

O B A M A ' S C I T I E S

**SEMINAR SUMMER TERM 2011
BAUHAUS UNIVERSITY WEIMAR**

Dr. Frank Eckardt and Jennifer Paul.

Lecture Presentation April 11, 2011:

T H E A M E R I C A N C I T Y

HISTORY AND URBAN PLANNING IN THE USA

Oswald W. Grube

L E C T U R E S C R I P T

**Appendix and Notes with bibliography following on Page 42
after the lecture script.**

THE AMERICAN CITY.

PART I : History of the American City

**PART II: American metropolitan areas in the
20th Century and today**

**PART III: American urban areas at the
beginning of the 21st Century**

INTRODUCTION

When dealing with processes of urban planning, we have to consider a number of approaches:

- the historical view;
- the geographical view;
- the sociological view;
- the formal-aesthetic approach.

A synthesis of all these aspects is required.

Aside from rational and economic factors, also socio-cultural traditions as well as myths and emotional factors deserve deliberation.

Urbanism today, more than ever, is not a specialized science but in need of an approach across faculty lines. This is the reason why it is so fascinating and at the same time so hard to deal with.

PART I : The History of the American City.

This chapter contains four parts:

General differences and specifics; foremost the low age of American cities;

The geometric footprint of the American City – the 'Grid Iron',

Case stories illustrating the development of selected North American cities,

Where the first suburbs sprang up.

Specifics of American cities, setting them apart from European cities.

The American City is young!

Beginning in the middle of the 16th Century, and until the beginning of the 17th Century, settlers founded a number of unconnected cities in the area of what now constitutes the United States of America.

The first of those were:

- 1565 – Fort St. Augustine on the East Coast of Florida – is a Spanish settlement and constitutes the oldest white foundation. Two even older foundations by Spaniards in Pensacola and on the Fort Caroline site of what is now Jacksonville, were given up for St. Augustine.
- 1608 – the French settlement of Quebec is established.
- 1609 – Santa Fe in what now is the State of New Mexico is founded by Mexican settlers.
- 1620 – the famous 'Pilgrim Fathers' set foot on American territory near Plymouth, Massachusetts and begin to found towns in New England.
- At the same time Dutch and Swedish seafarers land on the coast south of the Pilgrim Fathers. Nieuw Amsterdam – which later became New York – was founded by them.

The Middle West and the West of the continent was substantially settled by white immigrants only during the 19th Century.

Obviously the history of American cities is very young compared to European and Asian cities. But what appears to have been a period of connected settlement activity was, in fact, a series of isolated developments taking place at the same time. There were almost no roads on the continent, due to Indian attacks and to the wilderness of the countryside. Therefore little communication existed between the new towns and villages along the East coast.

Differences and characteristics.

North America never had fortified cities as we know them in European history. However, at the time the first settlements took place, palisade fences were built to fend off Indian attacks. New Orleans is such a case in point. And

the name 'Wall Street' in New York City points to the location of such a fence erected by the Dutch.

Located in a similar geographic and scenic context as northern European cities, the first settlements in New England show similarities with European, specifically English, villages and towns. These settlements were founded before the '*Land Ordinance*' of 1785 went into effect, which resulted in regular parceling of most of the North American land area. Alas, in the settlements of New England topography was still taken into account as had always been the case in Europe.

Squares were not common elements of the foundations – and in the cases where they were, they did not serve trade but administrative purposes such as '*Courthouse Squares*' or '*Greens*' like in England. It is remarkable that up to 1830 (!) squares, where they existed, were used as pasture grounds. They were attributed an inferior importance in the new cities. This is, of-course, totally different from the uses European town squares and piazzas always had. The reason for this difference is found in the remarkably different political structure of American society from the very beginning of settlement activity. Only from about 1800 '*Residential Squares*', enclosed by town residences, took shape (a good example is Washington Square in NYC, described by Henry James as the prototypical myth of the city and its social fabric at that time). From about 1850 linear '*Main Streets*' assumed the function of the square as a place of trade. Those later became part of the '*Central Business District*' (CBD). Only in the period of roughly 1880 to 1910, '*Civic Centers*' in the sense of places serving public functions such as Federal and State Offices, Court Houses, Central Post Offices or Main Libraries developed.

Another characteristic of American cities is, they never developed a relationship with recreational green spaces on the banks of rivers or on the shores of lakes. Far into the 20th Century bodies of water served exclusively commercial and transportation purposes. Since the 19th Century new towns in America – as opposed to older European cities – have served predominantly non-agrarian functions, i.e. trade and industry. Almost all American cities were established in the emerging industrial age, based in the Midwest and West on the development of railroads and on boat traffic on rivers and on the Great Lakes. In fact, many of the settlements owe their very existence the advent of railroads or canals. Dense industrial districts developed along railroad tracks, close to the heart of the city, where cheap labor was available.

When those industries became obsolete in the later 20th Century, these areas became 'Rust Belts', and became industrial wastelands. Finally slums took over. By the time heavy industry became unprofitable, the educated and motivated sectors of the workforce moved out to the suburbs, where new jobs were created in new white-collar industries – a process called 'upward mobility', fuelled to a great extent by the never-ending influx of immigrants from all over the world. The less successful and less mobile workforce, as well as racial minorities and unskilled immigrants, continue to constitute the nucleus of the slums to this day.

The geometric footprint of American cities – the 'Grid Iron'.

A common element of American cities – but not necessarily of newer suburbs - is the chessboard pattern of the rectangular grid iron.

Cities based on such grids can be found at least since the 3rd Century B.C. and were common in Roman cities, f.e. Carthago in North Africa. An advantage of this scheme is easy orientation, a disadvantage is the absence of functional distinctions. Though New England generally did not follow this pattern, early adaptations appear f.e. in 1637 in central New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1681 the city of Philadelphia, founded by Quakers, was laid out on a strict grid system, as was New Orleans, founded by French and Spanish settlers in 1718. Colonization by immigrants from Northern Europe was strongly influenced by the English edition of '*Vitruvius Britannicus*', published 1715 to 1725. According to that precept, Savannah, Georgia, was founded in 1733; Louisville, Kentucky, in 1778, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1784.

As was mentioned above, after the '*Land Ordinance*' of 1785 the entire West of the US, - that includes all states west of New England, called 'Public Land States' – were organized on a square-mile grid at a right angle to the compass. This was possible, because the land distributed to the settlers was all 'owned' by the public domain (in disregard of Indian hereditary rights, of-course!).

Often, at intersections of this square-mile grid pattern, settlements began to spring up, and only in a minority of cases topography became a factor in the layout of settlements. In cities like San Francisco and Seattle, roads pass up and down hills in a straight line regardless of steep grades – the famous Cable Car in San Francisco is owed to this situation. However, rivers, lakes or railroad gradients led to separate grids at an angle from each other. Thus we find a variety of grids with different orientations in many US cities.

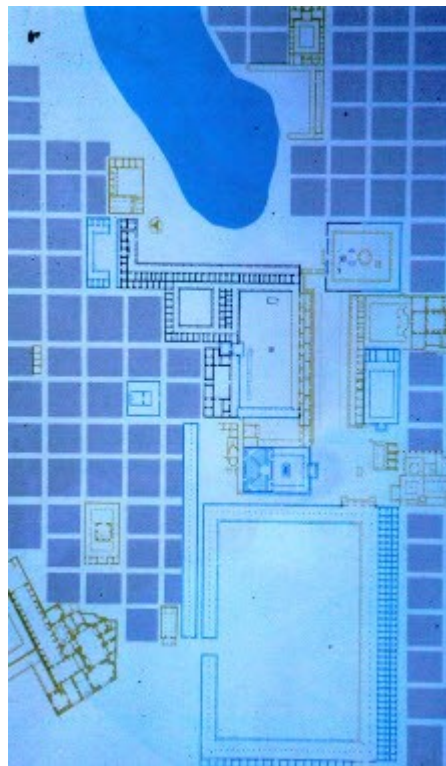
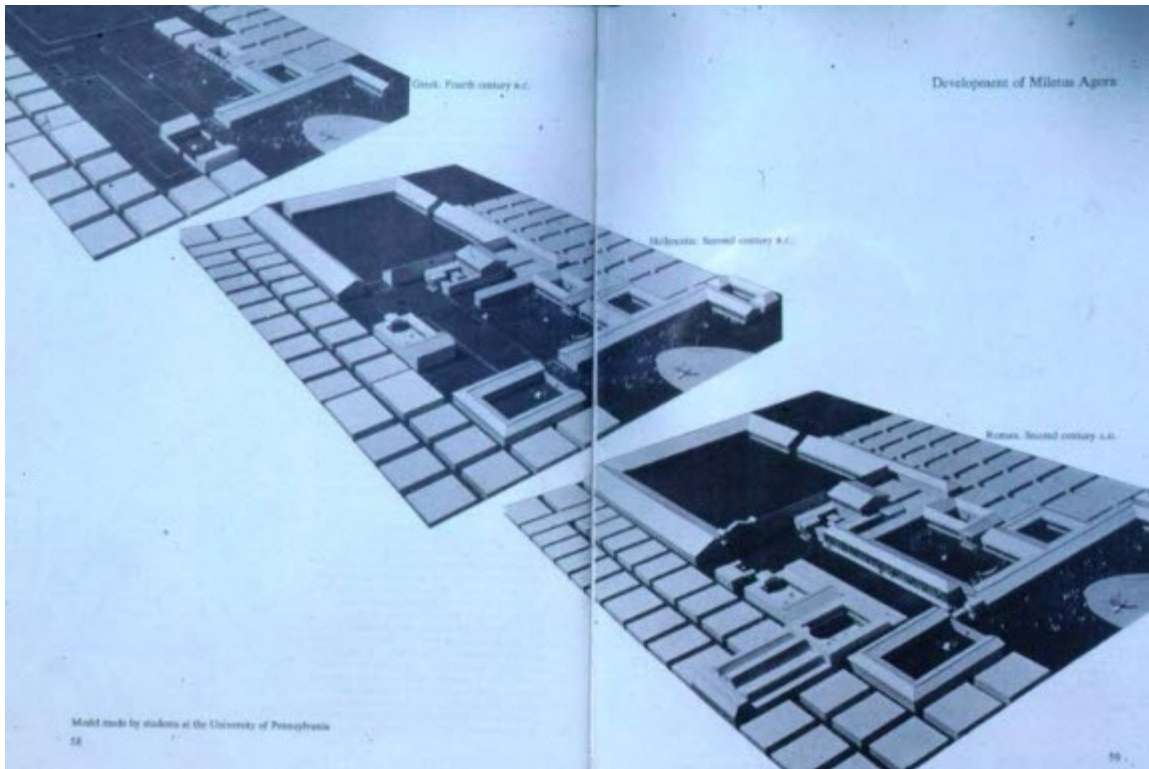
As executed, grids mostly have not a square but a rectangular shape. Grid sectors are subdivided by secondary service alleys serving important infrastructure functions. In most cases, the length of a grid block is about 300

feet, and about 12 blocks form a square mile sector. In exceptional locations, diagonals were introduced as a variation of the geometric pattern.

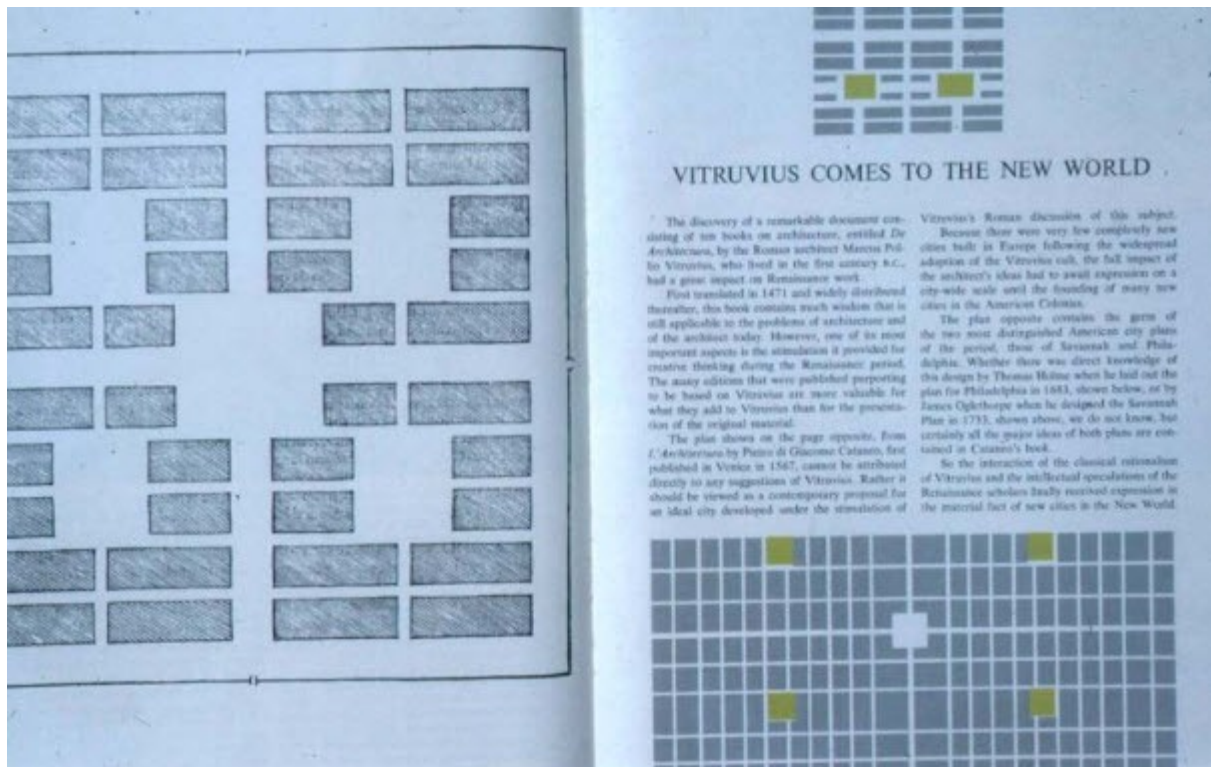
The street grid might be called the '*genetic code*' of the American city. This pattern guarantees that each point inside the grid is anonymous and variable. There are no prominent or exceptional positions. No palace, no cathedral is at the end of a dramatically accentuated axis – because such major axes do not exist. This fact is underlined by numbered streets, resembling DNA codes and makes New York City so different from Paris, France - a city based on a hierarchy of outstanding public buildings and spaces. As Robert Campbell FAIA remarked (AR 12/2003), '*Everything is possible on the grid, and that constitutes its magic*'. The absence of hierarchical structures on the grid pattern simplifies change and makes all kinds of variations possible: at all points within the limits of the grid pattern, all sorts of buildings and of architectural expressions become possible. Christian Norberg-Schultz noted that a building that cannot be emphasized by its location on the city map must be emphasized by its architecture. Maybe here is the reason why citizens of Chicago or New York City identify so strongly with exceptional architecture in their cities. Each point inside the grid can accommodate exceptional size or distinction.

At the base of this egalitarian system is the fundamental American belief, expressed by the Founding Fathers, in democracy and in unlimited chances for every individual, independently of origin and ethnicity. The only constant factor in the American city is the grid, everything else is subject to permanent change. Quoting Christian Norberg-Schultz again, '*the American city is expressed as an incessant series of happenings; as a never-resting process that engages and fascinates.*'

Pictures 1, 2 – Agora of Milet. Hellenistic Greece >>>



Picture 3 – 'Virtuvius Comes to the New World' >>>



Planning histories of selected American cities.

Settlements in New England, such as Hartford, Connecticut, and Boston, Massachusetts, were founded by Puritan immigrants.

Boston, Massachusetts,

located on a Massachusetts peninsula, was founded in 1630. Initially roads followed the irregular outlines of previous settlers and of existing Indian (Native American) pathways. A central square with a Prayer House was commonly at the center of the settlements. In Boston, called the 'Boston Commons', this became the best known square of all early American settlements, and yet it was used as a pasture for 200 years. Hard to imagine - until 1830 what was to become the intellectual center of North America, next to Harvard University, was home to grazing cows. In 1722 the map of Boston depicts irregular low developments and a few boat landings, 'wharfs', in the harbor area. While the city grew substantially in the first century since its founding, the core retained its early, unplanned 'organic' structure, untypical for most other American cities, to this day.

Pictures 4,5 – Hartford, Conn.>>>



1. Map of Hartford, 1869. (The park, centrally located, was not to be named for Horace Binckel for several years.)

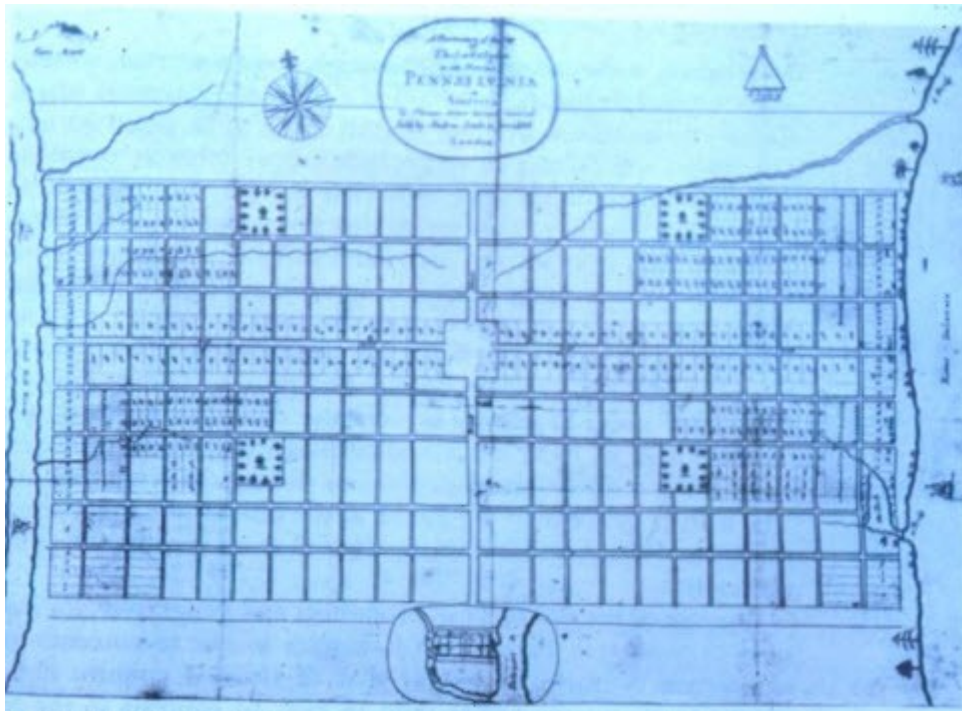
Picture 6 - Boston



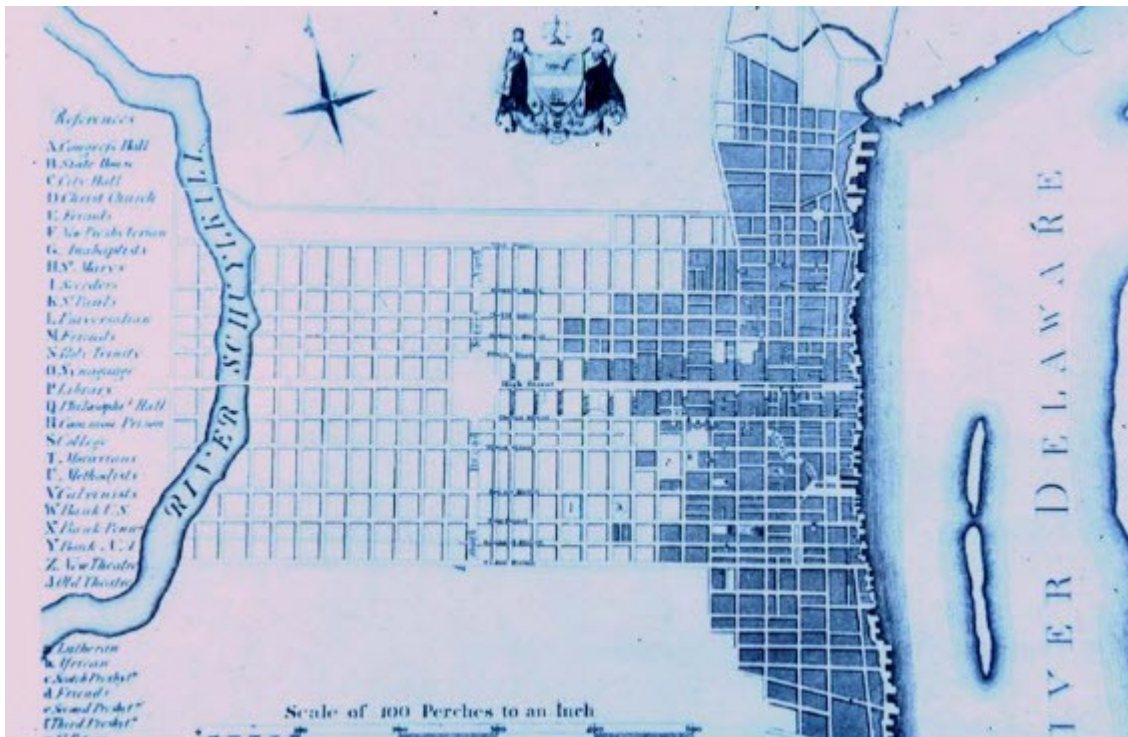
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,

was founded in 1681 'with God's Help' by Quakers, who called it the '*City of Brotherly Love*' (in Greek '*Philadelphia*'). The founding fathers of this city, foremost William Penn, laid the city plan out on a rectangular grid between the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers. They expected a steady growth of population in this area, with public buildings to be located on a major square in the center. The elite of the city was expected to live on four minor squares near the center. But as it turned out, the city developed mostly on the bank of the Delaware River and along the central Market Street axis. From 1790, after ratification of the US Constitution, to 1800, Philadelphia, - then the largest City in North America, and geographical center of the 13 American colonies - served as capital of the US. Only 150 years after the founding of the city did its development finally reach the Schuylkill River – according to the old masterplan.

Pictures 7, 8 – Philadelphia >>>



9. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, plan as laid out by Thomas Holme according to instructions from William Penn. 1682.

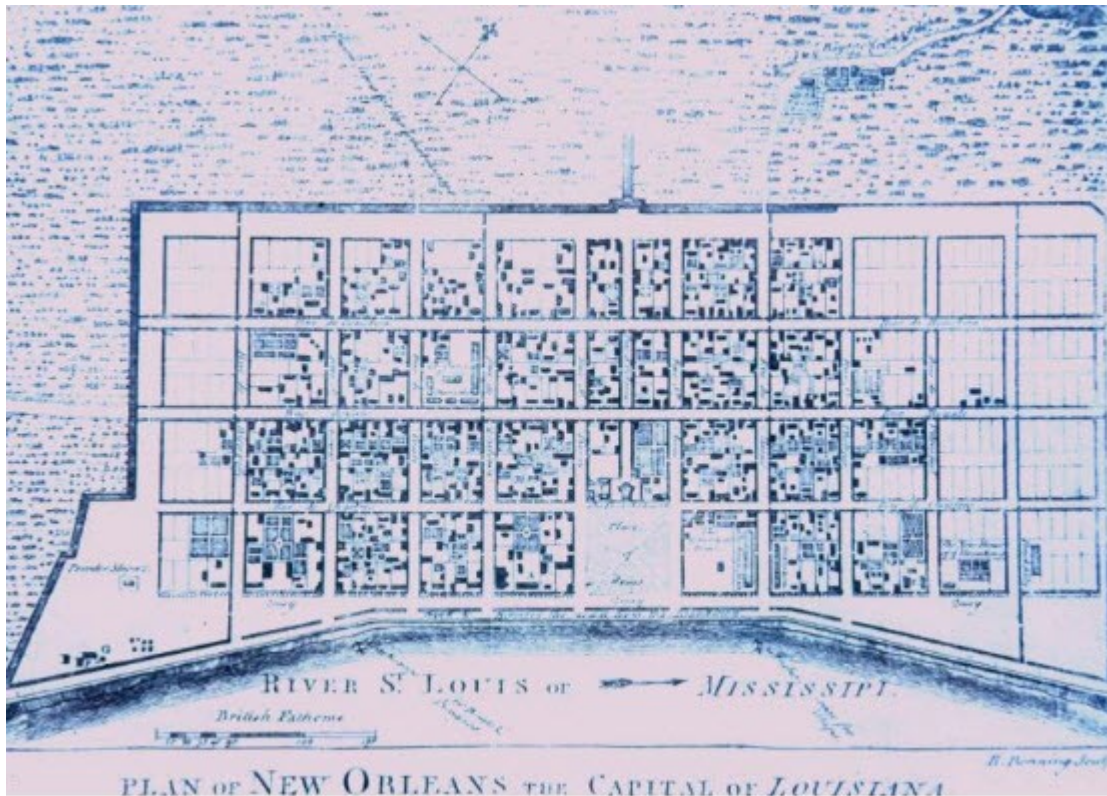


Pictures 9, 10 – Philadelphia >>>



New Orleans, Louisiana, developed after 1718 as a French and Spanish settlement in the middle of swamps on the Mississippi River. The city's main square with its political

power centers, - the Cathedral, the City Hall and the prison, flanked by storage sheds and housing for civil servants, - is facing the river. As there was no danger of attacks from the swamps in the back of the new settlement, no fortification, except for a palisade fence, was deemed necessary.

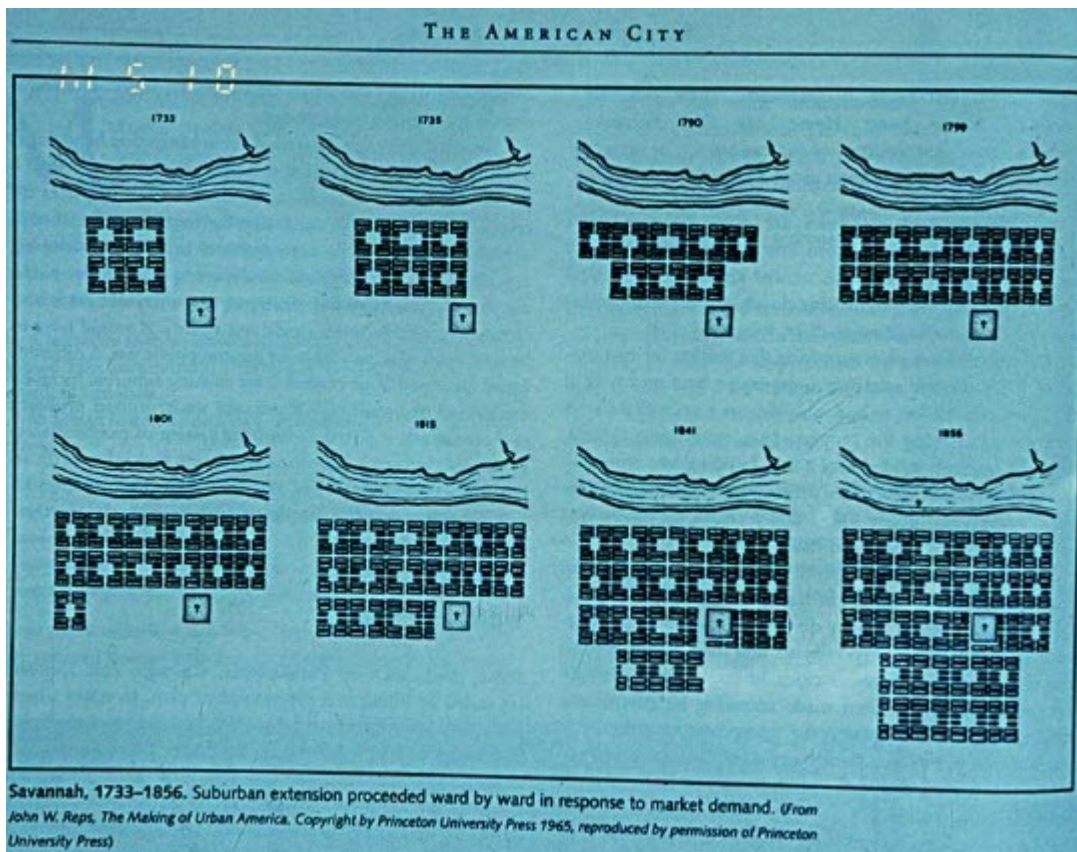
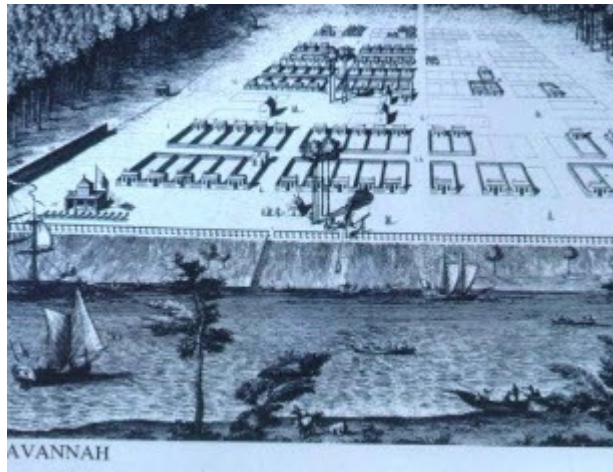


Picture 11 – New Orleans

Savannah, Georgia,

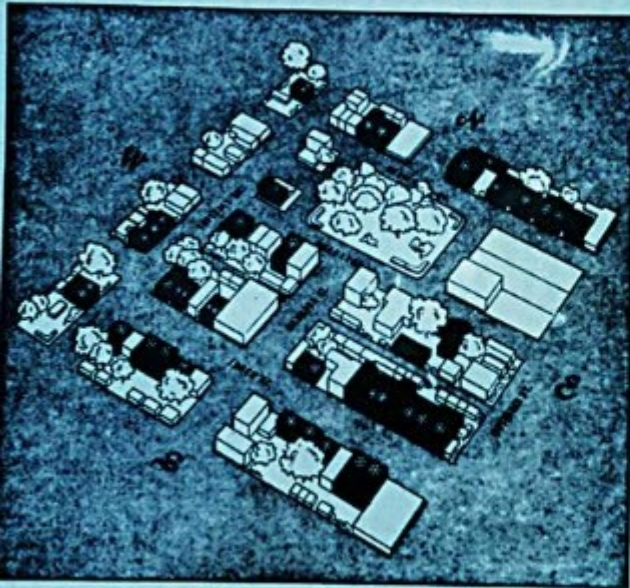
was founded in 1733 by James Edward Oglethorpe, who laid it out on a prototypical rectangular grid pattern. The purpose of this new town was to serve as a place where English refugees, who had not paid outstanding dues in their homeland, were sent to. Similar to Philadelphia, the grid system is interrupted by squares. In 1851 about 14,000 inhabitants lived in 24 sectors of the grid. Today historic preservation battles the decay of sectors of the original grid.

Pictures 12, 13 – Savannah, Ga.>>>



Picture 14 – Savannah, Ga.>>>

PULASKI SQUARE - JONES STREET



■ 46 Buildings stabilized (restored or in process)
* 38 Units reclaimed through Historic Savannah

... it was a 13-acre deteriorating, near-slum neighborhood. It is now being reclaimed.

46 buildings have been stabilized . . .

38 were reclaimed by Historic Savannah

28 of the 38 through direct purchase for resale

another 10 influenced by Historic Savannah's efforts since the program's inception.

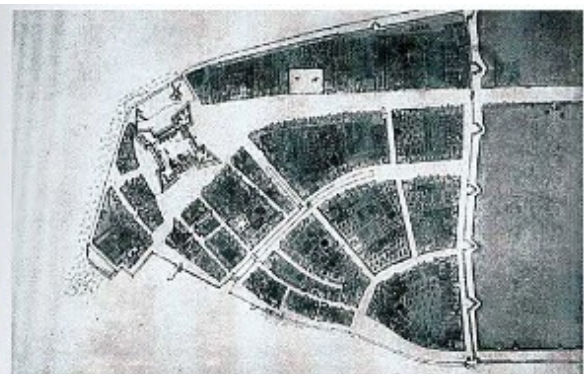
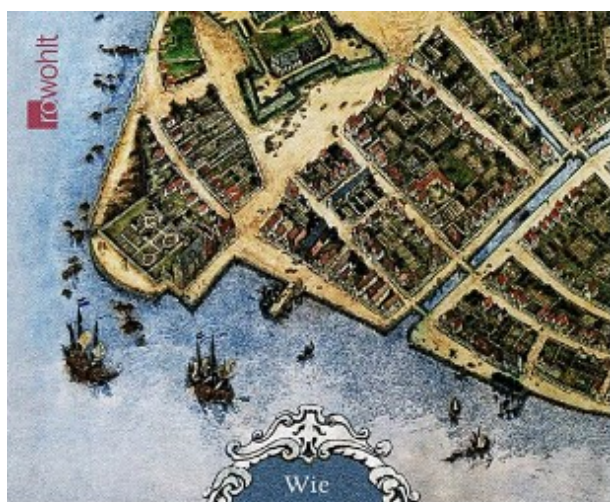
01 5 14

Washington, D.C.,

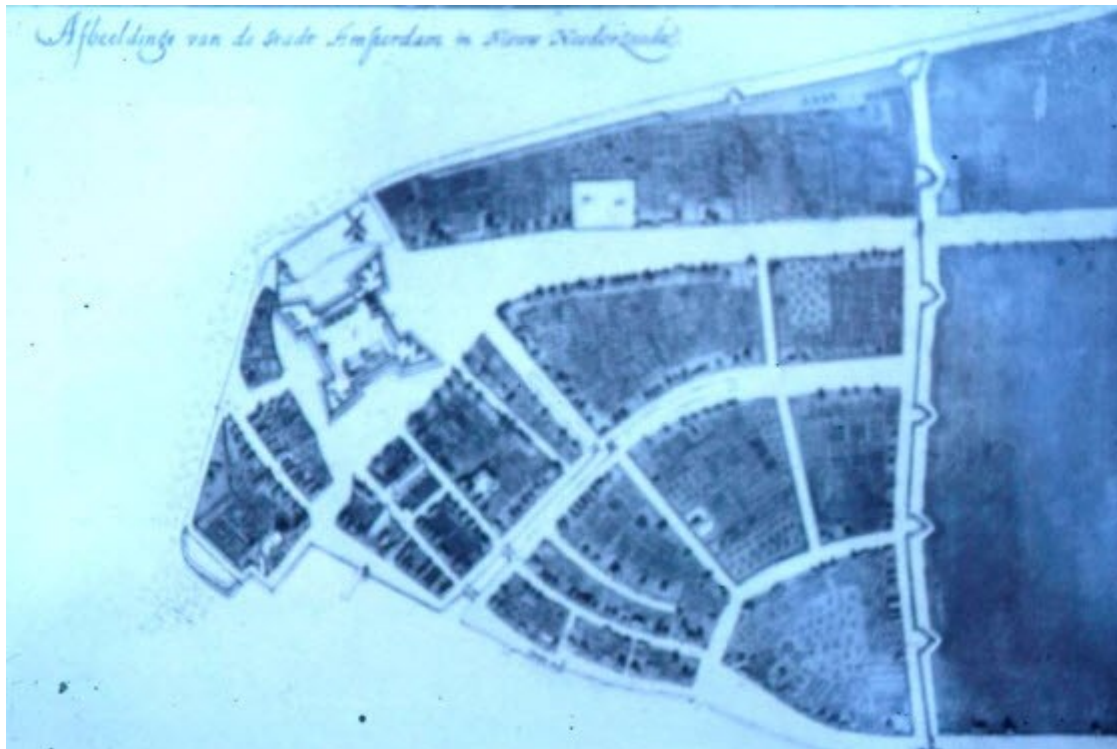
the Capital of the United States, follows a plan by Pierre L'Enfant, who first inspected the swampy area on the Potomac River in 1791. L'Enfant, a French military engineer who had been an advisor to George Washington during the Civil War, chose two low hills to respectively situate the executive and the legislative functions of the new seat of the government of the United States. He connected these points with a wide esplanade, and on a right angle to this axis he laid out a vast green space stretching down towards the river. Pennsylvania Avenue forms the connection between the hills and is at the same time the starting point for diagonal streets. L'Enfant planned monuments in baroque manner at the intersections of this system of streets. He was familiar with Versailles and with the Tuilleries Gardens in Paris. His intention was to combine these precepts with the rectangular grid system that had become common in America. The generous scale of L'Enfant's plan pointed to the future. Yet, his design – and the city itself - remained on paper for a long time while ambitions to make Washington the US Capital were not realized. Up to 1870 there were discussions about moving the US Capital out into the Midwest . And it was not before 1850 that Andrew Jackson Downing, who collaborated with landscape architects Calvert Vaux, made a proposal for the design of the vast space L'Enfant had set aside, to create Washington Mall as the nation's central green mall.

New York City, New York,

was founded by Dutch settlers about 1624, and at that time had roughly 500 inhabitants who spoke no less than 18 different languages. The settlement was ceded to the British soon afterwards, in 1674. According to Verena Lueken, '*complicated routes of transportation connected the parts of town*'. A map of 1767 still shows the irregular network of roads the Dutch had laid out, as well as unplanned extensions later English settlers had created in the Northeastern part. Even at that time it had been determined by law that 'all land between low and high tide' was to be owned by the city, which then could establish harbor facilities on public land – or, as today, could use landfill from the Hudson River for the Westside Promenade. Alas, in the 19th Century, private commercial interest began to dominate public interest. With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 began an era of economic expansion into the hinterland, and New York City quickly gained the status of the richest and most influential city in the US. A plan drawn up for New York in 1811 reveals a rather primitive, purely commercial 'frontier mentality'. It was fittingly deemed 'plain and simple'. This plan recklessly ignored the natural topography of the Manhattan peninsula, and its gigantic goal was to attract 400.000 inhabitants. They were to dwell in small homes arranged on a rigorous grid pattern. Fortunately, the subsequent development of New York City was not entirely determined by this plan. Following private initiatives, a number of small parks were created. Around 1850 a circle of educated businessmen formed, which in 1857 succeeded in mitigating this unfortunate plan on the upper peninsula to a certain extent with a large green area, called C.P.



20) Der Plan von Neu Amsterdam aus dem Jahr 1660 ist ein optischer Beweis für das, was van der Doncks Mission bei der Regierung bewirkte. Sieben Jahre nachdem Manhattan dank seiner Bemühungen eine Stadtregierung erhalten hatte, zeigt der Plan eine wohlorganisierte Stadt mit regelmäßig angelegten Straßen und Parzellen, Befestigungsanlagen und einem Kanal. Dank einer Volkszählung, die um diese Zeit stattfand, kennen wir die Bewohner aller 342 Gebäude. Dem Wall im Norden (rechts) verdankt die Wall Street ihren Namen, und die breite Straße, die vom Fort aus nach Norden führt, wurde zum Broadway. So unwahrscheinlich es auch klingen mag – der Plan wurde Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts in einem Medici-Palast in Florenz entdeckt.



17) Oben: Die düstere Ansicht von Neu Amsterdam, die van der Donck der niederländischen Regierung präsentierte, um sie zur Übernahme der Kolonie zu bewegen. Unten: Der Stich, der auf dem früheren Bild basiert, stellt die Stadt in einem weitaus besseren Licht dar und wurde von van der Donck publiziert, um Siedler zur Auswanderung in die Kolonie zu bewegen.

Pictures 17, 18, 19 – New York City (resp. 'Nieuw Amsterdam')



New York, New York, plan of 1767.



Pictures 21, 22 – New York (above: Central Park 'C.P.')

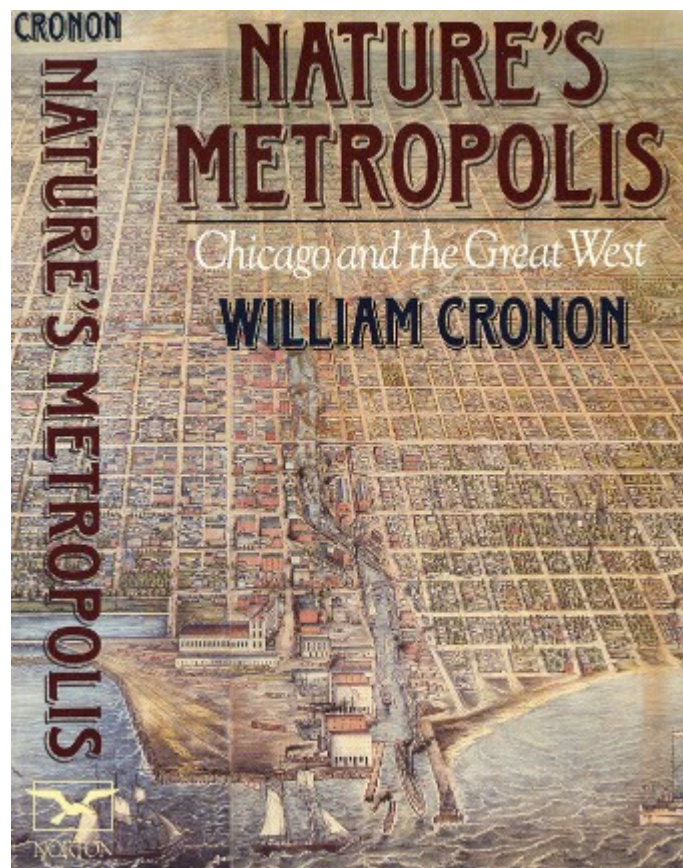
The development of the City of Chicago, Illinois,

facing Lake Michigan, has been extensively presented in 1971 in an exhibition and catalogue titled 'One Hundred Years of Architecture in Chicago – Continuity of Structure and Form'. (*This exhibit, and the material it is based on, have been donated to Bauhaus University Weimar in 1998. It can be accessed in the university archives*).

In many ways the history of Chicago is symptomatic of the history of American cities in general. In his fundamental work 'Nature's Metropolis', William Cronon approaches Chicago's development process in the 19th Century with an innovative system of sociological analysis, based essentially on sustainability. Determining factor for the development of the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Sierra Nevada was the advent of railroads. Their network started weaving together grain elevators, lumber yards, stockyards and traders, stock exchanges as well as speculators and propagandists. Chicago was at its center. In the time between the Civil War and the turn of the 20th Century Chicago relied on technical and innovative superiority as well as on trade in this part of the Midwest, which had decisive consequences for the entire region and its ecology. It determined both the city's development and its appearance. As we know, all American cities are industrial cities of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Their structure and their history, their spacial functions and experiences, cannot be compared with the development of European cities. Important features of the young American cities are function and dynamic development processes, not the more static urban spaces common in Europe. Centrality in American cities is of a different character. In America, centrality is derived from traffic and transit, relying on railroad junctions – and is not, as in Europe, based on administrative functions. Town maps in 19th Century America, both of bigger and smaller cities, are characterized by the dynamic of railroad transportation. In later days, when motor traffic took over, infinite strip developments and the Federal Interstate Highway system of the 50ies and 60ies became dominant factors. These are fundamental factors to understand the character of the American City.

Daniel Hudson Burnham's famous 1906 Plan of Chicago was the first attempt to discipline the unlimited rule of the endless grid with a structure that took notice of the fact that Chicago faces Lake Michigan. Previously Burnham had proposed similar plans for Cleveland, and, in 1905, for San Francisco. After the Great Fire of 1871 Chicago had enormously expanded. Burnham proposed to concentrate traffic patterns and to create an efficient economic and cultural center. His most far-reaching idea was to move railroads and industry away from the lake shore, and to convert this land into a continuous linear park,

'forever free and open'. His 'Plan for Chicago' was inspired in its design features by the conservative City Beautiful Movement and by the 1893 'White City' World Exhibition. It was published in 1909. „Make no little plans.“, Burnham's famous dictum goes, „They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die“ ('Stadtvisionen', p.130). Since then, many of his prophetic planning ideas have been realized step by step. To this day there is a 'Chicago Plan Commission' overlooking the continuing implementation of the original planning guidelines.



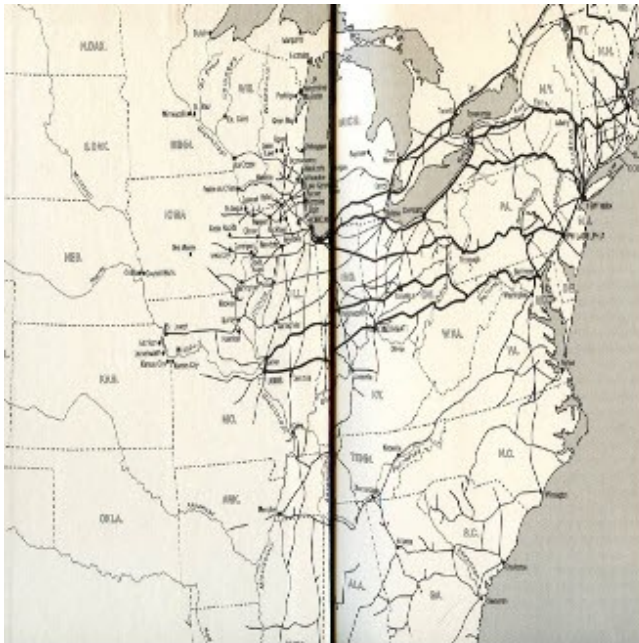
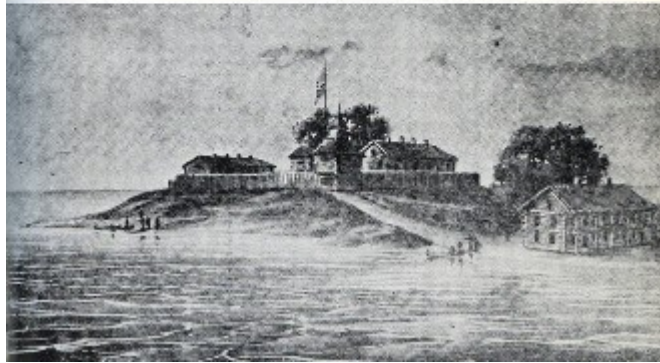
Picture 23 – Chicago, 'Nature's Metropolis'

Pictures 24, 25 (below) – Chicago, 19th Century

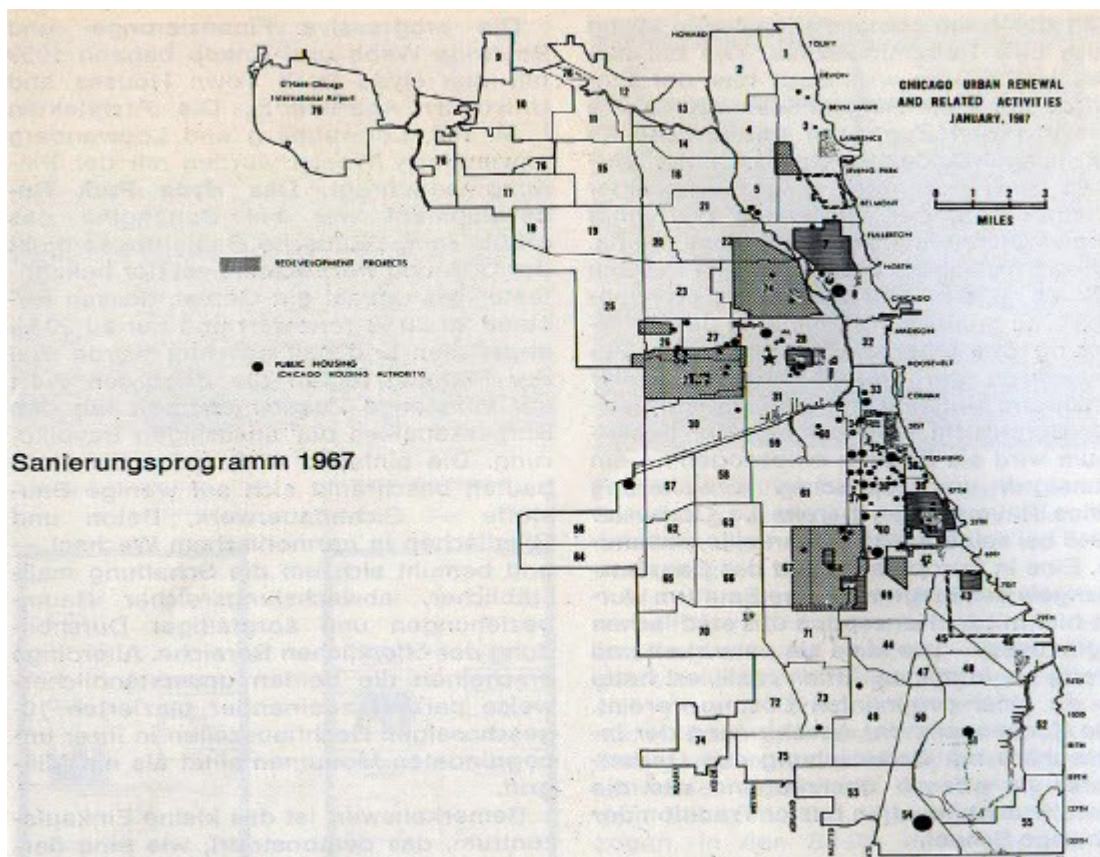
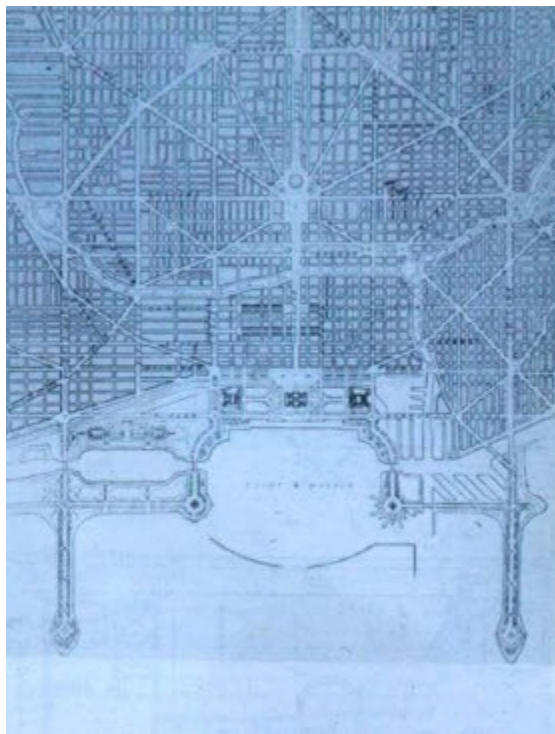


Indians with a load of beaver skins portage across Mud Lake to the little river they named Checagou. (Photo, Chicago Department of Development & Planning.)

Fort Dearborn, built in 1803 on the south bank of the Chicago River mouth, offered refuge to settlers during Indian uprisings. (Photo, Chicago Historical Society.)



Jens Permyer's bird's-eye view of Chicago in 1852. This detail from the famous bird's-eye view shows the tracks of the Illinois Central Railroad, in the left foreground, leading to two large grain elevators at the mouth of the Chicago River. Ships line the main branch of the river, loading and unloading in the warehouse and business district, which is clearly visible as the line of larger buildings on the south bank. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



Pictures 26, 27 – Chicago. Burnham Plan and Urban Renewal 1967

(Note by the author: for further Pictures/Slides please consult the Power Point Presentation available for this lecture/presentation!)

The first suburbs that developed outside cities.

Brooklyn Heights

may perhaps be called the first American 'suburb'. Beginning in 1819, lots for residential use were sold in what at that time was the agrarian hinterland of New York. Only about 1.000 people lived there, while Manhattan, across the East River, already had a population of 123.000. From about 1814 a steamboat ferry served Brooklyn from Manhattan with an eight minute ride. As Brooklyn offers great views of Manhattan, after a short while Brooklyn Heights developed into a residential suburb with broad streets, long blocks, and lots about 25 feet wide. Today this is a highly preserved and expensive historical district, which later on became part of the New York Borough of Brooklyn, which has several million inhabitants.

Riverside, Illinois,

situated about 7 miles southwest of Chicago, became the most influential early suburban development. It was planned by the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his office of Olmsted & Vaux, who had previously designed Central Park in New York and Chicago's World Fair of 1893, where now Midway Plaisance is. When Burlington Railroad had connected the mostly plain territory on the Des Plaines River with Chicago, this encouraged commuters to move out from the dense city. In 1868 Olmsted conceived Riverside as a romantic recreational concept for a low-density suburb with winding roads, which were depressed in order not to disturb views. Fortunately most of Olmsted's Riverside concept could be realized in a short period, and this development became a prototype for many other garden suburbs in the US to this day. Not only the river banks but almost a quarter of the land were reserved for public uses. Today Riverside with its generous residences, many of them designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, is one of the established and most expensive suburbs of Chicago. The comparison of the densely populated and highly built-up city core with this green oasis but a short distance away is indeed striking.

In later years American suburban planning became predominantly influenced by the ideas of *Ebenzer Howard*, an English lawyer's assistant, who had published what became a referential volume in 1898, called '*Garden Cities of Tomorrow*'.

PART II :

American metropolitan areas in the 20th Century and today.

Chapters:

- Why is urban culture in the US and in Europe headed in different directions?
- Urban renewal in metropolitan areas;
- The development of American inner cities and their revitalization; skyscrapers are indispensable.

Why is urban culture in America and in Europe headed in different directions?

The first part of this script in Part I has outlined the history of the North American city in Part I has outlined the fundamental differences between the history of the American city and the history and form of the European city. There still is the question of what, apart from geographical and economic causes, the reasons for this divergence are - in view of the fact that urban culture in North America was created almost entirely by European settlers? It can be argued that they are rooted in different cultural myths of the Old World and the New World. The '9/11' events have made that even more obvious. The following text contains quotes from an article in the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* that appeared before those events, in the June 16./17.2001 issue:

„The city is poised against the country“. The American cultural historian Garry Wills, in his book *'A Necessary Evil'*, has listed a remarkable number of opposing identifications dealing with what he calls the basic American distrust. He speculates that these opposing ideas are not restricted to inner-American disputes but at the same time illuminate the differences between European and American perceptions. It is remarkable, he says, that each side draws its myths from exactly those characteristics which are highly suspicious to the other side. To Americans, continues Wills, urban Europe seems suspicious because it emphasizes the role of government and restricts individual freedom. And government symbolizes the city as a sinister location, from whose restricting confinement and moral corruption you have to escape to the wide open country in order to experience real freedom. This unlimited countryside means mobility and liberty...an eternal existence as a pioneer (even if it's in reality only the drive out to the nearest suburb). The European

perception is opposite, Wills continues: here the city was always regarded as the place where you fled to, in order to discard the narrowness of country life ('Stadtluft macht frei'). In Europe it was the rural existence, which symbolized confinement and staleness forever. The perceived anonymity of the city held out the promise of individual freedom, and offered access to progressive ideas, based not only on physical, mobility, but more importantly on spiritual freedom. Even if many Americans may have recently bought a residence in a suburb – 'for the benefit of the children' - such myths live on in subconscious collective memory. Not real life but the belief is what counts: Freedom in America means the country, freedom in Europe means the city. Nevertheless, a small semantic difference is substantial in this context: there is freedom from restrictions, and there is freedom to act. Each one is the condition for the other one...when these myths developed this fact was unfortunately lost somewhere on the way – on both sides.

'Urban Renewal' in American metropolitan areas.

The Public Housing programs of the 1940ies initiated substantial changes in the urban structures of older American cities. The expression '*Urban Renewal*' was coined when these programs multiplied in the late 50ies. In due course their impact extended to cover not only residential but also commercial projects, and, - in cooperation with federal and local programs – also private investment. The main goal of Urban Renewal was to increase property values in run-down inner-city areas, thereby discouraging the flight of the urban middle classes to the growing suburban fringe. In retrospect Urban Renewal is commonly regarded as a failure. This view, however, overlooks that a number of the projects that were realized - such as Society Hill in Philadelphia (1960-64) or Lafayette Park in Detroit (ca. 1960) - were successful from the beginning, and still are today. Excellent planning tactics by Philadelphia's ingenious town planner Edmund Bacon in cooperation with a progressive developer (William Zeckendorf of Webb&Knapp), and with the famous architectural office of I.M. Pei succeeded in creating a dense urban structure, which contains both upscale new apartment blocks, renovated historical brownstones, new terraced town houses and a few small parks. Lafayette Park in Detroit, planned by Ludwig Hilberseimer, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and developed by Herbert S. Greenwald, is an equally successful inner city renewal scheme. As Prof. Charles Waldheim of Harvard recently wrote: '*Lafayette Park is also the most fully realized U.S. example of a superblock strategy for the decentralizing postwar city*'. And in Detroit this

strategy proved successful.

What is desperately needed is a careful non-ideological evaluation of those Urban Renewal projects that failed - undoubtedly the majority - and why they failed, and the few schemes that succeeded, and why they did. The fact is undeniable that the underprivileged and the racially discriminated (the civil rights movement at that time only just about evolved) minorities of the population were on the losing side of Urban Renewal. In most cases the population that had originally inhabited the deprived areas was displaced and was subsequently housed in 'Projects' in fringe areas with inadequate infrastructure and shoddy construction, lacking environmental and planning quality. Crime increased to an extent that police dared not enter those areas for fear of getting shot. Chicago is a sad point in case. In the year 2002 Robert Taylor homes, a large complex of schematic and ill maintained highrise blocks, located south of the inner city, finally had to be razed. And as late as 2011, the last block of the infamous Cabrini Green scheme on the North Side, was blown up. These structures were beyond rehabilitation. It seems urban planners relied on the promise of Urban renewal much too long - considering the fact that Herbert Gans, and especially Jane Jacobs, had emphatically drawn attention to the problems this kind of 'renewal' encountered. In addition to the displacement of disadvantaged groups, Urban Renewal projects often involved inner-city expressway construction, causing further destruction of older residential areas where poor and black people used to live. The general quality of inner-city life decreased. Jane Jacobs vehemently drew attention to the process of deprivation and degradation of urban life in the 60ies. Fuelled by protests against the discredited ideology of urban 'renewal' no new projects were started after 1966. In the 70ies, public opposition against the damages Urban Renewal had caused both in the inner cities and in adjacent zones, resulted in spectacular actions such as the much-publicized blasting of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing complex near St. Louis, Mo. in 1972. This happened at the time postmodernism in architecture was on the rise, and Urban Renewal projects were blamed as 'modernist urban planning'. When the St. Louis complex, containing a total of 2780 apartments in 33 identical residential slabs eleven stories high, was blown up because it was deemed beyond rehabilitation, the event was declared to constitute the final failure of what was intentionally (though, of-course, erratically) identified as 'the import of European (i.e. 'foreign') Bauhaus modernism'. Tom Wolfe formulated this critique, a simplification mistaking buildings with their contents, in his widely quoted book '*From Bauhaus to Our House*'. Wolf accused Urban renewal to have caused a human catastrophe, but at the same time describes this as having been predictable because aspects of urban

sociology had been totally neglected. A result of the negative perception of Urban Renewal was that public institutions ceased to apply for federal funding of any ambitious urban redevelopment project. This had far-reaching consequences for inner-city improvements, especially improvements affecting disadvantaged and minority groups.

Finding substitutes for the aging, in many cases uninhabitable and crime-ridden Public Housing Projects, is a planning problem many communities have to cope with to this day. 'Projects' are almost exclusively housing low-income groups in need of public support and are outposts of racial segregation. Public Housing failures are not limited to the US. Regent Heights in Toronto, Ont. is a sad example in Canada. The oldest social housing complex in that country, consisting of 14 residential towers of up to 27 stories in height, was built already in the 40ies. The city has developed a 300 million Dollar plan to replace this complex over ten years with a low, dense residential housing structure based on a regular grid system broken up by small parks. Instead of the existing 2.087 apartments there will eventually be about 4.500 units. While the scheme aims at a high standard of housing, it remains to be seen if it will not again end up as a vast ghetto of low-income dwellers dependent on public support.

The discussion of alternatives to multi-lane inner city highways, namely by **improved mass transit** infrastructure, began at the time of the first oil crisis in the seventies, when Urban Renewal had come to a standstill. The construction of San Francisco's Bay Area Transport System was the first large new scheme a major American city undertook, and extensions continue to be made. While between 1992 and 1996 mass transit experienced a slight decline, many systems of that type have been constructed in larger cities since then. Today new 'light rail' projects prevail. Their numbers and their scope increase as gasoline prizes discourage private transportation and as Earth Warming is recognized as a new threat to civilization. It is indeed surprising to see light rail systems being planned and built even in the younger urban conglomerations in the South, the Southwest, and also in the traditionally more conservative Midwest. In the Northeast of the U.S., revitalization of the existing network of older commuter rail systems is on the agenda. More federal funds became available for such programs after 9/11 and especially after Obama took office.

But In spite of all those efforts, the rapid extension of the suburban fringe outside the central metropolitan areas has been unbroken, although a temporary slow-down recently took place, following the financial and subprime housing crisis.

Inner City development and revitalization efforts.

What we recognize today as the image of all major American cities, the skyscraper, was made possible by the invention of the electrical elevator in 1887. This machine gave rise to multistoried buildings with extreme concentrations of work force and economic power within the limits of inner-city Central Business Districts. The ensuing skyline became the symbol of entrepreneurship, in fact of American society in general. In the last decades of the 20th Century - While social and ethnic problems drove out many middle-income families from the older centers and the adjacent slums to the suburbs, a different movement began to discover or to re-discover the qualities of an urban lifestyle. In an intriguing book, called '*Bobos in Paradise*' David Brooks argued that a new '*Creative Class*' had formed. He called the fictional avatar actors in his book *Bourgeois Bohemians = Bobos*, and used the term '*Creative Class*' in the sense Richard Florida had coined it in his seminal book '*The Rise of the Creative Class*'. Florida distinguishes between a creative and a super-creative class. In his statistics he shows the shares different professions have in relation to the total work force, and how these numbers changed over the years. Florida assigned about 15 million members of the entire work force to what he calls the 'super creative core' of the creative class, recruiting mainly from science, engineering, electronic systems, mathematics, the arts and entertainment. And he shows that this highly creative sector of the work force increased from less than a million in 1900, and about 2,5 million in 1950 to as many as 10 million, representing 12 percent of the total work force in 1991. Inner-city renaissance in larger and middle-sized cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, and lately even in Detroit, is widely attributed to the sociological phenomenon of the rise of this new creative middle class. Many urban scientists (including Prof. Bodenschatz of TU Berlin) share Florida's view. In preferred residential areas near the inner cities, - f.e. where they border on lakes like in Chicago or on an inlet like in Vancouver, B.C., - highrise condominiums gain ground while, although at the price of increasing gentrification. Inner cities increasingly see more multi-use and multi-functional buildings as well as lowrise high-density residential developments (f.e. in Seattle). Upward mobility of many of the immigrant ethnic groups also contributes to the attraction of inner city living - sadly leaving the African-American minority behind in most cases. Metropolitan Los Angeles, now ruled by a mayor of Latin ethnic background, benefits from large-scale Mexican, South American and Asian immigration with a specific dynamic and with specific urban responses. The groups that return to inner cities from

suburbs are predominantly white so-called 'empty-nesters' and younger working couples. Statistics document that, - after a phase of dramatic decreases in the inner-city population until the end of the last century, especially in the northeastern Rust Belt cities – a contrary movement has set in since the late 80ies. Increases of the inner-city resident population over the past 12 years between almost 6 percent in Los Angeles and 70 percent in Houston, Texas, have occurred.

'Revitalization of inner cities has become an accepted trend today', urban sociologist Christopher Leinberger (*'The Option of Urbanism'*) said. *'Almost 60 percent of inner cities have been affected by this trend and the rest will follow'*, he continued. Even in the heart of Detroit a number of new developments take shape. Property values in older residential locations near the inner cities are rising faster than property values in the wider metropolitan region. Members of the sector described by Florida as the creative class by Florida are instrumental in this process. They are sought after both by developers and by employers. As this group to a good extent consists of highly motivated younger middle- and upper income persons, who contribute substantially to entertainment - including night life - and to urban vitality in general, they have become a decisive factor in the process of inner city revitalization.

Results of the revival of city cores appear in many places. After investing two years work and spending about 500.000 Dollars, Chicago in 2003 presented a new inner city development plan, called *'Chicago Central Area Plan'*, extending into 2020. The intention of this framework is to control office- and residential development in the next 20 to 30 years. Until 2010 population in the inner city is expected to rise from the present number of about 85.000 to about 150.000, and the work force is predicted to increase from 650.000 to 900.000. To accomodate this increase, the plan provides for 40.000.000 sq.ft. of new office space. In addition, new parks are planned, as well as an extended promenade along Lake Michigan and a chain of small islands in the lake for recreational uses. Mass transit will be improved by closer integration of various modes of public transportation. Although the boom for residential highrises has flattened, areas close to Chicago's lake shore remain a hot market for upscale residential accomodation.

Inner City revitalization is further supported by new cultural venues such as *'Citytainment'* schemes. Obsolete railroad stations turn into museums like in Cincinnati; new museums with educational facilities for families and a wide range of subjects attract people to the downtown like in Los Angeles, or an ambitious new lakefront park like the Millenium Park in Chicago enlivens a formerly little used park adjacent to Lake Michigan. And near these places of

entertainment and culture new theatres, restaurants and specialized shops spring up. Old hotels are rehabilitated into condo apartments when senior Empty Nesters return to the inner city. Even older office buildings have been rehabilitated for such uses. The federal government encourages many efforts in the inner cities by tax reductions, f.e. for soil pollution remediation in locations, where obsolete industries stand empty. 'Brownfields', as these industrial wastelands are called, become available for new uses after improvements and investments.

Skyscrapers are indispensable...

...and continue to dominate city cores and their image. After the 9/11 catastrophe it was generally recognized that this would not change. „*We don't let terrorists determine the shape of our skyline*“ was the predominant reaction. From a more rational point of view, highrises are indispensable for the function of the American City. Witold Rybczynski, who teaches urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania, said that the skyscraper is a type of building „*taylor-made for a nation that strives for innovation, technology, size and big business. American cities don't have '[public]'plazas, boulevards and palaces. What we have is skyscrapers*“ Rybczynski continued (AR 12/2001). „*When now, at the end of the first decade of the 21st Century, the majority of the world's population lives in urban environments, highrise buildings are imperative to achieve the required densities – the alternative would be intolerable sprawl*“, Rybczynski said. Many urban specialists share his opinion. They favor high densities, both for places of work and for residential units in certain areas. In a series of lectures at Munich Technical University in 2001, called 'Iconic Form', Lord Foster of London saw the only solution in face of a rapidly growing world population in higher densities and in vertical expansion of residential units, although in new and innovative designs.

PART III :

Suburbanisation and the consequences for metropolitan America.

Chapters:

- Suburbanisation of American metropolitan areas; utopian schemes;
- Determining factors have changed in the second half of the 20th Century;
- *Edge Cities* – Joel Garreau's discovery;

- Shopping Malls and Mega Malls;
- *Edgeless Cities* – Robert Lang's discovery;
- The consequences of *Edgeless Cities*;
- New Urbanism;
- Conclusion, and the forgotten *Broken Heartland*;

Suburbanisation of American metropolitan areas.

Siegfried Giedion observed in 1963 *„Today's developments point to a more rural character of the big cities, and at the same time to increased urbanisation of rural settlement patterns“*.

Following substantial population growth and increasing prosperity in the years after WW II, American suburbs began to develop in seemingly chaotic, random patterns which became associated in Europe with a 'typical American' image. These unstructured suburbs lack orientation and cause total dependence on the automobile. In the last decades of the 20th Century awareness of the inhospitable character of this settlement pattern rose, and the expression '*sprawl*' was used to describe it. While *sprawl* is found all over the metropolitan region, the phrase predominantly refers to suburban areas with their multiple zoning divisions, which cause not only functional, but also social and racial segregation. Cultural critic Howard Kunstler calls this 'a Geography of Nowhere', with a 'new wilderness' and a 'new frontier', which is constricted to a defaced image of 'our little farm' in gated communities on the one hand, and to a potentially hostile outer world on the other hand. While this is a frightening observation, in many communities, mainly in the Midwest and in the Northeast of the U.S., the ideal of a traditional community – as Norman Rockwell memorably iconized it - prevails, however much endangered it is by many factors of modern life.

A major source of suburbanization trends in America were **utopian planning ideas** such as **Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Broadacre City'**. Wright conceived this vision of a garden city, called 'Broadacre City', in a long process between 1924 and 1958. Much like LeCorbusier and Hilberseimer, Wright's rural image radically negates the existing compact historical city. But other than LeCorbusier and Hilberseimer, Wright comes to very different conclusions: *„The city landscape“* [in *Broadacre City*] *„has no large centre, but many small buildings for community puposes scattered about; schools, factories, swimming pools, clubs, workshops, the zoological gardens, aquarium, stadium and a terminal for post and aerotors“* (from: Malene Hauxner '*Open to the Sky*'). Wright saw his utopia as a lush garden city, *„where work and*

recreation mix, and where competence pays in a society that believes in progress". Many elements of the image Wright developed for his 'Broadacre City' are indeed utopian. But at the same time, abstract democratic ideas prevail in his concept when he says „*When every man, woman and child ...finds his acre waiting for him when he is born – then democracy will have been realized*". The collective and authoritarian element European cities – and indeed European utopias as well - are based on was anathema to Wright's ideas. Instead, the free and independent person was Wright's governing principle, with the ability of each individual to develop according to his own inclinations. Broadacre City was designed as a 'rural city' for democratic property owners in the spirit of the Founding Fathers of the nation. Wright considered big cities a detestable life style, and his utopia was a scheme to counter the juggernaut of Chicago. Surprisingly, in those days he already thought not only of the motor car and the telephone as media for communication - he also gave consideration to the telegraph and broadcasting. Among Wright's goals were short lines of communication between producers and consumers, home working, and residential quarters situated right above factory floors – all of this directly opposed to CIAM's 'Charter of Athens'. Wright integrated small farms in his scheme, and it is interesting to compare this idea with Ludwig Hilberseimer's utopian concept – as elaborated by Alfred Caldwell – called 'The City in the Landscape'. That concept also envisioned decentralized cities and their complete integration in extensively landscaped rural regions. Yet, the methods Wright and Hilberseimer proposed to achieve their goals were entirely different in their utopian concepts.

Looking back at them today, we see reality has superseded most of the idealistic assumptions. To realize them even in increments, decisions for regional planning and urban development would have been needed, which not even the New Deal, and much less the open American postwar society could have considered. Nevertheless, certain aspects contained in these visions can be found in actual situations. Broadacre City f.e. comes to mind in prosperous residential developments in the 'Edgeless City' regions of the suburbs; and Hilberseimer's visions come to life in a few successful urban renewal schemes of his time.

New conditions for urban development and planning in the second half of the 20th Century

The context and the framework of urbanistic processes in North America, both in traditional cities and in suburban and rural areas, has fundamentally

changed with the extensive social and economic changes the continent was subject to in the past 60 years. As nobel-prize winning economist Paul Krugman said in 2002 (LAT) *„The America I grew up in the 1950ies and 1960ies, both emotionally and in reality was a middleclass society. Extensive differences in income as had characterized the so called Golden Age, belonged to the past. Sure, there was poverty in the lower classes, but the accepted view in those days was that this posed social rather than economic problems. In daily life society could be perceived as in most respects fair and egalitarian. But those days have long gone“*, Krugman continues, *„middleclass America in my days was a different country. Today we live in a new Golden Age. Few people are aware how big in a short time the gap between the extensively rich and the rest of the population has become, how substantially the distribution of income and wealth in this country has changed“*. Sociologist Paul Sennett came to similar conclusions observing the 'New Capitalism' in his book (German translation) 'Respekt im Zeitalter der Ungleichheit', Berlin Verlag 2002. The impact of radical change is illustrated by the fact that at the time Richard Nixon was elected President in 1969, only about nine million foreign-born people lived in America; in 2010 there were at least 30 million people with a foreign background. The economic consequences of these *„tectonic shifts“*, as Krugman called them, have obviously - although with a slight time lag – meant fundamental consequences for America's urban regions.

Edge Cities – Joel Garreau's discovery.

It is often overlooked that the suburban fringes are still maintaining their status as the areas with the most dynamic growth, in spite of all the investments and innovations that went into inner city revitalisation in the past decades.

From about 1960 to the present, suburban areas became preferred locations not only for monofunctional residential developments. Since that time, also employment - mostly in office jobs - , shopping centers, administrative functions, hotels, recreational and cultural activities, all settled in the suburbs. An intensive automotive infrastructure made all of this possible, as Expressways and parking became determining elements in the suburban pattern.

At the end of the 1980ies, concentrations in nodes of these various activities began to develop, which journalist Joel Garreau in a highly acclaimed study of 1991 called 'Edge Cities'. He drew attention to the fact that in these Edge

Cities shopping center sales had surpassed those in traditional centers. Increasingly Corporate Headquarters (as defined as 'Fortune 500 Companies') moved to Edge City locations. When he wrote his book, Garreau defined about 200 concentrations of suburban land uses in such nodes in all the larger metropolitan areas of the US. An outstanding example is Tyson's Corner, an Edge City that developed in Fairfax County, Virginia, in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., since 1968 along a beltway. In the 1990ies the number of jobs in Tyson's Corner already surpassed jobs located in the traditional center of Miami, Florida. Today Edge Cities take 13th place in the size of American urbanized areas. It is not surprising that Garreau identified Los Angeles as the prototypical polycentric metropolitan area. Liberal zoning and little planning constrictions encouraged Edge City developments. Some of those are in areas originally already designed to become satellite towns, like Irvine-Costa Mesa on the old Irvine Farms grounds. Large companies built their headquarters in this location in elegant architectural complexes with stacked garages - instead of extended parking lots - , surrounded by lush landscaping. In some Edge Cities the development of suburban downtowns becomes obvious, and density has now reached the point where mass transit could become feasible. To a certain extent there are mixtures of uses that support social interaction, and there are also tendencies that business parks, research parks and dense residential complexes become attached to Edge Cities.

Shopping Malls and Megamalls.

As in central cities, major incentives for private investments also in suburban regions are public investments in infrastructure. Shopping centers have opened on or near motor traffic interchanges. One of the biggest multifunctional malls, organized around individual shops, is the Mall of America in the Edge City of Bloomington/Edina, in a distance of two miles from Minneapolis Airport. The plot of land for this gigantic complex became available when the city of Minneapolis decided to build a large sports stadium originally planned to rise near the airport, in the center of Minneapolis with the intent to strenghten the inner city. Then the town of Bloomington succeeded in convincing the developer of the biggest North American mall in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to develop the Mall of America on that site. In its foot print, this mall follows a basic scheme first conceived by Victor Gruen, but the size of Gruen's typical mall plan hs been quadrupled here. The complex opened in 1992, with space for more than 520 shops, including four anchor shops at the ends of the double fishbone shape. There is employment

for more than 12.000 people. About 40% of the more than one million visitors per year are tourists, due to the vicinity of the international airport. The inner mall space, surrounded by the 'fishbones' with large department stores on the edges and of smaller shops inbetween, contains an area for major events. Shopping centers can – but need not necessarily - improve the vitality both of unstructured suburban regions and of inner cities. Horton Plaza in San Diego and a number of similar schemes in the Los Angeles metropolitan area are well known examples of the potentials of this land use. For the success of the malls the fundamental sales function needs to be complimented with an event character and with event functions such as community, cultural and/or recreational facilities. In some cases inner city malls have become beacons in the improvement of socially disadvantaged sites. Cultural institutions like museums and universities often help to fulfill similar functions. According to a publication by Wolfgang Christ (p.122), the outstanding importance of shopping malls for the American urban landscape is clearly proven by the fact that in about 15.000 American shopping centers about half of all sales of the country take place (compared to only about 8% in German shopping centers). It is an important fact that most of the spaces that constitute these compounds are private spaces, while shopping streets in European cities are public spaces, supervised only by the regulations of a civil, public society. Alas, in Europe as in America, the public realm is notoriously short of funds and leaves ever more functions to the private sector.

Edgeless Cities – Robert Lang's discovery.

In cooperation with the Brookings Foundation - one of the leading US Think Tanks - American urban sociologist Robert Lang in 2003 published a book with widely acclaimed research on what he called 'Edgeless Cities'. His initial thesis is that American urban structure really had been misunderstood, and that too many people regard the actual built-up environment, and especially the suburbs, as coarse, alienating and ruled entirely by private interest. Entire scientific research efforts and evaluations were based on these premises. In Lang's view, suburbs need to be appreciated according to their own laws. Especially the fact must be acknowledged that America has indeed become predominantly a suburban nation. Lang begins his work with an analysis of Edge Cities as described by Joel Garreau. While agreeing with Garreau's findings on Edge Cities in a limited number of locations, he noticed that right besides these nodes were large areas of what he initially called 'office sprawl'. Having discovered this, Lang and his team went on to study the phenomenon of office jobs in suburban areas outside central cities and outside Edge Cities.

He noticed that many urban researchers had put their hopes on the ordering system of Edge Cities to halt sprawling suburban expansion. Suburbs in their view had become 'adult' with the development of Edge Cities. But this does not correspond to reality, Lang discovered. Edgeless Cities show the growth of sprawling office agglomerations, which have neither the density nor the compact structure of Edge Cities. Yet this is where in fact two thirds of suburban job locations are found.

Edgeless Cities as defined by Robert Lang occupy almost twice the area of Edge Cities. You find them everywhere; in all urban regions. They lack mixed use, pedestrian-friendly zones, or mass transit. Due to their scattered distribution they are hard to define and hard to investigate. Joel Garreau's invention of Edge Cities was a result of his observation as a journalist. He did not research the phenomenon as a sociologist, and he reported what he regarded as exceptional, not as common. Lang and his team went beyond this view in attempting to find out what the real configuration of the suburban region is. His 'Edgeless Cities' are cities as they actually function, with the jobs they provide, not cities seen as formal entities. They cannot be described in formal categories, as opposed to office complexes in traditional and suburban environments.

Lang's research team discovered that the majority of office jobs are located either in downtowns with high density, or else in low-density Edgeless Cities. Only about a quarter are located in Edge Cities or in subcenters with medium density, i.e. uptowns. Lang found that in the eleven urban regions his team researched, an even larger amount of office jobs was found in Edgeless Cities than in the downtowns. Sole exceptions are New York and Chicago.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, when satellite cities and compact suburbs sprang up, their density was lower than in inner cities, but their urban structure repeated compact cities on a smaller scale. This does not apply to business areas in today's suburbs. With the exception of a few dense Edge Cities, there are no compact cores, no recognizable spatial configurations. The multifunctional suburbs of the beginning 21st Century also cannot be regarded as 'dormitory subs' any more of the old downtowns. They contain all the functional elements of cities – even including an increasing amount of low-income households.

During the past decades, new configurations of the urban region have developed, characterized by low density, dependence on the automobile, and by an amorphous appearance. This is neither the traditional town, nor the suburb or the exurb. It is rather an emerging America with shopping centers, multi-lane ring roads, residential subdivisions - which often are gated communities -, multiplex movie houses, drive-thru fastfood eateries, low-

slung office complexes, and strip developments with shops along thru-roads. Polycentric structures with dense core cities and Edge Cities as 'spokes' are very rare. There is not even a close relationship between office functions and sales functions as it is common in traditional city centers. Shopping malls and office parks adopt their locations in seemingly arbitrary patterns, dependent only on market opportunities and traffic networks.

Obviously established planning theories cannot cope with these new structures. It appears that Edgeless Cities are the final step away from the traditional city, while Edge Cities were a transitional phenomenon and the last example of polycentric urban models. Edgeless Cities compete with Edge Cities and will not develop into Edge Cities. While initially Edge Cities strongly expanded in the late 1980ies, Edgeless Cities are now growing faster. This may be due to the fact that Edge Cities start to be affected by the same problems of high density as downtowns are, and at the same time their edges unravel in the direction of Edgeless Cities.

Robert Lang and his team found a number of surprising results in comparing the thirteen metropolitan areas he selected for his research. One of the surprises was that Los Angeles is among the most densely settled regions of the US. While the definition of 'sprawl' may apply here in a general sense, what we find is not a combination of sprawl with low density. That is found more often in the South of the US, f.e. in Atlanta. Therefore the authors of Robert Lang's research team applied a number of parameters to define sprawl. They found that sprawl in residential areas often corresponds to decentralized office complexes. However Philadelphia, according to Lang, is an exception to this rule. Concentrated residential areas usually are not located in the vicinity of office jobs - Lang's study established a 'proximity index' to define this parameter - while in Los Angeles, contrary to this pattern, different land uses are often closely adjacent to each other. Yet, these specific patterns in Los Angeles are anything but pedestrian-friendly!

Consequences of the Edgeless Cities phenomenon.

Many urban scientists were intrigued by Robert Lang' research, although many of them tried to put the reality as presented in 'Edgeless Cities' in question. They were worried by the negative impact that this discovery – and without doubt, this very phenomenon! - has. But Lang was careful in his conclusions. He points out that in his view Edgeless Cities are neither 'all good', nor 'all bad'. Many aspects need to be researched in more depth. Lang found that f.e. in Edgeless Cities the tax base is relatively evenly distributed among a multitude of communities. This becomes an important factor when

office or research parks are involved. Decentralization of office jobs also reduces traffic jams. This effect means that, while commuting distances increase, commuting times do not increase proportionally, an effect benefitting those who no longer commute from decentralized Edgeless City locations into central cities or to Edge Cities. The polycentric scheme of urban organization belongs to the past, Lang argues. Even the cores of metropolitan regions, he continues, lose their importance as they constitute only a few of many centers, surrounded by both Edge Cities and many Edgeless Cityscapes. Some Edgeless Cities extend into areas outside the 'favored quarters', that is, into suburban zones where low-income households and/or minorities prevail. In such areas the unfortunate 'jobs/spatial mismatch' may be reduced by this development. Edge Cities on the other hand predominantly concentrate in the more affluent areas of suburban regions.

So far academical planning theory as well as administrative planning bureaucracy have concentrated on the traditional 'city'. Now, at the onset of the 21st Century, it would seem appropriate to put the order of the 'Elusive Metropolis' on the agenda. What we see is basically a process of decentralization, which started in the 19th Century and appears to have reached the 'Limits of Growth' by now. There will be no simple model to find solutions, because – when explored in detail - American urban regions vary so widely in their structural character and in their development tendencies.

New Urbanism.

When Joel Garreau's Edge City book came out, it immediately fuelled a debate about the possibilities of creating points of identification and structures similar to traditional cities in these urban – although not central - compounds, with the goal of 'reforming the suburban metropolis'. At about this time the notion of 'New Urbanism' was coined by its protagonists Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk on the East Coast and by Peter Calthorpe on the West Coast. The schemes they began to develop under that label, however, typically were not located in the range of Edge Cities. Explained in short terms, the protagonists of New Urbanism seized upon the desires of the predominant conservative middle classes, and try to implement their wishes with traditional architectural designs.

Presenting their intentions in a 'Charter of New Urbanism', New Urbanist planners first of all attacked suburban sprawl. They complained of

- the lack of coordinated regional planning, including the lack of

- cooperation between inner cities and suburbs,
- the lack of neighborhoods with traditional, socially and ethnically mixed quarters,
- useless restrictions on permitted land use, and on the other hand of useless separations between different types of use,
- a lack of mixed-use projects.

New Urbanist projects that have been realized are predominantly smaller residential schemes, f.e. Seaside - a recreational town on the Gulf of Mexico in Florida - or Laguna West near Sacramento, California. Inspiration for the design of these towns is not for the most part derived from large downtowns, but from the model (really a dream model) of the 'classical American small town', or else from historical ideas like the City Beautiful movement and from Jane Jacob's teachings. At the bottom of these principles lies a revival of the classical anti-big-city sentiment American urban history always cherished.

But well designed and considerably detailed residential schemes based on New Urbanist ideas find widespread acceptance by the public. The main reason for this acceptance is economical, i.e. careful planned projects support higher resale values. In a sea of 'Edgeless Cities', New Urbanist projects often mark easily identifiable enclaves of order and scale. Where small markets, service facilities, mixed uses and other public commodities are integrated with the residential development, there is less use of the automobile, and at the same time pedestrian activity is encouraged.

Following European precedent, New Urbanists favor developments directed towards nodes of public transport. Preferred density is modelled on the classical garden city with 12 houses per acre. Successful New Urbanist ventures include infill developments in existing urban regions, and more recently, also larger projects in the vicinity of Edge Cities like the Redmond community in the Seattle metropolitan region. But often enough these ventures have little or no relationship with existing regional structures. Many of the executed New Urbanist schemes breathe the air of dictatorial design regulations and of a selective social structure that encourages monotony. In those respects they repeat the shortcomings of unplanned suburbs. There are striking similarities with the strict regulations in privately planned schemes like the town of Celebration in Florida, which was developed and originally owned by the Walt Disney Corporation.

For these and other reasons there is an ongoing critical debate in the US concerning New Urbanism. The main argument against is, that - instead of concentrating on the sprawl problem - New Urbanist architects neglect the

fundamental task of public planning as the only remedy for sprawl, and are creating nostalgic and isolated upper-class enclaves with a picturesque postmodernist architectural language. This indeed seems a justified critique, considering the structure of most of the projects that were built so far under New Urbanist premises. Nevertheless, this critique overlooks the sophisticated theoretical base of the New Urbanists, as well as the obvious superiority of carefully designed New Urbanist projects compared to the faceless anonymity of omnipresent and unplanned suburban sprawl.

CONCLUSION

The forgotten 'broken heartland' of the United States.

Let me start my conclusion of this paper with excerpts from a short story by the famous Swiss-German poet Hermann Hesse.

It is called 'The City' and it begins like this:

„'We're getting ahead', the engineer called out while the second railroad train in a short while, full of men and women, coal, tools and groceries arrived. The prairie glowed in the yellow sunlight while on the horizon the high blue mountains and their forests loomed.“

The tale goes on with the construction of the first house made of wood, the second one made of sheet metal, and the third one made of stone masonry.

„After one more year, there were already pickpockets, pimps, burglars, a reatil shop, and Anonymus Alcoholics“. And after that, banks, theaters, churches, universities. „Over the centuries the town attained a reputation as being the richest and most beautiful city of the entire country.“

But at the end of Hesse's story the forests take over, *„they enclose the land, the reamaining walls and streets, the palaces, temples, museums; and wolves and bears populate the wasteland“* (translated from SZ 26-07-2002 'Das Unternehmen Stadt' by the author).

America's great tradition is the epic of the homesteader, the occupation and cultivation of the land by pioneers, the limitless open skies, the frontier of the West (Willa Cather 'O pioneers', and 'My Antonia'). Today, this path has come to an end – but not because even the Pacific Coast has been densely settled with 'blooming landscapes.' No, it is because unjustifiable farm subsidies have caused unbelievable depopulation of the huge farmbelt in the center of the United States, the upper Midwest. When this backbone of the land starts to die and its small farms cease to support families, life in the remaining small

APPENDIX AND NOTES

I. A Case Story from the Southeastern USA, which illustrates the various causes for suburban development with a small-scale example from the State of Delaware.

Norfolk Southern's short-haul stone trains are changing the face of Delaware

Story and photos by Michael S. Murray

the population swelled, so did the demand for new homes, driveways, roads, churches, schools, parking lots, stores, and services. For road builders, there was ample opportunity to be had and money to be made.

The problem? Most of the Delmarva Peninsula lies east of the Mid-Atlantic "fall line," the geographic boundary separating the sandy flatlands of the coastal plain from

What a canal once wrought, the railroad has taken away.

For 160 years, residential patterns in the state of Delaware were frozen in time. Back in 1829, the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal opened a 14-mile channel straight across the Delmarva Peninsula, connecting the head of the Chesapeake Bay with the Delaware River. The canal cut the shipping route between Baltimore and Philadelphia by 300 miles, but also produced an unintended consequence: North of the canal, a densely populated industrial and manufacturing center emerged, while the

the rolling hills and hard rock of the Piedmont region. The sediment that underlies the peninsula is completely unsuitable for producing the key materials needed for real estate development: asphalt and concrete.

The solution? Dig out thousands of tons of hard rock each week from hills west of the fall line, and then reliably transport the crushed stone to paving, concrete, and

region below the canal remained primarily agricultural and sparsely populated, earning it the pejorative moniker "Slower Delaware."

The state remained this way until just 20 years ago, when a real estate boom swept through southern Delaware and adjoining portions of Maryland's eastern shore. Delaware's population grew 15 percent this past decade alone (on top of an 18 percent jump in the 1990s), with most of those 116,000 new residents settling south of the canal. (Delaware's 900,000 residents place it 45th among all U.S. states, but its population density is eighth highest in the nation.) As

gravel companies 200 miles south.

The heroes? Two Pennsylvania quarries and one railroad, Norfolk Southern. Using efficient car scheduling and a unit train service, the railroad and its partners are moving 150,000 to 200,000 tons a month of crushed stone from Pennsylvania to Delaware — a short-haul move that could easily have been conceded to trucks.

MAY 2011
www.TrainsMag.com 31

II. Selected Bibliography (in chronological order of publication; selection favors newest publications and discussion of suburbia; all books are in the private library of the author).

1. *Space, Time and Architecture*, Sigfried Giedion, Harvard University Press, 1941;
2. *Design of Cities*, Edmund A. Bacon, Viking Press, 1967;
3. *The Levittowners*, Herbert J. Gans, Columbia University Press, 1967;
4. *100 Jahre Architektur in Chicago – Kontinuität von Struktur und Form*, Oswald W. Grube, Die Neue Sammlung, München, 1973;
5. *Crabgrass Frontier*, Kenneth T. Jackson, Oxford University Press, 1985;
6. *Edge City*, Joel Garreau, Doubleday, 1991;
7. *Nature's Metropolis*, William Cronon, Norton, 1991;
8. *Suburban Nation*, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk & Jeff Speck, North Point Press, 2000;
9. *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida, Basic Books, 2002;

(continued on the next page >>>>)

10. *The Flight of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida, Collins, 2007;
11. *Edgeless Cities*, Robert E. Lang, Brookings Institution Press, 2003;
12. *Boomburbs – The Rise of Accidental Cities*, Robert E. Lang & Jennifer B. LeFurgy, Brookings Institution Press, 2007;
13. *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden, Pantheon Books, 2003;
14. *20th Century Sprawl*, Owen D. Gutfreund, Oxford University Press, 2004;
15. *Victor Gruen-From Urban Shop to New City*, Alex Wall, www.actar.es;
16. *The Option of Urbanism*, Christopher B. Leinberger, Island Press, 2008;
17. *The Creative City – A Toolkit for Urban Innovation*, Charles Landry, Comedia-Earthscan London, 2nd Edition 2008;
18. *Theorie des Städtebaus*, Dieter Frick, Wasmuth, 2008;
20. *Suburbanisierung und Reurbanisierung (in den USA)*, Tilman Harlander u.a., Die Alte Stadt Heft 2/2009;
21. *Resilient Cities*, Peter Newman a.o., Island Press, 2009;
22. *Stadtvisionen 1910 I 2010*, Harald Bodenschatz u.a. DOM Publishers, 2010;
23. *Retrofitting Suburbia*, Ellen Dunham-Jones & June Williamson, John Wiley&Sons, Updated Edition 2011;
24. *Triumph of the City*, Edward Glaeser, Penguin Press, 2011.

There are additional publications by many of the authors, which can be found on the Internet. There is one such recent publication which is most interesting with reference to the issue of suburban growth and suburban sprawl:



Thursday, April 28, 2011

USA TODAY

[Suburbia wins](#)

Haya El Nasser reports that American suburbs are still growing within two distinct subsets. "A few decades ago, all the growth was on the edge," University of Nevada-Las Vegas urban sociologist Robert Lang says. "Now, there are citylike suburbs doing well on one side of the metropolis while conventional suburbs still

flourish on the fringe" ...

News wire

- From: [ARCHITECT](#)
- Posted on: April 28, 2011
- Source: USA TODAY

Suburbia wins.

By [ARCHITECT Staff](#)

•
Haya El Nasser reports that American suburbs are still growing within two distinct subsets. "A few decades ago, all the growth was on the edge," University of Nevada-Las Vegas urban sociologist Robert Lang says. "Now, there are citylike suburbs doing well on one side of the metropolis while conventional suburbs still flourish on the fringe." Inner suburbs grew 11.3 percent between 2000 and 2010; the outermost suburbs grew 24.5 percent in the same period. "Pro-urban vs. pro-suburban thinkers can both find affirmation of their views in these numbers," Lang says. "They're both right."



[Full story:](#)

Suburban growth focused on inner and outer communities.

By [Haya El Nasser](#), USA TODAY

Updated 1d 3h ago

If population growth is a contest, suburbia wins — hands down.

Almost 85% of the nation's 308.7 million people live in metropolitan areas, and more than half are in ever-expanding suburban rings that encircle major cities.

A new pattern is emerging this century. Most of the growth is happening on opposite ends of the suburban expanse: in older communities closest to the city and in the newer ones that are the farthest out.

"A few decades ago, all the growth was on the edge," says [Robert Lang](#), an urban sociologist at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas who analyzed 2010 Census data. "Now, there are citylike suburbs doing well on one side of the metropolis while conventional suburbs still flourish on the fringe."

- **INTERACTIVE: [Census data in your state, town](#)**
- **MORE: [Growth slowed in U.S. metros last decade](#)**

Close-in suburbs in the 50 largest metropolitan areas added 6 million people from 2000 to 2010, an 11.3% increase. The nation grew 9.7% in the same period.

At the same time, less populated suburbs on the outer edge grew even faster. They gained 6.7 million, a 24.5% increase.

Growth varies across suburbs

How population grew in the different suburban rings of the 50 largest metropolitan areas from 2000 to 2010:

Type of suburb/growth rate, 2000-2010

Source: Analysis of Census data by Robert Lang and Chrissy Nicholas, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The numbers show that a resurgence in urban lifestyles spilled over from cities into their nearby suburbs, Lang says, but even that wasn't enough to stop the outward growth to cheap land and housing and less-congested areas.

"Pro-urban vs. pro-suburban thinkers can both find affirmation of their views in these numbers," he says. "They're both right."

America's suburban landscape has four distinct rings, Lang's research shows:

•Inner suburbs.

Many developed in the 1920s and 1930s along streetcar lines. Because they're close to cities and usually have extensive public transportation, they have gained in appeal as gas prices have soared. They're most attractive to the young, the childless and immigrant families. Many buildings are old, so there is less reluctance to rebuild and fill in vacant space. Key examples are Arlington and Alexandria, Va., suburbs of Washington, D.C., and sections of Tampa's Hillsborough County and San Antonio's Bexar County — all double-digit gainers since 2000.



By Andy King for USA TODAY

Bill Rubin, executive director of the St. Croix Economic Development Corp., is pushing the Wisconsin county to create jobs, not just housing for residents commuting to nearby Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota.

"There's been a growing sentiment towards moving closer (to cities) in the past decade," says John McIlwain, a housing expert at the [Urban Land Institute](#), a non-profit group that promotes sustainable development.

•**Mature suburbs.** The next ring out from inner suburbs, these communities began their growth in the 1970s and 1980s and are filling out: Jefferson County in the Denver metropolitan area or Chicago's DuPage. On the whole, these suburbs grew the slowest from 2000 to 2010, adding 3.5 million people, a 7.8% increase.

"These are suburbs that are finished being built — were finished in the '80s and '90s — and are not old enough to be rebuilt," Lang says. As rail lines begin to extend into these suburbs, denser development may follow and growth may pick up again, he says.

•**Emerging suburbs and exurbs.** Despite the housing bust and foreclosures that hit new subdivisions the hardest, these communities along the outer ring of suburbia ended the decade with phenomenal growth.

"The issue that really tends to separate growth more than anything else is housing affordability and weather, too," says [Wendell Cox](#), a principal at Demographia, a public policy and demographic firm in the St. Louis area. "Places that grew the strongest were more affordable."

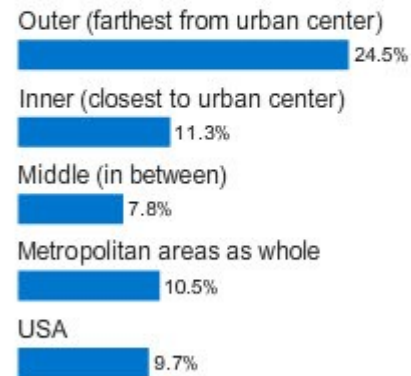
St. Croix, Wisconsin's fastest-growing county, has become a bedroom community to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in neighboring Minnesota. Located off Interstate 94, the border county has appealed to commuters because of its easy access to the Twin Cities (12 miles), more moderately priced housing, good schools and a quaint downtown in Hudson, the county seat. It has drawn workers at St. Paul-based technology giant [3M](#).

The county gained more than 21,000 residents in the past decade, a 34%

Growth varies across suburbs

How population grew in the different suburban rings of the 50 largest metropolitan areas from 2000 to 2010:

Type of suburb/growth rate, 2000-2010



Source: Analysis of Census data by Robert Lang and Chrissy Nicholas, University of Nevada, Las Vegas



By Andy King, for USA TODAY

Situated on the St. Croix River, Hudson, Wis., is a small town that has attracted growth from the nearby Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

balances are not aimed at truths for America our checks and balances are now focused on global rather than national concerns we need to protect our open land for farming and natural habitat or it will be lost, due to our greed.



[Libertyville](#)

9:40 AM on April 27, 2011

Reaching retirement, my wife and I are moving further out and away from the large cities. Most of our friends are staying put or moving further out too. One of our kids is moving to a suburb closer to the city, but the other with kids is moving out further.



9:43 AM on April 27, 2011

This analysis is not including the new socialist government we are moving towards in America. All this talk about growth will go away in the next few decades, because there will be none. Because there will be no new money.



[zion](#)

9:46 AM on April 27, 2011

Let's all move to DC. I've heard there are plenty of jobs, the housing market is booming, etc.. They don't understand that the bubble they live in is generated by the rest of America's hard-working tax payers. Let's face it, somebody's got to get up and go to work people.



[smyth3e](#)

10:00 AM on April 27, 2011

smithRobson seems a little nutty going on about people leaving the country. What's with this ditz?



[smyth3e](#)

10:00 AM on April 27, 2011

perhaps smitherobson should go

© 2011 USA TODAY, a division of [Gannett Co. Inc](#)

“Waterways of Empire: Duke Karl Bernhard’s Travels in New York State and Canada”.

By Prof. Dr. Dennis F. Mahoney (University of Vermont)

My paper today is an outgrowth of the talk on Goethe and America that I gave earlier this year in Weimar, one section of which dealt with the information about the United States that Goethe received via his reading of the account of the journey to North America that Duke Karl Bernhard of Weimar, second son of the reigning Arch-Duke, had undertaken during the years 1825 and 1826.ⁱ Bernhard, born in 1792 while his father was participating in the military campaign against revolutionary France, fought on the French side at the Battle of Wagram in 1809, where he received a medal for his bravery, but also at Waterloo in 1815, this time against Napoleon. After the Congress of Vienna, he entered into the service of the Netherlands as a general; in 1828, he was appointed Governor of the Dutch East Indian Colonies. In that same year, with Goethe’s encouragement and with the editorial help of Heinrich Luden, Schiller’s successor as Historian at the University of Jena, a two-volume account of his travels through the eastern and southern parts of North America appeared in print under the title *Reise seiner Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nord-Amerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826* (Weimar, Hoffmann, 1828), as well as in simultaneous English translation.

Seeing that Bernhard stopped briefly in Burlington, Vermont on his way from Montreal to New York City, I am happy to report that the University of Vermont's rare book room contains copies of both editions. For the sake of encouraging NEASECS/CSECS members in disciplines other than German Studies to make use of Bernhard's travel account, I will be quoting from the English translation, which is entitled "*Travels through North America, during the years 1825 and 1826*. By His Highness, Bernhard, duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach" (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828).

Bernhard's descriptions of the utopian settlements „New Harmony“ of Robert Owen in Indiana and „Economy“ in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by the Würtemberg Pietist Georg Rapp are doubtless of great importance for the conception of the American settlement projects in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (Wilhelm Meisters's Journeyman Years, 1829) but they also have discouraged scholars from paying attention to other parts of his narrative. In connection with the theme of this year's NEASECS/CSECS conference, "Making and Unmaking of Empires," my paper today will focus on chapters VI-X of the first volume of *Travels through North America*, which record Bernhard's experiences in the "Empire State" of New York along the Erie Canal; his travels in Canada via Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as far as Montreal and Quebec; and his use of the Champlain-Hudson waterways down to New York City. A military engineer by training, Bernhard takes note of fortifications past and present and makes sure to visit the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as well as the new settlements along the Erie Canal. He shows a keen interest in sites associated with the recent War of 1812, the American War of Independence, and the earlier struggles for empire between

Great Britain and France. But he also observes the plight of the once proud Oneida tribe, whose children have been reduced to beggars, as well as the pariah status of even free blacks in New York City. Bernhard's depictions of the less savory aspects of American life in the 1820s may help explain why Goethe's description of the projected American settlements in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* has struck recent critics as being decidedly dystopian.

1825 was the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the American War of Independence. In that regard it is not surprising that Bernhard makes good use of his high rank in European society in order to visit John Adams in Massachusetts and Thomas Jefferson in Virginia, both of them being not only former presidents of the United States, but also signers of the Declaration of Independence. (He also encounters the then-current president John Quincy Adams several times in the course of his travels from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.) The start of Bernhard's North American travels, however, also coincides with the completion of the Erie Canal, which united New York City and the Hudson River (first explored in 1609 by Henry Hudson) with the Great Lakes, thus simplifying the transportation of goods and settlers to and from settlements in western New York and the Middle West. Upon his arrival in Albany, the capital of New York State, Bernhard notes that this city "expects to reap the most happy results from the Erie Canal, which has been lately established, and which commences here, and runs a distance of three hundred and sixty-two miles to Lake Erie, as well as from the canal from Lake Champlain." In his travel account, Bernhard provides further statistical data such as the Erie Canal's eighty-three locks, due to Lake Erie's elevation of six hundred and eighty-eight feet above the level of the Hudson River.ⁱⁱ Bernhard's

professional training and familiarity with corresponding projects in European countries, though, also provide him with a standard of comparison that prevents a starry-eyed glorification of everything that he encounters during his travels. Already on the morning of his departure from Albany on August 14, 1825, Bernhard remarks that any one "who has seen the canals in France, Holland, and England, will readily perceive, that the water-works of this country afford much room for improvement." For example, after going through the twenty-seven locks between Albany and the nearby town of Schenectady, Bernhard observes: "These, though they are built of solid lime-stone, will soon require repairing, as the water passes through them in various places. The gates also lock badly, so that the water which percolates forms artificial cascades (p. 63)."

Such attention to detail allows Bernhard to detect metaphorical leaks within American society as well. Following a further eighty-mile journey by packet boat from Schenectady to Utica, New York, the site of the former Fort Schuyler and already a flourishing town of 4000 inhabitants, Bernhard decides to travel the next day by stage coach in order to see the newly settled country between that place and Niagara. With regard to the town of Rochester, for example, he reports that as late as 1812 there was not a single house standing; all that one saw was forest, which could be purchased for 1 ¼ dollars per acre; thanks to its location on the intersection of the Genesee River and the Erie Canal, Rochester already is a thriving community of 4,000 (pp. 67-68). On August 17, 1825, the day before his arrival in Rochester, however, Bernhard observes in the Indian village of Oneida who is paying for these developments, when he sees begging children for the first time since his arrival

from Europe. Bernhard reports that this village has been built “by the remnant of the once mighty Oneida tribe, who, unlike their countrymen, unwilling to fly before the white settlers to the west, are at present a wretched people, despised and oppressed by the neighbors like a gang of gypsies” (pp. 70-71). Such a passage may well have induced Goethe to include in chapter 7 of the first book of the reworked *Wanderjahre* the report about Lenardo’s uncle and his decision to return to Europe from Pennsylvania rather “than thrash around with the Iroquois in order to drive them away, or defraud them with contracts in order to expel them from their swamps, where one is tortured to death by mosquitoes” („als daß ich mich mit den Irokesen herumschlage um sie zu vertreiben, oder sie durch Kontrakte betriege, um sie zu verdrängen, aus ihren Sümpfen, wo man von Moskitos zu Tode gepeinigt wird“; FA I,10, p. 344).ⁱⁱⁱ To be sure, it was not swamps, from which the Iroquois tribes allied with the British during the American War of Independence were driven, but rather their villages and fruitful fields in western New York. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784, which in effect dissolved the Iroquois Confederation, was the precondition for the later building of the Erie Canal. The plight of the Oneidas – who unlike the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas had fought on the side of the American colonists – was even sadder. Although the federal Treaty of Fort Stanwix confirmed the possession of Oneida lands in recognition of their services during the War of Independence, the state of New York pressured them into the sale of their lands at low prices, until by the time of Bernhard’s journey in 1825 the Oneidas owned practically nothing and many members of the tribe had migrated to Wisconsin. In the meantime, the memory of their participation in the American War of Independence was all but forgotten. Here,

for example, is a statement in David Warden's *Statistical, Political, and Historical Account of the United States of America* (1819), a copy of which was in Goethe's library in Weimar: „In the revolutionary war of the United States, all of the confederated nations except the Oneidas and the Tuscaroras, joined the English standard.“^{iv} Warden's formulation is factually correct, but it omits any mention of contributions made by the Oneidas in critical battles of the Revolutionary War such as Oriskany and Saratoga. Such selective memory helps explain the surprise of the settlers of Oriskany and Utica when in June of 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette, on his tour of the United States, asked them whether his old friends the Oneidas still lived in the region and immediately recognized several veterans who were summoned from their dwellings in the vicinity.^v

Duke Bernhard, who unlike the Marquis de Lafayette had no prior experience with Native Americans, certainly shows himself capable of prejudice in his initial statements about not only the outward appearance and imputed character of the Oneidas and other Native Americans he encounters, but also of the French Canadians and African Americans he sees in Montreal and New York City. For example, en route to Buffalo, Bernhard and his party of travelers “met an Indian and his wife, of the Oneida tribe, who were going on a visit to the Senecas. We conversed with the man, who had been at school, and understood English. He told us that he had been raised by a Quaker missionary, and that he was a farmer, and concluded by asking for a little money, which he probably spent with his ugly wife at the next grog-shop (p. 69).” Noteworthy, though, is that Bernhard also is capable of reconsidering initial judgments based his own observations. In the streets of Buffalo, he later

observes "some tolerably well-dressed Indians of the Seneca tribe, who have their wigwam three miles distant. Amongst them were several women, who indeed, but for their complexion, might have been considered handsome (p. 74)." En route to Montreal from Niagara Falls, Bernhard also takes care to visit a village of the Tuscarora Indians, observing that the fields appear to be in good condition (80-81).

Of greater interest to him to be sure, is Fort Niagara, one of the most visible evidences of the struggle for power in North America: Bernhard observes how this fort had been built by the French in the middle of the last century, taken by the British, then ceded to the Americans in 1783, retaken by the British in the last war, and once again obtained by the United States after the Treaty of Ghent. (p. 80). A further sign of dual dominion in North America, of course, are the falls at Niagara, divided into the Canadian and American sides by Goat Island, which Bernhard visits with the help of a wooden bridge that had been constructed only seven years previously. By 1825, Niagara Falls clearly has become an international tourist attraction: a small island also connected by this bridge already "contains a bath-house and billiard room" (p. 75). At the falls, Bernhard reencounters two lieutenants from the Dutch ship that brought him to America; they, too, want to visit a site that they experience and describe with the help of the vocabulary of the sublime. The native peoples, though, are mentioned only in the past tense: "The Indians who formerly resided in this part of the country, considered the island [Goat Island, which separates the two great falls] as sacred. They used to say that the Great Manito or Great Spirit inhabited it. And in fact, how could the Great Spirit manifest himself more irresistibly than in the destructive might of the

tremendous Falls” (p. 75). Such a remark reminds us that Bernhard is a European-educated aristocrat who soon will occupy a position as governor of Dutch colonial territory. In this regard, the account of his travels through North America is more than an American variant of the Grand Tour; in addition to fulfilling a childhood dream of traveling to the United States, Bernhard also is interested in making observations about people and places that may be of use to him in his later career. This perspective becomes amply clear in his reflections while traveling along the St. Lawrence River and corresponding visits to British possessions there.

While on the British side of the falls, Bernhard meets with Sir Peregrine Maitland, the governor of Upper Canada, and visits his summer cottage (pp. 77-78). This encounter proves so agreeable to both parties that Sir Peregrine’s son accompanies Bernhard as far as Kingston, thus enabling him to visit the navy-yard there, which is “surrounded by a high wall and protected by a strong guard” (p. 82), due to extreme suspicion about American spying – perhaps one reason why I have not been taken there on my visits to Queen’s University! Continuing past the Thousand Islands, Bernhard travels as far as the village of “La Chine” near Montreal, observing that during the colonial period people initially thought that one could soon reach China by way of the St. Lawrence. The language that Bernhard hears, however, reminds him of another part of the world: “The French was spoken so badly here, that I thought myself transported to our provinces of Hennegau or Namur (p. 87).” Bernhard’s remarks about French Canadians suggest that he is prejudiced in other ways as well: “It is well known that most of the Canadians, and four-fifth of the inhabitants of Montreal, are Catholics; they are bigoted, and the lower classes

are exceedingly ignorant (p. 88).” I will leave it to my Canadian colleagues to pass judgment on the accuracy of Bernhard’s remarks, at least as far as they pertain to the year 1825. In any event, the following observations made after meeting with Bishop Plessis in Quebec City, whom Bernhard finds to be a very agreeable and well-informed man, suggest that already in America, the future colonial governor is reflecting on how best to secure the cooperation of local leaders: “The Catholic clergy are very much respected here, and they are said to deserve it, on account of the information they possess, and the benefactions they bestow. The English government left them all the emoluments and prerogatives which they possessed before the colony was conquered. On this account, the clergy are obedient to the government, and exert this best influence over the people in favour of the government (p, 94).” Similarly, Bernhard has praise for the humane and friendly deportment of the lieutenant-governor, Sir Francis Burton, a civilian, contrasting this with what he has heard of Lord Dalhousie, governor general of all the British possessions in North America: “he has estranged the hearts of the people from himself and the government, through his haughty and absolute deportment, and the opposition party in the Canadian parliament has thereby been strengthened” (p. 92).

Given his military background and the interest already shown in visiting the site of the Battle of Queenstown, 13 October 1812 (pp. 78-79), en route to French Canada, it is hardly surprising that Bernhard would include an account of the Battle for Quebec City in 1759 within his travelogue, but almost equal space is given to the nearly successful American attempt to capture Quebec in December of 1775 by Generals Arnold and Montgomery (p. 94). An observation made on his return trip to Montreal when stopping at the town of

Sorel or William Henry, built in 1785 by American Tories and discharged soldiers, gives a further indication of where Bernard's true sympathies lie:

Generally speaking, the towns in Canada bear a very poor comparison with those of the United States, and will never arrive at the same point, because the settlers in Canada are mostly poor Scotchmen and Irishmen, who come out at the expense of the government; they receive land, and are oppressed by the feudal system, which opposes all prosperity; emigrants, however, who possess some property, and have an ambitious spirit, settle themselves in the United States, where nobody is oppressed; on the contrary, where all the laws are in their favour (p. 96).

As we shall see, Bernhard will modify this last remark upon his arrival in New York City and points further south.

On September 9, 1825, Bernhard boards the American steam-boat Phoenix in St. John, Quebec, bound for Whitehall, New York. He remarks favorably on the politeness of the captain, who tarries at the Isle Aux Noix, the last English strong post in Canada, so that he might inspect the island and its Fort Lennox (pp. 98-99), and likewise surveys the American fort at Rouse's Point, " which as well as I could judge in passing, appeared to have been located with much judgment and erected at a small expense" (p. 100) – other than that it was built on what turned out to be the Canadian side of the border! Night falls as Bernhard enters Lake Champlain proper, and he regrets being unable to see the site of the recent naval battleground at Plattsburgh as well as what he calls "this beautiful part of the country" (p. 100). I wish I had the opportunity to describe Bernhard's visit to Burlington, Vermont, and its small but promising university; alas, the steamship makes only a brief stop in Burlington to drop off passengers before proceeding to Ticonderoga. Bernhard visits the ruins of the fort there before making a side trip to Lake George and other sites connected with battles during the French and Indian War. Here, for

example, is Bernhard's description of Fort William Henry:

built in the year 1755, by order of Sir William Johnson, after having completely routed, on September the 8th, 1755, a French corps which had come from Ticonderoga to attack him. In this rencontre, Baron Dieskau, a French general lost his life. In the following year, however, Marquis de Montcalm arrived with a stronger force and captured the fort. A capitulation was allowed to the English garrison, but they were attacked after leaving the fort, by the Indians, in a disgraceful manner, and the great part cut to pieces. After the fort was taken, the Marquis de Montcalm ordered it to be destroyed (p. 102).

This massacre is a key scene within James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1825) – one of the three Cooper novels that Goethe read in the fall of 1826 after meeting with Duke Bernhard upon his return to Europe; it is not unlikely that such a passage in Bernhard's diary and/or conversations with him provided the original impetus for Goethe's interest in Cooper's novels. As for Bernhard, following his visits to Ticonderoga and Lake George he reflects on the fortifications that could be built there if the Americans wanted either to organize an expedition against Isle Aux Noix and Canada, or else to defend the United States from the English (pp. 102-3). From a twenty-first century perspective, it would seem like saber-rattling at best to be considering a future military conflict only ten years after the Treaty of Ghent had been signed, but Bernhard's military training makes him acutely aware of the strategic importance of the Champlain-Hudson waterway as a means of transport and invasion. En route to New York City, he visits sites associated with the Battle of Saratoga in the fall of 1777, where General von Riedesel, the father of the current Land-Marshall of the Grand Duchy of Weimar, had commanded a regiment of Brunswick troops (p. 105). And during his three-day visit to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he is very favorably impressed by the daily plan and instruction of the cadets,

he refers to the foiled plot by Benedict Arnold to deliver West Point to the British, something he calls a “disgraceful treachery” (p. 115). At West Point, Bernhard is astonished that the ruins of Fort Putnam will not be rebuilt, as the Americans do not see the need for defense of the interior against an English attack: “This view appears to me doubtful; I wish from my heart that these excellent people may never find by experience, that they have deceived themselves” (p. 117). Fortunately, our present joint CSECS/NEASECS conference is an indication that Canada and the United States have taken a better route than military armament to secure peaceful relations.

During the first of his two stays in New York City – the second being before his return to Europe in June of 1826 – Bernhard receives a tour of the fortifications for the defense of the bay of New York from Governors’ Island as far down as the Narrows. During a visit to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, he is surprised and flattered when he is saluted with twenty-one-guns by the man-of-war Franklin, and also sees “the renowned steam-frigate Fulton the First,” built as an experiment during the last war and a source of much anxiety among the British (pp. 123-124). Bernhard also takes care to visit prisons, hospitals, and schools, though, and it is in this context that his remarks on the status of Negroes and mulattos make clear that not all people in the United States have free and equal opportunities:

There are public schools established for the instruction of coloured children, and I was told that these little ape-like creatures do sometimes learn very well. In the city there are several churches belonging to the coloured population; most of them are Methodists, some Episcopalians. A black minister, who was educated in an Episcopalian seminary is said to be a good preacher. But there is in this country a great abhorrence of this class of people, who are obliged to live almost like the Indian Parias. In the army, they are only employed as musicians, but are never admitted to be soldiers. Soldiers are not even allowed to be of mixed

blood! (p.126)

During his subsequent travels to the south of the United States, where Bernhard comes into actual contact with the institution of slavery, his sympathies for these oppressed people become ever more evident. But even before leaving New York City, on the 3rd of October, 1825, he reports on a festive procession of free blacks who display both pride in their status and also civic engagement: "An African club, called the Wilberforce Society, thus celebrated the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in New York, and concluded the day by a dinner and ball. The coloured people of New York, belonging to this society, have a fund of their own, raised by weekly subscription, which is employed in assisting sick and unfortunate blacks. [..] During a quarter of an hour, scarcely any but black faces were to be seen in Broadway" (p. 133). Without wanting to overly idealize Bernhard or the conditions that he describes, he does present the picture of a society that, while no utopia, at least offers possibilities for individual and collective improvement. Despite the provocative title of my talk in Weimar, Goethe was perhaps not so far off when he wrote in 1827: "Amerika, du hast es besser." (Notes see next page; received April 4, 2011, from Prof. Mahoney via E-mail. Oswaldw.grube@gmx.net)

Notes:

1.

The initial impetus for my interest in this travel account came from Ed Larkin's presentation at the 2007 NEASECS conference in Hanover, New Hampshire; for the benefit of those of you in the audience who did not have the opportunity to hear Ed's stimulating talk, a print version of it is scheduled to appear in the year 2010 under the title "Herzog Karl Bernhards Nordamerikareise (1825-1826): Militärs, Maschinen und Menschen."

2.

Travels through North America, during the years 1825 and 1826. By His Highness, Bernhard, duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (Philadelphia, Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), p. 58, 61. Future

quotes from this edition will note the page references in parentheses within the main text.

3.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Conversations of German Refugees. Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years or The Renunciants*. Goethe Edition: Volume 10 (New York: Suhrkamp, 1989), 151.

4.

David Baillie Warden: *Statistical, Political, and Historical Account of the United States of America; from the Period of their first Colonization to the Present Day*. 3 volumes. (Edinburgh 1819) 3: 528.

5.

Joseph T. Glatthaar und James Kirby Martin: *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution* (New York 2006), pp. 289-316.

(The End)

