Montage

sisting racial and economic integration.

Logue’s major projects roughly parallel fashions in renewal and redevelopment and divide fairly conveniently by decades, and Cohen uses these periods to organize the book. Logue started in New Haven in the mid 1950s, having earlier graduated from Yale and its law school, and having worked as both a labor organizer and Connecticut labor secretary. With Mayor Richard Lee, Logue attracted “more redevelopment funds per capita than any other city received,” testing both physical redevelopment and social programs that became part of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. He was then in Boston until the late 1960s as head of the Boston Redevelopment Agency (BRA), arriving after the West End had been demolished but in time to be responsible for the swath of modernist design called Government Center. In this period he retained more historic urban fabric and engaged neighborhood groups. Recruited to New York, where he spent much of the 1970s and 1980s, he first led the innovative statewide Urban Development Corporation (UDC) under Governor Nelson Rockefeller. As the federal government retreated from developing affordable housing, Logue pioneered a new quasi-public approach, eventually creating housing for 100,000 people. In this period, he also attempted to launch a Fair Share affordable housing project in the suburbs, suffering a difficult backlash. After the UDC experiment collapsed amid the financial and political turmoil of the mid 1970s, he had a final chapter in the South Bronx, working at a smaller scale and in a more participatory manner, finally doing what he had long claimed to do, “planning with people.”

The book is more than a biography of Logue. Cohen spends time finishing the stories of the cities where he worked, even after he moved on. Staff colleagues in early projects later became leaders of major initiatives elsewhere, linking the personal experiences in Logue’s life with a larger narrative. For example, the leader of the social-development organization Logue sponsored in New Haven, Community Progress Inc., later became the first president of the Ford Foundation-sponsored Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Since 1979, in the wake of federal pullback, LISC has invested 20 billion sponsoring more than 400,000 affordable housing units and tens of millions of square feet of community and commercial space. The world of the Boston-Washington corridor in the 1950s to the 1970s was a small one with many interconnections among key players, and these are fully evident in the book.

Cohen’s analysis is aided by the location of Logue’s projects in university towns. Yale political scientist Robert Dahl used Lee and Logue’s New Haven as the focus for his important book, Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City (1961), and two Yale graduate students, Nelson Polsby and Raymond Wolfinger, conducted parallel work and produced books. Boston and New York also contributed their share of research on urban issues. These studies were not always sympathetic to Logue, but they provided Cohen a rich empirical base from which to work—complemented by assistance from the Logue family, approximately 80 of her own interviews, multiple oral histories and transcribed interviews with Logue and associates, and numerous archives and libraries.

As an urban planner, one of the professions low on the pecking order in urban renewal, I was of course interested in Logue’s story. Some of the contemporary debates about his work were conducted in the journal I now edit (then called the Journal of the American Institute of Planners). As a scholar of new towns, I was interested in Logue’s attempts to build them in the 1970s, even though Cohen sees Logue’s attempts more positively than I do. Importantly, beyond this planning context, Cohen makes a number of arguments that loom larger than Logue himself or even urban policy, making her history relevant to a wider audience.

Chapter & Verse

Correspondence on not-so-famous lost words

Laurinda Morway writes, “Years ago an author described the phenomenon of hearing or seeing something for the first time and then experiencing it repeatedly as a ‘Junio Sparrow’ (that being the name that popped up unexpectedly again and again). I can’t remember where I read it, and I love the expression. But if I use it I ought to be able to explain where I got it. Can anyone help?”

Charles Cassidy seeks a source for “It’s not the dark I fear. It’s the things moving around in the dark,” or “a more popular variation: ‘I’m not afraid of the dark. I’m afraid of the things moving around in the dark.’ I think the second version has been popularized by the Web phenomenon of creepypasta. The first version I came across was quoted by infamous filmmaker Ed Wood Jr. in his posthumously published Hollywood Rat Race, so it goes back at least to the 1970s. It is clear Wood derived it from some other source, unknown to me.”


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