North American growth, as in the recent work of geographer D. W. Meinig, whose "American system of regional development" draws directly on the concept of urban frontiers.<sup>20</sup>

It is worth noting that Wade's accomplishment was contemporary with similar pathsetting work in England, where Asa Briggs pursued a parallel research agenda in a much cooler climate. Briggs vitalized the study of urban Britain in Victorian Cities. He used systematic comparison of city-building process in five British and one Australian city to rescue the industrial city from the clutches of antiquarians and boosters.<sup>21</sup> Like The Urban Frontier, Victorian Cities has remained an achievement of impressive depth and great influence that combined a "search for general patterns with careful attention to what was unique and specific in individual places."<sup>22</sup>

In putting their stamp on the master narrative of urban history, Wade and Briggs reaffirmed the primacy of questions about the sphere of public action.<sup>23</sup> In turn, many scholars who began to publish after 1965 developed the same research agenda in greater detail.<sup>24</sup> Comparative work proliferated on city growth, city politics, and public services. These researchers have differed widely in their intellectual antecedents and historiographic concerns, but they have shared the assumption that we learn most quickly about cities by tracing the same issue of community formation or community action in multiple cases.

In the 1980s and 1990s, more and more historians have added their own conceptual sophistication to the examination of cities as common or shared communities whose fate and character both residents and outsiders try to promote, influence, represent, and describe. Unlike Charles Cist or J. T. Scharf, they do not posit or assume naturally unitary communities. They realize that unity, common identity, and purpose are fragily constructed out of conflicting groups, goals, and ideas. Cities as entities are continually challenged from "below" by internal divisions and from "above" by the national state and by national and global networks and institutions.

Grouped closely around what I'm defining as the "main stem" of urban history are

several currently vital research clusters. One is the continued fascination with cities as engines of economic change and agents of modernization (that package of other "ations" including commodification, rationalization, specialization, and nationalization). This interest can include stories of city-regional growth and stories of relative or absolute economic decline. A second cluster of historians analyze cities as "political" entities that residents define, control, and direct through electoral politics, government, extra-governmental institutions and leadership, and the articulation of community identity. Other historians continue to do explicit comparative analyses of regional sets of cities in South, West, and Middle West.

Even the time-tested urban biography remains a viable format, especially for smaller or newer cities in the South and West and for suburban communities.<sup>25</sup> Urban biographies feed the hunger of local citizens to understand their civic communities. As sociologist Anthony Orum recently noted, they also provide a clear context for testing ideas of structure and agency in urban change.<sup>26</sup> Modern city encyclopedias, as published for Cleveland, Indianapolis, and New York and in process elsewhere are a related expression of the same impulse to structure our exploration of social diversity within the framework of civic communities.<sup>27</sup>

Efforts to communicate recent scholarship to broad publics frequently link the same questions of urban growth and community formation to the practice of citizenship. A good illustration is a recent television series on "The Making of Modern Atlanta" prepared by Dana White and Tim Crimmins. Their tacit purpose is to help Atlantans understand that the "public interest" can legitimately be enunciated and pursued in a variety of ways, sometimes mutually supportive and sometimes contradictory. This central theme allows White and Crimmins to respond in detail to the two questions most likely to be asked by viewers

searching for Atlanta's secrets of success. First, why did Atlanta emerge as the premier city between the Potomac River and the Texas prairies? Second, how did Atlanta escape the open warfare over racial desegregation that affected so many other southern cities? Both questions, of course, are ways of asking how Atlanta constructed a civic culture that could respond effectively to the enormous social and economic changes of the mid-twentieth century. The shows do not tell every story about modern Atlanta, but they tell the essential story of Atlanta as a civic entity.<sup>28</sup> Many historical museums have taken on a similar task by mounting new exhibits on city history with an eye toward affecting the quality of debate on public issues.

### **Conclusion**

Historians who think about American cities are continuing two of the most important of American historical conversations. The first concern of my urban history tradition is easily recognized as a version of Fred Turner's powerful question: "How did European Americans turn North America into the garden and then the workshop of the world (and what role did urbanization play)?" The second focus of urban history restates Alexis de Tocqueville's essential concern: "How have the disparate residents of the United States managed to overcome kaleidoscopically shifting social patterns to construct and maintain a civil society?"

In turn, these broad questions place the history of the United States within two of the most powerful narratives of the modern world. Turner was taking a middle western crack at understanding the changing global division of labor and economic activity, a central question since the theorizing of Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Much of the most exciting work in

urban social science continues to worry over the geographical and sectoral restructuring of the national and international economy. The discourse on flexible accumulation, post-Fordist economies, regional shifts, core-periphery relations, the information economy, global cities, and hyper-metropolitan citystates engages some of the sharpest students of politics, geography, social structure, and economics.<sup>29</sup>

Tocqueville's worry was the effect of increasing scale and mobility on social affiliation--the essential question of modern sociology since the late nineteenth century. Again, current social theorists are revisiting the challenge of strengthening the civil community. In addition to theoretical work of communitarian thinkers like Amatai Etzioni and Philip Selznick, urban scholars might cite the targeted work David Rusk, Anthony Downs, and Daniel Kemmis, who are searching for ways to reinvigorate metropolitan areas as ethical communities by making the social and political collectivity congruent with functional economic units.<sup>30</sup> In recent political science, we can cite the renewed debate between on the purpose and control of municipal and metropolitan government.<sup>31</sup>

In everyday life we think and act as if cities (or metropolitan communities) are entities with distinct character and distinct modes of action. Cities are black dots or yellow splotches on the map. They are names in the NFL and NBA standings, whose successful teams elicit community pride.<sup>32</sup> We rate and rank cities and talk about their personalities. We recognize metropolitan areas as labor sheds, retail markets, and focused communication systems and make investment and business decisions accordingly. We establish city-wide and metro-wide institutions of formal governance and service delivery. We persist in using the metaphor of vitality, talking about cities as living things that grow, flourish, decline.

In so doing, popular discourse holds on to a core truth. The central tradition of urban history in the United States has focused on the interaction of citizens and cities conceived as

potentially inclusive entities. The question of civic life has been central to my own work. Each of my predecessors as president of the Urban History Association has been just as interested to understand how the past shapes the potentials of contemporary civil communities.

As historians of cities, we deal with the constant interaction of people and place. If good citizens are the riches of a city, as Oregonian C. E. S. Wood wrote a century ago, so too is a good city the treasure of its citizens. To the extent that historical understanding helps us shape better communities, the pursuit of urban history has been and continues to be a basic element in the practice of citizenship.



## NOTES

1.. De Bow's Review, 1 (February 1846): 145; Jesup W. Scott, "Internal Trade of the United States," Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, 9 (August 1843): 31; Benjamin J. Lossing, "Growth of Cities in the United States," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 7 (June-November 1853): 171; Carl Abbott, Boosters and Businessmen: Economic Thought and Economic Growth in the Antebellum Middle West (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Bayrd Still, Urban America: A History with Documents (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974); Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

2. George Tucker, The Progress of the United States in Population and Wealth (New York, 1843), 143.

3.. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Culture," in The Conduct of Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), 155; "Town and Country Abroad and at Home," The Nation, 2 (May 15, 1866); E. L. Godkin, "Our Great Cities," The Nation, 9 (Nov, 11, 1869); Frederick Law Olmsted, Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1870); Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas", in Prose Works 1892, Floyd Stovall, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1964), II, 371; Dana F. White, The Urbanists, 1865-1915 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989).

4.. In addition to the "mainstream" described in this paper, there are two other broad clusters of urban historical scholarship. One focuses on the evolution of the city as a physical object, with particular attention to changing land use patterns, the built environment, formal planning, and the social meaning of the city as a physical container of activities. It has close ties to neighborhood history, historic preservation, geography, and the history of the design professions. The other focuses on cities as arenas for the definition and

defense of group identity, with obvious attention to the social power of ethnicity, race, class, and gender. This cluster has strong and obvious connections to sociology and to the history of immigration, labor, and ethnic groups.

5.. The city profile in the style of Daniel Drake, Natural and Statistical View, or Picture of Cincinnati and the Miami Country (Cincinnati: Looker and Wallack, 1815) and James Mease, The Picture of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: B. and T. Kite, 1811) evolved by mid-century into the booster compendium--the natural ancestor of promotional materials prepared by twentieth century chambers of commerce and development departments. George Thurston's Pittsburgh As It Is (Pittsburgh: W. S. Haven, 1857) offered statistics on coal mining, railroads, real estate values, population, employment, boat building, and banks and a "progressional ratio" comparing the growth of Pittsburgh to the rest of the nation. We can also trace the evolution of this genre in three books about Washington: D. B. Warden, A Chorographical and Statistical Description of the District of Columbia, the Seat of General Government of the United States (Paris, 1816); Jonathan Elliot, Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square, Forming the District of Columbia (Washington: J. Elliot, Jr., 1830); and William Q. Force, Picture of Washington and Its Vicinity for 1848 (Washington: W. Q. Force, 1848).

6.. Review of Commerce for 1853 (Chicago: Chicago Democratic Press, 1853), 1.

7.. David Hamer, New Towns in the New World: Images and Perceptions of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Frontier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 172-73.

8.. Colbert, Chicago, p. 1.

9.. Frederic Hall, History of San Jose and Surroundings (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1871); Kevin Starr, Americans and the California Dream (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 157.

10.. Charles Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 210; Howard P. Chudacoff, "The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company and the Study of Urban History," Historian, 49: 2 (1987): 184-93.

11.. Walter W. Ristow, American Maps and Mapmakers: Commercial Cartography in the Nineteenth Century (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 403-439; Michael P. Conzen, "North American County Maps and Atlases," in David Buisseret, ed., From Sea Charts to Satellite Images: Interpreting North American History through Maps (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 186-91; Michael P. Conzen, "Maps for the Masses: Alfred T. Andreas and the Midwestern County Atlas Trade," Chicago History, 13: 1 (1984): 46-63.

12.. Howard Chudacoff digested these two key themes from a comprehensive analysis of dozens of city histories published by the S. J. Clarke Company between 1906 and the early 1920s. Dick Wade has written that these histories "contained the germ of a grand theme--the disproportionate influence of the city in regional and national expansion." See Chudacoff, "S. J. Clarke Company," and Richard C. Wade, "An Agenda for Urban History," in Herbert J. Bass, ed., The State of American History (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), 43-69.

13.. T. J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historic Southern Port (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1931); Gerald

Capers, The Biography of a River Town: Memphis, Its Heroic Age (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939); Blake McKelvey, Rochester, Vol. 1-3 (Harvard University Press, 1945-56); Bayrd Still, Milwaukee, The History of a City (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1948); Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, Vol. 1-3 (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1937-57); Rollin Osterweis, Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953); Constance M. Green, Washington, Vol. 1-2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962-63).

14.. Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The City in American History," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 27 (June 1940): 43-66; Bruce Stave, "A Conversation with Blake McKelvey," Journal of Urban History, 2 (August 1976): 471. A key point is McKelvey's use of "community" in the singular.

15.. Caroline Ware, ed., The Cultural Approach to History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); Ellen Fitzpatrick, "Caroline F. Ware and the Cultural Approach to History," American Quarterly, 43 (June 1991): 173-98.

16.. Constance McLaughlin Green, "The Value of Local History," in Ware, ed., Cultural Approach, 275-86; Constance McLaughlin Green, Holyoke, Massachusetts: A Case History of the Industrial Revolution in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939); Caroline F. Ware, Greenwich Village, 1920-1930: A Comment on American Civilization in the Post-War Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935).

17.. Robert Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment," in Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie, eds., The City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 1-46.

18.. Contrast Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929) and Middletown in Transition (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937) with Daniel Aaron's 1942 dissertation on "Cincinnati, 1819-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West," finally published as Cincinnati, Queen City of the West: 1819-1838 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992). Although Aaron stated his goal as writing a "nineteenth century Middletown," his study was much more strongly focused on the public community rather than private life. In effect, Aaron portrayed CINCINNATI rather than Cincinnatians.

19.. Richard C. Wade, The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959) and Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (New York, 1964).

20.. D. W. Meinig, The Shaping of America, Vol. II: Continental America, 1800-1863 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

21.. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (London: Odhams Press, 1963).

22.. Andrew and Lynn Hollen Lees, "Forward" in Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), vii.

23.. These are the same concerns that Wade placed at the center of the urban history agenda in several programmatic essays, where he repeatedly emphasized two broad issues: (1) the internal process of institution building, particularly those governmental and nonprofit institutions that claim to speak for,

represent, or serve all residents, and (2) the external economic and political relations of cities, including the interaction between city-building and nation-building and the ways that communities present themselves to the world. Richard C. Wade, "The City in History--Some American Perspectives," in Werner Z. Hirsch, ed., Urban Life and Form (New York, 1963), 59-79; "Urbanization," in C. Vann Woodward, ed., The Comparative Approach to American History (New York, 1968): 187-205; and "An Agenda for Urban History."

24.. For example, Urban History Association presidents Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City: 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) and David R. Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).

25.. Carol Hoffeecker, Wilmington, Delaware: Portrait of an Industrial City (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974) and Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974); Margaret Ripley Wolfe, Kingsport, Tennessee: A Planned American City (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987); Michael J. McDonald and William Bruce Wheeler, Knoxville, Tennessee: Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Don H. Doyle, Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985) and Nashville since the 1920s (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985); David McComb, Houston: A History (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) and Galveston: A History (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Stephen J. Leonard and Thomas J. Noel, Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1990); Eugene Moehring, Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970 (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989); Bradford Luckingham, Phoenix: The History

of a Southwestern Metropolis (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989); Carol O'Connor, A Sort of Utopia: Scarsdale, 1891-1981 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Zane Miller, Suburb: Neighborhood and Community in Forest Park, Ohio, 1935-76 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981); Michael Ebner, Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

26.. Anthony Orum, "Apprehending the City: The View from Above, Below, and Behind," Urban Affairs Quarterly, 26 (June 1991): 589-609. Orum has biographies of twentieth century Austin and Milwaukee: Power, Money and People: The Making of Modern Austin (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987) and City-Building in America (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995).

27.. David G. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds., The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., The Encyclopedia of New York City (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

28.. The Making of Modern Atlanta, written and produced by Chris Moser, Dana F. White, and Timothy J. Crimmins. Eight thirty-minute programs produced for WPBA-TV, Atlanta, 1991 and 1993. For reviews see Carl Abbott, "The Documentary as Public History," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 78 (Spring 1994): 115-23 and David R. Goldfield's review in Journal of American History, 80 (Dec. 1993): 1204-06.

29.. David Harvey, The Urbanization of Capital (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); John Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis," Development and Change 17 (1986): 69-84; Allen Scott, Metropolis: From the Division of Labor to Urban Form (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Ann Markusen, Profit Cycles, Oligopoly, and Regional Development (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); Peter Hall and Pascal Preston, The Carrier Wave: New Information Technology and the Geography of Innovation (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988); Manuel Castells, The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process (London: Blackwell, 1989); Saskia Sassen, The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Bennett Harrison, Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Manuel Castells and Peter Hall, Technopoles of the World (London: Routledge, 1994).

30.. Philip Selznick, The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Amatai Etzioni, The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda (New York: Crown, 1993); Anthony Downs, New Visions for Metropolitan America (Washington: Brookings Institution and Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1994); David Rusk, Cities without Suburbs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Daniel Kemmis, Community and the Politics of Place (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990) and The Good City and the Good Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995).

31.. Paul Peterson, City Limits (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); John Mollenkopf, The Contested City (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Pierre Clavel, The Progressive City:



Planning and Participation, 1969-1984 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Harvey Molotch and John Logan, Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Mark Gottdiener, The Decline of Urban Politics (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987); Stephen Elkin, City and Regime in the American Republic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Joe Feagin, Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political and Economic Perspective (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Clarence Stone, Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989); Susan Fainstein, The City Builders: Property, Politics and Planning in London and New York (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994).

32.. In my hall closet are caps with Cincinnati Reds and Cleveland Browns logos--affirmations of urban loyalties from my Ohio upbringing in the days of Wally Post and Otto Graham.