



# *The Urban History Newsletter*

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## *Whatever Happened to Atlanta and Seattle?*

By Larry Shumsky, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Editing an encyclopedia seems to be fairly straightforward—an enormous amount of work to be sure, but straightforward. First, you decide on the list of topics to be included and assign word-lengths to each, select authors for them, collect the finished entries, edit them, and submit finished copy to a publisher or copy editor, depending on the nature of your contract (or lack of one). That's the way the process works in theory. My own experience says that the reality is quite different, fixed somewhere firmly between fantasy and nightmare.

Begin at the beginning, determining the subjects of individual entries. Before they can be firmly decided, an editor has to have at least a rudimentary set of guiding principles in mind lest the scope of the encyclopedia become completely unmanageable and the number of entries limitless. If you were editing an encyclopedia of American cities, for example, would you want each entry to be a particular urban place (Kokomo, IN)? or would you want it to be a particular urban institution (dance halls) or person (James "Gentlemen Jimmy" Walker)? or would you decide on concepts that have been applied to cities or used to help analyze and understand urban life (hamlet)?

But even answering that question raises a larger set of questions. If you choose to have entries on individual cities, or to develop some kind of mixed criteria, will you include an entry for every urban place in the United States (more than 7,000 according to the census of 1970)? What criteria will you use to make the final decisions? Even if you decide to limit the inclusion of places on the basis of population, another question arises. What is your baseline date or dates? If you choose to include entries about the twenty largest cities in the country, what year are you referring to? The list of the twenty largest cities in 1820 contains seven that had slipped off by 1870, and the list that year contains seven others that were gone by 1920. Do they all receive entries? Similar kinds of questions can be asked about any of the other schemes of organization. What mayors of what cities of what size should be included? What institutions of



*The skyline of Houston, Texas (courtesy of ABC-Clio)*

cities of what size? what concepts from what disciplines? Sooner or later, you have to decide, knowing full well that someone, somewhere (hopefully not in public) will take you to task for not making quite the right selections.

After this tentative list of entries has been devised, a word-length has to be assigned to each. For largely unjustified reasons having to do with their own economic well being, publishers will simply not accept books of unlimited length; instead, they issue contracts that specify an approximate length for works such as this. Nevertheless, the question of how long each article should be can be answered fairly easily if the editor is on top of things. Entries of roughly equal importance should be of roughly equal length. So that, for example, if one were preparing an encyclopedia of world cities, the entries on London, Paris, and Rome should probably be roughly comparable, whereas the entries on Plymouth, Lyons, and Naples should be shorter. But what about Birmingham, Marseilles, and Naples? They seem to fall into an intermediate category between the other two, but how finely do you draw such distinctions? How do you draw the lines that separate one category of entry from another?

The issue becomes more complex when one considers artifacts or objects that are not instantly comparable. As an extreme example, if one were including the French pissoir as an entry in an Encyclopedia of World Cities, to what could it be compared in determining the appropriate length of an encyclopedia article since there is (at least to my knowledge) nothing comparable elsewhere. Or, how do you determine the relative importance of mayors? Are all mayors of all cities equally important? Does Rudolph Giuliani deserve as much consideration as Diane

Feinstein, or Curt Schmoke as many words as Brand Whitlock? But even these questions are relatively simple when compared to the issues that arise when you try to identify potential contributors and persuade them to become actual participants. The editor has very little leverage; almost no one receives any tangible reward for writing encyclopedia entries, certainly not enough to justify the amount of time and effort expended. But that's a matter of enticement. Before potential authors can be induced, they have to be identified. And here the problem is one of tactics. Imagine this. The editor is trying to tick off possible contributors; the editor also realizes that no one (for good reason) will agree to write an unreasonable number of words. Now, in identifying possible authors for the entry on Sacramento, the editor decides that Jones would be best. However, there is a problem. If Smith declines to write the entry on California cities, Jones would be the next most appropriate candidate to write it. But if Smith does decline your invitation, you can't very well (well, you can, but it's embarrassing) go back to Jones and ask if she would like to write a different, or an additional, entry. It quickly becomes clear that, to a large extent, finding authors is a hierarchical affair. The process becomes a decision tree with each agreement or rejection to write a particular entry affecting authorship of subsidiary or subordinate entries. A rejection at any point along the branching can affect every subsequent decision by repositioning potential authors. This has the affect of prolonging the process because only a limited number of authors can be approached at any one time. More than that, facing this hierarchy of authors forces you to realize that the process is not sequential, and you do not go through all the stages in some kind of lockstep order.

After you've begun, you quickly see a progression through the various stages of developing articles occurring at very different times. Not only can you not write to all potential authors simultaneously (because some of them might move up the ladder because of earlier declines), but some of the people contacted reply quickly, others slowly, and still others not at all. So, you actually end up editing some entries even while you are still trying to find authors for others almost up until publication. Which at least partially explains the length of time that these projects can take. Incidentally, it also explains why I was generally noncommittal when so many people asked me, "When is it coming out?" two, or even three years, after they had sent me their manuscripts. Why are you still looking for authors of articles at such a late date in the project's development? Because one of two things has happened. Either you never could locate any appropriate potential author, or every author you did locate declined your invitation. What next? There are really three choices, none of them ideal. You can write the article yourself, you can drop it from the encyclopedia altogether, or you can ask someone who is not so appropriate to write it. As I said, none of these alternatives is very satisfactory. You have more than enough to do without writing the entries yourself. The entry was important enough to make all the cuts you have been forced into so far. And you are trying to maintain at least some integrity for the project and would like the entries to be written by people who have earned at least the right to pose as experts on a topic. What to do? There is no choice. You do all three of these unpleasant

things. If an article is important enough and there is no alternative, you write it yourself. If the article is unimportant enough, you drop it from the encyclopedia. If everything else is equal and you have a willing stooge at hand (read graduate student), you let them write the entry and hope that no one, especially reviewers, will notice what's happened. It's not such a great way of handling things, but that's probably the normal state of affairs.

And now, the fun part—receiving and editing the entries—supposedly begins. (Yeah, the process isn't sequential for the whole book, but it is for each entry.) You've been through all this hassle, determined the entries, assigned them lengths, and cajoled people into writing; all that's left is to open your mailbox and vet the contents. Not quite. What does "edit" mean? Probably not what you thought of first. If you've done a good job of selecting authors, and been incredibly lucky, most of the contributors are authorities, or at least knowledgeable; which is to say that they know more than you do about any given topic and aren't likely to have made serious errors, so editing doesn't mean checking facts and making sure that the text is correct. That's almost a given. One thing it does mean, unfortunately, is cutting. Regardless of what you told them about length, most authors "can't possibly deal with that subject in so few words" and submit entries much longer than you had requested. Although most everyone thinks their own words are pearls not to be discarded lightly, the editor has to make decisions about what is pertinent and significant and what can be omitted without detracting from the submitted entry or distorting it. The only alternatives are to scrap the entry altogether or be lucky enough to have had the contract sold to a publisher much more amenable to publishing a book substantially longer than the one initially proposed. Sometimes things do work out right. Other than cutting, the essence of editing this kind of work is the kind of nit picky, necessary garbage that drives most of us crazy almost all the time—spelling, grammar, usage, sentence structure, and so on. Some of this is pretty simple, but it all has to be decided and resolved consistently. And there are constantly annoying "gray areas." What do you do about the spelling of British or Canadian authors? Labor or labour? honor or honour? What do you do about the abbreviations of state names? Calif. or CA? Ind. or IN? And those are just for starters. How disillusioning and disheartening it is to learn that the "rules" of grammar pounded into your head decades ago weren't rules at all but standards of usage. Regardless of what your third grade teacher told you, the "rules" of good English are not immutably carved in stone and can be expunged. And the new rules and standards of usage are open to question and debate. No longer does "everyone have his book," but social convention has made acceptable the previously taboo "everyone has their book," thus violating the once sacrosanct principle of agreement between noun and pronoun. No longer is a sentence forbidden to end with a preposition, and it now seems acceptable to avoid the kind of grammatical structures up with which I was taught to put.

The result of all this effort and aggravation, of the extraordinary amount of effort and time that far surpassed what you had anticipated, is an encyclopedia very different from what you had planned more years ago than you care to remember. It doesn't have all the entries that you thought belonged there, has a couple

(but only a couple) of entries that are frankly embarrassing, includes contributions from some colleagues who add luster to the book and of which you can feel proud, contains usage for which your third grade teacher would have chastised you (I still can't end a sentence with a preposition), and reflects the latest version of the English language. The whole process has increased your admiration for your colleagues, the work that they do, and the willingness of so many of them to contribute to a work like this for and assist you for little or no return. On your better days, you can even overlook the absence of entries on some subjects by some colleagues you would have liked to include but who declined to participate at all or who never submitted the entries that they had promised (hence the title of this piece). But overall, the result actually pleases you and seems to be regarded well by others. *Mirabile dictu!*



## Tributes to Zane Miller

Zane Miller has proven central to my development as a historian and as an advocate for progressive social change. His approach to history as a tool to understand change and his use of that understanding to work for the welfare of his community dovetailed exactly with my reasons for returning to graduate school in my mid-30s.

In the fall of 1983, soon after I began my graduate work in history, I enrolled in Zane's urban history course in which he required students to produce a paper based on original research. I chose to try to understand the racial and class change on a street in Cincinnati's Avondale section, that I knew from living there in the late 1970s had occurred at some earlier point. Zane took my interest seriously, treated me as a colleague, and persuaded me to expand the project into a master's thesis. Ultimately that work became a doctoral dissertation on race, civil rights, and housing policy in Cincinnati after World War II.

Although my work in history has been slowed and interrupted occasionally, Zane has always acted as if he assumed that I was or would make a valuable contribution as a historian. Indeed, that assumption contributed to my returning to Cincinnati after a two year absence in the late 1980s to pursue a doctor-

ate under Zane's supervision. Over the four years that led to the Ph.D., the correctness of my decision to work with Zane was confirmed repeatedly. He challenged me to achieve excellence, he gave me a powerful theoretical framework against which to test my work, and he made clear throughout, his respect for me as a scholar and his affection for me and my family. Moreover, he edited my dissertation with skill, grace, and speed, teaching me to construct sentences, paragraphs, and chapters that made sense both grammatically and as history. And I could find him in his office when I needed to consult with him. Despite the fact that the tight job market of the 1990s led me to work outside of the history profession primarily, the love for history that Zane helped nurture in me, his belief expressed through his work that progressive change is possible and worth doing, and his deeply embedded decency as a person, continue to have a profound impact on me. For this I am deeply grateful to him.

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I would like to add a few comments to those of others regarding Zane Miller. I first met Zane when I was beginning my senior year at Northwestern. A class on urban sociology taught by Dennis McElrath and Scott Greer had already drawing me toward a specialization in urban history, and I was most excited to learn that someone named Miller, an urbanist from Chicago, was Bob Wiebe's replacement for the 1964-65 school year. I boldly asked Zane whether I could take an independent reading class in the subject. He was still finishing his huge dissertation (my 910 pages on the saloon looks like a Reader's Digest Condensed book next to his three volumes), but he agreed and led me through three quarters of reading that covered virtually everything extant at the time, including city histories. I will never forget that joy of discovery. It was a blast! Zane later helped me obtain a job as a research assistant to Bessie Louise Pierce, a position he had once held. And in the years that followed, Zane has repeatedly come to my rescue as a recommendation letter-writer, gentle critic, and trusted friend, while at the same time enlightening the profession with the same wisdom and superb scholarship that I had the pleasure of encountering 35 years ago. I feel sadness for his department, but personal happiness that now perhaps he can get to Chicago more often.

Perry R. Duis, Professor of History  
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In May 1999, Zane Miller retired as a Professor of History from the University of Cincinnati, after a rich and fruitful career of research, writing, teaching, and service — most of which he plans to continue in spite of formally leaving his academic post. Zane received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1975, one of the many students to thrive under the tutelage of Richard Wade. Zane's first, renowned book was *Boss Cox's Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era* (1968) — “neither the biography of a boss nor an analysis of a machine.” In a tribute to Miller, historian Joel Schwartz described *Boss Cox* as

a book that depicted the political boss as a shrewd mobilizer of issues and the adroit broker of the political middle, and that offered a kind of unitary field theory for the metropolitan landscape.

He added:

Reading *Boss Cox*, you instinctively knew that Miller got it right.

In 1976, Zane and colleague Henry D. Shapiro wrote *Clifton: Neighborhood and Community in an Urban Setting: A Brief History*, a short study of one of Cincinnati's neighborhoods. The book was initiated by a request from a Clifton neighborhood organization to prepare a history as part of its annual house tour. As articulated in "Self-Fulfillment and Decline of Civic Territorial Community" in the *Journal of Community Psychology* (October, 1986), Miller suggested that the type of selective historic preservation in which the community was interested — one that downplayed the more modern history of the community — reflected a desire on the part of communities in the period after World War II to re-capture a sense of community that had been lost.

Pervading all of Zane's work is an examination of the concept of "community" and its change over time. Most of his work from the 1970s on builds on a theory of shifting interpretations of the relationship between community, culture, and place in the U.S. since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Drawing on the scholarship of colleagues such as Henry Shapiro, Miller has identified three changing definitions of community in this period:

- \*the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which "community" was primarily a function of geographic proximity.

- \*the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which community was seen as stemming from cultural characteristics of its physical and human components, such as architecture, race, ethnicity, and occupation.

- \*the post-WWII period, during which community came to be defined as a place where individuals themselves determined the nature of the area, based on their "own social identities" and needs.

Often collaborating with colleagues and students, Miller has explored and described the histories of various neighborhoods and entire municipalities inside and outside of Cincinnati, and offered broader histories of the "neighborhood" in the U.S. as well. In "The Role and Concept of Neighborhood in American Cities" [in Robert Fisher & Peter Romanosky, *Community Organization For Urban Social Change: A Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: 1981)], Miller described various organizing efforts at the neighborhood level in the U.S., including the settlement houses and the "social unit" schemes of the first quarter of the century. Zane has also examined the part played by urban planners in shaping cities and suburbs — and the ability of planning to respond to changing roles for the metropolitan area, the city, and the neighborhoods. Thus, in 1980, Miller co-edited *Urban Professionals and the Future of the Metropolis* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1980) with Paula Dubeck. Miller and Dubeck anticipated that the essayists would focus on specialist solutions to the "urban crisis" of the 1970s. Instead, the authors all emphasized their disappointment in the "post-World War II performance of 'urban professionals'."

In *The Planning Partnership: Participants' Views of Urban Renewal* (Beverly Hills, 1982), Miller and co-editor Thomas Jenkins invited professional and non-professional participants in the Queensgate II project — a project to re-invigorate an economically-depressed African-American neighborhood in Cincinnati in the 1960s — to describe their experiences in the course of the project.

These studies and another — *Suburb: Neighborhood and Community in Forest Park, Ohio, 1936-1976* (Knoxville, 1981) — crystallized for Zane concerns emanating from the post-WWII theory of community. In his study of Forest Park, Miller identified a shift from a civic-centered approach, in which the citizenry attempted to negotiate its differences on the basis of the good of the entire community. By the 1960s, a more competitive approach emerged, in which neighborhood organizations spoke for the interests of their constituencies alone, seemingly without the interests of the larger metropolis at heart.

Zane spelled out the implications of this new competitiveness in a 1983 article, "The Politics of Community Change in Cincinnati," in *Public Historian* (Fall, 1983). He wrote:

Today, to act in the public good means to act for the welfare of individuals in their pursuit of self-fulfillment, not to act for the welfare of a place. . . . As a result, civic activism increasingly is embodied in negative or oppositional rather than constructive goals. This leads us towards a kind of political paralysis, a situation in which it is easier to mobilize opposition to policies and programs than it is to create and implement them.

Zane also contributed essays to the collections on "snowbelt" and "sunbelt" cities in the early 1990s. In "Pluralism, Chicago School Style: Lewis Wirth, the Ghetto, the City, and 'Integration,'" *Journal of Urban History* (1992), Zane described Wirth's changing views on the possibilities for assimilation within the racially and ethnically diverse metropolis.

In the September 1996 *Reviews In American History* Miller again articulated his idea of the need for a broad-based civic understanding and unity in "The Crisis of Civic and Political Virtue: Urban History, Urban Life and the New Understanding of the City." After an assessment of the role of urban historical scholarship in encouraging and discouraging civic cooperation, he asserted:

the maintenance of political and cultural pluralism rests on tolerance and compromise, and that the new understanding of the city in the hands of Richard Wade as scholar, civic and political activist left ample room for self-transcendence, and a vital concern for the idea of civic and political virtue defined as the promotion of the public interest as well as the broadening of civil liberties and lifestyle choices.

Continuing concern for these issues is included in *Changing Plans for America's Inner Cities: Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine and Twentieth-Century Urbanism* (Columbus: 1998), co-authored with Bruce Tucker.

Miller has himself made a major commitment to civic activism in his own life, with *Journal of Urban History* editor David Goldfield asserting, "He is one scholar to whom the boundaries between public and academic are meaningless." Zane has held positions with the Ohio Historic Conservation Board, the

Cincinnati Historic Conversation Board; the Miami Purchase Association for Historic Preservation, and the Hamilton County Democratic Party over the years.

At the time of his retirement, Zane was director of the Center for Neighborhood and Community Studies at the University of Cincinnati and co-editor of two book series: the “Greater Cincinnati Bicentennial History Series” with the University of Illinois Press and the “Urban Life and Urban Landscape Series” with the Ohio State University Press. The “Urban Life and Urban Landscapes Series” has produced some of the landmark urban history studies since its inception in 1988, leading off with Ann Durkin Keating’s *Building Chicago*. For a listing of publications included in the series, see the website: <http://www.ohiostatepress.org/ull.htm>.

In the course of producing this rich body of ideas, Zane has also shared his understandings with graduate and undergraduate students, as well as post-doctoral Taft fellows at the University of Cincinnati. Among the legion of urbanists who worked with Zane are Robert Fairbanks, Patricia Mooney-Melvin, Blanche Linden, and Fritz Casey-Leininger. In a tribute to Miller, Linden wrote of the “halcyon days” as Zane’s assistant in the Laboratory of American Civilization,” and of the “think tank of your Urban History Seminar.” She asserted that Zane’s mentorship, together with that of Henry Shapiro, had “absolutely shaped the type of historian — my perspective, my teaching, my writing, the love I have for my work. . . .”

These sentiments are shared by many of those who have encountered Zane as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and activist through the years.

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## *Conference Reports*

### **“Cities Under Siege” Conference, Montalcino, Italy, July 7-10, 1999**

by Victoria Belco, University of California, Berkeley

Professor Lucia Carle of the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme put together an original and very successful international conference on the subject “Cities Under Siege.” Taking place in Montalcino, Italy, July 7-10, 1999, the topic, timing, and location of the conference all marked the 440<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the final siege of the city of Montalcino and the fall of the Republic of Siena (which had retreated to Montalcino). In her inaugural lecture, Professor Carle recounted the history of some thirty years of sieges against Montalcino, in which much of Western Europe participated, and which served to shape the urban identity of Montalcino’s citizens to the present day.

Over the four day conference, forty panelists from Italy, France, the United States, Canada, Spain, and Britain presented their work from a variety of disciplines, including architecture and art history, demography, sociology, military history, literary and gender studies, and economic history. Paper topics ranged in period from the Etruscans to cold war USA; geographically from Yorktown, Virginia, to Naples to plague-era London; and conceptually from whether a siege can take place before the existence of the city, to the idea of siege as a model of biological aggression within the human body. Reflecting the current scholarly interest in urban disasters, the conference treated siege as a specifically human-generated urban disaster. Many of the papers explored themes of the city as battleground, the presence of non-combatants (or civilians) in the midst of war, and war’s short and long term effect on an urban civilian population.

Too numerous to catalogue individually, the papers were divided thematically into five panels according to the chronology of a siege: preparing to face a siege; the siege as experienced by the besiegers; the besieged; after the siege; and memories, rites, and myths of siege. The first panel focused primarily on planning and design, technological change, and the evolution of fortifications from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, examining, in part, how an enclosure defines a city. Others discussed the connection between military, engineering, political, and theoretical considerations that went into building urban fortifications. Two fine papers in the second session were Michael Wolfe’s on how memoirs of the French wars of religion provided those at home with vicarious experience of siege warfare, and the analysis by Luis Pablo Martinez and Luis Arcon of political propaganda portrayed in a recently restored 17<sup>th</sup> century Valencian mural depicting the siege of the castle of Salca. Showing how valuable international conferences can be, even if sometimes unexpectedly so, Francisco Andujar Castillo presented Spanish documents on the 1553 siege of Montalcino — records previously unknown to Lucia Carle.

Carolyn J. Eichner and Juliette Parnell-Smith gave interesting accounts of women’s anti-clericalism and women’s writing, respectively, during the siege of Paris and the commune in 1871 as part of session three. The fourth session — after the siege — included my own paper on need and assistance in post-WWII Central Italy and excellent papers by Jean-Paul Desaiave on the 16<sup>th</sup> century civil wars in Burgundy, and by Myron Gutmann on population migration to the United States after the Mexican Revolution.

The fifth session on “memory, rites, and myth” of siege was the longest and included some exceptional papers, especially those on disputed memory and the difference in commemorations and myths between those of the besiegers and those of the besieged. Patrice Grouix described how myth and commemoration of the siege of Long-Sault came to portray Native Americans as enemies of the Canadian nation. Thomas G. Fraser then explained the continuing Catholic and Protestant conflicts over urban space and fortifications in commemorating the siege of Londonderry. Using French and Canadian examples of women participants, Diane Gervais and Serge Lusignan characterized siege as an ideal time for women to transform themselves into warriors and defenders, whether actually or in their own later ac-

counts. Tukufu Zuberi addressed issues of siege, racialized slavery, and the quantification of race. The final panelist, Kristina Zarlengo, spoke of an expected and feared siege, but one that never occurred, in her paper on American city planning for the atomic age.

Especially enjoyable to the European participants and to those from the United States was James E. Crisp's paper on Texan identity and the iconography of the well-known painting of Davy Crockett's defense of the Alamo. James Crisp and Vincent Renstrom, whose excellent paper described the Andean siege of Cuzco, shared the monetary prize for the best conference paper. Three additional talks regarded more contemporary, immediate sieges. A UNESCO representative spoke of the current situation in Bosnia, while both the vice-mayor and the city council president of Sarajevo poignantly described the modern siege of that city and its aftermath.

The conference setting was ideal — and not only because Montalcino is one of Tuscany's loveliest towns and the producer of Brunello, one of Italy's best wines. The city's spectacular hilltop position and well-preserved walls and fortress helped illustrate the concept of siege preparation. In addition, as participants, we felt very connected to the city throughout the conference, from the conference site in the city's theater (which permitted visitors and members of the public to attend), and through field trips to Montalcino's exquisite civic museum, a nearby abbey, and a winery and wine museum. The city also hosted a concert in the Palazzo Comunale, a dinner in Siena, and lunches each day prepared by Montalcino's four rival *quartieri* or neighborhoods.

## **“Race, Class and Gender in Planning History: A Workshop Held in Memory of Marsha Ritzdorf,” Washington, D.C., November 18, 1999**

by Andrew Wiese, San Diego State University

Almost one hundred participants gathered on November 18, 1999, for a plenary workshop on Race, Class, and Gender in Planning History, which preceded the 8th Biennial Conference on Planning History held in Washington, D.C. The workshop commemorated the life and scholarship of Marsha Ritzdorf, professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, who died in 1998. The workshop proceeded in four fifty-minute “conversations” about class, race, gender, and an agenda for new research in planning history. A total of fifteen panelists presented short “research bytes” interspersed with questions and comments from moderators and the audience.

Almost uniformly, panelists called for scholars to complicate the narratives of planning history and to invigorate the field

through research informed by recent trends in the social sciences and humanities. This call took several forms. Some participants encouraged scholars to complete the project of social history for the history of city planning — in particular by examining the ways racial and ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians, and members of the working classes have shaped the history of urban planning.

Several others called for scholars to re-conceptualize planning history to encompass the history of community building and organizing at the grassroots, as well as the spectrum of resistance to professional planning initiatives. Just as historians of urban politics have shifted their emphasis away from the state toward public culture and public life and have focused on the various means by which power is exercised (including the use of imagery and language), a variety of participants called for a more inclusive and critical planning history that incorporates ordinary people as both subjects and objects (too often victims). Leoni Sandercock, in particular, called for scholars to “offer not one ‘official history’” of professional planning but a variety of “insurgent planning histories” which would “provide a foundation for an emerging alternative (to the modernist) paradigm for planning in multicultural cities.”

In addition to these points, a number of younger scholars, including Angel Nieves, Andy Shanken, Laura Swartzbaugh, and Robin Bachin, encouraged historians to consider not only the ways race, class, and gender have shaped planning history, but the ways planning (broadly conceived) has shaped the categories of race, class, and gender themselves. Shanken's research on architects' efforts to plan for post-war city building, for instance, suggests that the exigencies of gaining access to government contacts during World War II led professional architects to redefine their profession in gendered terms as “undeniably male.” Nieves, on the other hand, suggested ways that the black women who founded several historically black colleges in the early 20th century hoped to use planning and architecture to advance their view of African American “nationhood.”

Gail Dubrow provided perhaps the most searching examination of the agenda for re-framing planning history. That agenda, she argued, should include not only more inclusive scholarship rooted in “feminist and anti-racist impulses” but also a reconsideration of the welcome that such scholarship receives in the institutions where most of us work. After a generation of research that has pushed the boundaries of urban and planning history to incorporate narratives about race, gender and sexuality, Dubrow questioned whether work on these topics has penetrated the “mainstream” in planning departments and is received on an equal footing in decisions concerning recruitment, promotion and tenure, and curriculum design. Dubrow also suggested that the time had come in planning departments to replace the standard “history of professional planning” course with a broader urban history course in which “the history of planning is conceptualized as only one of many forces shaping city and region.”

Finally, in remarks that closed workshop, Howard Gillette urged participants to take seriously our responsibility not only as scholars but as citizens by engaging our neighbors, community boards, planners and elected officials in informed debate over

the shape of our communities and by taking discourses such as this one out of the conference room and into the public arena. Questions from the floor provoked a lively discussion about historical sources that might be used to construct a new planning history, and several comments suggested that a follow-up workshop on methods and sources for writing “insurgent” or “bottom up” planning histories might be especially useful at the next meeting of the Society for American City and Regional Planning History.

In the end, participants embraced no single agenda for the future. Rather, in fitting tribute to Marsha Ritzdorf, the gathering reflected a robust enthusiasm for heterodoxy in the planning history.

## The First Annual Dallas History Conference

By Robert B. Fairbanks, University of Texas at Arlington

Until the 1980s, Dallas history had too often been written by journalists or sloppy amateurs who repeated the same stories and did little to systematically investigate the city’s history. Fortunately for the city, that has changed recently with a growing number of good local historians who along with some urban and social historians are finally making sense of one of the nation’s most visible but least understood cities. Their output in books and scholarly journals including the city’s local history journal, *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas*, has been a clear manifestation of this increased interest. The first annual Dallas history conference, held at the eighty-six year old Scottish Rite Cathedral in downtown Dallas on October 2, 1999, proved another example of this growing historical awakening in Dallas. Over two hundred people representing about forty different history organizations attended this gathering sponsored by six historical bodies in the area, and coordinated by Michael V. Hazel, editor of *Legacies*. The Summerlee Foundation was the principle underwriter for the conference which included seven sessions and a luncheon presentation. It easily was the largest assembly of Dallas historians in the city’s history and their interaction with each other and the other attendees between the formal sessions was also a highlight of the day.

Organizers selected ten papers from the thirty-six proposals submitted for a conference which took as its organizing theme “The Forces that Have Shaped Dallas.” The presenters reflected a nice mix of local historians, graduate students, and public and academic historians who read papers on a variety of forces that shaped Big D. Jackie McElhane explored the impact of the Trinity River flood of 1908 paying special attention of how it spurred on the development of a new viaduct to connect Dallas with Oak Cliff, and set in motion developments that resulted in the Kessler Plan of 1911. Another paper traced the early planning and zoning movements in the city while Robert Fairbanks examined the role of the Kessler Plan Association in not only

promoting planning in Dallas in the 1920s but in promoting civic loyalty to Dallas. Two public historians, Marsha Prior and Terry Schultze, presented “A City Within a City: The Rise of Freedman’s Town North Dallas in the Face of Segregation.” This nicely illustrated presentation provided a powerful reminder of the role of racism in shaping the city’s geography. Other papers looked at different aspects of the built environment including one by Jeff Dunn who presented “The Development of Automobile Roads and Travel Routes in Dallas County, 1905-1926,” and another by Kelly McMichael Stott entitled “The Lost Cause in Dallas, 1894-1898” that explained how the city’s Confederate Memorial in City Park helped residents cope with the growing urbanized setting that they experienced.

Three papers at the conference traced the role of individuals and documented their contributions to Dallas history. Instead of focusing on business leaders however, two papers looked at the role of Jewish rabbis in shaping the city. Jane Guzman presented “David Lefkowitz of Dallas: A Rabbi for all Seasons,” while Hollace Weiner gave a paper entitled “Levi Olan: An Unorthodox Rabbi.” Another entertaining paper by Bonnie Lovell explored the influence of Stoney Burns, editor of the underground newspaper *Dallas Notes* and promoter of the counter-culture in Dallas. Most of these papers will be published in *Legacies*, now in its eleventh year.

The luncheon address by Elizabeth York Enstam, author of *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas Texas, 1843-1920*, was entitled “Why Belle Starr? Or Whatever Happened to Myra Maybelle Shirley Reed?” It contrasted the mythic Belle Starr, one of the city’s most notorious females, with the “real” Belle Starr as a way of reminding listeners about the dangers of such popular history for those who really want to understand the city and its citizens. Indeed, this conference helped do that by bringing a diverse number of historians to share their knowledge and understanding of the city’s history.

## Minutes of Annual Meeting of UHA, January 7, 2000

The meeting convened at 4:45 PM., Joel Tarr, President of the Urban History Association, presiding. The minutes of the previous meeting of January 8, 1999 were cited and approved by the membership present. Timothy R. Mahoney, Executive-Secretary and Treasurer of the Urban History Association gave the annual report on the affairs of the association. He began by thanking Michael Ebner for all his support and cooperation during the transition. Mahoney reported that he and Michael Ebner met on November 18 at Lake Forest College to facilitate the transition and assured the membership that it would take place as smoothly as possible. Mahoney then reported that the association had 437 members, a slight decrease from 441 in 1998. He suggested that the continued decline was probably due to the same causes that have accounted for declines in memberships in other professional associations. Mahoney also reported that the Association has a very positive cash balance. With its 437 members, a positive financial position, prize competitions, and annual meetings the Urban History association is in very sound

condition and has considerable strengths to build on.

Even so, Mahoney stated that like all transitions this one has raised a number of important issues about the future of the association. To address these issues, Mahoney reported that he queried by memo select members of the association for ideas on three issues facing the association. These are: 1) How to clarify the relationship between the Urban History Association and the *Journal of Urban History*; 2) Whether or not the Urban History Association should sponsor a conference, and 3) Whether the Urban History Association should develop a website. Mahoney stated that he was willing to engage in this discussion and welcomed any ideas from the membership concerning these issues.

Mahoney then expressed gratitude that Joel Schwarz has agreed to continue as Membership Secretary. He also reported that Janet Bednarek of the University of Dayton is the new editor of the Urban History Newsletter. Mahoney concluded his report reminding those present that the annual dinner of the Urban History Association would be held on January 8, 2000 at the Chicago Historical Society. He thanked Harlan Davidson Inc. for their support for the dinner. He also reported that the annual luncheon would be held at the meeting of the Organization of American Historians in St. Louis, Missouri on March 31, 2000. The speaker will be Robert Archibald of the Missouri Historical Society. The topic of his talk will be "City Stories, Past and Future: The Missouri Historical Society and Its Place in St. Louis." He thanked those directors whose terms were coming to an end: John Bauman, Henry C. Binford, William Cronon, Peter G. Coheen, Russell Lewis, Gail Radford, and Judith Spraul-Schmidt. Joel Tarr then asked Barbara Posadas of Northern Illinois University, chair of nominating committee, to report on the vote of the membership for president and new directors. Posadas reported that Lizabeth Cohen of Harvard University was the new president elect for 2001. New directors elected for a three-year term were Roger Biles, Amy Bridges, Howard Gillette, Paul M. Hohenberg, Mingzheng Shi, John C. Schneider, and Thomas Sugrue.

Joel Tarr then introduced new business. He proposed that an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee be formed to develop ideas and formulate a policy regarding the three issues that Mahoney raised in his report. A motion was made and discussion followed. Mary Corbin Sies offered a plan by which the Urban History Association would join the conference of the Society of American City and Regional Planning History in 2001. She presented a request from Society of American City and Regional Planning History for support for its biannual conference. When it was suggested that the association needed to decide about its role in the Society of American City and Regional Planning History conference soon, Blaine Brownell made a motion that if a committee is formed it focus first on the conference issue. More discussion followed. The amendment to the motion was called and received an affirmative vote. The motion was called and received an affirmative vote. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35P.M.

## THE URBAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

President: Gil Stelter/University of Guelph (Canada)  
President-Elect: Lizabeth Cohen/ Harvard University  
Past president: : Joel A. Tarr/Carnegie Mellon University  
Executive Secy.-Treasurer: Timothy R. Mahoney/University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Newsletter editor: Janet R. Bednarek/University of Dayton

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thru December 31, 2000: John Bukowczyk (Wayne State University); Lizabeth Cohen (Harvard University); Ann Durkin Keating (North Central College); Ted W. Margadant (University of California, Davis); Glenna Matthews (University of California, Berkeley); Eric Schneider (University of Pennsylvania); and Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. (SUNY Buffalo) thru December 31, 2001: Lorraine Attreed (College of the Holy Cross); Clifton Hood (Hobart & William Smith Colleges); Patricia Mooney-Melvin (Loyola University Chicago); Mark Rose (Florida Atlantic University); Kristin Stapleton (University of Kentucky); David Stowell (Keene State College); and Quintard Taylor (University of Oregon).

thru December 31, 2002: Roger Biles (East Carolina University), Amy Bridges (University of California at San Diego), Howard Gillette (Rutgers University-Camden), Paul M. Hohenberg (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), Migzheng Shi (University of Hawaii at Manoa), John C. Schneider (Tufts University), and Thomas Sugrue (University of Pennsylvania). Past presidents: Richard C. Wade/CUNY Graduate & Research Center (1989); Sam Bass Warner, Jr./Brandeis Univ. (1990); Zane L. Miller/Univ. of Cincinnati (1991); Samuel P. Hays/Univ. of Pittsburgh (1992); Lynn Hollen Lees/Univ. of Pennsylvania (1993); Kenneth T. Jackson/Columbia University (1994); Carl Abbott/Portland State University (1995); and David R. Goldfield/University of North Carolina, Charlotte (1996); and Raymond Mohl/University of Alabama at Birmingham (1997); Eric Monkkonen/ University of California-Los Angeles (1998).



*Joel Tarr, Past-President (l); Liz Cohen, President-elect;  
Gil Stelter (r), President at  
Annual Urban History Association Dinner, Chicago,  
January 8, 2000.*

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The bibliographers are Michael Ebner, Lake Forest College (U.S. Books); Charlene Porsild, University of Nebraska (Canada). and Katherine Aaslestad, West Virginia University (Europe). The *Urban History Newsletter* seeks occasional bibliographers for Canada, Australia, Africa and the Middle East. Regular U.S. Books and Articles bibliographers are needed. If interested please contact the editor: [janet.bednarek@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:janet.bednarek@notes.udayton.edu)

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## Report of the Executive Secretary

On January 1, 2000, I succeeded Michael Ebner as the second Executive Secretary and Treasurer of the Urban History Association. I want to thank Michael Ebner for his support and cooperation in assuring that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. Michael served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Urban History Association with dedication and creativity for eleven years. He has the deepest thanks and appreciation of members of the association. This transition, like most transitions of officers in any association, is accompanied by questions and concerns about the future of the association. The three issues facing the association are: 1) the relationship between the Urban History Association and *the Journal of Urban History* and H-Urban, 2) whether or not the association should have a conference, and 3) whether or not the association should develop a website. To initiate and advance a discussion and the formulation of a series of motions to present to the membership, a motion was made at the annual business meeting to form a committee. In January, President Gil Stelter invited seven members of the association to be members on an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. The call of the committee was to discuss each of these issues, with a special emphasis placed initially on discussing the issue of a conference. The seven members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee are: Timothy Mahoney and Gilbert Stelter, ex officio; Blaine Brownell, chair; Barbara Posadas, Thomas Sugrue, Georgina Hickey, and Clifton Hood. The committee is currently discussing these various issues and hopes to make its report to the President of the Urban History Association in March. The President will present the motions from the committee to the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Urban History Association in late March.



*Michael Ebner (l), outgoing Executive Secretary, and Timothy R. Mahoney (r), new Executive Secretary of Urban History Association*



*New Newsletter Editor, Janet R. Bednarek, and her Assistant (Husband) learned the value of having cheap filler material. It especially comes in handy the weekend before the newsletter is due and the Bednareks have an inch of water in their basement.*

## Milestones

**John Bauman** (California University of Pennsylvania) has been elected as vice-president of the Society of American City and Regional History.

;  
**Howard Gillette** (Rutgers University—Camden) has been elected as president of the Society of American City and Regional History.

**Michael E. Holleran** (University of Colorado) is the recipient of the Society of American City and Regional History's Lewis Mumford Book Prize for the Best Book in Planning History, for *Boston's 'Changeful Times': Origins of Planning and Preservation* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

**Bruce M. Stave** (University of Connecticut) has been named Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Connecticut, where he directs UConn's Center for Oral History.

## Other News

### Visiting Professorship in Urbanization at University of Oregon.

The University of Oregon has announced the establishment of the Carroll Visiting Professorship in Urbanization. Appointments will

rotate among the departments of history, geography, and political science and are open to both traditional academics and to those whose contributions in governmental service or elsewhere promise to advance teaching and research about urbanization at the university. Occupants will offer undergraduate and/or graduate courses for at least one full academic term. The professorship is named for Benjamin and Louise Carroll and endowed by Louise Carroll Wade, Professor Emerita of American urban history. Professor Larry R. Ford, Geography Department, San Diego State University, will inaugurate the chair in the Spring Term 2000. He is co-author of *Southern California Extended: Las Vegas to San Diego and Los Angeles* (1992) and author of *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skidrows, and Suburbs* (1994), as well as numerous articles. He will teach an upper-division course in urban geography and a graduate seminar on The New American Downtown.

## Annual UHA Awards

Best doctoral dissertation in urban history completed during 1998: Mary Letherd Wingert, "City Limits: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in Urban America, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1834-1834" (Duke University).

Best book in non-North American urban history published during 1997 or 1998: Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Best book in North American urban history published during 1998: Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago* (University of Illinois Press, 1998).

Best article in urban history published during 1998: Raphael Fischler: "Health, Safety, and the General Welfare: Markets, Politics, and Social Science in Early Land-Use Regulation and Community Design," *Journal of Urban History* 24:6 (September, 1998), 675-719.

## Zane Miller Memorial Fund at UC

The Department of History at the University of Cincinnati is honoring Zane L. Miller on the occasion of his retirement from teaching by establishing a fund to support the scholarly work of graduate students in history at the University and to establish a prize for the best seminar paper by a graduate student. As readers of this newsletter know, Miller made a mark not only as a publishing scholar but also as a mentor for graduate students and as an editor of two (continuing) book series. Readers who would like to contribute to the Zane L. Miller Graduate History Student Fund should make out checks to the University of Cincinnati Foundation/ Zane L. Miller Fund. The address is :  
University of Cincinnati Foundation  
PO Box 19970  
Cincinnati, OH 45219-0970  
For more information contact Judith Spraul-Schmidt at (513)556-3258 or [spraulj@email.uc.edu](mailto:spraulj@email.uc.edu).

## The Urban History Association: New Directions, New Opportunities

By Timothy R. Mahoney

In late 1999 I sent a query to a number of members of the Urban History Association concerning the issues facing the association during the transition. I noted that declining membership, the ever-shifting nature of urban history, and a shift in cohorts were somehow connected. I wrote: "Though such transitions are never neat, it is becoming apparent to more and more members of the association that the urban historians who earned their Ph.D.s from the 1950s through the 1970s are gradually giving way to those who earned their Ph.D.s in the 1980s and 1990s. This gradual transition is occurring during a period in which membership in the association has been on a gradual downward trend. From talks with various officers and members of the association, it is apparent to me that there is a general sense that the two phenomena are related. The elusive definition of the field of Urban History has continued to shift and become more discursive. There are, therefore, many historians doing work on the history of cities and towns, but who do not, for one reason or another, define themselves as urban historians or see the need to join a professional association of urban historians. Clearly as we make this transition, the membership as a whole and the officers of the association need to address this issue in some way.

As a way to start a conversation about these issues, I thought I would simply pose the following five questions: 1) How do you define your own work as urban history? 2) How do you define the field in general now? 3) Where do you see the field of urban history going? 4) What do you think about the viability of the field of urban history? 5) Given your responses to these questions, how do you think the association can reach out and encourage urban historians who are not members to join?" I then asked for ideas about the various ideas currently being discussed by the Ad Hoc Advisory committee: 1) a conference; 2) a permanent relationship with *the Journal of Urban History*; and 3) a website. I received a number of replies, among which I include three below. Readers wishing to join in the discussion are encouraged to send me their comments at [TMAHONEY1@unl.edu](mailto:TMAHONEY1@unl.edu).

From Mark H. Rose, Florida Atlantic University

One ought not be surprised that membership numbers have declined. Part of the decline is attributable to matters you've accurately described—the transition from the generation of the “founders” to members of what I'll characterize as the second and third generations of urban historians. But many among that founding generation were never active in creating a society, nor in institutionalizing the field. The net result has been that only in the 1970s—when Raymond Mohl et al launched the *Journal of Urban History*; and only in the 1990s, when Mike Ebner et. al. energized the field (after forming the Urban History Association) by taking over the annual lunches, launching a newsletter, and awarding prizes, could we say that the skeletal components of a field were even in place. The late start, moreover, meant that urban historians “missed” the “golden age” of the 1950s and 1960s — when new fields and new approaches were incorporated in Ph.D. programs. Few universities award the Ph.D. with a focus in urban history. Consequently, many who self-identify as urban historians have “come over” from other fields. One component of making the field and the Urban History Association grow needs to be some mechanism or mechanisms that facilitate the process of crossing over.

First, we need to make a direct connection between the *Journal of Urban History* and the Urban History Association. Although many in the association may not want a subscription to the *Journal of Urban History*, my guess is that we'll add many subscribers to the *Journal of Urban History* as members of the Urban History Association. In turn, the Urban History Association will—so to speak—“own” the *Journal of Urban History*.

Second, we should seek a direct connection to Society of American City and Regional Planning History. When I attend their meetings, it is like attending a conference of the Urban History Association. Sessions are about the history of cities, city builders, networks, and so forth. I myself would not object to some more formal blending of the two organizations.

Third, I'd like to see an annual or bi-annual conference of urban historians. Whether for purposes of networking, or professional self-development urban historians have long sought a place at which they could—as a group—talk urban history for a couple of days. The old idea—from the founding generation of Wade, et al.—was that urbanists would somehow burrow into the other organizations. As many active scholars are now often exclusively participants in specialty groups, we have fewer places at which to succeed with our burrowing. Time, I think, for a group that would serve as an outlet on a regular basis for this (attractive) desire to write and talk about urban history. Joining with Society of American City and Regional Planning History in promotion of these annual or bi-annual conferences would seem to make sense.

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From Greg Hise, School of Policy, Planning, and Development, University of Southern California

I see the generational divides as so critical that I'll jump to the end and suggest the need for regional symposia or a national/international conference as a central issue for the maintenance and growth of the organization. While web initiatives are of interest, and a few are quite compelling, none will perform the necessary function of creating personal and professional relations among senior and junior scholars, especially those who are working towards advanced degrees. This is an essential benefit of the annual meeting of each of the other organizations I am affiliated closely with for example, planning history (Society of American City and Regional Planning History), vernacular architecture (Vernacular Architecture Foundation), and to a lesser extent, western history (Western History Association).

I consider myself an urban historian because I study processes of urbanization. My training in architectural history and cultural landscapes/geography reinforced a prior inclination to examine the material city through field work, surveys, and a grounded investigation of everyday settings and how these places have shaped our lives. Many of my colleagues and the majority of the students I work with are urban historians because the phenomena they study take place in cities. This is particularly true for graduate students; the city is a site for popular culture, immigration, modernity, etc. Unfortunately, the city itself, if examined at all, is often the last, and least analyzed, factor. These are the people who would benefit from inclusion in Urban History Association and are least likely at present to belong.

From Clifton Hood, Hobart and Smith College

As chair of a search for a position in U.S. history this year, I was struck by the number of applications we received from candidates who are doing urban-related scholarship. What was startling was that none of the applicants defined himself or herself as an urban historian. Candidates obviously tailor themselves for particular jobs - and ours was not an urban history position. Still, I think that these promising young scholars probably do not consider themselves to be urban historians and are not connected to our professional networks. This gives me mixed feelings: while I am delighted that so much interesting work is being done on urban topics, I am frustrated that the presence of high sub-disciplinary walls separates us from the sources of new ideas and different approaches that these young scholars represent.

One way of breaching these walls is by taking a broad definition of urban history. As I see it, urban history encompasses any historical subject where cities or suburbs are independent variables and have some explanatory power. Such a definition allows us to appeal to scholars whose primary specialization is in another sub-discipline. In addition to historians, we should continue to reach out to interested museum curators, archivists, policy-makers, and others. Through the superb efforts of Michael H. Ebner, Kenneth T. Jackson, and other historians, the Urban History Association has acquired a strong foundation of committed members that can serve as a base for the future.