

Finally, a number of the essays illustrate the opportunities that are available to public historians. The National Park Service has created many instances where historical evidence has contributed to better public policy. Carol Shull and Dwight Pitcaithley examine what they term “the maturation” of the National Park Service. The National Register of Historic Places has created greater public interest in historical and environmental activism. Christopher Clarke looks at the role of museums as a point of engagement between public historians and the wider public, and argues that museum exhibits offer many important ways of communicating environmental issues.

Beyond lending their expertise to commemorative processes, historians have generally been reluctant to contribute to public policy. Martin Ruess and Hugh Gorman both contend that historians can make a vital impact: in the words of the latter, “in making connections, identifying trends, and providing context, historians raise the quality of decision making” (220).

The concept of “environmental justice” provides a spur to activism based on historical knowledge. Christopher H. Foreman and Martin V. Melosi explore that term, and the related concepts of “environmental equity” and “environmental racism.” The latter term emerged in the early 1980s when the Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr joined a battle of the mostly African-American residents in North Carolina against the establishment of a PCB dump near their homes. The authors argue that historians can contribute their broader understanding of context to tease out the complicated relations between race, class and gender and environmental concerns.

As in any collection of essays, some of these contributions strike the reader as more pertinent and convincing than others. Taken as a whole, these articles are all calls to action for historians, and illustrate the public roles that historians, with their own methods and training, can play. For that reason this collection of American case studies should also be of great interest to a Canadian audience.

Chris Wilson and Paul Groth, eds., *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J. B. Jackson*

LEONARD J. EVENDEN

Wilson, Chris and Paul Groth, eds. *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J. B. Jackson*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003. 395 pp., illus., cloth, US\$55, ISBN 0-520-22960-6; paper, US\$19.95, ISBN 0-520-22961-4.

This volume commemorates the inspiration, work and legacy of J. B. Jackson as a student of the cultural landscape, and provides a recent review of the field in the United States. An interdisciplinary conference to recall the memory and work of Jackson (1910–1996), and to begin a re-evaluation of his work and writings, was held at the University of New Mexico in 1998. Some three hundred persons attended, and about eighty papers were presented. Of these, several were published in *The Geographical Review* 88, no. 4 (October 1998), and reappear as part of the sixteen that are published in this volume.

Jackson was born in France and spent his early years in various parts of Europe. During the Second World War he served in Europe, working in U.S. military intelligence. Thus he was familiar with European languages and landscapes, and at an

early stage wrote about the latter. This meant that, in later years, he had a bank of memories to contrast with his observations in the United States, and he also had access to relevant European literatures. But it is his work on American cultural landscapes for which he is remembered and on which this volume focuses.

As the editors point out, the term “cultural landscape” derives from a variety of sources. Indeed, various “mentions” are made in the book about what the term means. The editors themselves indicate in the early pages that “...cultural landscapes (are) the complex sets of environments that support all human lives and all social groups” (viii). This very broad definition is not the only one that could be adduced, but it serves to point out that the field is considerably wide. They follow this by discussing the historical emergence of the term and Jackson’s role in promoting the concept as a way of seeing the world (founding and editing the journal *Landscape* being not the least of his contributions), and by outlining theoretical and methodological issues. This leads to the introductory chapter, “The Polyphony of Cultural

Landscape Study,” in which the editors further discuss Jackson’s place and contributions, and provide context for the essays that follow. No fewer than six of the sixteen authors give special credit to the editors for guidance.

Jackson spent much time in universities, but as an independent scholar he was not tied to their routines and responsibilities. On the whole, as far as human geography was concerned, he was allied more closely with the Carl Sauer/Berkeley approach than with that of others such as Richard Hartshorn at Wisconsin. In interdisciplinary contexts, he was in contact with a wide circle of academics. But, while drawing on a national group of scholars, this is a book with a strong flavour of the West, making connections with the “new western history” and demonstrating that Jackson, essentially a loner in his pursuits, nevertheless belonged to an intellectual community that was inspired by him and was fond of him personally.

Following the introduction, papers are grouped into four sections, each in turn comprising four papers. Section 1, “Evaluating J. B. Jackson,” contains engaging chapters on how Jackson “behaved” academically (“[r]ecognize consistency for the petty virtue it is. . . .” Patricia Nelson Limerick, 30); how his critique of modern architecture eschewed the importance of “high architecture” in favour of attention to the buildings of ordinary folks (Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz); and how he imparted lessons as a natural teacher in socially congenial ways, but always kept a certain distance (“[h]e was a friend and advisor. . . but he was no pal” — although he was obviously a close professional friend, Denise Scott Brown, 56). In the last chapter in this section, which focuses on evaluating Jackson’s interest in the highway landscape, the personal touch is apparent through the many references to personal correspondence, and the references to Jackson’s love of motorcycle travel (Timothy Davis). Along with Jeffrey W. Limerick’s discussion of the impact Jackson had on his own thought and life (Chapter 8), these first essays are the most intimate in the book and in places are quite moving.

The second grouping comprises essays by Peirce Lewis, Grady Clay, Jeffrey Limerick and Tracy Walker Moir-McClearn, each devoted to the general problem of cultural landscape teaching, something that Jackson is said to have excelled at. Essentially, the teaching task is to inspire students to ask questions, to search for answers and “to learn how to see.” Lewis emphasizes this last, along with the necessity to acquire the appropriate vocabulary with which to deal with the subject, and goes on to illustrate his approach by a study of a

Pennsylvania town. Clay presents his idea of using the cross-section through a city in order to read its condition and shape, and repeating the exercise at intervals to note changes. Moir-McClearn presents a closely written review of a design course based on “cultural landscape methods.” While she makes no direct reference to Jackson, this teacher’s case study of assignments concerning Baptist buildings in rural East Tennessee would certainly open the eyes of students to their surroundings.

Gwendolyn Wright begins the third grouping, “Questioning Theoretical Assumptions,” with a well illustrated and sophisticated discussion of the “vernacular” in architecture and landscape studies, thus highlighting Jackson’s own preoccupation with the vernacular. George Henderson’s essay attempts to bring “traditional” cultural landscape study of the Jackson style together with recent conceptual developments in social geographic theory, suggesting that studying the vernacular is not sufficient to solve the many problems of society today, especially with reference to shelter and the built environment. This is appropriately followed by Richard Schein’s discussion of “Normative Dimensions of Landscape,” in which he makes the case that cultural landscapes are not neutral. This is demonstrated in an especially interesting study of Lexington, Kentucky, a place where a number of cultural “edges” can be observed in its history. Lastly, Mark Fiege discusses aspects of the incongruities between the geometry of property surveys and the shapes of the natural world.

A new world of cultural landscapes is tentatively explored in the final grouping. Jessica Sewell suggests that San Francisco’s landscapes may be read for their lessons as gendered built environments (offices and department stores), linking this to the “suffragist” (suffragette) movement and thus linking the built environment with political life. (Today one would also have to consider the impact of the gay community on that city.) Louise Mozingo explores the meaning and symbolism of the lawn and open park-like settings of corporate estates and campuses, while James Rojas argues for the significance of “enacted” space (spaces between buildings) by returning to familiar haunts of East Los Angeles. Lastly, David Sloane discusses the emerging “health-care landscape” by highlighting changes in the organization of the delivery of medical treatment, right down to the level of offices and surgeries in mini-malls. Each of these points the way to new applications of cultural landscape understandings, the Jackson approach emphasizing alertness to surroundings, clear (visual) observation, penetrating questions and lucid writing.