“Modern Walks: Human Locomotion during the Long Nineteenth Century, c.1800-1914”

Hyde Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill campus

Friday, September 13 and Saturday, September 14

Organized by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in Collaboration with King’s College, London

Conference organizers:
Chad Bryant (UNC-Chapel Hill)
Cynthia Radding (UNC-Chapel Hill)
Paul Readman (King's College, London)

The nineteenth century was a century of movement. Trains sped passengers across previously unimaginable distances, radically transforming our conceptions of time and distance. Steamboats chugged up rivers and across oceans, provided heretofore unimagined possibilities for travel, trade, and migration. Within cities, trams and subways redefined the urban experience and the urban landscape. Bicycles and – by the turn of the century—automobiles opened another chapter in the history of man and machine united in motion. Yet scholars have often overlooked a simple fact: people continued to walk. Indeed, this most basic of human functions arguably took on an increasing number of forms and meanings as the nineteenth century progressed. The window shopper, commuter, tourist, and trespasser made their appearances on the world stage. Stone-paved sidewalks, new rural pathways, and public parks became available to the pedestrian. Old rituals such as the pilgrimage and the promenade adapted to the modern age. Newer practices, such as organized marching, rambling, hiking, and mountain-walking established themselves as important features of social and cultural life.
This conference seeks to explore the many various practices of walking that persisted and emerged around the world in the course of the nineteenth century, and into the early twentieth century. Our goal is not only to offer a new perspective on the history of movement but to ask what walks and walking might reveal about some of the major themes in nineteenth-century global history such as urbanization, industrialization, commodification, and imperialism. In short, how does our perspective on the nineteenth century change if we ask how people put one foot in front of the other, and for what purpose?

Program

Friday, September 13
10-11:15 am -- Walking, or Not Walking, as Religious Practice

Iqbal Sevea, History Department, UNC Chapel Hill, “‘The Bus Won’t Get You There’: Walking, Piety, and Spiritual Authority in South Asia during the Age of Modern Transportation”

Barry L. Steifel, Urban Studies, College of Charleston, “Urban Space and Travel on the Jewish Sabbath in the Nineteenth Century”

Chair/Discussant, Arthur Burns, History Department, King’s College, London

11:15-11:30 – coffee and snack break

11:30-1:00 – Interpreting Modern Walks

Matthew N. Johnston, Department of Art, Lewis & Clark College, “Revisiting National Trauma: Pioneering Experiential History in Benson Lossing’s Pictorial Field Book of the Civil War”

Elizabeth Coggin Womack, Department of English, Penn State, Brandywine, “‘The Walk of a Race Apart’: Walking as Labor in Henry Mayhew’s London”

Angeliki Sioli, School of Architecture, McGill University, “Walking in Andrei Bely’s Petersburg: Active Perception and Embodied Experience of the City”
Chair/Discussant: Brian Hurwitz, Professor of Medicine and the Arts, Department of English Language and Literature, King’s College, London

1:00-2:00 – Lunch

2:00-3:30 Walking Up: Mountains and Mountaineers

Paul Readman, History Department, King’s College, London, “The Pedestrian Passions of James, first Viscount Bryce: Walker, Mountaineer, Scholar, Statesman, 1838-1922”

Arthur Burns, History Department, King’s College, London, “The Only Way Is Up? The English Mountain Expedition Narrative from Albert Smith to Edward Whymper”

Michael Wedekind, Institute for Social and Economic History, University of Vienna, “Climbing for the Nation’s Sake: Mountaineering and National Identity Around 1900”

Chair/Discussant, Simon Sleight, History Department, King’s College, London

Saturday, September 14

9:30-11:00 Walking, Delineation, and Mapping

Julie Hipperson, Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, King’s College, London, “Efficiency on Foot? The Well-run Country Estate of Nineteenth-century Britain”

Robert Gray, History Department, Keele University, “Walking the Boundaries between Modernity and Tradition: Perambulation and ‘Beating the Bounds’ in Nineteenth-century Hungary”

Simon Sleight, History Department, King’s College, London, “License to Roam? Historicising Young People’s Urban Range”

Chair/Discussant: Chad Bryant, History Department, UNC-Chapel Hill and Paul Readman, King’s College, London

11:00-11:30 Coffee and snack break
11:30-1:00 Contact with People, Contact with Nature

Chad Bryant, Department of History, UNC Chapel Hill, “The New Urbanites and their City Wall: Strolling within, above and outside Prague before 1848”

Clare Griffiths, Department of History, University of Sheffield, “‘A Good Walk Spoiled’? Golfers and the Experience of Landscape in the Late Nineteenth Century”

Nitin Sinha, Department of History, University of York, “Colonial Walks: Between 'Zones of Contact' and ‘Zone of Comfort’ in India”

Chair/Discussant: Cynthia Radding, Department of History, UNC-Chapel Hill

1:00-2:00 Lunch

2:00-3:30 Plenary session

The conference is supported by the UNC-King’s College, London collaboration fund; the History Department; the Center for European Studies; the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies; the College of Arts and Sciences; and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies

Questions? Please contact Chad Bryant (bryantc@email.unc.edu)