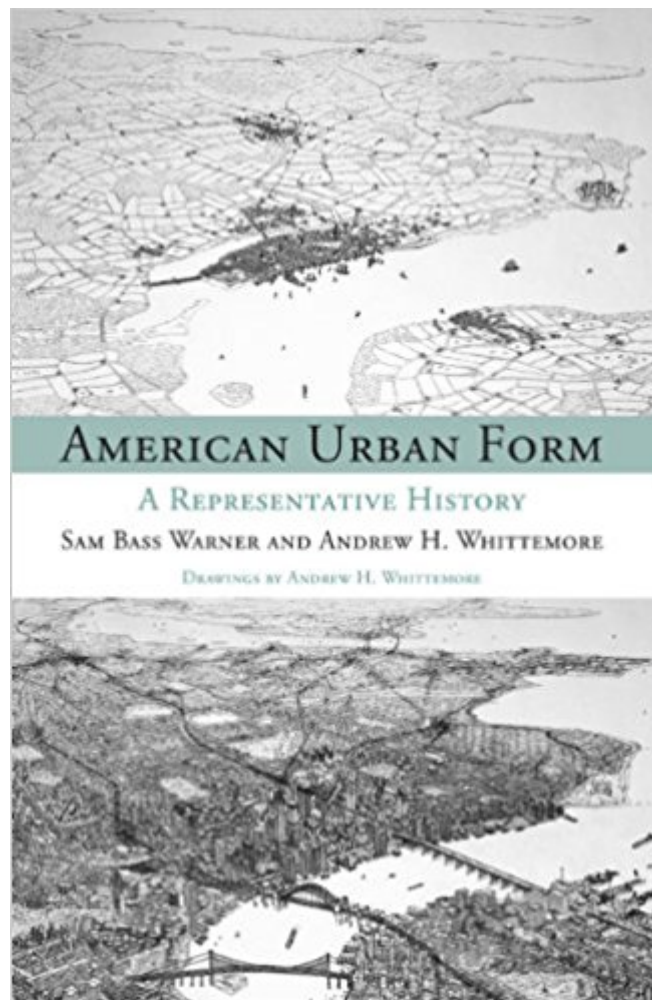




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American Urban Form: A Representative History (Urban And Industrial Environments)



Synopsis

American Urban Form -- the spaces, places, and boundaries that define city life -- has been evolving since the first settlements of colonial days. The changing patterns of houses, buildings, streets, parks, pipes and wires, wharves, railroads, highways, and airports reflect changing patterns of the social, political, and economic processes that shape the city. In this book, Sam Bass Warner and Andrew Whittemore map more than three hundred years of the American city through the evolution of urban form. They do this by offering an illustrated history of "the City" -- a hypothetical city (constructed from the histories of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York) that exemplifies the American city's transformation from village to regional metropolis. In an engaging text accompanied by Whittemore's detailed, meticulous drawings, they chart the City's changes. Planning for the future of cities, they remind us, requires an understanding of the forces that shaped the city's past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With its rich narrative and outstanding visual representation of urban form changes, this concise book succeeds in making the reader experience the American city through time and understand the forces behind its evolution. The hypothetical city becomes real through engaging and detailed accounts of events, spaces, and social interactions. (Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Professor of Urban Planning, UCLA) American Urban Form -- assaying Boston, New York, and Philadelphia --

merits acclaim. Imagining our urban past, present, and future, Sam Bass Warner and Andrew Whittemore frame their lively narrative with twenty-first century sensibilities as they plumb the near and more distant past. Assembling chronologically organized big-picture views, the co-authors explain the shaping forces which created assorted urban forms. This superb book, to its credit, features Whittemore's hand-crafted and sumptuously detailed urban landscapes, best thought of as a luminous historical exhibition. A wide range of readers -- architects, artists, planners, historians, journalists, lawyers, mayors, legislators, policy makers, and general readers -- surely will learn much from this book. (Michael H. Ebner, Lake Forest College) This book represents a fresh approach to a perennial problem -- arguably the perennial problem -- in urban history. It will surely be, as the authors intend, a very useful and enlightening book for planners and design professionals seeking to learn from a single volume the most important elements of American urban history. The range of detailed, accurate, and insightful knowledge the authors display from the colonial city to the present is simply astonishing. And I believe the book will generate much useful comment and debate among urban historians about how to conceptualize and to present our field. (Robert L. Fishman, Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning, Taubman College, University of Michigan) In this illuminating book, Warner and Whittemore have teamed to produce a richly visual, extraordinarily conceptual view of urbanization in the US. (Choice) *American Urban Form* stands out as a concise narration of the various dynamics that shaped the physical form of the American metropolis. The book is highly engaging in its technical descriptions, which are supported by excellent hand drawings by Whittemore. (Garyfalia Palaiologou *The Journal of Space Syntax*)

Sam Bass Warner, noted urban historian and Visiting Professor of Urban History at MIT, is the author of *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City* and other books. Andrew H. Whittemore is Assistant Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Texas Arlington.

This book is a very good broad overview of how many Eastern coastal cities developed in the United States. The scope is fairly large and there seems to be a nice balance of objective, distanced observation, and more of a finer grit perspective. The generic city described throughout is actually pretty brilliant as it removes many of the pre-imposed connotations that come packaged in any study of history, allowing one to look only at the broader forces that shape the city. There is likely nothing in here that will blow your mind, but the clarity of development might just change the way you read the history of some cities.

I teach an intro (University) urban course on the US city centered on urban social geographies and urban landscapes. The first three weeks present an historical geography of the the American city in its general form and process. This book is a perfect accompaniment for seeing the development of the city through those interpretive lenses.

Exactly what I needed.

What a gem for us to have on our bookshelf. We have also shared with many of our friends, too.

This is a concise book with dense information. If a prospect reader has a general knowledge about history of the U.S. and particular knowledge of NY, Boston, Philadelphia urbanism, this book would be a fantastic read; however, if not, it would be a somewhat difficult read. The subject matter of the book are Boston, NY, and Philadelphia. However, specific use of the names are excluded. Instead, author used an abstract name: "The City". The author was trying to construct a fictive, yet based on real cities, story of The City that would include universally applicable claims and principles in the eastern cities of the U.S.A. The author created "A Representative History" of eastern cities. The core value of the book is an endless search for the causation (not a specific phenomena) of what constituted eastern cities during 17 century ~ 21 century. For an international reader (particularly as a Korean audience), issues on the evolution of immigration, racism, mortgage, and housing was little bit "too" region-focused (American), causing reader's eyelids to drop from time to time; nonetheless, the book provides ample insights, causing eyes to shine in bewilderment. The underlying principle of "The City" is magnificently and succinctly told.

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