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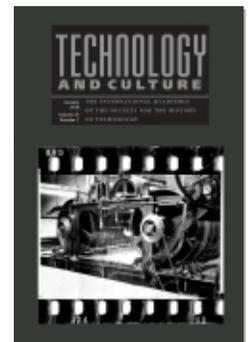
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The Garage: Automobility and Building Innovation in America's Early Auto Age by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle (review)

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particular, it would serve well for course adoption for history of technology, Russian history, business history, and global studies courses.

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**The Garage: Automobility and Building Innovation in America's Early Auto Age.**

By John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle. Knoxville; University of Tennessee Press, 2013. Pp. xvii+170. \$29.95.

American garages, especially commercial garages of the first half of the twentieth century, have been largely overlooked by historic preservationists, as well as by others investigating automobile-shaped America. From a concern with that architectural and cultural heritage, John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, a geographer and a historian, respectively, were motivated to publish a book on the rich history of the garage in America. It seems that it also took them a while to pay attention to the garage, as they have published extensively on aspects of roadside America, including parking lots, gas stations, roadside restaurants, and motels. The garage was less attention-getting in physical appearance as well as location in comparison to other roadside businesses, but its history sheds light on many aspects of car dealing, servicing, usage, and storage.

The opening chapter outlines the rise of the garage. The typology of the (commercial) garage harks back to livery stables, smithies, carriage and wagon shops, machine shops, and bicycle shops. While blacksmiths and other shop-owners took on auto repair as a new business in the early days of cars, auto repair gradually evolved into its own distinct enterprise. The next two chapters are dedicated to the layout of commercial garages between 1900 and 1959. Floor plans, sketches, and pictures illustrate successive steps in the evolution of the typical garage with distinct sales and repair spaces. The salesroom at the front had to be aesthetically pleasing in order to seduce and persuade customers to buy, while the repair room at the back had a utilitarian arrangement in order to repair and store cars efficiently. The fourth chapter discusses dealership, the activity of selling and servicing automobiles.

The evolution of the domestic garage is the focus of the fifth chapter; originally only for the upper class, it later became common in all layers of society. Interestingly, the first garages were not only for the car, but also the chauffeur, who was in charge of its maintenance and repair as well as its operation. Chauffeurs took cars to a public garage for service. The sixth chapter focuses on the specialization and departmentalization of the garage, a process that took place quickly after World War I. In the seventh

and last chapter, the authors plead for the historic preservation and the adaptive re-use of commercial garages. They argue that, although those structures were not envisioned as attention-getting because of their rather trivial and purely utilitarian outlook, they are important landmark buildings. Although they do not belong with the places of aesthetic merits, they symbolize successful entrepreneurship and highlight that roadside America was more than a giant playground.

*The Garage* is a well-researched and richly illustrated book, in which a gender perspective is included. The authors treat the American garage holistically, taking many aspects into consideration: its users (from workers to customers), its architecture, its connotations, its location, its perception in popular media, its meaning in the stratification of society. However, it would have been useful if certain evolutions were stressed more explicitly or at least summarized in a concluding chapter, as the central themes can be hard to identify amid the abundance of information. At the same time, I missed some important evolutions of the domestic garage in the United States. Jakle and Sculle only mention Jane Jacobs as an advocate of a renewed street life in her famous *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (1961), and they jump immediately to the New Urbanists of the 1980s as the first planners who were concerned with a pleasant living space. But already around the 1930s urban planners were experimenting with alternatives to deal with a car in a housing environment. For example, the garden city Radburn in New Jersey is worth mentioning because, already in 1929, it dealt explicitly with what are now called “traffic calming measures.” In their design, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright separated the roads from pedestrian paths. While the paths ran to the doors at the front of each house, the roads gave access to the rear of those houses. For that reason, the garages were positioned at the back of the homes. As that model was influential among urban planners in postwar Europe, it seems to me that it deserved mentioning.

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Els De Vos is associate professor at the Faculty of Design Sciences at the University of Antwerp. She has published a monograph on postwar home cultures in Flanders, coauthored in *T&C* (October 2011) an article on the garage in Belgian Flanders, and coedited several book volumes.