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Article abstract

Retrospective orientations of Toronto residents are indicated by dispositions toward general interest in the past, direct experience with survivals, appreciation of heritage, and conservation of historical remains. These dispositions indicate a strong, positive sentiment toward the past that is expressed by substantial involvement with the historical environment and highly uniform attitudes toward it. Torontonians care about their past. Implications for historical resource management are that they should be given additional opportunities to become involved with it, and that these opportunities should recognize the broad social base of concern and interest.

RETROSPECTIVE ORIENTATIONS IN METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND THEIR
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL
ENVIRONMENT*

Victor A. Konrad and S. Martin Taylor

Résumé/Abstract

La tendance des Torontois à la rétrospection se manifeste par l'intérêt général qu'ils portent au passé, les contacts directs qu'ils se ménagent avec les vestiges, leur appréciation du patrimoine et la préservation des ruines historiques. Ces dispositions dénotent de leur part une attirance puissante et constructive pour le passé, qui s'exprime par un engagement important envers l'environnement historique et un attrait généralisé à son égard. Par conséquent, la gestion des ressources historiques devrait donner aux Torontois davantage de possibilités de prendre part à des activités reliées au passé, possibilités qui devraient tenir compte de l'importante assise sociale de l'intérêt manifesté par la population pour ces activités.

Retrospective orientations of Toronto residents are indicated by dispositions toward general interest in the past, direct experience with survivals, appreciation of heritage, and conservation of historical remains. These dispositions indicate a strong, positive sentiment toward the past that is expressed by substantial involvement with the historical environment and highly uniform attitudes toward it. Torontonians care about their past. Implications for historical resource management are that they should be given additional opportunities to become involved with it, and that these opportunities should recognize the broad social base of concern and interest.

* * *

It is not difficult to illustrate a strong and widespread appreciation of the past in the present though conventional wisdom is otherwise. Considerably more challenging and academically rewarding is the task of providing solid evidence to refute the historical "apathy" myth and, secondly, developing a more coherent basis on which to approach

some practical questions. What needs does the past fulfill? What in the past has value and for whom? What ways is the past used? What should be preserved, where and in what form? At least, such a basis can help identify policy guidelines for the management of historical and prehistorical resources, and more important, justify to the taxpayer and politician the

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expenditures for such management.

Government agencies responsible for the management of the past are certainly aware of the growing interest and concern for our legacy and some of the motivations behind it. Unprecedented steps are being taken to insure the preservation of the past and enhance its presentations.¹ But a clear understanding of what constitutes the public interest is lacking. The understanding of personal and collective orientations toward the past remains rudimentary. We suspect that they are multifaceted but we lack a clear definition of the dimensions involved. The identification of these dimensions presents not only an intriguing problem, the solution of which can lead to a fuller understanding of how and why human identity is in part developed through environmental experience, but also provides applications to the development of a meaningful and cogent policy for heritage management. In such endeavour, considerations of perception must precede those of preservation and presentation.

*REAWAKENING TO THE PAST IN THE
ENVIRONMENT OF THE PRESENT*

Human views and treatment of the past can change considerably over time.

Men in one epoch may resolutely set their faces against the past; men of the next may venerate that previous era and deplore their predecessors' heedless neglect. The ebb and flow of historical self-awareness, of anachronistic recognition, of concern with heritage are

themselves historically causal. We are inescapably the creatures of the past we have come through, including its attitudes toward previous pasts.²

Canadians have in recent years entered a new era. Neglect and outright repudiation of the old, the worn, the used, have given way to a rediscovery of the past and a regard for its legacy. There have always been Canadians with an interest in the past, but the concern remained specific. It lay entwined in a cultural tradition, religious belief, social context, family connection, or consuming interest. One man's past held little meaning for his neighbour; one group's heritage was rarely valued by another.³

Private and particular remembrances certainly persist but pervading these are more generalized and all-encompassing values. Canadians from different parts of the country, varied backgrounds and distinctive social mileaus maintain different images of the past and react to it in different ways. A recent study of the images of *Vieux-Quebec* held by residents in that locale, in the greater urban area, in Montreal, and in Ontario indicates significant differences in preferences for historical features among respondent groups.⁴ Respondents also differed considerably on preferred preservation strategies. But in Quebec City and across the country there appears to exist unanimity on the need for historical preservation, the desire to commune with the visible past, and the feeling that our heritage is an asset.

Canadians are by no means

alone nor are they in the vanguard of renewed historical appreciation. The trend appears to be well established in Western society. Newcomb⁵ reports a demonstrated appreciation for the visible past in Denmark. In England it is a tradition.⁶ In fact, most European nations accommodate the past if they do not revere it. Certainly better established in Europe is an aura of historical self-awareness and a feeling of security about the past which borders on comfort and smugness.

It is the "American Scene,"⁷ however, which is closest to our own. As in other matters, Canadians are profoundly influenced by developments in American recognition and treatment of the past in the present. The "historic preservation movement"⁸ in the United States, the focus on architectural restoration,⁹ the move toward area conservation,¹⁰ the "antique craze,"¹¹ and the "great ancestor hunt,"¹² all have striking parallels in Canada. But until recently, the majority of Canadians, like their American counterparts, adhered to what the geographer John K. Wright termed "the law of the disparagement of the past."¹³

This rejection of the past was particularly visible in North America's cities.¹⁴ Jane Jacobs decried the destruction of old buildings in her much lauded book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,¹⁵ and insisted that aged structures were not only desirable but also necessary for the maintenance of a healthy diversity. Her point of view has gained increased acceptance, but North American society has yet to achieve the integration of past

with present as accomplished in European cities.¹⁶ Without landmarks of history and tradition, the experience of living in cities remains largely undifferentiated and lacks depth.

There are signs of change. In urban Canada, there is evidence of a growing individualism among cities, a move away from the standardization and sameness described by Rashleigh¹⁷ over a decade ago. Contributing to this individuality, and in no mean measure, is the urban fabric of the past.¹⁸ Conformity contributes little to the identity of a place or the people who live there. No city will ever be known for its gas stations, apartment buildings and traffic lights. True, recent spectacular developments add to the identity of a city. Certainly, new developments are not necessarily a bad thing. Toronto is known for its new city hall, Yonge Street, and most recently the CN Tower, but Toronto is also Yorkville, Kensington and St. Lawrence Markets, and Union Station.⁹ *The Face of Toronto*²⁰ is as much its past as its present, and in that city and others across Canada there is an awakening of retrospective recognition.

RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION OF THE PAST

The past, and particularly the past in the landscape of the present, is largely and increasingly viewed in a positive light by those who recognize it. In general, it is considered to have value as an amenity, for like our "natural" environments the past, both visible and remembered, is rapidly disappearing or being altered. Although there exists an increasingly common appreciation of the past there is no common

preference for any aspect of it. Some people appear interested in the past in general; others are interested in very specific aspects of it. While some gravitate toward things, others explore the lifestyles of people. For some the past is distinctly tied to place; for others the context of place is unimportant. Certain people are concerned only with defined periods; others prefer to consider the flow of time.

Several plausible explanations have been advanced for the tendency toward retrospection, ranging from those which are inherently personal to others which are societal. One is "future shock": the stress and uncertainty of contemporary life in the economically advanced countries resulting from an exponential rate of change. According to Toffler, the accelerated thrust of change permeates the very core of our existence.²¹ Material, emotional, moral and spiritual fundaments are now subject to alteration. Permanence is dead and transience rules. In limbo, we feel uncertain of our immediate future and helpless to assert any effective control over it. Consequently, we become insecure when faced by the unknown and unfamiliar and grasp wildly for what is, or is perceived to be, permanent, often overcompensating in the process. An acceptance of this thesis provides one basis for explaining western society's current heightened appreciation of the past. The past symbolizes the familiar and known and hence is reassuring and conducive to a feeling of security and continuity. The all-important strand of experience remains, or at least appears to remain

unbroken.

Whereas a basic psychological need for the past may be difficult to substantiate, human desire to transcend contemporary and everyday experience is not. Lowenthal and Price argue that transcendental values, rooted in experience, underlie social, national and cultural views of place and space.²² They are instrumental in the creation and maintenance of environmental milieus of landscapes. Feelings and insights, born of experience and legitimized through identity, enrich our awareness of the world around us and make life worth living. They give us pleasure.

The fabric of the past, the relict features of the landscape itself, also appeal to our aesthetic senses. Past landscapes are commonly equated with richness and quality in contrast to the greater blandness and brashness of the present day urban environment.²³ When steps are taken to tear down old buildings to make way for "contemporary cathedrals"²⁴ of commerce, opposition from certain segments of the population is vocal. Additional support for the notion that the patina of age, when added to other design qualities, commonly connotes quality and inherent value comes from commerce itself. Marketing and architectural firms, among others involved in contemporary design, are increasingly incorporating elements of the old in the new in order to make their products attractive to consumers.

Probably the most pervasive factor leading to an appreciation of the past is based on personal connection with history. Our concerns are typically centered on

ourselves and those nearest to us. Similarly, the past is often of most interest to us as it relates to previous events and places in our own lives and those of our families. Personal reminiscence and nostalgia are traits which we all exhibit to a varying degree. Lowenthal²⁵ has recently suggested that nostalgia today represents an exaggerated affection for the past reflecting disenchantment with the present and fear about the future. His argument implies that the personal and societal factors leading to an appreciation of the past, while distinguishable, are nonetheless closely interwoven.

The growing literature on human retrospection describes views of the past and attempts to identify the psychological processes involved in the orientation towards former times. These two lines of research are distinct: the literature of time-orientation explores mechanisms or retrospection,²⁶ and the work on perception of past landscapes,²⁷ largely based on literary sources, discusses what is seen. With a few notable exceptions,²⁸ neither direction leads to results which are useful in planning the preservation of the past in the environment of the present. Where the research on views of the past in the present shows promise in this regard, the results are somewhat limited by elitest literary perspectives which do not necessarily represent ordinary peoples' perceptions of past landscapes.²⁹ A great deal of the writing is not based upon empirical research. Those studies which are based upon the views which people hold are specific as regard to place.³⁰ There is a need for going beyond such studies in order to define and predict

broader orientations toward the past.

DISPOSITIONS TOWARD THE PAST

Observations tend to indicate that views of the past, attitudes toward history, and even behaviour in past settings are aligned by basic orientations toward the past. Some people are collectors of antiques and memorabilia whereas others are concerned with building preservation or family trees. The notion that enduring psychological dimensions underlie attitudes toward the environment and guide behaviour in specific settings has recently received considerable attention. Researchers in environmental psychology have shown that such orientations can be identified and measured.³¹ These personality traits or *environmental dispositions*³² guide an individual's description, appraisal, and understanding of his surroundings and in fact lead to the development of specific environmental life styles. For example, persons with a *mechanical orientation* tend to gravitate toward the world of mechanical objects and technological processes, and view the environment as a convenient backdrop for mechanized activity.³³ Among the *environmental dispositions* identified in recent research on environmental life styles by George McKechnie is a general disposition toward the past variously identified as *time orientation*, *environmental nostalgia* and *antiquarianism*.³⁴ People maintaining this disposition prefer traditional design, enjoy the *ambiance* of the past, are aesthetically sensitive toward man-made environments, appreciate cultural artifacts from the past, and often collect them for their

emotional value.

These findings invite closer examination of the *antiquarianism* disposition. Firstly, this disposition appears less well defined than the other environmental dispositions posited by McKechnie's research. Secondly, *antiquarianism* represents not one but an amalgam of several orientations toward the past. Accordingly, it remains to define and substantiate the nature of dispositions toward the past.

Like other environmental dispositions, orientations toward the past develop through the interplay of personality features, socio-demographic characteristics and environmental experience (Figure 1). These dispositions guide cognition of the environment, influence attitudes toward it, and affect behaviour. Cognition, attitudes and behaviour, in turn, effect ongoing environmental experience which then plays a part in reinforcing or altering environmental dispositions. Dispositions toward the past guide and help develop images of the historical environment. They focus and align these images within the cognitive and behavioural historical environments of the individual (Figure 2). A person recognizes only some of the elements (c_i) of the total historical environment (a_i), and interacts with or uses only some of these (b_i). For example, a Toronto resident might recognize a number of structures as 19th century Victorian houses, know where the old commercial core and the Yorkville area are located, be aware of three Ontario Iroquois sites near his home in Agincourt, remember the old brick works in the Don Valley where he used to work, and know the

location of a good place to collect old bottles. He visits one of the houses regularly. His parents live there, he was born there, and the house was built by his grandfather. He is considering the purchase of one of two similar structures nearby. They remind him of his youth and are convenient to his place of work adjacent to the Yorkville area. Here he eats lunch daily in one of a number of restaurants located in old houses and wanders through the small shops in his spare time. He has gone to collect Indian artifacts with his son on one of the sites near his home in Agincourt and occasionally stops to sift through the remains of an old bottle dump while walking his dog.

As the scenario implies, an individual's orientation toward the past is not necessarily confined to one specific disposition. While one disposition may dominate, others may also align a person's views about and actions in the historical environment. In essence, any one or a set of dispositions are employed by the individual in dealing with past settings and establishing a sense of identity *vis à vis* the past. They guide appraisal of the past in the landscape and in the mind. In short, these dispositions constitute the basis of historical appreciation.

RETROSPECTIVE ORIENTATIONS IN METROPOLITAN TORONTO

In order to establish dispositions toward the past amenable to both identification and measurement, a broadly-based empirical study was undertaken in Metropolitan Toronto. The identification of possible dispositions was based on an extensive review of how people deal

Figure 1. THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ENVIRONMENTAL DISPOSITIONS, COGNITION, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

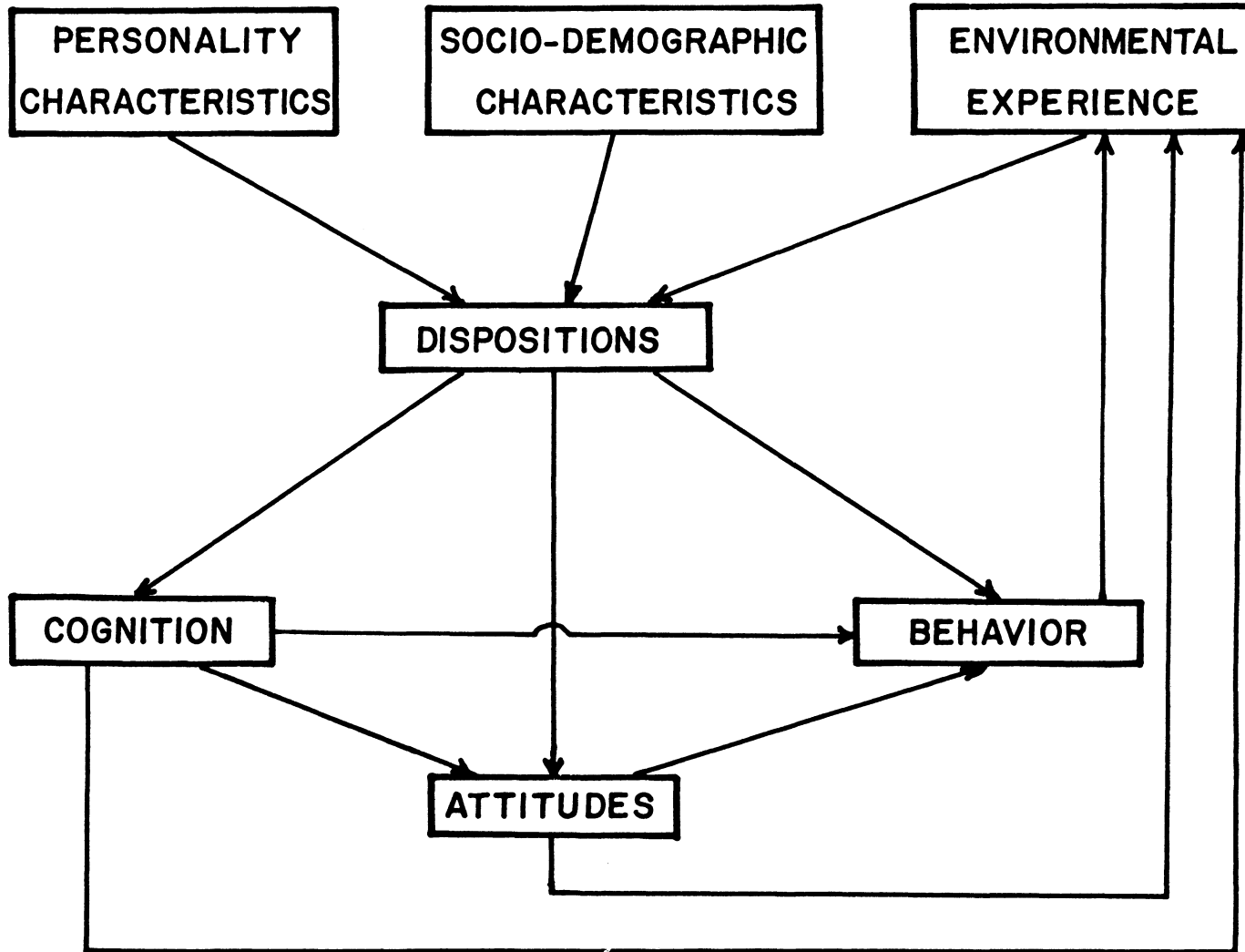
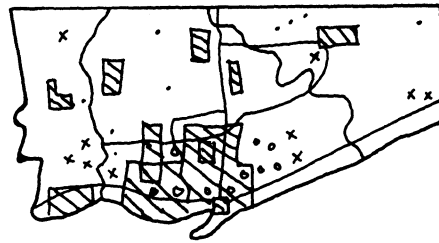
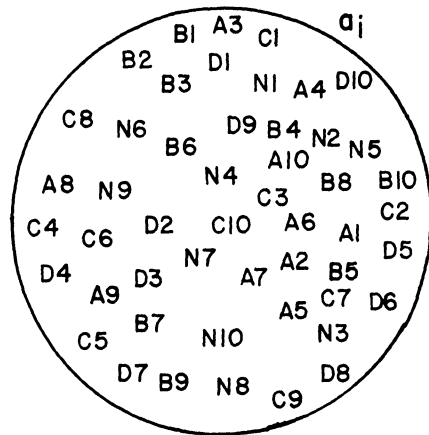


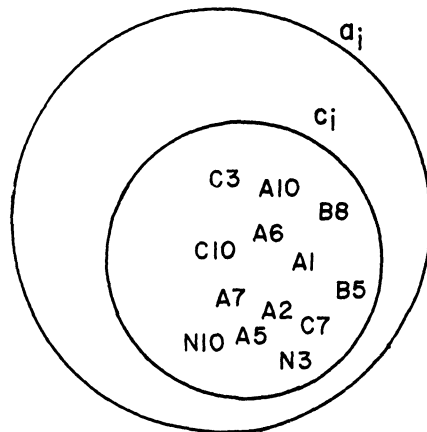
Figure 2. HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTS

TOTAL

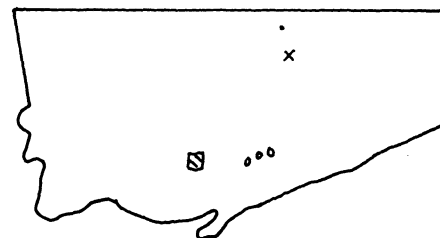
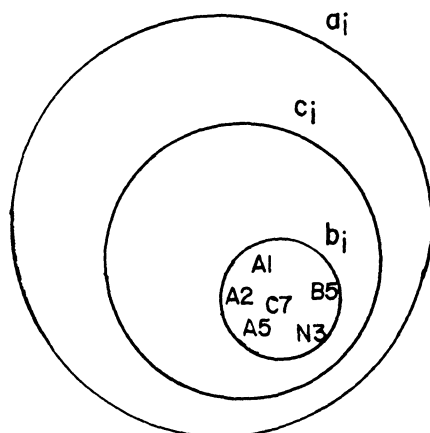


- A structures ○
- B zones ▨
- C native sites ·
- D routes —
- N other x

COGNITIVE



BEHAVIOURAL



with the past in the present and an intuitive grasp of attitudes toward the past.

Four major aspects of retrospective orientation were established as opposed to a general *antiquarianism* or *environmental nostalgia* disposition. One apparent direction seemed to be a *general appreciation of the past*. Both empirical observation and the literature supported a substantial orientation toward the past in general but no facet of it in particular. A distinct, although somewhat circumscribed, aspect was defined as *appreciation of prehistorical remains*. It is related to the past distant in both culture and time. A third dimension was seen as the *appreciation of historical sites and remains*. Included in this dimension were preferences for historical places, antiques and other survivals from the past. A final orientation, related to this but strong enough to be considered separately was identified as *appreciation of historical buildings*.

A collection of statements, or "statement pool," was then generated tapping these divergent aspects of personal responses to the past. Consistent with normal psychometric practice, statements were written on the basis of an intuitive grasp of the essential elements in these dispositions toward the past.³⁵ The next step was the development of four scales to represent the four *a priori* dispositions hypothesized as underlying the statement pool. Details of the construction of the scales, testing and substantiation are treated elsewhere.³⁶ The following summary focusses on the findings of this research.

An analysis of the principal components of the responses of the pretest group to statements on the *a priori* scales produced four different and psychologically more revealing dispositions:

1. conservation of historical resources;
2. general interest in the past;
3. appreciation of the past as cultural heritage; and
4. appreciation of direct experience with the past.

Essentially, the pretest group was oriented toward the past along these dimensions instead of the *a priori* categories outlined previously. These dispositions were accepted as the basis for scales expressing a range of commitment from neutral to extreme and positive to negative. The statement pool was re-evaluated and items not associated with the scales or not contributing to the overall variance of the scales were discarded. Additional statements were written to provide twelve statements on each scale. McKechnie's *antiquarianism* scale was included for comparative purposes. The resulting five rational scales formed the underlying structure of the statement pool administered to a representative sample of 1214 Metropolitan Toronto residents.

Analysis of the results of this survey confirm that the personal dispositions of Metropolitan Toronto residents toward the historical environment are amenable to identification and measurement. The hypothesized rational scales tap four discrete, but related orientations: *general interest in the past*

describes a broadly based attention to the past; *direct experience with the past* represents a feeling for old places, a desire to visit and commune with the past and to collect relics; *cultural heritage* describes the past as national and community culture and family legacy; and the final disposition expresses anti-progress sentiments and the desire to *conserve our prehistorical and historical resources*. Residents maintain, foremost, a general and largely undifferentiated *interest* in the the past. More specific and restricted are orientations toward *direct experience* with the past environment, appreciation of *heritage*, and *conservation* of historical resources.

Whereas the respondents' replies to a general question, "What in or about the past interests you?" also suggest the presence of similar dimensions of past orientations, these dimensions are not clearly identified, nor are they amenable to satisfactory measurement. The results outlined in Table I demonstrate that people maintain orientations toward various aspects of the past and prefer some over others. The separate dispositions are difficult to establish. Furthermore, a clear definition of "measurable psychological constructs" is necessary for the further exploration of the relationships among dispositions, attitudes and behaviour.

Since measures of personal involvement with the past and attitudes toward the past were also collected in the survey, it was possible to ascertain to what degree dispositions underlie specific, retrospective attitudes and behaviour. The Toronto research confirms that dispositions

toward the past align the development of retrospective attitudes and focus involvement with the past. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this effective quality of the dispositions.

With respect to involvement with the past, the predictive validity of the disposition scales is strongly confirmed by the results which show that in aggregate those involved in activities connected with the past exhibit significantly higher disposition scores than those not involved (Table II). Mean disposition scores for members and non-members of historical and related societies differ most significantly ($t = -2.34$, $df = 1212$, $sig. = .01$) on the *conservation* scale. Those residents who join societies are motivated more by preservation than other orientations toward the past. This goal achieves higher levels of fulfillment through co-operation and organization. Collectors and non-collectors of items connected with the past differ significantly on all four scales with the greatest difference being on the *experience* scale ($t = -10.57$, $df = 984$, $sig. = .001$). Since collecting represents one means of directly experiencing and handling the past, this finding further confirms the predictive validity of the disposition measures. Likewise, the most significant differences in dispositions between those visiting and not visiting places merchandising the past is also on the *experience* scale. The most significant differences between visitors and non-visitors to specific historical sites is on the *heritage* scale ($t = -10.12$, $df = 1212$, $sig. = .001$). Since collecting represents one means of directly experiencing and handling

TABLE I
 MAJOR ASPECTS OF INTEREST IN THE PAST AMONG
 1214 TORONTO RESIDENTS

Aspect	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total Respondents
A. the way people lived lifestyles, the old way	330	27.18
B. personal past, family past, genealogy, memories	81	6.67
C. things: antiques, objects, furniture, handicrafts, etc.	295	24.30
D. buildings: houses, churches, barns, other structures	357	29.41
E. places and landscapes	175	14.42
F. the remote past, origins of man, native peoples, prehistory	69	5.68
G. the past in general, history in its various facets, periods and events	276	22.74
H. miscellaneous	13	1.07
I. everything	29	2.39
J. nothing	122	10.05
K. don't know	41	3.38
L. no answer	9	0.74

TABLE II
STUDENTS' STATISTICS FOR THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
SELECTED INVOLVEMENTS WITH THE PAST AND DISPOSITIONS
TOWARD THE PAST

Involvement	Disposition Scales			
	Conservation	Interest	Heritage	Experience
Collect things from the past	-9.18	-9.85	-9.39	-10.57
Visit places merchandising the past	-9.34	-9.82	-10.32	-13.11
Spend time viewing the past environment	-11.33	-13.19	-12.58	-13.04
Reminiscing	-7.49	-10.98	-9.83	-7.38
Visiting specific museums and Reconstructions	-7.66	-9.19	-10.02	-8.22
Reading books about the past	-13.74	-17.05	-14.20	-13.34

All statistics significant beyond .05 level

the past, this finding further confirms the predictive validity of the disposition measures. Likewise, the most significant differences in dispositions between those visiting and not visiting places merchandising the past is also on the *experience* scale. The indication is that for many who visit museums and sites the desire to have contact with their cultural heritage is a basic motivation. For those who commune with the past by viewing and admiring survivals in the landscape, *interest* and direct *experience* are prime motivations. "Reminiscing about how Toronto used to be," however, evokes strongest feelings for *interest* in the past, and again confirms the predictive validity of the scales.

F statistics were calculated to test for significant differences in dispositions among respondents grouped on the basis of their responses to each of the attitude statements. Both belief and behavioural intentions were investigated. Once again, highly significant differences emerge on all four disposition scales. A few examples are provided in Table III. As in the case of the relationships between involvement and dispositions, caution must be exercised in attributing too much significance to the highly significant test statistics in view of the large sample size. The results of the analysis clearly indicate, however, that dispositions guide the development of specific attitudes toward

TABLE III
F STATISTICS FOR THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
SELECTED ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

Attitude Statement Stem	Disposition Scale			
	Conservation	Interest	Heritage	Experience
If I find something old, I usually...	44.617	75.708	53.535	92.043
I believe that historical and pre-historical sites in danger of destruction should be...	73.036	66.285	52.465	57.744
I regard archaeological excavations as...	77.721	102.421	79.301	76.154
I would prefer to see prehistorical remains displayed...	32.009	46.756	36.710	36.056

All F statistics significant beyond .001 level

the past.³⁷

The most significant differences in responses to the first statement ("If I find something old, I usually...") are on the *experience* scale. Mean scores on this scale are highest for those responding "try to discover something about it" (45.18) and "put it on display in my home" (45.06). The mean *experience* score is lowest for residents who indicated they would "disregard it" (36.48). Both the highly significant difference among the group means and the direction of the difference confirm the predictive validity of the disposition measures. This relationship is consistent in the other examples as well. The most significant differences in the second example are on the

conservation scale. In response to the statement "I believe that historical and prehistorical sites in danger of destruction should be...", means by response category are: "destroyed" (36.60), "excavated and recorded prior to destruction" (46.64), and "preserved at all costs" (48.82). The remaining two examples illustrate the predictive validity of the more general *interest* scale. However, both examples, and particularly the statement "I regard archaeological excavations as..." also demonstrate the hypothesized relationship with respect to the *heritage* disposition. Mean scores on this scale are highest for the answer "essential to the preservation of our heritage" (48.62) and lowest for the response "a waste of time and money" (37.00).

*IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESERVATION AND
PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL
ENVIRONMENT*

*A Strong Positive Sentiment Toward
the Past*

The most consistent finding of the study is the strong positive sentiment toward the past among Toronto residents. These feelings are almost as strong as those among the professional historians and Ontario Archaeological Society members polled by way of comparison.³⁸ This finding contradicts notions that urban residents largely abjure the past and hold little regard for its preservation and appreciation. They are in fact largely interested, concerned and involved.

One implication of this positive sentiment is that the public are potentially receptive to increased access to the historical resources of the region. While the dangers of inferring from verbal statements of attitudes to actual behaviour are well established,³⁹ and acknowledged here, the consistency and uniformity of favourable responses elicited in this study provide a strong basis for concluding that the provision of additional opportunities for viewing and experiencing both the immediate and more remote past would be welcomed and utilized by a large component of Toronto area residents.

The second implication concerns the potential support for a public policy oriented toward the preservation and presentation of the past. The idea of a disposable urban fabric readily replaced in the cause of change and supposed progress is an ethic which appears to muster little support among the public at large. The strong

sentiments toward conservation and heritage measured by two of the disposition scales is indicative of the sensitivity of a large majority of residents for the preservation of the past; the orientation toward direct experience demands not only preservation but also conscientious presentation of this past. Responses to the attitude statements support such a public policy. As such the establishment and furtherance of policies and legislation directed toward both protection and presentation of historical resources - whether they be buildings, sites or artifacts - is likely to find strong public support.

This brings into question whether the administrative structures for dealing with the past in the present are adequate or whether they require re-evaluation. The re-awakening to the past has been a development of recent years and prevailing administrative structures at both the provincial and municipal levels may be inadequate to deal with this change. In Metropolitan Toronto, for example, the Planning Board, Parks, and a number of community and quasi-governmental bodies concerned mainly with historical building preservation are developing and instituting policies. The recognized regional impact of Toronto's growth⁴⁰ has spawned planning and an administrative structure for a Toronto-centred region. Established in our research, and elsewhere,⁴¹ is the fact that residents maintain a strong feeling for the regional past in addition to an empathy for family and community heritage. One component of regional government should represent the constituency of the past in order to insure the development of historical resource

preservation and presentation policies which are in line with regional growth.⁴²

A Substantial Involvement With the Past

Not only are Toronto residents strongly sympathetic toward the past, but also they express this sentiment by becoming involved with it. In fact, residents rival professionals and society members in their participation with the past. As illustrated in Figure 3, these involvements range from simply reminiscing to visiting historic sites and places merchandising the past, and even actively seeking artifacts and forgotten family relationships on their own. In all instances, save society membership, Toronto residents demonstrate a strong degree of involvement with the historical environment.

There appears to be a demonstrated need for additional facilities representing the past. In the private sector, the proliferation of antique stores, flea markets and the like may indicate adjustment to a growing demand for the tangible past. But similar adjustments in the public sector are not as apparent. Survivals of the past are highly valued and increasingly in demand, but management is a complex and expensive proposition.⁴³ It demands assessment of available resources, examinations of need and demand, development of policies, planning and testing of proposed programmes, and integration with other urban land uses and activities before effective management can be accomplished. For example, a Toronto Iroquoian village site of several acres size, remains partly excavated, inadequately preserved and

uninterpreted for the public. This is due largely to the cost of reconstruction but also to the lack of precedents for interpretation, and the shadow, more perceived than real, cast by the adjacent apartment buildings.⁴⁴

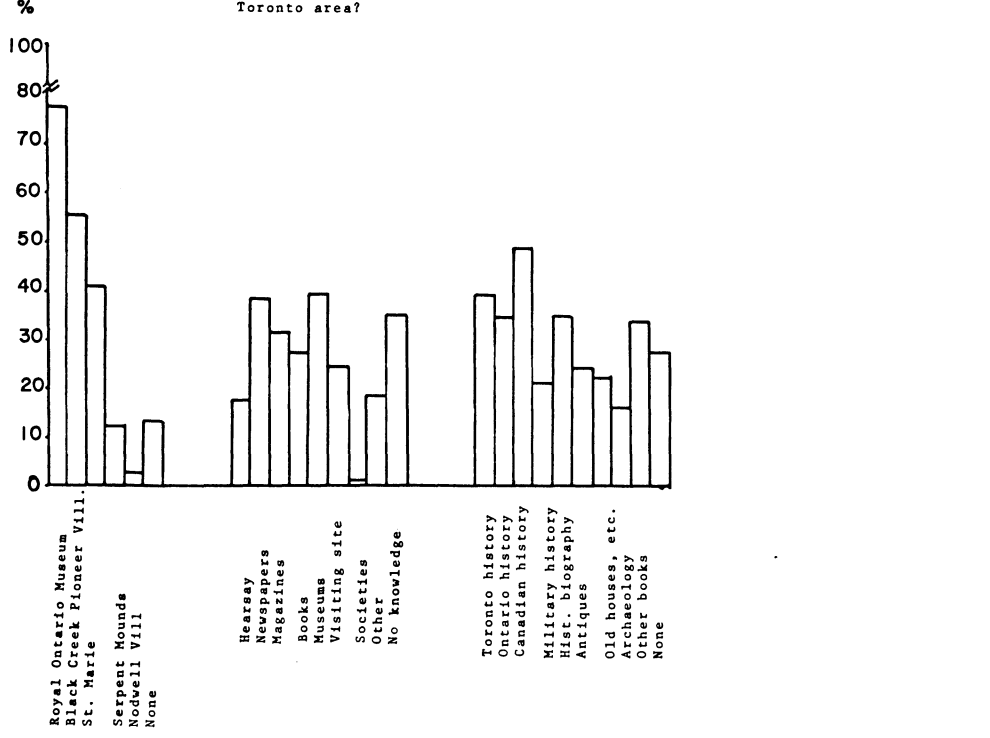
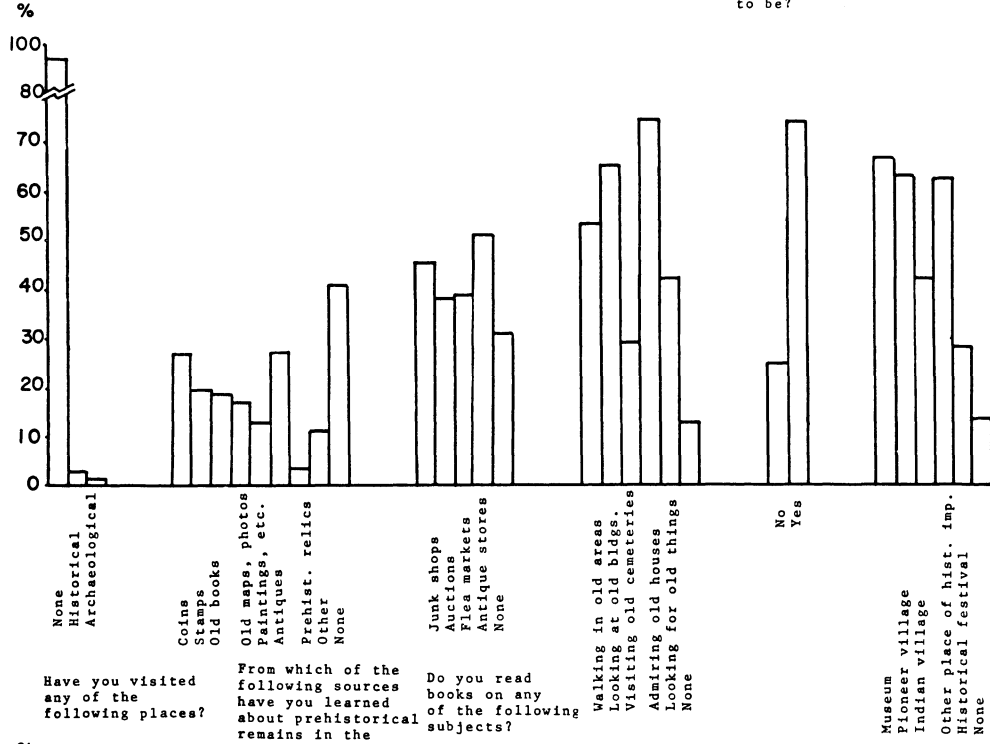
The Uniformity in Attitudes Toward the Past

Another finding of the study having policy implications relates to the general uniformity of attitudes toward the past across social class groups. The argument that interest and involvement in the past are the preserve of a small social elite comprising the upper and certain middle class groups, and, therefore, that the preservation and provision of access to historical resources should not receive extensive public financing, is not supported by the data. Although statistically significant differences are found among the social class groups in dispositions, attitudes and involvement, the absolute differences are on the whole marginal. The variations seem to represent aberrations from a relatively uniform response pattern.

The level of interest and participation of lower class groups certainly exceeds expectation and represents one of the more revealing findings of the study as a whole. A word of caution has to be added here since to some extent self-selection inevitably entered into the sample composition. It is possible, therefore, as indicated in the sample design report,⁴⁵ that in the lower class areas, where the response rate was typically reduced, residents agreeing to participate in the study were generally more interested in the past. Even accepting this possible

Figure 3. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONSES TO INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONS

Do you belong to any historical, etc. societies? Do you collect any of the following? Do you visit any of the following? Do you spend time at any of the following? Do you ever think, etc. about how Toronto used to be? Have you visited any of the following?



bias, the uniformity of response is impressive and does much to dispel the belief that the past is and need be a luxury in which only a social elite indulge.

This popular appeal suggests that preservation and presentation of the past is broadly based and possibly should be even more so. The past conserved and portrayed should represent the workingman's past as well as that of the prominent merchant and legislator. It might well reflect past social conditions and lifestyles as well as commemorate military victories, political and religious events, and architectural achievements. The appeal of the past extends to the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. This view receives substantial support from current trends in antique collecting and geneology. Popular among antique collectors today are rustic furnishings, "primitives," workingmen's tools, folk art, and lighting devices.⁴⁶ Geneologists are no longer interested only in tracing lineages to famous individuals. Connections with pioneer farmers, carpenters, sailors, and even felons are just as acceptable. More important than the prestige of the lineage are the roots themselves.⁴⁷

Special Interests in the Past

Despite the widespread appeal of the past it has by no means become uniform or anonymous for Toronto residents. Certain aspects attract relatively few interested and dedicated individuals, other types of past appeal to most people. Among the significant findings of the study are a number of special interest areas that range from attracting a large cross-section of the population to appealing to only select

individuals and groups. Personal reminiscence and tracing family experience are common avocations. Certain groups of Toronto residents embrace collective pasts that lie somewhere between the specific personal and family experience and the highly elusive national legacy. Consensus is usually based on a particular cultural heritage. For example, respondents of Anglo-Canadian, British, American and West European origin are more favourably disposed toward the past and past-related activities than are more recent immigrants of South European, East European, Asian and Caribbean origin.⁴⁸ The elderly are generally constrained in past-related activities by inclination, lack of mobility and financial restrictions and the young tend to prefer involvements which demand direct experience with the past.⁴⁹ Inner city residents are more favourably disposed to the past environment than are their suburban counterparts. Native Torontonians maintain a stronger feeling for the city's heritage than recent migrants, while long-time city dwellers appreciate Toronto's past to a greater degree than do Torontonians who have moved from the country.⁵⁰ Special interests also include particular periods, artifacts, settings and activities.

The nature and appeal of all of these special interests as well as the general observations of strong, positive sentiment toward the past, substantial involvement with it, and a uniformity in retrospective attitudes require consideration in any blueprint for the management of Toronto's past. Planning the management of historical resources, in addition to mediating adverse effects on the resources in question, should consider the range of interests

extant and the proportion and characteristics of the population potentially engaged in pursuing these interests. Such planning would benefit from the context of a more comprehensive management policy for the urban centered region.

* * *

NOTES

- 1 During the last decade, all of Canada's provinces have assumed the mandate of heritage preservation and presentation. Consider the area of prehistorical resources. Since J.V. Wright's eloquent appeal for action [J.V. Wright, "A programme is needed to stop the destruction of prehistoric remains," *Science Forum*, 11, 5 (1969), p. 14], the Government of Canada inaugurated the Archaeological Survey of Canada, legislation has been expedited at both federal and provincial levels, and the provinces have all developed programmes for prehistoric resource assessment, preservation, and management.
- 2 David Lowenthal "The Past in the American Landscape," in D. Lowenthal and M. Bowden, eds., *Geographies of the Mind* (New York: Oxford, 1975), p. 109.
- 3 British and Loyalist colonists incorporated classical elements of architectural design [Peter J. Stokes, *Old Niagara-on-the-Lake* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971)]; late 19th century antiquarians showed a seemingly insatiable appetite for native relics [William C. Noble, "Canada," in James E. Fitting, ed., *The Development of North American Archaeology* (New York: Anchor, 1973), pp. 51-54]; the Amish Mennonites maintained their traditional way of life [Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 259-282]; and geneologists have long meticulously retraced the web of forgotten human relationships [A. Baxter, *In Search of Our Roots: A Guide to Canadians Seeking Their Ancestors* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977)].
- 4 M. Bélanger et A. Genreau, "Le reamenagement du Vieux-Québec: Un exemple d'application emprunté à l'analyse perceptuelle de l'environnement," Communication présentée au colloque international de Géographie appliquée à Tbilissi, Georgie Soviétique, 1976, p. 15.
- 5 Robert M. Newcomb, "Geographical Aspects of the Planned Pre-observation of Visible History in Denmark," Association of American Geographers, *Annals*, LVII (1967), pp. 462-480.
- 6 David Lowenthal and Hugh C. Prince, "The English Landscape," *Geographical Review*, LIV (1964), pp. 309-346; David Lowenthal and Hugh C. Prince, "English Landscape Tastes," *Geographical Review*, LV (1965), pp. 186-222.
- 7 David Lowenthal "The American Scene," *Geographical Review*, LVIII (1968), pp. 61-88.
- 8 C.B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965).
- 9 Preservation of the past in the present has largely been

- interpreted as an activity exemplified by the conservation and restoration of individual structures with apparent historical and architectural significance. This view has prevailed throughout most of the 20th century and still receives considerable support in both the United States and Canada. For a discussion of this position see: F.L. Elmer, *The Preservation of Environmental Character: A Pilot Architectural/Environmental Survey of Central Columbus, Ohio* (Columbus, Engineering Experiment Station, Ohio State University and the Ohio Arts Council, 1971), pp. 2-11.
- 10 Community and area conservation began with the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s and expanded after World War II. Only recently, in both the United States and Canada, has the emphasis changed to preserving the historic and environmental character of places such as Mystic Seaport, Connecticut and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, while maintaining these areas as functional communities where people live and work. Again, refer to: Elmer, *The Preservation of Environmental Character*, pp. 2-11.
- 11 Collecting antiques and memorabilia has become one of the most popular avocations in North America. In the United States they collect "Americana," in Canada we collect "Canadiana," but the distinction is not too meaningful. Relics cross the border almost as easily as the latest fashions in collecting.
- 12 Genealogy is no longer practiced by "dotty old ladies bent on establishing kinship with the Lees of Virginia or with the lost Dauphin of France." In fact it has become the third most popular hobby in America. This interesting development is traced in: H. Van Thorne, "The Great Ancestor Hunt," *Family Weekly*, July 10, 1977, p. 7.
- 13 John K. Wright, "On Medievalism and Watersheds in the History of American Geography," in *Human Nature in Geography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 161, 166.
- 14 There have been many inspired commentaries on the attrition of our visible urban past. Some eloquent statements and keen insights are found in: Ian Nairn, *The American Landscape: A Critical View* (New York: Random House, 1965). See also: C. Tunnard and H.H. Reed, *The American Skyline* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1955); C. Tunnard and B. Pushkarev, *Man-Made America: Chaos or Control?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).
- 15 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 187-199.
- 16 L. Holzner, "The Role of History and Tradition in the Urban Geography of West Germany," *Association of American Geographers, Annals*, LX (1970), pp. 315-339.
- 17 E.T. Rashleigh "Observations on Canadian Cities, 1960-1961," *Plan*, III (1962), p. 75.
- 18 Historical features such as buildings, road patterns, landmarks and even street names enhance the individuality of a place and

- become its trademark. This argument is forwarded in: J.N. Jackson, *The Canadian City: Space, Form, Quality* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973), pp. 90-91.
- 19 M. Scrivener "What are the ingredients that make Metro a city?" *Toronto Daily Star*, November 10, 1970, p. 7.
- 20 A. Gowans, *The Face of Toronto* (Toronto: Oxford, 1960); reprinted in part in: A. Gowans, "The Evolution of Architectural Styles in Toronto," in G.A. Stelter and A.F.J. Artibise, eds., *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library No. 109, 1977), pp. 212-222.
- 21 A. Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam, 1971).
- 22 David Lowenthal and Hugh C. Prince, "Transcendental Experience," in S. Wapner, S. Cohen, and B. Kaplan, eds., *Experiencing the Environment* (New York: Plenum Press, 1976), pp. 117-131.
- 23 "Being bold with the old," *Time*, July 5, 1976.
- 24 With apologies to R.W. Collier, *Contemporary Cathedrals: Large Scale Development in Canadian Cities* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1976).
- 25 David Lowenthal "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," *Geographical Review*, LXV (1975), pp. 1-36.
- 26 L.W. Doob *Patterning of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); E. Krudy, B. Bacon and R. Turner, *Time: A Bibliography* (London and Washington: Information Retrieval, 1976); and T. Carlstein, D. Parkes, and N. Thrift, *Making Sense of Time* (New York: Wiley 1978).
- 27 The geographers David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince are particularly productive in this area. See for example Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place"; H.C. Prince, "Reality Stranger Than Fiction," *The Bloomsbury Geographer*, VI (1973), pp. 1-22; Lowenthal and Prince, "Transcendental Experience."
- 28 See for example: Kevin Lynch, *What Time is This Place?* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1972); E.H. Zube, R.O. Brush, and J.G. Fabos, eds., *Landscape Assessment: Value, Perceptions and Resources* (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson, and Ross, 1975).
- 29 E. V. Bunscké, "Commoner Attitudes Toward Landscape and Nature," *Association of American Geographers, Annals*, LXVIII (1978), pp. 551-566.
- 30 See for example: Larry Ford and Richard Fusch "Historic Preservation and the Inner City: The Perception of German Village By Those Just Beyond," *Association of American Geographers, Proceedings*, VIII (1975), pp. 110-114; and Larry Ford, "Urban Preservation and the Geography of the City in the USA," *Progress in Human Geography*, III (1979), pp. 211-238.
- 31 K.H. Craik "Environmental Dispositions and Preferences," in J. Archea and C.M. Eastman, eds., *EDRA Two: Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Environmental Design Research Association Conference* (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross 1970), pp. 309-339; G.E. McKechnie, "A Study of Environmental Life

- Styles," Ph.D. Dissertation (Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley, 1972).
- 32 K.H. Craik, "Assessing Environmental Dispositions," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., September 4, 1969.
- 33 McKechnie, "A Study of Environmental Life Styles," pp. 56, 63, 68.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62, 68, 69-71, 69-71, 75; G.E. McKechnie, *Manual for the Environmental Response Inventory* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1974).
- 35 D. Jackson "The Dynamics of Structured Personality Tests: 1971," *Psychological Review*, LXXVIII (1971), pp. 228-248.
- 36 S.M. Taylor and V.A. Konrad, "Scaling Dispositions Toward the Past," *Environment and Behaviour* (forthcoming).
- 37 The results reported in the context of this study only begin to explore the effect that orientations toward the past have on attitudes. Further research will require examination of the role played by personality dimensions in guiding the development of retrospective attitudes. See R. Calabresi and J. Cohen, "Personality and Time, Attitudes," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, LXXIII (1968), pp. 431-439.
- 38 V.A. Konrad and S.M. Taylor "Views of the Past in the Environment of the Present: Retrospective Orientations of Three Toronto Groups," in R.C. West and C. Kimber, eds., *AAG Program Abstracts, New Orleans, 1978* (Washington: Association of American Geographers, 1978), p. 181.
- 39 These are discussed in a series of articles reprinted in K. Thomas, ed., *Attitudes and Behaviour* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1971).
- 40 H. Kaplan, *The Regional City* (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1965).
- 41 See for example: W. Fieguth, "Historical Geography and the Concept of the Authentic Past as a Regional Resource," *Ontario Geography*, 1 (1967), pp. 55-59; R.W. Travis "Regional Components of the Recognition of Historic Places," *Occasional Publications of the Department of Geography* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1972, No. 3).
- 42 Suggestions for policy development and implementation in the area of prehistorical resources are detailed in C.R. McGimsey, *Public Archaeology* (New York: Seminar Press, 1972).
- 43 A.A. Atkisson and I.B. Robinson "Amenity Resources for Urban Living," in H.S. Perloff, ed., *The Quality of the Urban Environment* (Washington: Resources for the Future, 1969), p. 179.
- 44 This dialogue has a long history. See for example: J.N. Emerson, "Proposal for an Archaeological Conservation Program," Proposal Submitted to the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto, 1964; Emerson, "The Importance of the Parsons Village," A Brief Submitted to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, Ottawa, 1968. Interest in the project is again emerging.
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- of Toronto C.M.A., 1971*
 (Toronto: Survey Research Centre, Institute for Behavioural Research, York University, 1976), pp. 23-25, 27.
- 46 J. Smith, E. Smith and K. Bell, *Collecting Canada's Past* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1974).
- 47 Van Horne, "The Great Ancestor Hunt," p. 7.
- 48 V.A. Konrad, "Variation in Orientations Towards the Past Among Ethnic Groups in Metropolitan Toronto," in J.R. Mather, ed., *Program Abstracts, 75th Anniversary Meeting* AAG (Washington: Association of American Geographers, 1979), p. 201; V.A. Konrad, "Orientations Toward the Past in the Environment of the Present: Retrospect in Metropolitan Toronto," Ph.D. Dissertation (McMaster University, 1978), pp. 308-317.
- 49 V.A. Konrad, and S.M. Taylor "Aging and Orientations Toward the Past," unpublished manuscript, University of Maine, Orono, 1979.
- 50 Konrad, "Orientations Toward the Past in the Environment of the Present," pp. 247-326.