



Onusko, James. (2021). Boom Kids: Growing Up in the Calgary Suburbs, 1950-1970. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University.

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In the book, "Boom Kids: Growing Up in the Calgary Suburbs, 1950-1970," the author, James Onusko, extensively explores the socio-cultural dynamics of suburban existence inside the Banff Trail neighborhood of Calgary during the pivotal period spanning from 1950 to 1970. Onusko, a renowned scholar of Canadian post-war suburban culture, vividly portrays this era by examining the experiences of its most youthful inhabitants. The author's work sheds light on the stories of those who experienced childhood in the aftermath of World War II. 'Boom Kids' transcends its role as a mere historical narrative as it delves into the intricate process of establishing a communal ethos. This ethos is meticulously shaped by the laughter, trials, and escapades experienced by the youngsters inside this society. Onusko skillfully utilizes diverse materials to construct a narrative that allows readers to immerse themselves in a historical period characterized by the nascent development of suburban living, significantly shaped by the pursuits of its younger inhabitants. The book delineates the ways in which these emerging individuals influenced economic standards inside households, implemented changes in schooling, and fostered a suburban identity that was uniquely Canadian. These developments had a significant role in establishing a

book societal paradigm for subsequent generations.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the developmental period of the post-war generation in the Banff Trail neighborhood of Calgary, as previously mentioned. It not only presents a captivating examination of the distinct experiences of these youngsters but also aligns with the conclusions drawn by other established academic studies. This research focuses on the dynamics of family life in the post-war period. Onusko's study explores various topics, including the evolution of gender roles, dominant beliefs about parenting, the effects of health trends on young people, the omnipresent tensions of the Cold War era, and social worries around misbehavior. Onusko's book offers a comprehensive and adaptable examination of the intricacies and changes that influenced the inner structure of Canadian society over these pivotal decades.

James Onusko provides a comprehensive analysis of the developmental trajectory of suburban Calgary, focusing on children's experiences inside these rapidly expanding areas.

The book starts by reflecting on the suburban landscapes that served as recreational spaces for children in the aftermath of World War II. Onusko suggests that the conceptualization of these regions was significantly shaped by the objective of establishing an optimal setting for the development of young Canadians. The author illustrates the impact of children on the suburban environment, as well as the influence of this environment on the lives of its young residents. The many components, such as schools, playgrounds, streets, and public parks, all contributed significantly to forming childhood memories. Onusko examines the interplay between reciprocal effects, illustrating the way physical backgrounds and the experiences of young individuals converged to shape the suburban lifestyle. Residences were once seen as very valuable spaces and

served as the focal point of individuals' "childhood cultural landscape" (p. 33). The many elements of Banff Trail jointly cultivate a distinct sense of community and inclusion among its inhabitants. Onusko posits that a child's conceptualization of community is inherently interconnected with the geographical characteristics of the region. The tapestry intertwines the many domains where families dwell, pursue their economic activities, and partake in recreational pursuits. The child's identity was firmly established within the suburban environment through the interconnectedness of living spaces, workplaces, and recreational areas, which provided a distinct feeling of place that transcended temporal and spatial boundaries.

The traditional boundaries of social class are frequently blurred from the younger generation's perspective. Onusko explores the concept that inside the microcosm of suburban areas, the shared characteristics of their surroundings, such as residential settings, neighborhoods, educational institutions, and recreational spaces, serve to conceal the inherent social divisions. Onusko examines the intricate process of identifying and characterizing social class distinctions from the perspective of children's daily interactions. The author proposes that a child's comprehension of social class is best understood within the framework of their familiar environment. During that period, the population consisted predominantly of middle-class households however, in both working-class and middle-class homes, suburban children and adolescents usually performed some work for wages during this period" (p. 85). The contributions produced during the period and the efforts exerted may be considered improper or exploitative in contemporary society. These factors were crucial in attaining the perceived primary objective of acquiring a residential property, which was considered challenging at the time. The element of

financial need mentioned above highlights the extent to which families went to establish a stable household, indicating a period when the economic participation of every family member was frequently indispensable in achieving the suburban ideal. However, the author argues that social class continues to play a discreet but noteworthy role in shaping access to healthcare, recreational activities, and educational possibilities. This is evident in the experiences of the youngsters residing in Banff Trail, who encounter implicit privileges within several domains.

Furthermore, Onusko's research becomes particularly intellectually stimulating when he examines the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and dissent within the context of obscurity. According to his ground-breaking study, there has been a historical association between midnight and a feeling of apprehension among young individuals. During this period, they are often anticipated to withdraw from public spaces and adhere to the tranquility of nocturnal societal expectations. The author delves into this duality in the last chapter, analyzing the cultural and sociological aspects. This study examines the ramifications of "the night" and its link with invisibility and transgression in the lives of young individuals.

Additionally, Onusko highlights the significant role of education in shaping the identities of young individuals residing in the suburban areas of Calgary. The elucidation of historical events and the intricacies of this societal shift may be attributed to the rich oral accounts provided by eighteen persons who experienced their developmental years within the distinctive environs of the suburban regions of Calgary throughout the period spanning from the 1950s to the 1970s. These personal narratives have a purpose beyond mere indulgence in sentimentality. These artifacts function as a means of comprehending the intricate aspects of infancy during the period following

the war. Onusko adeptly portrays a wide range of recollections, encompassing moments of happiness and hardship. This portrayal effectively showcases not just the carefree experiences of youth but also the tumultuous periods marked by acts of aggression, prejudice, and sorrow, which occasionally leave lasting impacts, particularly at educational institutions where specific individuals were subjected to disciplinary measures.

Consequently, these measures served as a mechanism for fostering discipline. According to the author "Elementary, junior high, and secondary schools were places where young children and adolescents were observed and classified, required to obey rules, measured in terms of their relationship to specific standards, and directed to modify behaviours and their physical appearance" (p. 59) The inclusion of Onusko's recollections, as presented in a comprehensive supplement, not only enhances the practice of oral history but also provides the listener with a profound insight into the approach that evoked such vivid memories. The body of his work serves as evidence of the deep and varied encounters during childhood, skillfully interlacing a narrative that encompasses not only individual challenges and successes but also the significance of communal bonds and camaraderie. Onusko's tale serves to confirm the presence of children's vocalizations inside historical documentation. By conducting a thorough examination of archival resources sourced from professionals and educators and carefully comparing them with childcentric materials.

To adopt a comprehensive and child-centered viewpoint on historical events, one must strive to embrace a multifaceted understanding of the past. The book "Boom Kids" was created as

a poignant narrative that sheds light on the nuanced experiences of children, elevating them from the obscurity of historical accounts to the recognition they justly merit and to give readers a scope of life during the post war period. The academic audience that would be interested in reading “Boom Kids” would be historians, sociologists and psychologists.

In summary, "Boom Kids" transcends being a mere historical record. This work comprehensively examines the influential experiences that had a crucial role in shaping a whole cohort. The decision made by Onusko to integrate personal accounts with archival material sheds light on the nature of childhood experiences in Calgary during the post-war period. Although the book does not explicitly address the specific focus on the Banff Trail, it undeniably contributes to our comprehension of Canadian social history, leaving room for readers to engage in conjecture and interpretation. The comprehensive examination of personal experiences enhances the scholarly study of Canadian suburban areas. Onusko’s aim was also to encourages readers to contemplate the broader significance of these early-life narratives for present-day communities. The conclusion of "Boom Kids" invites readers to engage in thoughtful reflection, to examine the enduring impact of historical legacies on contemporary notions of identity, community, and belonging.