

"I Was the Only Woman"

Women and Planning in Canada

SUE HENDLER
with Julia Markovich



UBC Press · Vancouver · Toronto

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A black and white photograph of Sue Hendler, a woman with short, curly dark hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored shirt with a dark floral pattern. She is leaning against a brick wall. The photograph is framed with a white, semi-circular cutout at the top.

SUE HENDLER

(1960–2009)

*Friend, Colleague,
and Scholar*

*To Mortimer Hendler,
Lewina Gillman Hendler,
and the memory of Celia Hendler*

and

*to the courageous women planners
and their families
who shared their memories*

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Foreword

Julia Markovich

This book is the work of the late Professor Sue Hendler, my former supervisor, colleague, and friend. As many readers will likely know, Sue passed away in September 2009 and cannot witness this stage of her last academic work. The purpose of this foreword, which appears here before the preface Sue wrote shortly before her death, is to help situate the reader as to my involvement in this project. It outlines my relationship to Sue and her work and offers acknowledgments to a number of contributors at various stages of the book's development.

I first met Sue as a master's student in the School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) at Queen's University. During my time at SURP, I had the opportunity to work as one of her research assistants on the project that formed the basis for this book. This work principally involved conducting archival research and literature reviews, developing interview guides for participants, and locating prospective interviewees. I kept in touch with Sue following the completion of my degree program and continued to assist as needed on an ad hoc basis. This assistance became impractical once I began a doctoral program in the UK in 2005, and so for those intervening years my relationship to Sue's research was less involved.

In the summer of 2009, Sue contacted me to tell me that she would not be able to finish her book and asked if I would take it on as a postdoctoral project. I was able to return to Canada and begin the work after finishing my degree in 2010. My involvement at this final stage is thus both grounded

in the early years of Sue's research and a reflection of her last wishes for her book.

The process of completing Sue's book not only involved my working with her manuscript, but I also frequently consulted five boxes of archival material and other data that Sue had collected over the years and set aside for me to use. These sources are as follows:

- audio tapes of the interviews – conducted by Sue in the late 1990s and early 2000s
- interviewee files – paper copies of transcripts and interview guides, consent forms and permissions, archival photographs, résumés and CVs, articles and newspaper clippings, and Sue's own notes
- deceased women's files – additional files containing archival material that Sue collected on the prominent women of the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC) who had passed away prior to her research
- CPAC general files – organizational data such as membership lists, evaluation reports, internal correspondence, newspaper articles, and journal articles from the *Community Planning Review*
- CPAC division files – more detailed data on the various branches of the CPAC, including national and provincial records (e.g., Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Atlantic, British Columbia, and Alberta branch files), and municipal records (e.g., Fraser Valley, Regina, Vancouver/Greater Vancouver, Capital Region [Victoria, BC], Edmonton, and Toronto)
- Canadian Institute of Planners/ Town Planning Institute of Canada (CIP/ TPIC) files – organizational data including membership lists, articles, and correspondence
- photographs – provided by participants of Sue's research and obtained from archives
- manuscript drafts – one draft copy of the manuscript for this book (as of 2006), as well as paper and electronic copies of subsequently updated chapters, notes, and comments
- other literature – including academic literature informing the framework of the book, dissertations and reports on the CPAC, field research notebooks, and other articles of interest to Sue's work.

While these materials were extensive, some of the documentation was incomplete. There were many photocopies of old newspaper articles, for example, without key information (such as newspaper name and date). A number of attempts were made to track down the missing information, but some references remain partial and unconfirmed. There were also gaps in the interview transcripts, owing to issues with the original tape recorder and quality of recording. Finally, as many of the women Sue interviewed had passed away by the time I took up the project, further attempts to confer with participants proved ineffective.

Selected archival data from the above list will be made available for viewing through the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's University.¹

As Sue indicates in her book, she began her project frustrated with the view that women have been absent from planning. This emotion resonated with her own experiences as the only woman in her department, and her observations on the marginalization of women in the profession more generally. One element of her approach to challenging this view was through teaching: her lectures at SURP, for example, helped students expand their definition of what constitutes planning, and by extension, who "counts" as planners. Her book represents a second element: it offers readers a more detailed and Canadian account of women's contributions and considers the role that "non-professionals" have had in city building. This new history does not replace the conventional story of planning in Canada but it does expand it considerably, and, not unlike Sue's teaching and other scholarly work, challenges established notions of *planners* and *planning*. It is thus an important and unique Canadian addition to the planning history canon, one that I hope will inspire a new generation of scholars and urbanists alike.

As anyone who conducts research fully appreciates, it is not possible to see a project through to completion without the assistance of a great many other people. This is perhaps all the more so with this particular effort. Accordingly, I would like to acknowledge the work of those who assisted with the book, particularly following Sue's death.

Professor David Gordon, director of SURP at Queen's University, provided support for the book in the form of a postdoctoral fellowship and

visiting scholar appointment. This enabled me to devote myself to Sue's work on a full-time basis and participate in the SURP community by giving talks on the book and on my own doctoral research. More generally, David guided me through the publication process and made sure that I kept the work plan in sight.

A number of research assistants helped Sue throughout her project: Paul Sajan and Emma Fletcher assisted with archival work during the earlier stages of Sue's fieldwork (1999); Helen Harrison worked as an assistant and coauthored a book chapter with Sue (2000); and Amanda Slaunwhite assisted Sue as she wrote her manuscript during the last year of her life (2008–09).

Jackie Bell worked tirelessly, going through Sue's office and making available a number of books useful to the project as well as the audio tapes used for the interviews. Crucially, she was also the guardian of the archival material that Sue had collected during her travels across Canada for her research. This material was vital to my finishing the book.

I cannot speak highly enough of the work of Melissa Pitts, director at UBC Press. I have greatly valued her commitment to seeing through Sue's manuscript to completion, her comments and insights on revised chapters, and our discussions on planning more generally. I can't imagine a more supportive editor or publisher to work with. I would also like to thank Randy Schmidt, senior editor at UBC Press, and Katrina Petrik, assistant editor, who were particularly supportive during the final months leading to publication.

Last, financial support for the research came initially in the form of grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Advisory Research Committee of Queen's University. These were supplemented by funding from the Hender family and the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's.

JM

Ottawa, January 2017

1

Introduction

AN ARGUMENT ABOUT HISTORY, PLANNING, AND WOMEN

Women have lived in a world in which they apparently had no history ...

– Gerda Lerner, *Why History Matters*, 1997

Recent research has shown not that women were inactive or absent from events that made history, but that they have been systematically left out of the official record.

– Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 1988

With few exceptions planning historians have ignored the significant contributions women have made to the profession.

– Susan Marie Wirka, “City Planning for Girls,” 1998

There are just a few key ideas in twentieth-century planning, which re-echo and recycle and reconnect. Each in turn stems from one key individual, or at most a small handful of such: the true founding fathers of modern city planning. (There were, alas, almost no founding mothers ...)

– Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 2002

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How do these quotes make you feel? Frustrated? Curious? Indignant? If any of these apply to you, you will probably want to read this book. If you feel defensive or detached or wonder “So what?” you probably *should* read this book. These are big claims and my challenge is to make the following pages live up to them.

This book tells a story – a history about a profession. It is a history about women inside, and outside, that profession. It is one of innumerable histories that could be told about this subject but it is one that has not been told before, at least not within the confines of this discipline (planning), this country (Canada), and this time period (the last century, with emphasis on the 1940s to the 1970s). For this reason, if for no other, it is a history worth exploring and telling.

But there are also other reasons for writing and reading this particular story. It is the task of this chapter to begin to present and, in some cases, justify these reasons beyond those having to do with telling a new story about old events, old people, and old institutions.

My motivation for writing this book and doing the research on which it is based can be summarized in this anecdote:

Jackie [Hoag] ... had become very frustrated over what she was trying to accomplish and ... the planning staff was not too terrifically helpful ... so she asked [me] what could be done and I told her what I thought. I said you have to have trained people who know how to plan new subdivisions without just relating it to what the sewer needs are. (Downing, interview 1999)¹

So went my interview with Jean Crawford Downing, one of eighteen women who were especially active in two planning organizations during the early to mid-stages of the development of the profession in Canada. This quotation illustrates two recurring themes in the following discussion. This first is that women were not absent in planning, nor were they simply passive objects planned for by men, as most planning history texts imply (e.g., P. Hall 2002). Instead, many women were active in planning their communities in the ways available to them at the time. While most such opportunities were voluntary, some were paid positions, and the

women who were in these latter roles were often the only female professional planner in their province, at least during the early stages of their careers.

The second theme has to do with gendered approaches to planning. Downing makes the point (without mentioning men and women) that she and Jackie were going beyond the physical (male) aspects of providing appropriate infrastructure to suburbs. Instead, other factors, such as social (female) considerations, are at least equally important.²

My intent, then, is to build on these observations and shed light on the activities of women who were active in planning at the national level in Canada during the early to mid-stages of its development as a profession. In so doing, I focus on a number of interrelated themes: professionalization, planning as a profession, gendered histories, gendered planning histories, and the role(s) of histories in creating a more equitable future.

In this first chapter, I expand on my reasons for writing the book and discuss how it fits into planning history conversations. I also present my approach to history as both theory and action, with emphasis on adding a gendered dimension to these conversations. Where possible, I provide examples from the planning literature that illustrate how ideas from the discipline of history have been applied to the planning profession. I conclude with a summary of the chapter that emphasizes the normative stance I take here and in subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, I provide some context to the discussions that follow in the form of an argument about the connections and relationships among professions, planning, and women. I outline general characteristics of professions and I make a preliminary assessment as to how these characteristics are manifested in the field of urban and regional planning. I also discuss the normative implications of assigning professional status to planning, with emphasis on the gendered impacts of such a designation.

Chapter 3 is a comparative overview of the histories of the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC) and the Town Planning Institute of Canada/Canadian Institute of Planners (TPIC/CIP). As the two national planning organizations in this country, they provide convenient foci for my analysis. I describe their origins, memberships, mandates, and activities; I also describe the relationships between the two organizations. As the

CPAC was the lesser-known and shorter-lived of the two organizations, I elaborate on the reasons for its demise and consider its successes.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the women who were active in planning at the executive level in the CPAC or TPIC/CIP by providing profiles of key members. I rely on published accounts as well as primary research to present a detailed account of these women, including their demographic and familial characteristics, societal expectations, education and career choices, and professional motivations. I also examine membership data, publications, and other archival information on the presence and absence of women within the TPIC/CIP and CPAC. Together, these sources allow me to present a multifaceted depiction of the women in the two national planning organizations in Canada for over three decades of the last century.

In Chapter 5, I emphasize the wider context in which these women participated in planning during their tenure in the CPAC and TPIC/CIP. I use interview data and archival documents here to consider their reasons for participating in planning, key obstacles they faced, their approaches to and interests in planning, (self-described) “women’s issues” in planning, and their relationship to the profession as a whole, reflecting on their roles working in diverse aspects of the field.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I reflect on the preceding discussions and speculate on what the contemporary planning profession would look like had more women been involved in its development. Further, I extend these thoughts to imagining this same profession had more diverse women (and men) been provided opportunities to contribute to it. In so doing, I return to the position I develop in this chapter (and earlier) and suggest more strongly that histories can play a transformative role in professions such as planning, as well as other fields more broadly construed. Opportunities for further research are also considered here, including those pertaining to the experiences of a more diverse group of women (e.g., by “race,” class, and ethnicity).

The title of this book came to me while I was reading and re-reading the transcripts of my interviews with the women on the two national planning organizations documented here. “I was the only woman” was perhaps the most common string of words in these transcripts. It was also

a familiar sentiment to me for two reasons. First is the fact that women in other research I have conducted have voiced these same words and accompanying feelings about their situation in planning.

Second is the fact that I have been the only female full-time faculty member in my planning school for the almost twenty years that I have worked there. This has not been without its challenges; when I arrived, there was a handwritten sign on the men's washroom door that read, "SURP Faculty Lounge." While a student (presumably) had put up this sign in jest, it formed part of a gendered climate in which my difference was clear. My relating this experience is part of the transparency of the history I tell in this book. I did not go into this project as a neutral researcher.

The title of this book is thus a theme on which my discussion is based, one that resonates with many of us who find ourselves living and working in areas in which a key part of our identity leads us to feel different or on the margins of what is going on around us. Being the only woman in planning and planning-related endeavours was part of the experience of the women who are embodied in the following pages. This may be familiar to female readers. Other – or even the same – readers may want to choose an aspect of their identity – religion, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, "race," whatever is important to them – and imagine working in an environment in which this characteristic stood out as anomalous. How would this feel? Would one's work be affected by one's difference? What about one's comfort level? The place of one's career within the rest of one's life? This is the sort of thought process that is part of my story as well as the stories of the women who experienced their sex/gender-based difference at a particular time in Canadian planning history. I return to this theme and my own thoughts in this regard in the concluding chapter.

Histories and "the Past"

Before embarking on what is essentially an argument regarding women's participation in the Canadian planning profession, I need to write at least a little about my understanding of history and how this argument fits within this understanding. While the word "history" is commonly understood as objective facts and figures about things that happened long ago, I use the concept differently here.

First, there is an important distinction to be made between history as “the past” and history as stories about past events, recognizing that many such stories could be told about the same events. Over fifty years ago, well-known historian Edward Hallett Carr (1964, 30) answered his own question of “What is history?” with this response: “[It] is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.”³ In so doing, Carr differentiates between “the past” and history by describing a relationship between facts that make up the past and histories that arrange these facts into stories told by historians. Carr states that the “historian starts with a provisional selection of facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which that selection has been made – by others as well as by himself. As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and ordering of facts undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through the reciprocal action of one or the other” (29–30). Carr thus takes the view that history is not an objective science and that any historical story is partial in terms of both comprehensiveness and subjectivity.

Similarly, Keith Jenkins (2003, 7), a more contemporary professor of history, asserts that the “past and history float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart.” He goes on to itemize the kinds of forces acting upon historians and thus affecting their work; his list includes historians’ peer expectations, demands from publishers, and the market, among others. These forces, he argues, were not at work on the events being studied in the past, thus highlighting another way in which the past and histories must logically be two different things. Jenkins uses the absence of women in many histories as a case in point to illustrate the difference between the past and history, since women were surely not absent in the past.

Jenkins also makes a useful distinction between the past and history, using *historiography* as a medium between the two. That is, he holds that we should use “the term ‘the past’ for all that has gone on before everywhere, while using the word ‘historiography’ for [all] history, historiography referring here to the writings of historians” (Jenkins 2003, 7). In the planning realm, Sandercock (1998a) can be seen, perhaps, as following Jenkins’s path in the introduction to the book she edited, *Making the Invisible Visible*. She appears to use “insurgent planning histories” and “insurgent historiog-

raphies for planning” interchangeably, thus highlighting the constructed nature of histories and their subsequent links to historiography.

Feminist historians, among others, are vociferous in their support of this approach to doing history. This is not surprising, given their observations regarding, among other things, the absence of women in many historical accounts of social phenomena and their vehement advocacy of methods and studies that redress such oversights (see, for example, Bennett 2006; Gallagher, Lubelska, and Ryan 2001; among many others). They are not alone in their adherence to this conceptual framework for historical work; antiracist historians, and lesbian and gay historians, among others, also take this approach in their scholarship.⁴ Indeed, any individual who is part of a group that is unrepresented, underrepresented, or misrepresented in the histories he or she reads is probably going to want to change this situation; a perspective of history that enables – no, encourages or necessitates – this sort of practice thus follows.

Why the absence of different groups and ideas matters to history and historians could be challenged. If, for example, all histories are partial and are a product of a historian’s imagination, values, and research, then why worry about their partiality? As Tilly (1989, 439; original emphasis) relates, “A crusty old historian of the Revolution rose during the question period [after a women’s history presentation] and inquired in his own eastern twang, ‘Now that I know that women were participants in the Revolution, *what difference does it make?*’” I believe an answer to this is contingent on one’s politics, as well as one’s views on historical accuracy. Relevant to the latter is Gordon’s (quoted in Newman 1991, 60) argument that “it is wrong to conclude that because there may be no objective truth ... there are not objective lies ... [There] are degrees of accuracy; there are better and worse pieces of history.” In planning history, for example, Manning Thomas (1998) has advocated for the inclusion of “race” in historical discourse. She has argued that, “given the general sophistication and extensiveness of the literature concerning the connections between racial inequality and policy making ... planning histories that ignore the connections, or treat them superficially, raise questions of historical competence” (198). Thus, partiality does not equal inaccuracy; there continue to be standards against which histories are written, and simply omitting women, as half the human

population, counts as one such inaccuracy. Another pertains to historians' attempts at presenting and analyzing other individuals' and groups' experiences (see Newman 1991). In this regard, we can examine the methods used by historians to judge for ourselves whether we believe their stories about these experiences.

And, with regard to political aspects of history, a theme to which I return below, Gordon goes on to talk about "mythic power," which Newman (1991, 61) interprets as "intentionally writing history that lays a foundation for and inspires political change." As Thurner (1997, 122) argues, history "was considered to be an especially relevant and important helpmate ... both because of its potential to create and sustain a community through a sense of a shared past, and through its promise to provide a more precise map of the varieties, limitations of, as well as possible alternatives to patriarchal structures and power." By way of example, Tilly (1989, 458) suggests that studying women in the French Revolution "sharpen[ed] our understanding of power struggle in the revolutionary process." Thus, as long as we are concerned with questions of power and agency, studies of marginalized individuals and groups are relevant and important, for reasons that go beyond the particular actors in any one example of historical story.

Gordon (cited in Thurner 1997, 123) holds that developing and maintaining a tension between accuracy and mythic power has (or should) become a goal for feminist historians. More broadly, and in response to those who might see this goal as overly (and overtly) political, White (1978, 126–27) argues that "historians who draw a firm line between history and philosophy of history fail to recognize that every historical discourse contains within it a full-blown, if only implicit, philosophy of history."⁵ To this I would add two things. The first is that not only is a philosophy of history contained within a historical story but so is an ethical position about the subject matter under scrutiny. Second, such an ethical position often has implications for action associated with it. Both of these points warrant expansion.

When I say that an ethical stance is included in any particular history, I mean that historians are free to select the story, the context, the facts, and the meaning in which they are interested. In so doing, their selections may well have normative or ethical impacts. Outside of academia, it is clear that policy-makers and lawyers recognize this. Consider, for example,

Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel's views of "the" history of the Holocaust (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2004). Not only does he refuse to acknowledge the scope or nature of the systematic persecution and murder of Jewish people (and others) during the Second World War, he also works hard to publicize his self-titled revisionist approach to history and battles groups and governments that contradict his views. Thus, he was deemed to be a threat to national security given Canadian society's views of the accuracy of his stance, our understanding of the potential impact of his point of view, and our values. Zündel spent time in an Ontario prison awaiting extradition to Germany, where he was also charged with hate crimes. He was extradited in 2005 and, following a trial, was sentenced to five years in prison.

Jenkins (2003, 21) summarizes the basis of this argument succinctly when he states, "History is never for itself; it is always for someone." Historians thus choose for whom they are writing and, even if it is primarily for themselves, they should take other readers and the subsequent impacts of their stories into account. In other words, and as Roth (1988, 636) states, "theories of history contain or imply a conception or a vision of the political."

From this starting point, potential commitments toward action may follow quite naturally and logically. If one chooses to write a story for normative, ethical reasons, the conclusion of the story may point toward ways of remedying the undesirable situation. Then, if a historian remains committed to their ethical stance, it follows that they should, or at least could, pursue such a course of action. Jenkins (2003, 31–32), again, concludes his definition of history with the idea that the products of historical work "are subject to a series of uses and abuses that are logically infinite but which in actuality generally correspond to a range of power bases that exist at any given moment and which structure and distribute the meanings of histories along a dominant-marginal spectrum." Whether a historian chooses, for instance, to bring those people, issues, and topics that have been pushed to the margins of society and/or scholarship more to the centre is a decision that she or he must make. Clearly, each decision has normative or ethical or power-based implications.

Feminist scholars, once again, have this right, I think, when they define the foundation of their endeavour as a "belief that girls and women are

legally, politically, and socially disadvantaged on the grounds of their sex; the ethical stance that this oppression is morally wrong; and the pragmatic commitment to ending injustice to all female human beings” (Overall 1998, 15). Overall makes it clear that, once facts have been established regarding sex-based discrimination, ethical analysis and norms enter into the picture and action should follow. Historians may well follow this same path, and it seems to me that most feminist historians do. From highlighting the dearth of women in most history texts, to arguing that this is an inaccurate and undesirable approach to discussing our collective past(s), to working to correct this situation – all of this describes a feminist historian’s task, and I am happy to situate myself in this group.

More specifically, my project in this book is to uncover at least some of the contributions of women to Canadian planning. It thus makes visible those elements of Canada’s planning history that have heretofore remained invisible, exposing its “noir side,” to borrow Sandercock’s (1999a, 7; see also 1998b and 2003) terminology. It does so in two main ways: first, by documenting the rise and fall of the CPAC, it reveals that establishing and developing planning is not only tied to the activities of the professional institute; and second, by focusing on the contributions of women in both the CPAC and TPIC/CIP, it challenges the notion that women were simply the recipients of men’s plans and policies. Both elements of Canada’s planning history have been largely omitted from conventional texts.

Accordingly, my research method focuses on women and their own interpretations of their and their female colleagues’ work. I have defended this choice to those who have suggested that I speak with some of the many men who were active in planning during the time period under scrutiny here. My response to them, as well as to those who wondered why I did not take such advice, was simple: I wished to shed light on voices that had not been heard and women whose names were not commonplace in planning circles. This is my choice of historical story to tell. My challenge is thus to do so as reasonably and competently as possible. As Jenkins asserts (2003, 82), in arguing against a “position-less” history, “the only choice is between a history that is aware of what it is doing and a history that is not.” My position and my interest here have guided me not only to the nature of my research but also to the methods I used.⁶

With respect to judging the efficacy of my or any such story, Jenkins (2003) points out that assessing the accuracy of a historical account can only be done in the context of other such accounts because there is no one true, objective story against which all others can be judged. Instead, histories should be evaluated in ways similar to other stories produced through scholarly work. Transparency of research methods contributes to standard measures of reliability and validity, and the use of multiple methods can often address the shortcomings of any one approach (e.g., Merriam 1998). In that regard, this sort of historical research is similar to other forms of qualitative work in which new measures of adequacy and quality are considered and adopted, as follows.

Quantitative research – such as large-scale surveys, comparisons that rely on statistical tests, and large numerical data sets – employs familiar criteria to assess the quality of individual studies. Research is assessed favourably if it can be shown to be *statistically generalizable* (when the results can be generalized beyond the bounds of the particular study under scrutiny), *valid* (when the results can be shown to truly represent what was studied), and *reliable* (when the results can be shown to be reproducible by another researcher) (see, for example, Yin 2009; York 1982).

By contrast, qualitative research relies on measures of quality that reflect its intent and epistemology. It is focused on in-depth analyses of different sorts of data – sometimes descriptive information about a single case (e.g., Yin 2009). This approach lends itself to comparing case study findings to a previously developed theory, a process that Yin (2009, 38) describes as “analytic generalization.” Generalizing research findings to a larger population (or universe), what Yin (2009, 38) refers to as “statistical generalization,” is typically not one of the goals of qualitative work. As Morse (1999, 6) asserts, it is the knowledge attained that is generalized in qualitative research: “It is the fit of the topic or the comparability of the problem that is of concern.” Similarly, reliability is also not normally relevant because many qualitative researchers employ a postpositivist approach to their work that does not view replicability as possible either theoretically or practically. Merriam (1998, 206), for example, offers a revised notion of reliability that is more suited to the qualitative paradigm; the issue “is not whether findings will be found again but *whether the results are consistent*

with the data collected” (emphasis added). However, *transparency*, the careful and thorough description of research methods, is taken to be important so that other researchers can carry out analogous research if they so choose, as well as understand how the original findings and conclusions were developed. Finally, *validity* is important and can be achieved through triangulation (the use of multiple and complementary methods), peer review of methods and results, member checks (in which research participants can review the results of a research project or a researcher’s interpretations thereof), and, again, the careful explication and transparency of research methods, including the limitations thereof (Merriam 1998, 2002). It is against these standards that qualitative researchers, including, in my view, historians, should measure the efficacy of their work.

Gendered Histories

Once the multiplicity of histories is accepted, and the importance of difference, such as sex/gender, recognized, questions remain as to how to integrate these ideas. Feminist historians have identified three ways in which this integration can happen: women’s history, gender history, and feminist history. The goal of women’s history is to uncover or recover the presence of women and their activities. Seen as “the study of women in time” (Bloch, quoted in Tilly 1989, 440), examples include analyses of the accomplishments of individual women such as Elizabeth Fry, Laura Secord, and Mother Theresa. In the built-environment-related fields are those scholars who have documented the contributions of particular women in urban planning (Birch 1994a; Hayden 1982), housing (Wirka 1994); public administration (Felbinger and Haynes 2004); architecture (Adams and Tancred 2000); and geography (Monk 2004). Others have written more generally about groups of women who have played important roles in changing their urban landscapes (e.g., Belanger 2009; Hayden 1982; Spain 2001; Stratigakos 2008). Organizations such as Women Plan Toronto have also been profiled (e.g., Modlich 1988; Rahder 1998; Whitzman 2007).

Challenges posed to women’s history have to do with similarities between that history and the mainstream history that it seeks to supplement or supplant. That is, women’s history can merely identify and discuss “great” women, similar to the “great man/great plan” tradition of planning history.

As Kleinberg (1988, xi) asserts, “emphasis on individual greatness ignores the vast majority – of women as well as men.” Other criticisms are based on the potential ghettoization of women’s history from mainstream historical work, the uncritical acceptance by those working in women’s history of an unproblematic category of “women,” and a lack of attention paid to the privilege and power that may accompany, if not lead to, greatness (e.g., Bennett 2006; Rendall 1991; Thurner 1997, and others). In terms of planning history, Dubrow (2000, 3) sums it up nicely:

This project of recovery has been inspiring; yet we’ve come to realize that if the scholarship isn’t done carefully it can have some of the same limitations as the mainstream planning histories they implicitly criticize, in the sense that their celebratory impulse may have obscured more complicated dynamics of race, class, and nationalism bound up in women’s civic improvement projects.

Here, Dubrow does not reject women’s history as a legitimate endeavour but, instead, leaves room for thoughtful, inclusive women’s histories that place the subjects of their analysis within broader and more reflective contexts.

Gender history, as a second form of gendered history, is based on the use of gender as a “category for analysis” (J.W. Scott 1988). This can occur in different ways. First is Kelly’s position that events, ideas, and institutions can be seen through a gendered lens by which observations and conclusions are drawn about how these events, ideas, and institutions differentially affect men and women. Kelly’s (1984) now famous example of the Renaissance (i.e., “Did women have a Renaissance?”) is a paradigmatic case in point. Kelly urged us to evaluate differential gendered impacts of an event in, or period of, history using four criteria: increased freedom of female sexuality in comparison to men’s; the political roles of men and women; the cultural placement of women compared to men; and the ambient ideology or world view toward women. Planning discussions that could be seen as being part of this view of gender history include analyses of the differential impacts of land uses and land use policies, designs, or social programs (e.g., Hayden 1982, 2002; Lewis and Foord 1984; McDowell 1983; Reed 1997).

The second approach to gender history is that of J.W. Scott and others who focus more on how structures, events, and activities themselves perpetuate and/or create gender distinctions. Language and interpretations of ideas or concepts become the substrate of analysis here. In planning, a gender historian might be interested in what the exclusion of women from the planning profession says about the construction of the category “women” or might work on “the construction and representation of masculinities in planning” (Dubrow 2000, 3).⁷ Also in planning, work such as that by Aldridge (1996) can be seen as an example of melding these two views of gender history. Her analysis of garden cities and new towns in post-Second World War England suggests that these planning ideas both reinforced stereotypical gender roles and had limiting effects on women compared to men (see also Lewis and Foord 1984).

Like women’s history, gender history has also been criticized in a number of ways. Its links to poststructuralism have been cited as potentially moving history away from addressing the material conditions of women and focusing instead on less political topics such as masculinity and abstract “endless theorizing” (e.g., Sangster 1995; Rendall 1991; Bennett 1989). It has also been said that there is a not-unrelated emphasis on language, or words, instead of the actual experiences of real women (and men).

Finally, feminist history has the goal of going beyond sex and gender to focus more on oppression (Bennett 1989) and marginalization. Dubrow (2000, 3) describes such work as “a movement across lines of class, race, and gender to expand the subject of planning history to study the differential impacts of planning on a wide range of publics ... [and] ... the historical agency of these groups in relation to planning.” Examples here include previously untold stories of the impact of plans and planners not only on women, but also visible minorities, gay men, and lesbians, among others (e.g., Frisch 2002; Manning Thomas 1994; Manning Thomas and Ritzdorf 1997; Ritzdorf 2000; Strong-Boag 1991; Wilson 1991). Thus, the focus is not (only) on women but on the intersections of various sources of oppression in our society, where these oppressions include sex, gender, class, sexuality, “race,” ethnicity, (dis)ability, and so on.

Like gender history, feminist history may be criticized for not focusing exclusively on women but also for potentially losing political power in becoming overly diffuse and treading on the toes of antiracist and other

historians who do not perceive their work to be part of a feminist tradition. Conversely, feminist history may also be criticized for placing too much emphasis on women or sex and gender; this perspective has arisen at a time in which discussions of diversity seem to be preferred over this sort of focus on one or another “difference.”

While adherents to any one school of gendered history argue about the strengths of their approach versus others, it is clear that all three schools of thought have a place in making our histories rightfully more diverse. While feminist and gender histories might be criticized for potentially placing less emphasis on women than some people, hungry to see themselves in the histories of their field and world, would like, women’s history can surely be criticized in ways similar to critiques of mainstream history that focus on men and their achievements. Any discussion of “great women” that does not provide some context into why or how they became great fails to problematize the role of power and privilege that could contribute to “greatness” and ignores the majority of women who don’t “make it” into the pages of history texts. As Carr (1964, 53) says, the “great-man theory of history ... has gone out of fashion in recent years, although it still occasionally rears its ungainly head.” Instead, Carr wants us to “recognize in the great man an outstanding individual who is at once a product and an agent of the historical process, at once the representative and the creator of social forces which change the shape of the world” (55). Clearly, this applies to women as well as men.

In contrast to at least some scholars who insist on advocating for a single best approach to gendered history, many have written about, or hinted at, the unnecessary dualisms drawn between and among the different approaches (e.g., Iacovetta and Kealey 1996; Sangster 1995; Iacovetta 2007). That is, instead of presenting the different stages of gendered history in the form of a linear chronology along which, implicitly or explicitly, it appears that historians got smarter or wiser, it might be more useful to envision a boundless jigsaw puzzle in which women’s, gender, and feminist histories are all critical pieces in making the puzzle a more credible representation of gendered stories about the past.

Accordingly, my discussion in this book falls, to at least some extent, into all three categories of gendered history. I want to talk about women; they have been absent from planning history for far too long. What were

they doing while men were (apparently) planning their communities around them? I want to look at professionalization with the intent of analyzing how, or whether, this process affected men and women differently. Did planning marginalize women on its road to becoming a recognized profession? What did the exclusion of women from professional planning say about the construction of “women” or femininity? And, finally, I want to place the women I identify and with whom I speak into a context that will enable me to recognize their privilege and position in the society that enabled them to make the contributions they did.⁸

In going beyond a description of women and their activities in Canadian planning, I am also acknowledging recent trends in planning and other fields with respect to attention being paid to diversity and/or justice as opposed to only sex or gender or sexuality and so on (e.g., Fainstein 2005; Reeves 2005). That is, my focus is women but my analysis is broader than that. I am also concerned with the similarities and differences among the female participants in my research, as well as a comparison of them as a group with society as a whole. A discussion to this end forms a good deal of Chapter 4 and, to a lesser extent, Chapter 5.

Feminist historians talk about “the discovery or recovery of forgotten women’s lives” as part of the early stages of gendered historical work (Laslett et al. 1997, 1; see also C. Hall 1992 and J.W. Scott 1998, among others). They observe that the integration of feminism and history is concerned more with a range of axes of power (C. Hall 1992) than with only women per se. While this may be the case, there are fields in which women continue to be virtually absent from most of the historical discussions. Planning is one such field; popular planning history texts rarely include women to any extent, and readers are thus left with the impression with which I began this chapter – that women were merely recipients of men’s plans. Thus, planning history in many ways is still at the early stages of becoming more inclusive. As such, it may need to repeat both the successes and shortcomings of, especially, women’s history on its way to becoming more theoretically sophisticated and inclusive. However, its promise is immense; while Lerner (1997, 199) suggests that history to human beings is like breathing – it is that natural – many of us strive to go beyond merely breathing. For instance, those who practise various traditions of yoga strive to have *ujjayi*, or victorious, breath. This is the sort of active, productive,