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Landscape and Ambience on the Urban Fringe: From Agricultural to Imagined Countryside

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ABSTRACT

This article stems from ongoing research on the creation of penurbia since 1945 which examines the development of hybrid city-country landscapes around large urban areas that mesh stylised countryside with functional links to the cities. Simply put, penurbia looks like country but often thinks like the city, and gives a name and an explanation for a concept that had previously been neglected. The term amalgamates the solar metropolis' penumbra as an area of influence and visual awareness without defined focus.

The urban fringe has grown dramatically since 1945, as emigrants from urban areas hoped that life in the country would provide a haven against the rush and thrust of life in the city. Ill-formed and dimly understood cultural ideals fuelled flight to rural areas where individuality, nature, familiarity, purity, hope and tradition would trump practical and economic considerations. This paper relates the story of the development of distinct penurban landscapes and ambiances in three eastern U.S. counties.¹

KEYWORDS

Urban-rural fringe, urbanisation, suburbanisation, hobby farming, viticulture, horse/equine industry

INTRODUCTION

Over the last generation, historians have advocated the study of the interrelationship of the city and the environment, in part to stop the gaps in knowledge resultant from sub-disciplinary specialisation and to create a holistic understanding of the processes separately researched by environmental and urban historians. Joel A. Tarr (2000) noted that ‘historians have paid limited attention to the effects of cities on the environments on their hinterlands’.¹ While Tarr conceived of influence flowing from the city to the hinterland, this paper suggests a more even interlacing of influences to create patterns of urban-rural hybridisations based on reciprocal flows of people, ideas and physical objects. In the process, pastoral urban hinterlands can also influence urban areas as ideal, idealised and aspirational states of mind and physicality are projected back.² Thus conceived, nature blends roles as a socio-cultural construction and an actor in its own right.³

Arguably the urban-rural borderlands stage the most significant negotiations of cultural ideas with physical environments in the U.S., as emplaced by diverse networks of actors – including farmers, urban émigrés, government administrators and corporations. In the process new landscapes emerge which are fashioned socially and culturally, yet are still reliant on physical surroundings. Swirling within this mix of countryside and urbanity is a form of stylised nature or ‘socio-nature’: part constructed, part physical and partly dissembled.⁴ Incomers to the urban fringe imagine such areas to be nature, or at least predominantly natural, whereas displaced farmers and others more clearly recognise resultant landscapes as being enacted upon both them and their locales by outside forces. Together a fragmented, uneasy and contested patchwork of amenity and agricultural landscapes may result, in which an incomers’ landscape of leisure fizzles against, and fuses with, a landscape of production.⁵

Landscape transformation appears most visibly in the functional borderlands of urban areas.⁶ Describing this phenomenon demanded new terms of the professionals and observers concerned. August Sectorsky (1956) coined ‘Exurbia’ as a description of elective farming and ranching on New York City’s borderlands at mid century; William Whyte (1958) wrote of pervasive ‘Urban Sprawl’ at the city’s edge in *Fortune* magazine; Jean Gottmann (1961) described America’s eastern seaboard (Massachusetts to Virginia) conurbation as a continuous ‘Megalopolis’; Richard Louv (1982) argued that Americans elected to fuse tradition and nature with opportunity in a reworked and rejuvenated ‘America II’; John Herbers (1986) showed how metropolitan edge migration left decentralised city-country mixes of settlement patterns which he depicted ‘new American heartlands’; Joel Garreau (1991) recorded how urban life had spread to ‘Edge Cities’ on the metropolitan periphery; and Adam Rome (2000) highlighted the environmental effects of post-1945 spatial and demographic movements of ‘the Bulldozer in the Country’; while Rob Lang and Jennifer

LeFurgy (2007) described the texture of twenty-first century elusive and rapid urbanisation as ‘Boomburbs’. At a crude level, these authors described the urban fringe in very different terms, from celebratory (Spectorsky and Garreau) to catastrophic (Rome), depending partly on whether they focused on physical or cultural phenomena.⁷ More widely, concern over landscape and ambience change held the attention of people across the United States, the United Kingdom, and in other developed western nations, even as manifestations of change at the urban fringe varied.

Exurbia and sprawl emerged as the most durable terms for metropolitan edge growth by professionals and the popular mind respectively, with exurbia understood as extra-metropolitan urban and suburban growth rather than Spectorsky’s electively rural lifestyle.⁸ Exurban studies brought forth useful and innovative research, most of which was quantitatively based within the social sciences (economics, demographics and statistics) and presupposed that distance from urban area reduced the attractiveness of a location. Meanwhile, the softer culture of the urban fringe remained largely subsumed by the numbers, leading to oversimplifications and a lack of understanding of textual differences. For many, distance from urban areas – measured in commutes of up to two hours – continued to be a positive factor as it provided access to nature and protection from urban contamination. Fixations on the bricks and tarmac sprawl of monster homes on clustered subdivisions stifled discussion of cultural sprawl, of ‘neo-ruralites’, ‘new-country’ and ‘neo-pastorals’, who mobilised deep-set ideas and sought expansive, leisured lives in at the urban fringe. Moreover much recent research had the mournful loss of farmland and countryside to asphalt and bricks as its primary concern, rather than an assessment of landscape change and hybridisation. This paper scrutinises changing landscapes and ambience in three dissimilar metropolitan edge counties in the eastern U.S. – Loudoun County, Virginia; Howard County, Maryland; and Niagara County, New York – using census data, state reports, extension reports, news-media and interviews.

Thirty-three percent of Loudoun’s farms are really homesites This proportion appears to be rising and reflects the ... national trend among urbanites towards a return to rural living There are more takers for what Loudoun has to offer ... with Washingtonians crossing the Potomac in a ... discovery of her fertile possibilities in land and living.⁹

(1949 Loudoun County promotional brochure)

People and ideas spilled between the cities and the countryside during the latter half of the twentieth century, as illustrated in the Loudoun booster brochure above – altering the character of the American landscape in the process. Some city dwellers forsook their urban homes for rural living, while others left the country for the city. Agricultural change contributed to this development, as did the actions of governments and others. Arable farming landscapes were lost in urban edge expansion, yet countryside vistas frequently and counter-intuitively

became more complex, with greater diversity of flora and fauna. Grapes, horses, exotic animals, wildlife and new plant types thrived – replacing cereal and dairy farming – with fun or essentially non-commercial leisure farming taking over from hard nosed commercial farming. The minds and activity of new country dwellers – penurbanites – imagined, preserved and fashioned rich new pastoral landscapes in the unlikeliest of settings.

Loudoun County lies thirty miles from Washington D.C. in northern Virginia, Howard County lies about twenty miles from Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C., and Niagara County lies some fifteen miles north and east of the Baltimore-Niagara urban complex (at their closest points). Rural backwaters in 1945, all three subsequently came under the sway of nearby metropolitan areas as transport links to them improved. Populations increased and diversified dramatically: in terms of religious, ethnic and racial composition. Secondly, settlement dispersed widely, with the development of suburbs and the infusion of urban concerns into local politics. Thirdly, metropolitan mindsets overlaid local societies, leaving them substantially changed. Fourthly, traditional agrarian livelihoods became marginal to local economies in value and employment terms. Lastly, physical urban frontiers – whether as tangible lines of development, linear tendrils, or as exclaves – advanced into these counties.

For observers, however, these counties remained predominantly rural and verdant, despite the roar of the bulldozer. In fact, portions of the counties seemed more rural to city eyes in 2007 than in 1947. Deliberate preservation schemes help to explain this, but just as often the pastoral feel stemmed from the collective result of individual actions as settlers moved in. Thus, county and regional governments in Loudoun, with a 2006 population (estimate) of 268,817 (up 98,000 since 2000), Howard with a 2006 population (est.) of 272,452 (up 24,000 since 2000), and Niagara residents with a 2006 estimate of 216,130 (down 2,000 since 2000) cultivated rural flavours in some areas – despite eight to tenfold post-war population increases for Loudoun and Howard.¹⁰ This observation becomes doubly remarkable as the developed areas of these counties magnified beyond population increases.¹¹ Simultaneously, western Loudoun, central western Howard and eastern Niagara became greener, more forested, more diverse in plant, insect and animal life. In all three counties, larger populations jar against more verdant and less traditional farmland, challenging assumptions that the U.S. has become a 'suburban nation' and created a sprawling 'isomorphic geography of nowhere' in the process.¹²

To exemplify and analyse the construction of an urban borderland neo-pastoral landscape, five markers came under examination: the diversifying agricultural economy and landscape; the extent of the equine industry; agricultural fairs; the development of viticulture; and preservation and park development. The first four reflected ill-articulated cultural ideas operationalised by individuals, as they required a leisured use of extensive landholdings in order to create more of a 'dreamscape' than a productive landscape. As a prerequisite, such non-commercial

use relied on incomes independent of agriculture or horticulture, relatively cheap real estate prices, and often well thought out business plans. To employ cultural capital in a transformative way economic capital probably helped. Preservation and park development resulted from collective action and relates how local societies collectively reacted to the growing influence of the city.

THE DIVERSIFYING AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ECONOMY

Farming influences landscapes immensely, so changes in farming affect how people perceive places. Farming landscapes in the three counties transformed between 1945 and 2007. Incomers staked claims on the countryside, envisaged land differently, and prized aesthetics above utility. New country types saw land as a setting; the countryside conjured images of places to live in rather than work on. Not surprisingly, then, farmer and settlers clashed over attitudes, as one Maryland cattle farmer indicated:

One reason for a lot of the conflict is what non-farmers think of farms Environmentalists call farms natural resources, planners call them open space, and most people relate to them as parks. We think of a farm as a factory.¹³

For penurbanites, land could never be a factory. The countryside altered as incomers employed their ideas, shown through changed crop and animal husbandry trends, the availability of alternative agricultural advice and research, and the growing influence of the leisure economy. Between 1964 and 2002, as farmland was built over or left fallow, nearly two thirds of farmland was withdrawn from commercial agriculture in Howard, and between one quarter and one third in Loudoun and Niagara.¹⁴ The complexion of remaining fields changed, witnessing the influence of new farming practices and of the scale of farming. The most important agents of change in the three counties – apart from farmers and land consumers themselves – were the Cooperative Extension Services (CES) acting in concert with county governments' building and zoning policies.

Cooperative Extension Services reoriented themselves towards non-standard, 'alternative', or 'new' agricultural production from about 1980 as many commercial farms broke into mini-homesteads. Part-time 'farmettes' proliferated from the 1970s, starting a relative trend which extends to the present. Growing numbers of smallholdings grabbed media attention in a 1974 *Howard County Times* article which estimated that there were two hundred 25-acre and smaller farms in Howard alone.¹⁵ Penurban farmers conducted small-scale hobby-farming (smallholder farming with limited commercial impact), dude-ranching (oriented towards leisure and tourists), horse farming, organic farming, subsistence farming, collective farming, themed farming, pumpkin patches, petting farms, advanced forms of animal husbandry including exotic herds of llamas, alpacas, angoras, water buffalo and ostriches, and horticulture, including viticulture. Some back-to-the-landers were inspired by Scott and Helen Nearing's mid-century 'good

life'; others followed Spector'sky's wealthy weekend farmers of the 1950s; and still others sought ways of paying their property taxes.¹⁶ Incomers worked both landscapes and perceptions of landscapes. New, elective farmers frequently relaxed commercial criteria, but still needed specialist advice. Smallholder Peggy Schultz captured the new farmers' motivations in a 1979 *Baltimore Sun* interview: 'Farming just makes you feel good'.¹⁷

Despite rural sympathies, many new farmers knew little about country life, so the CES offered support – such as Howard CES basic farming course which started in 2000.¹⁸ The CES reacted to the ark-like diversity of alternative farming: the mindset of the 'farmette' organic wool producer grated with specialised agronomists. Few traditional farmers practised alternative agriculture, so alternative usually meant incomer farming – as CES personnel in all the counties confirmed during interviews.¹⁹ The need for profits and the massive capital invested deterred alternative farming for traditional farmers; especially as globalising food markets left scant leeway for experimentation. As staff retired, the CES increasingly hired specialists with skills tailored to diverse contemporary farming, often in regional specialists groups such as for producers of wine and horses in Maryland, Virginia and New York.²⁰

Small-scale producers complicated the marketing of food and fibre as niche and marginal farmers demanded more CES help in finding buyers for their goods, for instance by encouraging farmers' markets and subscription services to quicken the journey from field to table. Such marketing protected small producers from market price fluctuations by connecting them with local customers. Putting faces to produce, places for farms, and stories to consumers, were positive attributes that echoed with customers and allowed consumers to pitch their identities with the farming community. Nurturing niche products like lambs, goats, exotic vegetables, or items with value added on-site, such as cheese and wine also encouraged finely meshed penurban economies.

Recognising diversity, the CES support themed farming, including pumpkin patches targeting suburban families who could combine farm visits with pumpkin cutting, wine tours where the tippler could follow the grape from field to bottle, and the Bed and Breakfast weekend farming experience. Collectively, such initiatives 'humanised' farming for the outsider; which was especially important given mounting unease over the methods and the quality of agribusiness produce.²¹ Overall, CES organisations reoriented themselves towards consumer-minded strategies. Loudoun County's 1998 rural development programme represented the clearest acceptance of the hybridisation of agriculture by reconnecting the agrarian dream with the metropolitan present.²² The realisation that farming on the fringe held challenges and opportunities singled Loudoun out as a pioneer in deliberately weaving the seductive and productive landscapes which attracted incomers.

In recent years, agricultural crises associated with global markets, low commodity costs, and growth pressure hampered family farmers' ability to carry debt,

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improve productivity or add value to produce. Few traditional farmers could confidently pass their livelihoods on to their offspring, suggesting links between alternative and new farming and opening the door for incomers who could bear investment costs and low returns or think differently. 'Ethnic' farmers who cultivated intensive and high value products for émigré communities grew. After 1980, numbers of African, Asian and Latin American farmers rose seven-fold in the Washington-Baltimore region. Termed 'New American Farmers' by the *Washington Post*, they served between 500,000 and one million local customers through networks of supermarkets and speciality grocery stores. Ethnic farms looked little like traditional American monocultures and reinforced penurbia's exotic impression.²³

Parts of the changing agrarian economy could only be inferred from qualitative sources, as census materials only registered them incompletely. Examples include organic farming and more exotic crops and animal husbandry, where figures were very shaky due to self-reporting and classification. Censuses did not distinguish between organic and non-organic farmers, and different states operated different classificatory regimes, making comparisons between counties and across time virtually impossible. Likewise, the variety of livestock types relied on self-reporting. Data for both sectors needed to be gleaned from elsewhere. Horses, wine and agricultural fairs provided good sources describing changing rural life that can be monitored over time. These are examined later.

TABLE 1. Farm Size and Distribution

	Total farmland acres	Percentage area farmland	Under 50 acre farms	Under 10 acre farms
Howard County				
1964	87,000	54%	137	17
2002	38,000	23%	222	72
Loudoun County				
1964	234,000	70%	251	73
2002	165,000	49%	977	99
Niagara County				
1964	181,000	54%	598	108
2002	148,000	44%	346	70

(Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, see note 7.)

Farm sizes reflected the development of a hybridised pastoral landscape, characterised by the leisure farming and dude ranching where horses were present. Agriculture in all three counties transformed, as shown in Table 1 above. The distribution of farm sizes was squeezed as medium sized family farms fell to giant agribusiness on the one hand, and to the development of small lot and scarcely commercially viable leisure farming on the other. Micro lots gained much more significance. In Howard the total farm area fell from 87 thousand

acres in 1964 (when suburbanisation took off), to 38 thousand acres in 2002 – from 54% of land area to 23%. Simultaneously, the number of under-50 acre farms nearly doubled, from 137 in 1964, to 222 in 2002. Eye-catchingly, the number of tiny farms (under 10 acres) shot up from 17 to 72 during the same period. Loudoun's 234 thousand acres of farmland in 1964 fell to 165 thousand in 2002 (with much of the fall after 1980 when development began to encroach) from 70% of land area to 49%. Here, sub-50 acre farm numbers rose nearly fourfold; from 251 in 1964 to 977 in 2002. Niagara also saw land in farms decrease; from 181 thousand acres in 1964 to 148 thousand acres in 2002 – from 54% to 44% of land area. Small farm numbers here, however, collapsed by half from 1964 to 1992 (598 to 273) as the county suffered rustbelt malaise. From 1992, however, the number recovered strongly (to 346).

The stunning growth of lifestyle farms is well established, with less farmland distributed among many more small plots – despite the effects of different data collection methods or tax code changes on statistics. The huge increase in plots of 10 acres in the most developed county – Howard – may predict the future for other metropolitan edge counties. Certainly, the visual impression of these smallholdings would be of greater diversity than for traditional arable dairy farm, or agribusiness. While too small to farm, a patchwork of 10 acre landholdings helps create pastoral landscapes and ambiances where monoculture once predominated. For urbanites, the horse and leisure country of western Loudoun, western Howard and eastern Niagara became more alluring as a potential homestead: a trend confirmed at the national level by successive Gallup polls since 1972. The motif value of hayfields and horse manes billowing in the wind captured the hearts of the country-minded urbanite.²⁴

THE EQUINE INDUSTRY

Horses, the second marker of landscape construction, are a vital feature of the penurban fringe. Loudoun, Howard and Niagara counties saw rising numbers of horses within their areas between 1940 and 2002; despite mechanisation and despite declining arable farming acreages and employment. Increased horse populations relied on changes in farming: from for profit to for fulfilment. Local hay production rose even as dairying declined, suggesting that this hay was finding new markets.

The equine industry infused the feel of a community, as horses need space to feed and graze, for riding, and for hay and silage. Pasturage transformed cornfields into lush meadows. Simultaneously, the landscape was embellished with the feel of an elective, landed, leisurely and pastoral lifestyle: the 'country' ambience that drew city dwellers. State agricultural departments and local CES offices charted rising horse numbers through Equine Census Reports. Owning horses provided rich commercial returns, while servicing the equine market sup-

ported a growing equine economy, including blacksmithing and riding schools that can be tracked through city directories and telephone books. Descriptions for property for sale with equine references in publications such as the upper crust lifestyle monthly *Town and Country* suggest a spin off for real estate values. In recent years Maryland, Virginia and New York states reported spending for equine products of \$476 million, \$504 million and \$704 million respectively. Capital employed reportedly exceeded yearly expenditure by a factor of ten.²⁵ Though county breakdowns of annual expenditure were not available, horse census numbers revealed rising horse ownership rates. Loudoun became Virginia's premier equine county, and increasing horse numbers refuted the idea that mechanisation and closeness to the metropolis meant fewer horses.

Equine surveys are innovations of the last two decades. State Equine Surveys recorded more horses and dollar values than Census figures, and showed that the equine market deserved serious attention. Bridging economics and lifestyle, equine industry numbers and values suffered under-reporting and uncertainty. Due to collection methods and the lack of incentives to report, this uncertainty remained even though owner interests including the American Horse Council and CES offices encouraged members to respond.²⁶

Howard agricultural census figures listed 1,032 horses in 1997; less than the post-war high of 1,579 in 1987, but above the 935 reported in 1969.²⁷ In part, this rise in numbers from 1964 to 1987, and then fall thereafter reflected two distinct phases in the county's development; a first in which metropolitan attitudinal influence strengthened, and a second where penurban development within the county was superseded by physical development, leaving less land for leisure pursuits. Highlighting data uncertainty, the 2002 Maryland Equine Census counted 5,190 horses in Howard County – five times the census figures. Howard's horses were valued at \$61 million dollars and located in 1,200 places totalling 11,200 acres, or nearly 5% of the county's total area. Howard stabled one horse per 25 inhabitants. The Maryland Equine Census noted that nearly half of the state's horses were located in five outer Baltimore-Washington region counties; intuitively where they would least be expected due to development pressures.²⁸

Loudoun County reported a post-war high of 4,135 horses in the 1997 U.S. Agricultural Census, up from 2,405 in 1969. Strikingly, the 2001 Virginia Equine Report counted seven horses for every one tallied by the census: 15,800, or one for every fifteen Loudouners. Inventory value amounted to nearly \$295 million, explaining why the Loudoun Department of Economic Development monitored the industry conscientiously. Rising numbers may result from greater distance from metropolitan cores than Howard. Loudoun dominated Virginia horse numbers and value rankings, along with adjacent Fauquier County, repeating the link between horse number and proximity to metropolitan areas seen in Maryland.²⁹ Niagara listed 871 horses in the 1997 U.S. Agricultural Census, down from 1,107 in 1964. In contrast, the 2000 New York Equine Survey estimated Niagara's

equine population nearly four times higher, at 3,000 with a value of \$12 million – unchanged from the 1988 report. Consistent with other states nationwide, the New York Survey found more horses in near-urban areas.³⁰

Clear differences between 1997 U.S. Agricultural Census figures and 2000–2002 State equine reports underlined the growth and uncertainty of the equine market. The 2002 U.S. Agricultural Census returns greatly increased the reported number of horses in all three counties; from 1,032 in 1997 to 1,382 in 2002 in Howard (30%); from 4,135 in 1997 to 6,162 in 2002 in Loudoun (nearly 50%); and from 871 in 1997 to 1,698 in 2002 in Niagara (nearly 100%). More farms registered horses present in 2002 than in 1997; up from 111 to 158 in Howard; up from 401 to 731 in Loudoun; and up from 129 to 222 in Niagara. Three strong indicators emerge: the large size of the equine market, the growth of the market over the last generation, and the outer metropolitan fringe location of the industry. The precise size and value of the equine market probably surpassed even the higher equine report numbers.³¹

Farmers probably served the equine market for hay for cash from the barn door, especially given hay's weight, bulk and cost of transport. Substantiating barn-door sales would be impossible, although there is indicative data. Hay production in Loudoun increased markedly despite smaller yields per reporting farm; from around 50 thousand tons in the 1960s to around 70 thousand tons from 1987, and despite the collapsing dairy industry. Moreover, the average yield per reporting farm fell from the 1990s. Hay production in Niagara fluctuated wildly, while it dropped in Howard until the 1990s. Thereafter it stabilised, interesting because commercial dairying and ancillary industries had all but disappeared. Uncertainty reigns with regard to reporting criteria. Bountiful harvests and collapsing traditional markets beg the question of where the hay was going, with horses (and perhaps sheep, goats, llamas and other exotic species) providing a probable answer.³²

Listings by equine-related businesses in City Directories and Yellow Pages recorded vital and growing activity in Howard and Loudoun measured over ten year intervals since the 1960s, revealing growth to be especially strong after 1980. Howard saw a lone entry for horses in the 1972 phone book rise to seventeen in 2003, including three horse centres, four breeders, four trainers and six saddle and equipment vendors: a staggering increase, especially as much farmland had been lost. For Loudoun, the increase was still more dramatic. Entries for a single harness maker and one blacksmith in 1962, multiplied to eleven breeders, eight dealers, three furnishers, 26 trainers, three transporters, six blacksmiths and 22 saddle and harness sellers in 2001. Seventy-nine entries, the 2001 sum of Loudoun area horse related businesses, described a dynamic, vibrant community. Even Lockport and the rural eastern half of Niagara County increased its listings of such businesses, from one lone blacksmith in 1949 to two racers, a breeder, a blacksmith and two riding academies in 2000.³³

The huge increase in horse business entries could partially be explained by cross-county regional listings, multiple listings and a greater propensity for businesses to list. Yet together with census and survey numbers, increasing numbers of businesses testified to increasing horse numbers and the \$368 million importance of the industry in the counties, and indicate an increasingly leisure-inspired landscape. What were people doing with all these horses? One answer is provided by county agricultural fair classifications: a huge expansion of showing categories took place, which is reflected in 2003 programmes. Howard's fair listed 24 categories, from pulling to horsemanship; Loudoun's included 30 riding categories; and Niagara included seven major categories.³⁴ Cooperative Extension Service (CES) were acutely aware of rural transformations through links with 4-H programmes and targeted programmes at the horse minded newly-rural incomers.

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Agricultural fairs – a third area attesting to landscape and attitudinal change – shaped, reflected and bound local identity by bringing people together, and shaping community and togetherness in an atmosphere of entertainment. Fairs showcased rural life and the changing face of rural society, the shifts in agricultural production, landscape consumption and attitudes through schedules of events, classifications and competitions. Two generations ago, fairs exhibited produce raised or grown for sale – such as food and fibre – and items made or transformed for home use, such as clothes, cooking and canning. Recent fairs demonstrated that rural life now included hosts of other activities. These new activities created feelings and transformed symbols (rather than objects), leavening traditional rural life with a penurban synthesis of country and heritage that celebrated ambience and consumed landscape. Examples included the Niagara Fair's native dancing, Celtic dancing, clog dancing and antique tractor and equipment parade, Howard Fair's hand spinning and hair goat exhibitions, and Loudoun Fair's quilting, crocheting and hunting categories.³⁵ These classifications imagined rural life in non-commercial terms through stylised impressions of tradition and emphasised the break between countryside as an arena of production, and its contemporary function as a field of dreams.

CES youth 4-H programmes (Heads, Hearts, Hands and Health) played active roles in Howard, Loudoun and Niagara county shows. Fairs grew in length from a day or two in the 1940s and 1950s, to a week by 2006/7. Show categories increased gradually in Niagara and more rapidly in Howard and Loudoun, especially after 1980. Howard categories in 1946 included meat, vegetables, beef, and farm crops, poultry, household and 4-H demonstrations; as did Niagara in 1957, which also included tractor-pulls and flower arranging; and Loudoun in 1954, which held classes for vegetable canning and freezing.³⁶ Post-war Loudoun

fair programmes carried advertising for various staples of rural life: farm equipment, insurance, banking and feedstuffs. By 2007, CES programmes – which fed into show categories – served farm folk and other people interested in rural life, gardening, woodcraft and food production and treatment.

Many participants of recent CES programmes knew little of country life; consequently 4-H streamed programmes, with advanced instruction for farm children and basic skills for suburban kids. Fewer farm children, the massive suburban market, a wish to remain relevant, and incomer interest in rural life encouraged 4-H outreach to a broader public. County shows reflected change through the introduction of non-ownership categories for exhibitions so that everyone could join in, including the showing of borrowed sheep, and a prolific range of ‘pet’ categories including rabbits and goats, baked goods, fashion and ponies – all of which appealed to a non-traditional public.³⁷

Fair categories demonstrated the un-commercial hybridisation of countryside connected to penurbia and the shortcomings of the Agricultural Census. Llamas debuted in the 1998 Loudoun show, despite no census listings recording llamas in the county. In Howard, hand spinning surfaced; since 1973 the county has hosted the annual Maryland Sheep and Wool Show, reinforcing its craft heavyweight-status.³⁸ While Howard registered sheep numbers halved between 1964 and 1997, the number of farms with sheep remained virtually unchanged, suggesting cottage rather than commercial production. Similarly, Loudoun saw more small producers emerging. The 2003 Howard fair included eight sheep divisions, fifteen wool categories and nineteen meat categories for sheep, and the Loudoun fair listed seven major ownership divisions with an array of sub-classifications. While goats, llamas and alpacas did not appear consistently in census statistics, fair entries insisted that the animals had to be there. The 2003 Howard show included five divisions and fifty categories for goats – incredible as the 1997 Census counted only 213 goats. The 2003 Loudoun fair offered two classes and eight classifications for a 1997 Census count of 412 goats, and the Niagara show offered four events for its 154 reported goats.

Almost certainly, agricultural censuses undercounted the diversity of marginal wool, milk and meat categories. Niagara offered a home winemaking competition, and all three counties included beekeeping.³⁹ The rearing of llamas, sheep, goats, horses, bees and ponies and the growth of winemaking painted a picture of agriculture and land use as arenas for a stylised, leisure economy. These agricultural leisure economy activities could be perceived to require part-time attention and self-management, although reality often turned out differently. Agricultural fairs showcased the rise of a leisured agricultural economy, increasing diversity and the hybridisation of countryside. Country-minded incomers moved to the fringe and tended intricate gardens of leisured, esoteric production that partly replaced traditional farming. Fair categories presented texture that census figures missed due to underreporting, especially on the most marginal micro farms.

VITICULTURE

Tending vineyards – a fourth indicator of landscape and ambience change – reflected the pastoral idyll in the ancient world, taken up by America’s founding fathers who reflected upon ideas of natural purity and order. Winegrowing mixed idylls with the sophistication and urbanity informing America’s revolutionary republican class. Penurbanites brought and bought the symbolic value of the vineyard to the present and fed the nationwide viticulture boom. Since 1970 winery numbers nationwide have probably more than quintupled.⁴⁰ A key 2005 report noted that 36 thousand New Yorkers owed their livelihood to grape products and the industry provided over \$400 million in tax revenue. Three of the major producer areas (The Niagara Escarpment, The Seneca Lakes and Long Island) lay within commuter distance of the state’s largest metropolitan areas: Buffalo; Rochester/Syracuse; and New York City.⁴¹ Virginia’s biggest winegrowing counties also straddled the outer orbit of Washington, D.C. and Charlottesville.⁴² A 2004 Maryland report reconfirmed the geographical link between winegrowing and penurban areas.⁴³

New country people founded many wineries in the three counties after 1970. Loudoun boasted 54 winegrowers in the 2002 Agricultural census, up from 17 in 1978. Grape production in Loudoun rose one-hundredfold, to 836,000 pounds by 2006. The Loudoun Rural Economic Development Office responded vigorously by establishing the ‘County Wine Trail’.⁴⁴ Niagara re-orientated its massive grapes-for-the-table industry towards added value wine production from 1964 to 2002.⁴⁵ In March 2004, Niagara County planned the distribution of 100,000 new Niagara Wine Trail Brochures to support the craft through agro-tourism. Even Howard managed an increasing number of producers from 1987. Howard’s 15th annual ‘Wine in the Woods’ festival in May 2007 spotlighted local wines and drew over 20,000 visitors and 70 artisans.⁴⁶ The multi-year horizon for grape cropping meant that growers needed outside incomes before their first payday, confirmed by census data recording non-fruit bearing vines in the 2002 census which augurs for significant increases in the 2007 census.

Deep-set cultural dispositions and pragmatic responses to zoning rules together encouraged grape cultivation. Protective land policy in many counties stipulated minimum sizes for rural area housing lots, typically between two and fifty acres. Too big to mow, too small for traditional farming, these plots lent themselves to viticulture or horse keeping. The CES in Maryland, Virginia and New York honed their winegrowing expertise through regional viticulture coalitions. CES advice towards production, processing and marketing underscored the huge confidence in the wine business’s potential – as an industry, to draw tourists, and to enhance rural qualities. Increasingly sophisticated winemakers fermented grapes from other producers, providing markets for micro-producers who could not make their own wine. Almost certainly wineries suffered undercount as some ventures simply amounted to loss-making hobbies, financed by salaries or home

sale bonanzas. Winemaking's banner value overwhelmed its commercial value, as the rows of grape vines draped across plots of land endowed an area with genteel, rural sophistication. Rising wine production, wine country allure, and the greater prestige of local wines brought the producer, the consumer, and the imagination together in a collective appreciation, and confirmed that the cultural importance of wine trumped its economic value.

PRESERVATION AND PARK DEVELOPMENT

Cultural ideas drove landscape change at two levels. The four examples sketched above relied generally on individually chosen, functional factors, which then formed recognisable patterns for support services to deal with. Larger scale factors – as flagged earlier – were also important, in terms of zoning rules implemented by county governments and preservation and park creation policies advanced by municipality, county, state and federal policy.

Concern over sprawl affected near-metropolitan counties from the early twentieth century. Zoning became a common method of controlling development and directing land use. Women's organisations, such as the Garden Club of Virginia, led in campaigns to introduce rural zoning in Loudoun in 1941–2. Howard implemented zoning in 1948, whereas Niagara introduced zoning on a piecemeal township basis between the 1920s and the 1970s.⁴⁷ In all three zoning ultimately mandated minimum lot-sizes for homes in sensitive countryside areas or wilderness under 'Agricultural-Rural' or 'Agricultural Residential' classifications.⁴⁸ Rules covering lot-sizes also protected property values by ensuring exclusivity. Zoning regulations were tightened from 1970, revealing growing concern over encroaching development. Minimum agricultural plots in designated countryside areas grew: Howard quintupled lot-sizes to five acres, and Loudoun up-zoned from one to ten acres. Western New York used zoning to reduce linear 'ribbon' development by preventive zoning for road-front property.⁴⁹ Protective agricultural zoning bestowed rural feelings to countryside development by stopping intensive suburban-style development.

County services like water and sewer lines supported planning policy. Howard and Loudoun attempted to direct development through water and sewer provision by focusing services tightly on designated areas, and discouraging development in unserved regions.⁵⁰ Both counties saw growth as given, while in Niagara water and sewer systems crisscrossed the county by the 1960s to facilitate development.⁵¹ Large-lot owners beat servicing policy by relying on well-water and septic tanks, a factor influencing the lot size increases during the water pollution conscious 1950s and 1960s: Big plots were essential for well-water extraction and sewage disposal without the imminent worry of contamination.⁵² More recently, small-scale private treatment plants coupled with high cluster-zone densities and favourable property prices increased the ability of developers to

ignore county services. However, micro-treatment plants blighted the penurban landscape and fuelled resistance to further growth, as the *Loudoun Times Mirror* noted of one scheme: 'One major roadblock is the sewage and water treatment plant that will spray highly treated sewage on neighbouring undeveloped land.'⁵³ Many fringe settlers would have regarded human slurry as an intrusion upon the countryside vistas they imagined.

Large-lot rural development left penurban homeowners flummoxed over how to use their five to fifty acre mini-estates, while the difference between agricultural returns and development profits chased commercial farmers out of the market as some farmers could not afford to pay spiralling taxes. Using the land and earning a tax-offsetting return instead of hours of mowing strengthened the attraction of Cooperative Extension Service offerings for incomers.⁵⁴ The CES helped where it could – such as Virginia's 2004 courses in forest management which allowed small 'woodlot owners to see the forest beyond the trees', Niagara's environmental education programmes, and Howard/Maryland's 'Basics of Farming' short courses.⁵⁵ Capital costs of landholdings amounted to near zero for some, with land values being secondary to the house price. Contrastingly, traditional farmers had to invest heavily to produce profits. That incomers could discount their investment explains how the countryside diversified so rapidly since 1970. Paradoxically, large-lot housing, a product of zoning changes inspired by environmental concern, encouraged countryside transformation. Tax and investment factors helped explain the ageing of the farming profession: few younger farmers could finance a traditional farm as land values outstripped farmers' means to produce a return.

After 1980 zoning policies became more sophisticated in fighting the loss of open countryside through mini-estate privatisation. Cluster zoning (clustering), allowed more houses in one part of a plot in return for the preservation of the rest – with overall housing densities unchanged. Transferable Development Rights (TDR) programmes aimed to concentrate agricultural reserves and permit builders greater densities and profits on some sites if they purchased land elsewhere for preservation. For both, increased building densities on smaller plots saved infrastructure costs for builder and the county. Yet some observers felt cluster zoning and TDRs legitimised development. Suburbanites complained that building densities in their areas were already too high, while pretty rural areas enjoyed TDR protection paid for with their taxes. Sectional, suburban-country jealousy poisoned Loudoun politics from the late 1990s, as it had in Howard in the 1980s. Tellingly, zoning, clustering and TDR policies had limited success in staunching development. Howard and Loudoun – in line with other outer Washington-Baltimore region counties – grew despite policies targeted to maintain their rural character. A 2002 University of Maryland 'Landsat' satellite study recorded that development consumed 28,000 acres a year in the Washington region: build-outs actually accelerated as anti-development policies increased.⁵⁶

Public concern over sprawl persisted, was recognised by political representatives, and manifested itself in ways two ways. Farmland protection enriched cultural landscapes, and parks framed natural landscapes. Both meetings saw dollar returns deluged by attitudinal returns and were generally implemented and administered by county governments. Voters supported park creation and land development rights because they saw enough intrinsic value in these programmes to bankroll them. This self-sacrifice – despite resistance – indicated that incomer-farmland and wilderness attitudes were actualised into constructed places. And even where other factors such as flood protection and water quality maintenance worked into decisions to preserve or establish parks, the parks quickly blended into the background natural vista.

Penurbia united worlds of consumption and preservation. Aesthetics and the economics of farming combined to create unique syntheses which maintained open, rural habitats, like Loudoun's horse and hunt country, Niagara's escarpment, and Howard's wool and crafts. Preservationism was important, yet penurbia's heritage-hugging mindset also transformed landscapes. The preserved countryside itself became an object of consumption, a backdrop to country passions, and a setting for the selective eulogisation of tradition and crafts. 'Rural fringes require farmland and forest protection to retain their attractive cultural landscapes', wrote urban historian Dolores Hayden.⁵⁷ Landscape preservation uneasily united farmers, incomers, penurban values, local politics and administrations. Farmer and Howard Agricultural Preservation Board member, Ridgeley Jones caught the essence of preservation in 1981: 'This land has served countless generations and once it goes into development, it will never be put back'. Agricultural preservation did not go uncontested when introduced in Howard in the 1980s.⁵⁸ Still, by 2007 Howard had preserved over 20,000 acres.⁵⁹ In Loudoun, preservation schemes introduced in 2000 now protect about 1% of the County.⁶⁰

Criticism of preservation policies which purchased development rights (PDRs) came from farmers, taxpayers and some politicians, and covered inadequate compensation, exorbitant costs, 'snob' zoning favouring the already favoured, and the misuse of scarce resources. Leading farmers wondered if the PDR rules – keep the land in agriculture and forego the right to sell the land for development – could stand judicial challenge as development land values skyrocketed. Ironically, preservation cost most where it was most needed, and once preserved, neighbouring land rose in value – increasing development pressures. Other mechanisms employed for agricultural preservation included agricultural districting and right to farm rules. All three counties established agricultural districts that fixed land taxes to agricultural values to discourage farm sales due to taxes. Huge schools enrolments led to breathtaking development costs in Loudoun with increased tax burdens for all. To counter this, Loudoun dedicated 70,000 acres to the Agricultural and Forestal District Program (AFDP), beginning in 1979. The AFDP reduced the County's potential tax base, but also forestalled service-hungry development.

LANDSCAPE AND AMBIENCE ON THE URBAN FRINGE

Howard introduced right-to-farm laws in 1978; Virginia created state-wide rules that affected Loudoun in 1981, and New York state rules applied to Niagara in 1971 – in response to pressure and compromise between farmers and political leaderships.⁶¹ Right-to-farm regulations protected farming landscapes and farmers from potential nuisance suits. In their minds, incomers had split the rural landscape from its means of production, to then challenge the courts to rule against the irritations of farming. The need for right-to-farm ordinances provided hard evidence of the sometimes-frayed farmer-settler relationship. Simultaneously, preservation policies and ordinances underlined the status of agriculture as a worthy ‘museum’ repository of (redundant) rural values.

Some farmers repeatedly claimed that agricultural and residential uses were incompatible and that pockets of housing amid swathes of agricultural land disrupted farming by making the movement of equipment difficult. Farmers claimed that incomers trespassed, stole or destroyed crops and harassed livestock, whereas incomers retorted that noisy agricultural machinery held traffic up, loose animals destroyed gardens, and that muck spreading literally stank. Farmers and migrants together claimed that TDR policies preserved fragmented and low-grade countryside and that the money was better used elsewhere. Local and regional newspapers in all three counties repeatedly dedicated column inches to farmer-suburbanite conflicts.⁶²

The setting of nature aside for leisure and sublime experiences has a long history in the U.S. George Catlin famously (1832) proposed that America protect ‘pristine beauty and wilderness ...’ for posterity, while Frederick Law Olmsted added utility to nature and wilderness in 1865, declaring, ‘It is a scientific fact that the occasional contemplation of natural scenes ... is favourable to the health and vigour of men.’ From around 1850 municipal and federal authorities established city parks and national parks that celebrated wilderness by constructing and stylising it.⁶³ This section looks at the development of park and preservation policy for amenity and aesthetic values.

Open spaces – parks, reserves, sanctuaries and recreational facilities – enlivened the city edge sensibility, as un-built and stylised natural environments differentiated country from the metropolis. Continuous belts of open land dividing the metropolis from countryside created valued settings. By establishing focal places beyond the city, open land made credible a penurban self-identification, even when such areas were deliberate reconstructions. Open spaces frequently surrounded historic houses and monuments, such as the Rust Sanctuary in Loudoun that consisted of an imposing manor house and sixty acres and a protective barrier against growing Leesburg.⁶⁴ The Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park perched above Ellicott City connected visually with 32-mile-long riparian Patapsco Valley State Park, providing a country backdrop to the city and a rural exoskeleton to Howard County.⁶⁵ Howard, Loudoun and Niagara counties established recreational and open space areas from the late-1960s, partly in response to development. Other open spaces resulted from neighbourhood

planning concepts, as places where suburbanites could conveniently spend leisure time. In 1990, Loudoun created the 357-acre Claude Moore Park which served the most densely populated areas of the county. The park combined wilderness, woods, sports and recreational areas, and housed the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum in a nature-heritage-leisure complex.⁶⁶

‘For reasons not easily explained, most people seem to achieve a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction from being in natural surroundings’, the Howard County 1960 General Plan argued, acknowledging the urgent need for preservation of open land. The plan proposed saving up to 25,000 acres.⁶⁷ Commenting on the disappearance of open space in 1961 (the year Jean Gottmann published *Megalopolis*), *Times, Ellicott City* ran the headline, ‘Parks Needed: Merging Cities Threaten Open Space’.⁶⁸ Subsequent plans trumpeted open space as a primary objective. Patapsco and Patuxent Valley State Parks – 14,000 and 6,700 acres respectively – formed virtually continuous and effective riparian green belts protecting Howard County’s interior mixing feral and stylised nature, old mill buildings and hewn stone. Maryland State funding and local planning helped in the creation of river parks, as concern over water pollution worried many people close to Chesapeake Bay’s precarious ecology and rich fishing ground – especially after Rachel Carson’s 1962 bestseller *Silent Spring*. Locally and nationally, the League of Women Voters was consistently a strident voice for such preservation.⁶⁹

Loudoun County’s 1969 plan remarked that the county had ‘not ... felt the need for developed public recreational space ...’ beyond that associated with schools and the new Sterling Park subdivision, due to the rural feel of the county. The plan proposed the creation of county and developer-financed public and private parks and recreation areas. Later plans recognised the essential necessity of maintaining open and recreational spaces for Loudoun’s character and quality.⁷⁰ The emphasis on landscape and greenery protection in Howard and Loudoun matched the influence of resident opinion favouring open and natural space. Park regionalisation into green networks that joined separate areas together across jurisdictions became a goal of organisations like the American Farmland Trust and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and for regional organisations like the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.⁷¹

Frederick Law Olmsted had been a prime mover in the creation of the Niagara Reservation Park in the 1880s. Creating the Reservation led to the removal of energy-dependent and water-consuming industries from the Niagara Falls gorge and established parkland backdrops to the American Falls. ‘Renaturing’ the industrial landscape allowed Olmsted license. 1950s automotive mobility and the Robert Moses Parkway saw the city severed from the water again. In 2002, the Niagara Heritage Partnership campaigned successfully to close the road for a trial period.⁷² Illustrating the deeply intertwined character of environment and imagination, environmentalists fêted the re-establishment of Olmsted’s reconstruction.⁷³

Sanctuaries and reserves embellished penurban countryside. They owed their existence in all three counties to private largesse, the philanthropy of prominent citizens, and vocal local interests. Partnerships between governments and various interests created places like Loudoun's Claude Moore Park or the Niagara Reservation restoration. Philanthropic and citizens' interests organised the Waterford Foundation in Loudoun and raised nearly \$3.7 million for PDR's in 2003 to protect Waterford's achingly beautiful village vistas from development. Increasingly, private interests saw profits in preservation, such as in the 'South Riding' master built community in Loudoun that registered its land with the National Wildlife Federation's 'Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program'. Cluster-development regulations and developer self-interest converged to create storied open spaces complete with salamanders and rattlesnakes for potential buyers.⁷⁴

The political compromises underlying the complex interests at the urban fringe showed the convergence of amenity and utility values. Without open land, the neo-rural dream would die, and without the direct and indirect financial support of the rest of the community, farming would expire. Between the two, scarce tax dollars were traded for limits on land-use freedom. Purchasing and maintaining parks cost money, underlining the compromise between the support of economic and aesthetic values. Governments knew that open, agricultural land drew people to the fringe and that keeping it needed their support. Indeed county demographers in Loudoun regularly and consistently measured how Loudouners conceived of their county. Beginning in the 1960s in Howard County, private corporations learned that access to open space sold real estate and could generate richer profits than traditional subdivisions, and interests showed that preservation motivated by profit or altruism could gain public and political support.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

On the urban fringe, beyond the gritty sprawl of the metropolis lies penurbia: a developing zone of imagining as much as transition, a place where ideas could be superimposed on the landscape. Here, the metropolitan mind – without the cookie-cutter subdivisions of metropolitan physicality – spilled across agricultural landscapes and created hybridised leisure countryside. One National Public Radio journalist accurately captured the atmosphere of hybrid farm country:

Western Loudoun County, just minutes from downtown Washington, D.C., is still undeniably farm country, but you'll see more than the traditional fields of corn and dairy cows. Today, many of the local farmers are self-taught specialists raising water buffalo, llamas, goats, emus and bees. Others grow flowers and herbs, Christmas trees, organic vegetables and fruits, and grapes for wine.⁷⁶

Blinding heterogeneity marked the landscape and ambience of the penurban fringe, not agricultural monoculture. The scenery created truly allowed the mind to wander and to consider the proposition of whether landscapes were degraded or improved by the interplay of rural and urban elements.

Academic and journalistic reports bemoaned the loss of agricultural land under development pressure, yet the leisured countryside which incomers laid over farmland was more 'Edenic' garden or park than empty vacuum. Although accurate quantitative data over time is hard to come by, Howard, Loudoun and Niagara probably housed more trees and bigger trees in 2008 than in 1945, and may well have housed greater overall biodiversity in the sections of the counties housing imagined countryside. Qualitative data is even more elusive, what type of trees, how big, or how native? With trees come wildlife; all three counties reported concern over the explosion in deer populations, especially over the increasing number of vehicle-animal collisions.⁷⁷ In recognition of the problem, Howard County created a 'Deer Task Force' in 1996.⁷⁸ Certainly, in the fall breeding season, road kill peppered roadsides and was often removed for game before transport cleanup officials arrived. Feral plots and gardens represented a veritable 'buffet for deer', as well as other fauna.⁷⁹ Beyond the damage to vehicles and gardens, disease motivated scrutiny of deer as (apparently) the prime vector of Lyme disease. Loudoun Lyme disease cases shot up after 1990, and accounted for fully half of Virginia totals, with strong increases observed in neighbours Fairfax and Montgomery counties. The interface between deer and humans was probably as much the result of habitat gain as a habitat encroachment through development. European aristocrats intentionally created deer parks for enjoyment, hunting and leisured restitution for centuries; American penurbanites created derivative landscapes almost by accident in their yearning for countryside. The anecdotal value of the return of large fauna – including deer, bears and coyotes – for the new country fringe ultimately seemed double edged, with pressure building to permit increased hunting.

Penurban landscapes emerged pragmatically as migrants from the city moved to the country to practice rural living, as they saw it. Incomers carried with them ideas of how countryside should look, sound and smell, ideas which resided deep in cultural appreciations of ideal landscapes. And they certainly also bore with them prejudices against certain kinds of landscape, including the highly specialised, productive and sanitised (yet still periodically smelly) agrarian vistas which emerged as viable farm sizes increased and mechanised. Ideas of countryside appropriateness probably also suffered a nostalgic idea of what a rural – or even rustic – landscape should look like. Granted the wherewithal from metropolitan incomes, jobs and house sales, incomers could literally take a vision from their mind's eye and project it across a plot of land, complete with the amenity care of horses, growing of wine, keeping of exotic animals and so on. In the process they supported a fine grained economy and visual culture which embellished landscapes through horse pasturage, riding

schools, vineyards, vineries and the like. Moreover, the dispositions of incomers received timely support from county policy decisions such as land policy that had intended and unintended consequences. A five- or a ten-acre plot provided a substantial canvas for the penurban incomer to paint over, as well as soothing the needs of autonomy by providing exclusive domains. Protective policies such as agricultural zoning, districting, parks and preserves aided the creation of an imagined and then emplaced countryside in terms of an enduring backdrop and a greater textual cohesion.

The landscapes and ambiances of the urban fringe discussed in this paper are not 'natural', but contemporary cultural constructions superimposed on earlier agricultural landscapes and their underlying physical constructions. These hybrid constructions are the result of individual dispositions writ large, cultural ideals, economic opportunity and political support. They rest upon the cross pollination of ideas in mind and physical surroundings; envisaged, created and consumed. While few Americans live in small towns, villages or rural locations, most people express a preference for living in such places – despite their lack of first hand experience in living on the land or in small towns. Clearly the idyll of small scale and rural life has deep roots in the popular psyche, which some people can fulfil in part by buying a penurban home while others remain with their dreams in metropolitan surroundings.

While this paper rests on an examination of three eastern U.S. counties, preliminary research suggests that comparable patterns would emerge from close study of urban fringe counties elsewhere in the northern and Midwestern U.S. In other areas, water, climatic and regulatory concerns may force different manifestations of imagined countryside to emerge, such as the multi-acre 'ranchette' patterns in Colorado. Moreover, the creation of amenity landscapes in the countryside may also have a global reach, or at least reach into many western countries.⁸⁰ Post-1945 agricultural landscapes have transformed, to provide the imagined and hybridised countryside of contemporary penurbia. These new landscapes will probably evolve and prove transitory as development pressures increase, bringing more metropolitan and rural ideas in to dialogue.

NOTES

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¹ Joel A. Tarr (2000) 'Urban History and Environmental History in the United States: Complementary and Overlapping Fields', in *Historiography Series in Global Environmental History*, H-Net. (<http://www.h-net.org/~environ/historiography/historiography.html>)

² See, for example, lifestyle magazines such as *Country Living* and *Country Home*, founded around 1980. These two magazines have over a million sales an issue, advertising revenues in the tens of millions, and with dedicated sections for capturing country style in the city.

³ The conceptual divide between nature and culture ultimately fuels a cognitive incompatibility which at least partly lies between the relative comprehension of urban fringe phenomena by cultural geographers and environmental historians. See Judith Gerber, 'Beyond Dualism – the Social Construction of Nature and the natural and Social Construction of Human Beings', *Progress in Human Geography* 21, 1 (1997): 1–17.

⁴ For more on hybrid socionatural landscapes, see Erik Swyngedouw 'Modernity and Hybridity: Nature Regenerationism, and the Production of Spanish Waterscape, 1890–1930', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89, 3 (1999): 443–65.

⁵ Amenity landscapes in a broader sense rely on differences in purchasing power between natives and incomers; made more extreme by a widening income gulf between winners and losers in an increasingly globalised economy and labour market. For more on the relationship between countryside, hybridity, and globalisation, see Michael Woods 'Engaging the Global Countryside: Globalization, Hybridity and the Reconstitution of Rural Place', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31, 4 (2007): 485–507. Woods sees countryside as being enacted upon, rather than an actor in its own right.

⁶ By functional, I mean beyond the administrative and even occasionally statistical limits to urban areas. These limits vary according to the specific urban area studies, the history of the urban area, the region in which the urban area is located, and the size of the area.

⁷ See Auguste Sectorsky, *The Exurbanites* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1955); Albert LaFarge, *The Essential William H. Whyte* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); Jean Gottmann, *Megalopolis; The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund 1961); John Herber, *The New Heartland: America's Flight Beyond the Suburbs and How It Is Changing Our Future* (New York: Times Books, 1986 [first published in 1978]); Richard Louv, *America II* (New York: Tarcher, Inc., 1983); Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991); Robert Lang and Jennifer LaFurgy, *Boomburbs: The Rise of America's Accidental Cities* (Washington, D.C: Brookings, 2007); Arthur Nelson and Thomas Sanchez, 'Lassoing Exurban Sprawl', (pre-publication draft, 2002); Arthur Nelson and Thomas Sanchez, 'Debunking the Exurban Myth: A Comparison of Suburban Households', *Housing Policy Debate* 19, 2 (1999): 689–709; Arthur Nelson and Thomas Sanchez, 'Exurban and Suburban Households: A Departure from Traditional Location Theory?' *Journal of Housing Research* 8, (1997): 249–276.

⁸ Defined in general terms by scholars working at Virginia Tech's Metropolitan Institute and elsewhere, including Arthur Nelson and Thomas Sanchez.

⁹ 'Let's Look at Loudoun' – Loudoun County promotional brochure (1949).

¹⁰ 2006 U.S. Census estimates. See <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

¹¹ Anne Sorensen, Richard Greene and Karen Russ, 'Farming on the Edge', co-published by *The American Farming Trust* and The Centre for Agriculture and Environment, North Illinois University (1997).

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¹² Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberg and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl*, (New York: North Point Press, 2002); James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man Made Landscape* (New York: Touchstone, 1993).

¹³ Joe Surkiewicz, 'Greener Pastures: When Suburb Meets Country, Conflicts Can Arise', *Baltimore Sun*, 29 Jan. 1995.

¹⁴ U.S. Agricultural Census figures are used throughout this paper except where otherwise stated.

For Howard: Department of Commerce (1972) 1969 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 23 Maryland County Data; U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999) 1997 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 20 Maryland State and County Data; and 2002 Census of Agriculture website, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/> (for 1997 and 2002 data).

For Loudoun: Department of Commerce (1972) 1969 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 24 Virginia, Section 2 County Data; U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999) 1997 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 46, Virginia State and County Data; and 2002 Census of Agriculture website, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/> (for 1997 and 2002 Data).

For Niagara County: U.S. Department of Commerce (1972) *1969 Census of Agriculture*, Part 7 New York, Section 2, County Data; U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999) *1997 Census of Agriculture*, Volume 1, Part 32, New York State and County Data; and 2002 Census of Agriculture website, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/> (for 1997 and 2002 data).

¹⁵ Missy Zane, 'Farmettes: New Way of Life', *Times, Ellicott City*, 16 Nov. (1974)

¹⁶ Scott and Helen Nearing, *Living the Good Life: Being a Plain Practical Account of a Twenty Year Project in a Self-Subsistent Homestead in Vermont, Together with Remarks on How to Live Sanely & Simply in a Troubled World*, (Harborside, ME: Social Science Institute, 1954); Spector, op cit; interview with Corey Childs, Director, Loudoun County Office, Virginia Cooperative Extension, 29 Oct. 2003.

¹⁷ Michael Clark, 'Farming Withers Under Developer Pressure', *Baltimore Sun*, 18 Mar. 1979.

¹⁸ Jamie Smith Hopkins, 'Farmer Wannabes Warned', *Baltimore Sun*, 11 Nov. 2001.

¹⁹ Personal interviews with extension agents in all three counties were carried out in the fall of 2003.

²⁰ See the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County homepage, <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/niagara/niagara.html#local-programs> and the Virginia Agricultural Extension Services Department of horticulture, <http://www.hort.vt.edu/> for winemaking regionalism.

²¹ All three were available in Loudoun County. For wine tours see Loudoun County Wine Trail, http://www.rural-loudoun.state.va.us/wine_trail.htm, Loudoun 2003 Farm Color Tour, <http://www.rural-loudoun.state.va.us/fguid1.htm>, and the Loudoun County Bed & Breakfast Guild webpage featuring many farm B&Bs, <http://www.vabb.com/vabblist.asp>.

²² 'The 200,000 Acre Solution: Supporting and Enhancing a Rural Economy for Loudoun's 21st Century', Loudoun County Rural Development Task Force, 1998.

²³ See Judith Weinraub, 'New American Farmers', *Washington Post*, 15 Oct. 2003. Joan Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture: a History from the Black Death to the Present Day*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), argues historically that marginal farmers are often by necessity the most innovative.

²⁴ Emphasised in regular Loudoun County surveys that analyse the most important factors why people move to the County. See: Loudoun County Department of Economic Development, *Survey of Loudoun Residents*, Mar. 1990; *Choices and Changes Survey Results Summary*, Department of Planning Zoning and Community Development, Loudoun County, 1 May 1990 (4,000 respondents); *1997 Survey of Loudoun County Residents*, commissioned by the Office of County Administrator, Loudoun County, 1997 (1,000 respondents); *1999 Survey of Loudoun's Residents*, commissioned by the Office of County Administrator, Loudoun County, 1999 (1,000 respondents); *2001 Survey of Loudoun's Residents*, Department of Economic Development, Loudoun County, 2001 (1,000 respondents);

2002 Survey of Loudoun's Residents, commissioned by the Department of Economic Development, Loudoun County, 2002 (1,000 respondents).

At a national level, see successive Gallup Polls asking on place of living preferences (city, suburb, small town, country), George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935–71 (Vol. III)*, (New York: Random House, 1972), Volume III, 1996 & 2238; George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1972–77 (Vol. I & II)*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1978), 78 & 112, and Vol. II, 914; George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1978*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1979), 83–86; George H. Gallup, 'Urban America: A Special Gallup Report', in the *Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1978*, Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 83–86 Released March 2; George H. Gallup, 'Urban Problems Special Survey' in the *Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1981*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1981), 82–83; George Gallup, JR., 'Ideal Place to Live' in *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1985*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1986), 64–65; George Gallup, JR., 'America's Large Cities' in *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1989*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1990), 207–9; George Gallup, JR., 'America's Large Cities', in *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1998*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1999), 238.

²⁵ See Maryland Equine Census (2002) online, <http://www.marylandhorseindustry.org/census2.htm>, Virginia Equine Report (2001) online, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/va/2001equinereport.pdf>, and New York Equine Survey (2000) online, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ny/Equine2000/equine.htm>.

²⁶ Interview with Caragh Fitzgerald and Martin Hamilton, Howard Cooperative Extension, 11 Nov. 2003 confirm underreporting. State organisations exhorted owners to report, see New York State Horse Council Newsletter, September 2007: <http://www.nyshc.org/newsletters/SeptOct05.pdf> (<http://horsecouncil.org/about.html>)

²⁷ U.S. Agricultural Census. See note 7.

²⁸ See Maryland Equine Census (2002) and Dawna Klosner-Wehner, 'Howard Farms Still a Growth Industry', *Baltimore Sun*, 'Howard County Hometown Guide', 21 Mar. 2004

²⁹ See Virginia Equine Report (2001). Louis Nicholls, Agricultural Development Officer at the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development confirmed the county's interest in equine industry research during an interview on 16 Oct. 2003.

³⁰ With the exception of Saratoga County. See New York Equine Survey (2000).

³¹ U.S. Agricultural Census online:

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³² U.S. Agricultural Census, see note 7.

³³ Lockport Sources: *Lockport City Directory* (Buffalo, NY: R.L. Polk & Co., 1949); R.L. Polk & Co; and *Lockport City Directory* (Livonia, MI: R.L. Polk & Co., 2000); Loudoun Sources: *Leesburg, Middleburg, and Purcellville City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company 1962); C & P Telephone, Bell Atlantic; and *Loudoun-Fauquier Yellow Pages* (Verizon, 2001). Loudoun Directories are on hand at the Thomas Balch Historical Library in Leesburg, VA. Howard Sources: *Columbia Directory 1972*; *Howard County Telephone Directory, 2003* (all lodged with the Columbia Archives, Columbia, MD); and *The Community Phone Book Columbia, Ellicott City, MD, 2004* (online).

³⁴ See Joseph Goddard, 'The Creation of Penurbia: A Geography of the Heart, 1945–2005', (Ph.D. diss., University of Copenhagen, 2005).

³⁵ See '58th Annual Howard County Fair', 2–9 Aug., (2003 programme): 14 & 119. For the 2007 fair, see http://www.howardcountyfair.org/fair_schedule.htm. See '68th Annual Loudoun County Fair', 28 July – 2 Aug., (2003) programme): 23 & 35. For the 2007 show see: http://loudounextra.washingtonpost.com/events/search/?category=100&q=&age=&cost=&start_date=2007-07-19&end_date=&x=35&y=13. See the '2003 Niagara County Fair' July. 30–Aug. (press packet.) For the 2006 fair, see <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/niagara/2006%20fair%20events%20schedule.pdf>

³⁶ 'First Annual Howard County Fair', 21–22 Aug. (1946 programme).

³⁷ '58th Annual Howard County Fair', 4-H Sheep-Lead, (2003 programme): 237, and '68th Annual Loudoun County Fair'. Department 3.1 Non-Ownership Sheep (2003 programme) p. 19.

³⁸ 'Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival' website, <http://www.sheepandwool.org/index.htm>.

³⁹ 'The 2003 Niagara County Fair' (2003 press packet).

⁴⁰ 'Maryland Wine: the Next Vintage', Maryland Wine and Grape Advisory Committee Report, 2004: 4. <http://www.marylandwine.com/mwa/media/stories/wgacreport.shtml>

⁴¹ 'Economic Impact of New York Grapes, Grape Juice and Wine', 2005, MKF Research for the New York Wine and Grape Foundation: <http://www.nywines.org/articles.root/804/Economic%20Impact%20of%20New%20York%20Grapes%20Grape%20Juice%20and%20Wine%202005.pdf>

⁴² 'Virginia 2006 Commercial Grape Report', Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, online at: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Virginia/Publications/Grape_Report/2006%20grape%20publication.pdf

⁴³ 'Maryland Wine: the Next Vintage', Maryland Wine and Grape Advisory Committee Report, 2004: 33.

⁴⁴ The 'County Wine Trail' was established in cooperation with the Loudoun Rural Economic Development Office, <http://www.loudounfarms.org/Default.asp?Page=16>

⁴⁵ See New York Orchard & and Vineyard Survey, 2001, online at: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ny/FruitTree/fruittree2002txt.pdf>, and Thomas Prohaska, 'Niagara County Legislature Panel Won't Vote on Trucks-Only Bridge', *Buffalo News*, 18 Mar. 2004.

⁴⁶ The 'Niagara Wine Trail' is described on the Niagara USA website, <http://www.niagara-usa.com/attractions/winetrail.html>. The 'Wine in the Woods' festival webpage is recorded here: http://www.howardcounty.com/calendar/event_details.asp?ID=25466

⁴⁷ The role of women's organisations as pioneers in local environmental struggles has been well documented elsewhere, not least by Richard Walker, *The Country in the City* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2007).

⁴⁸ Maximum zoning in Niagara measured around one acre in 2003, less than in Howard or Loudoun.

⁴⁹ Townships, not the County determined land use policy in Niagara County.

⁵⁰ See *Howard General Plan*, 1960: 63.

⁵¹ See *Erie-Niagara Regional Plan Summary Report*, 1961: II-N-25.

⁵² See Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for the adverse effects of self-servicing.

⁵³ Anne Keisman, 'Development Races the Court', *Loudoun Times Mirror*, 5 May 2004.

⁵⁴ Agricultural land could be assessed for reduced levels of tax in all three counties.

⁵⁵ Adrian Higgins, 'Teaching Woodlot Owners to See the Forest Beyond the Trees', *Washington Post*, 22 Jan 2004; Cornell Cooperative Extension, local programmes in Niagara: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/niagara/#local-programs>; Basics of farming short courses in Maryland, Howard Ag. Newsletter, 2: 2006 at: http://www.hceda.org/uploads/pdfs/HowardAg_2006_Issue_02.pdf.

⁵⁶ American Farmland Trust (AFT) and Chesapeake Bay Foundation 'Conserving the Washington-Baltimore Region's Green Network: The Time to Act is Now', report, released May 2004. <http://www.farmland.org/greennetwork/Conserving%20a%20Green%20Network.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003): 238.

⁵⁸ Gill Chamblin, 'Fighting for Their Land', *Howard County Times*, 29 Oct 1981.

⁵⁹ See Howard County Department of Zoning and Planning website: http://www.co.ho.md.us/DPZ/Agricultural/dpz_agricultural_preservation.htm

⁶⁰ See The Loudoun County Purchase of Development Rights Program webpage, <http://www.co.loudoun.va.us/omag/pdr/index.htm>.

⁶¹ Virginia Agricultural Protection Act, 1981, and New York's Agricultural Districts Law, 1971.

⁶² Including the *Loudoun Times-Mirror*, *Howard County Times*, *Times*, *Ellicott City, Niagara Gazette*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Baltimore Sun*. Local historical societies in all three counties maintain clippings of conflicts in their archives.

⁶³ In Roderick Frazier Nash, ed., *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990), 33; and Carolyn Merchant, ed., *Major Problems in American Environmental History* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1993), 383–384. See also Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century* (New York: Touchstone, 1999).

⁶⁴ See Audubon Naturalist Society Rust Sanctuary website, <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/rustsanct.htm>.

⁶⁵ See Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park website, <http://www.patapscofemaleinstitute.org/friends.htm>.

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⁶⁶ See Claude Moore Park, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services website, <http://www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks/claude.htm>. The National Wildlife Federation owned the park from 1975 to 1986.

⁶⁷ Howard County General Plan, Howard County Planning Commission. 1960: 39.

⁶⁸ Byline: 'Parks Needed: Merging Cities Threaten Open Space', *Times, Ellicott City*, 8 May 1963.

⁶⁹ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

⁷⁰ Loudoun County, Loudoun County Choices and Changes General Plan, 1990–2010, 1991.

⁷¹ Anne Sorensen et al., op cit.

⁷² Bill Michelmore, 'The Parkway Problem', *Buffalo News*, 20 Feb. 2000.

⁷³ The Niagara Heritage Partnership maintains an extensive electronic campaign archive of articles and letters. See: <http://niagaraheritage.org/index.html>.

⁷⁴ See the National Wildlife Federation's 'Backyard Wildlife Habitat' website, <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/southriding.cfm>.

⁷⁵ Loudoun County Department of Economic Development surveyed local residents' attitudes regularly from 1990, as did Howard Research and Development – builders of Columbia new town. George Gallup polled nationally. Local newspapers in the counties also carried out irregular and relatively unscientific self-reported surveys.

⁷⁶ See Rudy Maxa, 'Western Loudoun's Rural Landscape – It's Not Your Father's Farm', June 2001, online, <http://www.rudymaxa.com/article.php?ArticleID=45>

⁷⁷ John Hanchette, 'Mountain Views: Exploding Deer Population Presents Problems for Officials and Motorists', the *Niagara Falls Reporter*, 28 June 2005.

⁷⁸ Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, 'Deer Management', http://www.co.ho.md.us/RAP/RAP_Deermanagement.htm (accessed 25 Jan. 2008)

⁷⁹ Amy Gardner, 'Swelling Herds, A Growing Risk', in the *Washington Post*, 27 Mar. 2007.

⁸⁰ See Woods, 'Engaging the Global Countryside', 487.

