

same status. Not only did spinsters find their residential options limited, but the average value and range of goods they owned were lower. These restrictions influenced the social life of single women; without being able to offer hospitality to visitors for lack of goods, many also felt it necessary to decline invitations.

The importance and meaning of household furnishings and decoration is another important theme of *Behind Closed Doors*. Decorations, furnishings, and wallpaper colour and pattern were not merely about fashion and taste, but signified a system of understanding — the decoration of homes conveyed rank, lineage, political membership, and religious affiliation. Décor was equally about propriety, decorum, and an understanding of the family's status in the social order as it was about fashion and taste. To demonstrate a proper understanding of the family's status in the social order and the appropriate position of the room in relation to the home, each room needed to be decorated in a proper manner. Vickery shows that deciding how properly to decorate a room produced a great deal of anxiety, especially as there was little guidance to help men and women differentiate "good taste" from tastelessness. Vickery is also interested in determining the extent to which certain objects, colours and patterns, styles, and rooms were associated with one particular gender. Though certain rooms, colours, and objects were more associated with men or women, Vickery shows that both men and women were involved in selecting the architectural styles, furnishing, colour patterns, and décor that made up the home.

By examining the interiors of homes and the experiences of household residents, *Behind Closed Doors* offers readers a glimpse into the domestic lives of Georgian Britons. While seemingly a mundane backdrop to life, the home, as Vickery shows, could be a battleground or a place of solace; an indication of one's status and place in society or a humiliating site of conflict; a beautifully decorated manor or a spare, damp room in a tyrant's home. Though preconceived notions about men's and women's responsibilities, objects, and styles existed, there were rarely clear lines of demarcation because both feminine and masculine tastes and preferences determined the interiors of homes. Vickery shows that gender and status influenced individuals' domestic lives and also makes an impressive case for why decorations, furnishings, and the interiors of homes are important.

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WALL, Sharon — *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920–1955*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010. Pp. 369.

Sharon Wall's recent history of the summer camp movement in Ontario may leave the reader with difficulty remembering the correct title — is it *The Nurture of Nature* or *The Nature of Nurture*? After reading Wall's study the reader will learn that the title could, in fact, be either. *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood,*

Anitmodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920–1955 examines both the ways in which being “in nature” was seen as beneficial to an increasingly urban population and the ways in which understandings of child development and the purpose of childhood changed during this period. The latter aspect is the focus of this review. Although Wall’s study is published by the “Nature/History/Society” series of the University of British Columbia Press, it has as much to offer to historians of childhood and youth as it does to environmental scholars. Wall’s past research focuses mainly on young people’s cultures and experiences; “nature” here provides a useful lens through which to examine an increasingly common and influential childhood experience during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

In six chapters, Wall reveals the complex ties between nature and childhood manifest in Ontario’s fledgling camping movement. Wall focuses most of her narrative on elite private camps and non-profit “Fresh Air” camps, but also includes church-run camps such as the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) programme. She limits her study to Ontario, where, she contends, Canada’s camping movement was most active in the years between the First and Second World Wars. Her analysis is based on camp archives, the personal papers of camp directors, and published literature, as well as 32 interviews with former campers. The interviews corroborate Wall’s arguments and provide colourful anecdotes, but this is not an oral history of campers’ experiences. Wall is much more interested in camp directors’ ideas and actions and, specifically, in the ways that camps reproduced a class-based social hierarchy. Ontario’s camp movement, she insists, was “fundamentally class-segregated” (p. 64).

Wall demonstrates clearly that the division between private and charity camps was more significant than one’s ability to pay fees. Wealth shaped camps’ locations, size, architecture, amenities, staff, programmes, and, ultimately, their impact. For example, Wall demonstrates convincingly that conceptions of nature were shaped by classist assumptions. Private camps, staffed and run mainly by the camp’s alumni, were designed to give their clients a much more untamed view of nature than charity-based camps. Private campers learned that “wilderness” was waiting to be conquered; it was a commodity to be consumed. Their camps’ locations, far from any centre of habitation, gave them elite status. Only wealthy children could pay to get there (usually by train, then bus, then boat), and they usually stayed at camp for the entire school holiday period.

On the other hand, charity camps were run by middle-class do-gooders who saw their working-class clients as already sufficiently “wild” and perhaps in need of a little taming. Fresh air camps, as they were otherwise known, were by necessity located close to the city, but their rural, idyllic settings also promoted a more middle-class appreciation of cultivated nature than the isolated forests and lakes of private camps. The wealthier children in private camps were “roughing it,” while the poorer children in charity camps often found better conditions at camp — indoor plumbing, for example — than they had at home.

Wall provides sufficient evidence to suggest that class shaped campers’ experiences as much as — or more than — gendered or racial ideologies. While camp

programming differed for girls and boys at all camps in the interwar years, the dichotomy between programming at private camps versus fresh air camps was greater. For example, camp directors sought to “make men” out of their male clients. At private camps, this meant exposing boys to activities that would make them physically tough and morally refined. In a homo-social and secluded environment, activities such as swimming, fishing, and canoe-tripping were expected to foster individuality, spirituality, and leadership in boys from wealthy families.

By contrast, at fresh air camps, organizers believed that they needed in fact to curb working-class boys’ rough tendencies. At camp, boys from working-class families could escape the confines of the city and play in the outdoors like their wealthier peers; however, instead of canoeing, fresh air campers were taught skills such as leather work and woodworking — skills perceived by their middle-class overseers as practical for obtaining work as labourers in the future. Furthermore, middle-class fresh air camp organizers sought to impart the value of personal hygiene, nutrition, and table manners on their urban-dwelling charges, attributes private camp leaders assumed their campers had already acquired at home or in private schools.

While girls at all camps were engaged in activities considered more feminine — such as archery, knitting, dancing, and dramatics — girls at private camps still went on canoe trips, while their fresh-air counterparts did not. Private camp directors had resources that allowed them to challenge the traditional feminine ideal more than their non-profit counterparts. Fresh air camp organizers were more concerned about guarding the femininity and chastity of young women they considered “at risk” from the temptations of an urban consumer culture. While prevailing gender roles affected daily life at camp, campers’ activities also worked to reinforce class divisions.

Wall’s overall argument is strong, but her final conclusions could be more substantial. After such an engaging analysis of camp leaders’ motivations and actions, reading in Wall’s second-last paragraph that her “findings, in the main, corroborate those of American scholars of the summer camp” is anti-climactic, even if true. The reader may find Wall’s statement that camps were both a product of, and a reaction to, the conditions of modern life less than novel. More originally, Wall’s study demonstrates how summer camps emerged from intersecting notions of childrearing and leisure. More emphasis on these conclusions would have strengthened the ending.

This is a minor fault in an otherwise strong and well-written narrative. Wall has shed much-needed light on the understudied history of Ontario’s more privileged children and has explored the role of camps in reproducing class hierarchies. For this reason, among others, her study will provoke discussion, debate, and further research.

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