

real play in the concrete world is diminishing, and it is becoming harder to balance the virtual and real worlds. Sometimes the editors seem too optimistic about the positive effects of technological development, if we consider the destructive effects of the same technology on children's play today. Perhaps the best trend might be to follow children's play in poor developing countries like India or Africa where children often play with found objects and toys they produce on their own, an approach at odds with the consumerist mentality of Western countries.

In general, the articles in this volume are of a high quality in content and formulation from well-known American play researchers, though it is surprising that the most important "playboy" in the world, Brian Sutton-Smith, is not represented here. Overall, the book is an interesting catalog, one that can inspire readers to attempt a more comprehensive study. Although I might have organized the work differently (for instance, Jane Ilene Freeman Davidson's article "Language and Play: Natural Partners" might have been better placed in Part III, along with James F. Christie's article on play and literacy), my bigger concern is that too many short articles might give a confusing picture. The book offers a rich start for deeper study, but I would have preferred fewer, longer articles. For that reason, such works, for example, as James E. Johnson, James F. Christie, and Francis Wardle's *Play, Development, and Early Education* or Joe L. Frost, Sue C. Wortham, and Stuart Reifel's *Play and Child Development* function better for students.

Finally, only the article by Roopnarine and Krishnakumar criticizes the ethnocentric American view of play, and there is

not a single article from European play research. The huge mass of research written in German presents language problems for American researchers, Nordic play research seldom appears in English, and very little Russian research gets translated, but English play research would have been easy to include and would have made this book an even better resource.

—Arne Trageton, *Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway*

Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America

Jeff Wiltse

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 276 pp. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780807831007.

This well-illustrated and highly accessible history takes us from the first municipal swimming pool in Boston in 1868 across a century of change in a largely summer activity that at times surpassed the popularity of most other forms of physical play. The author, a young historian at the University of Montana, focuses on public swimming in the North. In the tradition of American social history, the book focuses on the issues of class, race, gender, and, to a lesser extent, age in the "contested" space of the pool, a site of bared bodies, cooled on hot summer days, in a setting that (compared with sports) was relatively hard to regulate. One of the most imaginative works that I've seen in this genre in years, it compares very favorably to the social histories of leisure that appeared in the late 1970s and the 1980s.

The book begins with the story of the anarchic style of nude swimming by boys in rivers and lakes. Genteel urban authorities tried to prohibit such swimming and ultimately to channel it by providing municipal pools. Though the earliest pools had been built to assure the cleanliness of working-class and immigrant males, they wound up instead being used mostly by boys in raucous play. Swimming slowly became part of the middle-class recipe for fitness and recreation, but into the Progressive Era, public pools remained concentrated in working-class districts—though the justification for them moved gradually from maintaining male cleanliness to containing potential juvenile delinquency. Pools were more difficult to “control” than playgrounds, which appeared simultaneously with their supervised sports and games. Despite this drawback to pools, authorities did try to make them more accessible to mixed gender and middle-class users. They placed them in central locations, offered special times for female swimmers, and even charged admissions to regulate—or exclude—the poor. Wiltse offers vivid evidence of these developments, combining stories of specific pools and judiciously used data to back up his claims.

He notes that the interwar years between 1920 and 1940 comprised a golden age of swimming pool construction and use. While early municipal pools had been built to reduce crime, disease, and simply dirtiness, these new pools were openly offered to the public for summer play and socializing. Small towns and cities dramatically stepped up construction, and the federal government kept up the boom during the Depression. Sometimes these pools recalled resorts, boasting grass or sandy “beaches” for sunbathing. Some

were even decorated with mosaic tiling and statuary. They brought the seashore to inland cities like St. Louis. Small towns of only two or three thousand built pools that became the center of town life all summer. Cities sometimes offered football-field sized pools that accommodated 10,000 or more. For many readers, all of this will evoke memories of lazy summers spending all day at the pool.

But there was another side to this boom. As these pools became more accessible and appealing to middle-class crowds, as Victorian modesty gave way to more revealing (and comfortable) bathing suits in the 1920s and 1930s, and as females entered pools that were no longer gender segregated (a change allowed by authorities to facilitate family fun), a new issue arose. Whereas swimming pools before the 1920s had housed mostly working-class males, which meant a social amalgam of native and immigrant whites as well as African Americans (at least in small numbers), Wiltse argues that mixed-race swimming became problematic when it also became mixed-gender.

Simply put, pools became either officially or unofficially segregated (enforced with white crowds rioting if blacks should enter “their” pool) because of white fears of African American contact with white women in such a sexually charged environment. He argues that racial segregation occurred in the North in this period because black migration to the North during the second decade of the century increased the number of black people at swimming pools. Moreover, the growing affluence and assimilation of immigrants, the end to most new immigration in 1924, and a broadened definition of the “white” crowd to include all ethnic groups except

African Americans all reinforced “white solidarity” and the exclusion of blacks.

Those familiar with David Nasaw’s *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* have heard this argument, but Wiltse reveals the impact of this change in the playful crowd in an amazing and chilling account of how often black kids were physically excluded from pools in the early twentieth century. Moreover, while postwar efforts to integrate public pools gradually were successful, the result was that whites abandoned public pools in large numbers in the 1950s and 1960s, constructing private pool clubs with often hefty membership fees or building private backyard pools. Meanwhile, the grand pools of the interwar years were often neglected and closed by authorities. This is a sad and an important story, suggesting part of the explanation of the decline in public space that perhaps has led to a decline in commitment to community in our time. It also suggests the continuing negative influence of social/racial division in playful (especially sexually charged) crowds.

This book is a subtle and engaged treatment that should find a large audience. Some readers might wish for more on the tantalizing questions of changes in the use of and play in pools over time and the role of lifeguards and other authorities in controlling pool play. Some might question whether gender integration and the author’s other arguments fully explain racial segregation. But this was easily the most enjoyable and insightful book that I have had the pleasure of reviewing in some years. Read it and look for more from Professor Wiltse.

—Gary Cross, *Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA*

When the Girls Came Out to Play: The Birth of American Sportswear

Patricia Campbell Warner

Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. Preface, illustrations, bibliography and notes, index. 292 pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 1558495495.

Twenty years after she began her work on the development of women’s sportswear in the United States, Patricia Campbell Warner has completed a compelling and insightful book that poses the question, “Which came first, the sportswear or the female athlete?” As she explains in her introduction, Warner’s first interest has always been in the struggles of those women who wished to wear clothing that made sense. Since American sportswear has become the world’s default clothing style in the past fifty years, she uses this book to explain how and why comfortable clothing for women came to be accepted as both appropriate dress for working out in private but also acceptable for exercising publicly in the presence of men. According to Warner, the establishment and growth of women’s colleges in the United States during the nineteenth century is directly linked to the development of styles of dress more suited to the increased physicality of educated women. This, along with the discovery of new materials and the introduction of the sewing machine, allowed designers and individual sewers the opportunity to craft costumes both useful, and eventually, beautiful.

Warner begins with a definition of American sportswear, whose pieces she says, “have lasted with very little fundamental change since the late 1920s: sweaters, pants, shirts, skirts, blazers.” She argues