

Field Note

"Hiking to the famed Grinnell Glacier in Glacier National Park brings one close to nature, but even in this remote part of the United States the work of humans is inscribed in the landscape. The parking lot at the start of the six-mile trail, the trail itself, and the small signs en route are only part of the human story. When I hiked around the turn in this valley

and arrived at the foot of the glacier, I found myself looking at a sheet of ice and snow that was less than a third the size of what it had been in 1850. The likely reason for the shrinkage is human-induced climate change. If the melt continues at present rates, scientists predict that the glacier will be gone by 2030."



Figure 1.8
Glacier National Park, United States. © Alexander B. Murphy.

Any cultural landscape has layers of impressions from years of human activity. As each group of people arrives and occupies a place, they bring their own technological and cultural traditions and transform the landscape accordingly. Each new group of residents can also be influenced by what they find when they arrive and leave some of it in place. In 1929, Derwent Whittlesey proposed the term **sequent occupance** to refer to these sequential imprints of occupants, whose impacts are lay-

ered one on top of the other, each layer having some impacts on the next.

The Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam provides an interesting urban example of sequent occupance. Arabs from Zanzibar first chose the African site in 1866 as a summer retreat. Next, German colonizers imprinted a new layout and architectural style (wood-beamed Teutonic) when they chose the city as the center of their East African colonies in 1891. After World War I, when



Figures 1.9, left and right

Mumbai, India (left) and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania (right). Apartment buildings throughout Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India, are typically four stories with balconies. In Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, this four-story walkup with balconies (right) stands where single-family African dwellings once stood, reflecting the sequential occupance of the city. © Alexander B. Murphy.

the Germans were ousted, a British administration took over the city and began yet another period of transformation. The British encouraged immigration from their colony in India to Tanzania. The new migrant Asian population created a zone of three- and four-story apartment houses, which look as if they were transplanted from Bombay, India (Fig. 1.9 left and right). Then, in the early 1960s, Dar es Salaam became the capital of newly independent Tanzania. Thus, the city experienced four stages of cultural dominance in less than one century, and each stage of the sequence remains imprinted in the cultural landscape.

The cultural landscape can be seen as a kind of book offering clues into each chapter of the cultural practices, values, and priorities of its various occupiers. As geographer Peirce Lewis explained in *Axioms for Reading the Landscape* (1979), "Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible, visible form." Like Whittlesey, Lewis recommended looking for layers of history and cultural practice in cultural landscapes, adding that most major changes in the cultural landscape occur after a major event, such as war, an invention, or an economic depression.



Geographers who practice fieldwork keep their eyes open to the world around them and through practice become adept at reading cultural landscapes. Take a walk around your campus or town and try reading the cultural landscape. Choose one thing in the landscape and ask yourself, "What is that and why is it there?" How might the existence of that thing influence the future development of the neighborhood? Take the time to find out the answers!

WHY DO GEOGRAPHERS USE MAPS, AND WHAT DO MAPS TELL US?

Maps are an incredibly powerful geographic tool, and **cartography**, the art and science of making maps, is as old as geography itself. (For details on cartography, see Appendix A at the end of this book.) Maps are used for countless purposes, waging war, promoting political positions, solving