

data before they include it in their works. Belshaw does not present his work as either exhaustive or definitive, rather he offers “A, not *The, Population History of BC*” (5). This is not a textbook on how to construct demographic studies, but rather an extensive discussion on the significance of demographic discourse using British Columbia as its focus.

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Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press. 2009).

Summer camping for children in the United States and Canada is one of features of twentieth century childrearing. Summer camps could only develop when urban-dwellers were far enough removed from “the countryside” as a site of agricultural production and hard work, and it could be seen, increasingly as a site of leisure and self-development. Historians have begun to turn their attention to these institutions both as educational sites and as prisms through which we can understand how adults expressed their own cultural goals, aspirations, and ambivalences through for children’s development away from the day-to-day life of the city.

Sharon Wall has framed this book about the summer camps of Ontario, as they expressed an increasing unease with urban life. The framework she uses throughout the book is the seeming contradiction of a rural (or wilderness) ideal as an expression of both *modernity*, and a disquiet with that very *modernity*. This disquiet, or *antimodernism* was one of the key features of all the camps she examines.

The first group whose unease with the culture they themselves had created, was the urban upper-middle class. Like in the US, well-to-do Canadians mourned the loss of rugged self-reliance among their boys, now spending so much of their time in schools, and watching their fathers go to work in offices. This group promoted summer camps with a focus on making these elite boys more rugged. (Wall mentions that with the creation of some elite summer camps, parents of boarding school boys wouldn’t have to ever be around their children for long periods of time).

Soon a second, very different group of summer camps was developed as part of the concern among social reformers with the “unhealthy” qualities of childhood among the poor and working classes. Although many of the activities were similar, the job of these “fresh air camps” was to cure working class children of socially disruptive behaviour they learned from living in the city, in families either over-worked or vulnerable to poverty, if they were not. Like the elite camps, these camps emphasized activities like canoeing and learning to swim, but also were notable for the care taken to provide good food (sometimes in short supply at home) and regular physical examinations. If the children gained weight while at camp, their experiences were deemed a success.

The two most interesting chapters, to me, were those that discussed the role of the idea, and sometimes the reality of First Nations, as well as Wall's discussion of single-sex camps and the development of gender identity. In both Canada and the US summer camps promoted a camp culture that can only be called *faux Indian-ness*. Nightly camp-fires, costumes drawn from multiple native traditions and cultures, and rituals thrown together from vastly different peoples were common at camps. In Canada, however, there were individuals from native communities either in nearby communities, or as workers at the camps. One can only guess at whether these First Nations peoples were insulted or amused by the ways their multiple cultures were appropriated to create summer camp culture. What is clear is that there was only a short historical moment between the actual expropriation of the land of Canada's indigenous peoples, and the appropriation of their cultures as play for white Canadians.

Most camps Wall discusses were single-sex camps. As the first camps were devoted to combating "softness" among urban boys, the first camps were for boys only. The increasing influence of women on boy's lives was seen as part of the problem. Even after girl's camps were organized—since both middle-class and working-class girls seemed to need a reformation of character as well, the goals of the girl's camps were not so clear. Both boys and girls camps developed strong ideologies of separateness as they became institutionalized, and each camp's gender-specificity was proclaimed as one of the strong arguments for the camp. In the single-sex camp there was always some concern with the "dangers" of homosexuality, and special steps were taken to intercept relationships that were seen as "too" close or exclusive. The girl's camps were somewhat more tolerant, and "crushes" between campers or between campers and counsellors were viewed with more amusement than fear. When "brother-sister" camps developed in close geographic proximity stern efforts at separation were often accompanied by formal efforts to inculcate "healthy" heterosexual behaviour through formal dances and other such activities. While the campers seemed not to be that enthusiastic about these efforts, there was usually enough pairing off among the counsellors to provide for some concern and much gossip. Interestingly, the Jewish camps were notable for developing coeducational experiences. Wall interprets this as having to do with promoting marriage within the community, but I think this is probably more complicated.

This book is an important examination of what has become a significant part of childhood for both Canadian and US children. Her analysis of *antimodernism* coming from deep ambivalence about urban life allows us to see many different camps and many different camp programs as part of a culture-wide project. As the history of childhood develops will be many new questions and this is an important contribution.

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