

century? Is it ironic that the society, after years of battling the redevelopment juggernaut in many cities, now finds itself pressed by many of the same cities to declare almost every old building historically significant?

It would seem appropriate for the society and those who describe themselves as preservationists to identify the variety of interests which the phrase "historic preservation" now seems to cover. In this discussion it may

be useful for the society to distinguish between those who create history and those whose primary role is to interpret history. Real estate developers, city planners, homeowners, and businessmen change the physical and, hence, the historical landscape. The Historical Society interprets these changes. As a result, the society may choose to reassert that, from its perspective, history should remain at the foundation of historic preservation.

Book Reviews

Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir. By John T. Flanagan.
(Northfield, Minnesota, Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1977. ix, 181 p. \$7.00.)

THE AUTHOR, in his preface, makes a valid and important point. He remarks that "intimacy in personal relationships is not always the best preparation for the writing of a biography." Both Flanagan's respect and affection for the subject of this book are abundantly clear, but he is not entirely uncritical. The reader is fortunate that the author, although clearly an admirer of Blegen, was also meticulous in his use of sources, indefatigable in his interviewing, and not given to overgeneralization in his judgments. Furthermore, his writing and style seem to become more sprightly, informal, and alive as he moves along from the early to the later years of his subject's life.

If the comment in the preface is accurate, it must, in fairness, be pointed out that this reviewer was also friend, neighbor, golfing companion, fellow Sherlockian, and even, on rare occasions, poker-playing opponent of Blegen, facts which may erode critical judgment. The consequent temptation is always to write a postscript memoir rather than to review a biography; I shall try to resist it.

The author refers to his book as a "memoir," and uses the word in his subtitle. That is less pretentious than "biography," although the excellent work by Flanagan could qualify as either. Perhaps "biographical memoir" is as accurate a term as any.

Dean Blegen (it may be significant that friends, respecting his dignity, often addressed him as "dean," though he sometimes reminded them that his name was Ted) was for many years managing editor of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, under whose auspices this book was published. He taught at Hamline University, was superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, became professor of history and graduate-school dean at the University of Minnesota and was a lifelong critic, consultant, and writer. This book traces each of these intermixed careers clearly and accurately.

The early chapters of the work seem slightly less free-

flowing and rich than those which follow, but they do the necessary job of providing family and childhood background. It is in the chapter called "The Temper of the Man," however, that the memoir takes on life and vigor, and that the author, writing from his background as literary scholar and one deeply interested in folklore, identifies most closely with his subject and makes him almost as exciting to the reader as he obviously was to the writer. The sensitive way in which Flanagan describes Blegen's nomination (not "candidacy," because he did not campaign or even admit that he was a candidate) for the presidency of the University of Minnesota, indicates his understanding of academic politics. This was at the time James L. Morrill was chosen (1944) almost personally by Fred B. Snyder, chairman of the board of regents, who ignored the faculty selection committee. Snyder had been a very effective member and chairman of the board for many years, but at this point, in his mid-eighties, he made some ex-friends by failing to consult adequately with the constituencies of the university, either inside or outside.

It is another measure of the stature and character of Theodore Blegen that, far from resenting President Morrill, who was probably quite unaware of the lack of consultation, he became one of the new president's strongest supporters and, as Flanagan points out, joined a few of us who visited him on the morning of each birthday to present a bottle of champagne, sometimes chosen by the dean. (To our distress, we learned later that he did not like it.) The president depended heavily upon Blegen for advice, and it was always available, but presented graciously.

It should be clear from these few paragraphs that not only has the author provided us with a memoir of an exceptional man, but he has also provided us with significant bits of university history. In addition, the assignment of Blegen to survey the status of higher education in the state of New York is outlined clearly. That major task produced a set of pretty unpopular documents, and sketched out problems existing in other states as well, but some of the unwelcome advice was so skillfully structured and so persuasive that the controversy its author knew would follow did clear the academic and political air. Blegen makes all that clear in his book, *The Harvests of Knowledge*, which his biographer has obviously read with care and insight.

It is a special pleasure to note that the author does not

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neglect his subject's devotion to detective fiction. He notes, too, that Blegen joined with Errett W. McDiarmid and a few others in the establishment of a chapter of the Baker Street Irregulars, called "The Norwegian Explorers," and that at about the same time he tried to write a detective novel of his own. It did not go well, and he gave up the project in favor of doing books about Holmes and taking to Meiringen, Switzerland, a plaque sponsored jointly by the Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. The plaque was placed ceremoniously on the face of the cliff over the "dreadful cauldron" of the Reichenbach Falls, where it still commemorates the battle with Professor Moriarty. Blegen's sense of humor was served, just as it was when he described a dean as a person who "dodges issues in a straightforward manner."

Flanagan reports carefully the reactions to Blegen's *Minnesota: A History of the State*, which had generally favorable reviews, but a sour note was a negative piece by Philip D. Jordan, a former colleague, who said it was a narrative for a "popular and lay audience." The dean was wounded, but not mortally. He seemed more offended by Jordan's criticism of his style.

When he made the much publicized hole in one at the University of Minnesota golf course, a story told with amused relish by the author, I was fortunate to be in his foursome. We stopped at the Blegen home for a special nineteenth-hole ceremony, and the star of the round shouted to his wife, "Clara Clara, I made a hole in one!" She responded with simulated lack of enthusiasm, "Oh, is that good?" The dean was taken aback and said, "Clara, if I had been given the Nobel Prize, it would have been as nothing in comparison."

The inclusion of some of his humorous and witty verse is a delight to read, and the "Elegy on a Sad Blister by Mr. Lister," written to me after back surgery, is only one example included in the book. In a more serious passage, the author refers to the impressive appearance of his subject before the selection committee appointed to search for his successor. It was indeed a virtuoso performance.

As I have suggested, the liveliest chapters of the book are those in which the author permits himself to make judgments and evaluations, some of which Blegen's friends and family will treasure. We are reminded that he could be tough as well as compassionate, though he did not unceremoniously throw bitter words into the teeth of the academic world. As Flanagan says, this may be a less than totally objective biography, but if it does err in the direction of praise, it is not fulsome, and to most of us will confirm our own perceptions of a Triton in our midst.

Reviewed by E. W. ZIEBARTH, former interim president and dean of the college of liberal arts, University of Minnesota.

***A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota.* By Dave Gebhard and Tom Martinson.**

(Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977. 469 p. Illustrations. Hard cover \$14.95, paper \$8.95.)

RUN, DO NOT WALK, to your nearest bookseller and buy this book. It is the only complete, orderly, illustrated guide to

Minnesota's architecture. It is a competently written, clearly printed, and comfortably weighted and sized piece of bookmaking. It is well worth your money if you want to know more about the constructed ecology of the state.

The authors have avoided the clotted and constricted jargon of much architectural history. They take a sculptural view of their subject. They regard all large-scale, deliberate alteration of the landscape as architecture, without being too finicking about its anticipated longevity. They can write as well about the architecture of the mound builders as about the park builders. They symbolize their sympathy for ephemera with a picture of an ice palace on the cover and their sympathy for landscape in their description of the Dakota County Government Center.

That description is Gebhard and Martinson at their best. They care about what they see. One does not have to share their prejudices to find them better companions than those pedants who profess a walled detachment. They are annoyed by circumstances which put architectural gems within "private fiefdoms" — therefore, not "accessible to the public." They deride "corporate stagesets," not so much because of the staginess, one suspects, as because of the action onstage.

They are not snobbish. They emulate Robert Venturi and approve of such super-signs as Paul Bunyan or Babe, the Blue Ox, and they are as rough on big-name architects as they are on amateurs. They have their loyalties and their antipathies. Gebhard knows more about, and cares more about, the work of William G. Purcell and George G. Elmslie than any person alive, and Martinson (I presume) is responsible for the best writing in the book, which deals with parks, large and small. They do not "care for" the work of Ralph Rapson, among others.

We can be grateful to them for their discoveries. Without them I (for one) would not have known about the Bruce Goff works at Mountain Lake, about the public library at Tracy, the Farmers and Merchants Bank at Lamberton, the Municipal Building at Alden, and the new church at Barnesville, all of which are gems. My guess is that without them, very few readers, state or national, would discover the Federated Insurance Building, which, taken together with Louis H. Sullivan's great bank, makes Owatonna as important for any architectural education as Columbus, Indiana. (What Owatonna is for 1900-1925, Columbus is for 1950-1977.)

The book does have certain imperfections. I think the authors could have let themselves go and eschewed some nervous "seems." They could have been bold and attributed the St. Paul Building, for which signed drawings were published, to Harvey Ellis, as they did Pillsbury Hall and Nicholson Hall. And they need not have shyly assured us that they were going to "lump numerous stylistic episodes into a few broad categories" while giving us a taxonomy of twenty-four styles. A little more derring-do in the lumping would help lay readers work their way into the material.

The authors can write very well. For example, page 205 has two epigrams about Hibbing, page 349 does honestly and cheerfully for Bruce Goff, and Rochester is introduced to us with dash and finesse.

But, after fighting their way through snow and dust, from town to town, over thousands of miles, authors grow tired (as I can certify), and here and there their editors failed to bring

them refreshment. Hundreds of short descriptions cannot all be expected to be haiku, but the authors should have been rescued from some of their exhausted uses — “futuristic,” “meaningful” twice (pages 3 and 117), at least one “tasteful” (without irony), a “pretentious” that appears not to mean full of pretense, and “laissez-faireism,” which is not a word. “Hold a candle” has almost lost its right to print by now, as has “volumetric.” And what does this mean? — “The numerous intellectual organizations characteristic of Charles Moore’s work have been dropped, and only the stylistic features remain.” If they mean that Moore resigned from the Minnesota Historical Society, let them say so.

Having noted that the authors merited better editing after they had finished their labors, let me reiterate my first point. This book is the best thing in its field about Minnesota, and one of the three best architectural guides in the nation. It is solidly researched, extraordinary in the vitality and commitment manifested in its descriptive prose, and a welcome partner to chatter, earlier volumes. Having traveled many of the same roads a decade ago, I doff my hat to these more systematic wayfarers, their research assistants, and the organizations who helped with this first-class work.

Reviewed by ROGER G. KENNEDY, the Ford Foundation’s vice-president for arts in New York and the author of *Minnesota Houses: An Architectural and Historical View*.

A Supplementary View

GEBHARD AND MARTINSON work hard to transcend the traditional restrictions of architectural “high art.” Industrial and engineering structures often receive treatment equal in quality, if not in number, to the usual array of attractive houses and public and commercial buildings.

Railroad stations are well covered, reflecting current popular interest in their preservation. They are outnumbered only by early gasoline service stations (I counted at least twenty-five specific references), the happy result of the authors’ eye for these neglected buildings. Mills, bridges, and grain elevators are represented by about a dozen entries each, and there are a few warehouses, breweries, water towers, and creameries. A subject index to supplement the architect-engineer index would be handy for locating all service stations, depots, or creameries.

While the appearance of these buildings in the *Guide* is hardly in proportion to their ubiquitousness and significance in the Minnesota landscape, it is commendable that Gebhard and Martinson have included them at all. One baffling omission is the entire St. Anthony Falls west-side milling district, including the famous Washburn A Mill, and the east-side power stations. While the many University of Minnesota buildings, large and small, receive special recognition in eight pages, this important cluster of historic industrial and hydroelectric structures is disposed of in one paragraph.

The dilemma confronting anyone writing an architectural guide which includes things traditionally ignored is apparent in the text. Limiting themselves to a discussion of external style using contemporary architectural terminology, the authors are unable to communicate much about structures whose essential meaning is not necessarily in their architectural style.

The entry for the mill and elevator complex at Rushford is a

classic example of the limitations of the authors’ architectural language. Why even include elevators if they can be described only as “a variety of vertical and horizontal volumes (some circular, others rectilinear), all tightly grouped”?

The sophisticated knowledge which leads to such subtle stylistic distinctions as differentiating between subtypes of *Moderne* vanishes when confronted with a structure as elementary as a mill. Are the Afton and Rushford mills gristmills or sawmills? Are they powered by water, steam, or wind? The types are not indicated. In their travels around the state the authors apparently overlooked early metal truss bridges since few are listed and these do not state truss type. The mill and bridge at Clinton Falls seem to be included purely for their “rustic” quality, “highly reminiscent of rural areas in the East.”

The *Guide* helps to broaden our vision of the landscape to include many features overlooked and forgotten. What is still needed is an historical understanding of these depots, breweries, water towers, and mills, equal to that presented for commercial and domestic architecture, so they can become more than pleasant scenic backdrops or landscape sculpture.

Reviewed by ROBERT M. FRAME III, research historian for the MHS State Historic Preservation Office and a member of the board of directors of the Society for Industrial Archeology. He recently completed a study of Minnesota flour and gristmills.

The Fur Trade in Minnesota: An Introductory Guide to Manuscript Sources. Compiled by Bruce M. White. (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1977. 61 p. Paper \$4.50.)

IN THE FIRST SENTENCE of an excellent explanatory introduction this *Guide* refers to the difficulties scholars have encountered owing to the “exceedingly fragmented” nature of manuscript sources relating to the fur trade. The *Guide* is an attempt — and a very successful one — to provide a means of locating a wide variety of such sources relating to the fur trade in Minnesota. Nor is the topic limited narrowly to the state itself. A useful map of “The Minnesota Fur Trade Country” shows that the area dealt with includes the Upper Mississippi, Red River, and Lake Superior regions. In political terms, this means that it includes northern and western Wisconsin, the Michigan peninsula between lakes Michigan and Superior, the part of the Red River Valley in Canada, and the lakes and rivers east of it as far as Fort William. The map is limited to geographical features. One wishes that it had been possible to include a companion map showing trading posts, even if these were identified only by company (as in Grace Lee Nute’s *The Voyageur’s Highway*), or, better still, by both name and company.

The main body of the *Guide* describes the relevant collections in the Minnesota Historical Society’s division of archives and manuscripts. These are 104 in number, and in addition to original documents include the numerous copies of material in other repositories that the society has gathered over a long period. This section is supplemented by an appendix describing “Additional Collections” in a dozen institutions that have important holdings referring to the Minnesota region, copies of

which have not been obtained. Most notable of these is the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, now housed in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

Of necessity the descriptive notes are concise, but they are highly informative. They cannot be an index, nor can they answer every inquiry a researcher may have in mind; but they should enable one to judge with some certainty whether or not a given collection is likely to include material relevant to whatever topic is under investigation.

At this point the guide goes beyond the call of duty, as defined in its title, for it includes a substantial appendix entitled "A Preliminary Roster of Fur Traders in the Fond du Lac and Upper Mississippi Regions, 1795-1822." Researchers should note the two limitations; lack of time has made it necessary to limit the roster to persons known to have been active in the two regions indicated, and it concentrates on what were "perhaps the most active years in the Minnesota trade." It is an amazing tabulation of over 700 individuals, and whenever the information is available the roster indicates when, where, and by whom the person was employed, gives details of wages, the person's rank in the trade (such as clerk or boatman) and a reference to sources. These details have been gathered not only from fur trade records proper, but from notarial, probate, and census records, many of which include entries relating to employment contracts, fur trade partnerships, and personal affairs.

In sum, this is a carefully planned and most helpful guide. One can only hope that it will encourage other repositories to go and do likewise.

One small correction: the famous Beaver Club was not an organization for "retired" fur traders. Most of its members were very active indeed, both in business and socially, and its extremely boisterous dinner parties were for years the talk of Montreal.

Reviewed by W. KAYE LAMB, archivist of Canada from 1948 to 1969, who has written on many aspects of Canadian history and the history of the fur trade.

***The Streams and Rivers of Minnesota.* By Thomas E. Waters.**

(Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977. 373 p. Illustrations. \$9.95.)

***A Gathering of Waters: A Guide to Minnesota's Rivers.* By Greg Breining and Linda Watson.**

(St. Paul, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1977. 106 p. Illustrations. Paper \$5.00.)

MINNESOTA is a land of rivers whose smallest brooks are the headwaters of three continental drainage systems. From a single point near Hibbing, rain water flows eastward to Lake Superior and the Atlantic Ocean, southward into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, and northward to the Little Fork River and Hudson Bay. Running waters embrace Minnesota; the Pigeon, Rainy, Red, St. Croix, and Mississippi rivers partly form its boundaries. Two recent books illuminate this treasure of running waters.

The Streams and Rivers of Minnesota is a thoroughly researched and delightfully written survey of the subject. The author shows that rivers are not simply wiggly blue lines on the state map, but the central features of enclosed geographical units called watersheds. Rivers are more than running water, they are an integral part of, and largely a product of, the life within the watersheds. Bedrock, forest litter, and soils affect a river's water chemistry, for example. This gives the stream an identifiable "smell" that spawning Lake Superior trout and salmon can detect, and thus find their ways to ancestral breeding grounds. Thomas Waters (a professor of fisheries at the University of Minnesota) knows the streams from firsthand experiences and his chapters take the reader on excursions down swift canoeing rivers or up brooks filled with native trout.

Minnesota's rivers vary from flat water streams on the prairies to roaring cataracts spewing into Lake Superior. Watersheds embrace ancient granites and limestones, mountainous ridges, level muskeg bogs, rolling hills, mixed-grass prairies, rich Big Woods, and boreal forests. Diversity is the key to Minnesota's rivers. Deftly drawn word portraits of each watershed are reinforced with dozens of black-and-white and color photographs.

The chapter on the Big and Little Fork rivers illustrates the author's approach. When marshalling information, Waters draws freely on scientific data, historical records, and personal observations to produce a sharp picture of each watershed. The Big Fork River's many-faceted character is derived partly from the granite ledges that form its rapids, the vast, wooded bogs that stain its waters, the prehistoric hunters who built Grand Mound at its mouth, and the lumberjacks who cut the white pines along the riverbanks and drove the logs downstream to the mills. Human history and the landscape are intertwined, and Waters traces the connection with precision.

In an ably written chapter about the spring-fed streams of southeastern Minnesota, the author describes also the "intellectual energy and apostolic zeal" of Richard J. Dorer, a Minnesota conservationist who devoted years of patient labor to arresting the ravages of flooding and unchecked soil erosion. Human values have played a large role in shaping Minnesota's landscape. The importance of settlement and agricultural development in the region led to wholesale deforestation, severe erosion, and flooding. Eventually erosion and flooding forced farmers to abandon the land. When the state bought it, under Dorer's leadership, it was turned into a wildlife refuge and state forest. In the Whitewater Valley, the landscape has changed from wilderness to farms to wilderness, all in the space of a century.

Readers will find each chapter a readable synthesis of technical and general information. A few may find the statistics on annual stream flow in cubic feet per second too arcane for comprehension, but most will notice that the chapter is greater than the sum of its parts because the author has infused it with his conviction that rivers are a natural and cultural heritage worth preserving.

Waters' last chapter is a well-reasoned call for stewardship of Minnesota's rivers and streams. It is one of his many good passages. After succinctly chronicling the failures of dams and stream channelization as the answer to flood control, he points to signs of hope. If Minnesotans continue to defend their running waters, and use their time and opportunities wisely, he

believes "we might yet make secure the magic of flowing waters." After reading *The Streams and Rivers of Minnesota*, that is not too much to hope for.

A Gathering of Waters is a helpful companion for those who want to explore Minnesota's rivers for themselves. It is published by the state Department of Natural Resources as an aid to using the state's canoe routes. The first chapters are devoted to explaining the rudiments of running rapids, canoeing, and river fishing. The rest of the volume describes in detail eighteen canoe streams, including the wild and scenic St. Croix, Kettle, and the North Fork of the Crow rivers. A detailed map of each route accompanies the text and it shows the location of rapids, access points, highways, campsites, and wells. A tightly written text illustrated with color photographs describes the rivers, their flora and fauna, history, and the obstacles. Together, *The Streams and Rivers of Minnesota* and *A Gathering of Waters* introduce Minnesotans to a living heritage before it disappears.

Reviewed by R. NEWELL SEARLE, an enthusiastic outdoorsman (he hiked the Oregon Trail last summer) and canoeist, who wrote Saving Quetico-Superior, reviewed in the Spring, 1977, issue. Searle is assistant director of the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

Cultural Pluralism versus Assimilation: The Views of Waldemar Ager. Edited by Odd S. Lovoll.

(Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Topical Studies*, vol. 2, Northfield, Minnesota, 1977. 136 p. \$5.00.)

WHAT ROLE have ethnic groups played in the creation of an American identity? What role should they play? Norwegian Americans of the early twentieth century had strong opinions on these questions, some of which are aired in this unusual book. In addition to a thoughtful introductory essay by Carl Chrislock, the book contains translations of ten articles published between 1905 and 1919 in the periodical *Kvartalskrift* (Quarterly) of an organization called Det Norske Selskap (the Norwegian Society of America). The society was founded in 1903 and recently merged with the NAHA; *Kvartalskrift* lasted from 1905 to 1922. Waldemar Ager, its editor, was a first-generation Norwegian American who also edited *Reform*, a Norwegian-language temperance newspaper, wrote several novels and volumes of short stories, and often spoke and organized on behalf of his favorite cause, the preservation of what we would call Norwegian-American ethnicity. (A helpful biographical discussion of Ager by Kenneth Snemo rounds out the book.) Although most of the articles were written by Ager, an ardent pluralist, contributions by John B. Wist and A. H. Lindelie represent the assimilationist viewpoint.

Discussed in the book are many questions that are still timely today, not only because of the recent surge of ethnic studies and roots celebrations, but also because people in many national groups continue to immigrate to America. The role that all of these groups can play in the forging of an American character remains important. If the WASPing of American society has been thoroughly discredited as a goal (and the melting

pot as its symbol), where are we headed instead? As we submerge ourselves deeply in our own national or cultural pasts, might we not neglect the bridge building necessary to create respect for people with different pasts, whether Americans or citizens of other countries?

An important issue in this context and one which is raised in this book, as it is whenever this subject is thoughtfully debated, is the question of racism. Ager treats the subject with sensitivity, though by his own admission he shares some of the attitudes of his pro-melting-pot opponents. When Lindelie expresses dismay at the foreign neighborhoods on the East Side of New York, saying "God deliver us and save us from an America of that kind! Bring out the melting pot! The result cannot be worse than what we have now!" Ager discerns the crucial issue. "If they are to be assimilated," he says, "they must fuse with us who are already acclimated. But you do not want to. We do not in all truth want to either." But, says Ager, "The casting ladle is also waiting for you and into this ladle you must enter together with all these people that you pray to God to deliver and save you from." Later Ager speaks up for the people who so horrified Lindelie: "It is possible that Mr. Lindelie on Wall Street and Fifth Avenue would have found nicely dressed people who were bigger crooks and much more dangerous to the welfare of the nation than these poor 'God-deliver-us-people' in New York's foreign quarters."

So many Americans now come from racially, ethnically, and culturally mixed backgrounds that cultural pluralism as Ager envisions it may no longer be an option for an American identity. Unfortunately Ager does not confront this problem, nor does he entirely respect individuals of mixed background — the partially melted. We can now only laugh at Ager's remark that "America also has a racially mixed type. We recall men like Roosevelt and Lafollette. [But] one will quite soon notice something unfinished in them. There is not the genuineness, the completeness that characterizes the pure and refined English types. Their great energy is explosive, uncontrolled and reminds one too much of a display of fireworks."

Certainly there is more to the lively debate contained in this book than the specific questions discussed here, and just as certainly the book does not finally resolve the conflicts between cultural pluralism and assimilation. Because these questions remain open, the work forms a valuable contribution to a discussion, the importance of which makes itself felt each time an immigrant arrives in the United States or a third- or fourth-generation American rediscovers his or her heritage.

Reviewed by DEBORAH M. STULTZ, research assistant at the MHS, who is presently co-ordinating the Minnesota ethnic history project.

The Finn Factor in American Labor, Culture, and Society. By Carl Ross, with an introduction by Rudolph Vecoli.

(New York Mills, Minnesota, Parta Printers, Inc., 1977. 220 p. Illustrations. \$7.50.)

THIS EXCELLENT book achieves two purposes. First of all, it provides a useful narrative of the Finnish-American experi-

ence from 1865 to 1945. Secondly, it develops a convincing interpretation of the role of the "Finn Factor" within the broader American experience. It also demonstrates that an author need not be a professional historian to write good history, and that meritorious publications are not the monopoly of big-name firms. One might complain of certain flaws — the lack of an index, for example — but the book's over-all quality substantially outweighs its defects.

Basically, the nineteenth-century phase of Finnish-American history parallels the experience of other ethnic groups in the United States. As a response to the difficult challenges of a new environment, Finnish immigrants created a number of institutions, including temperance lodges (the influence of which extended beyond the promotion of abstinence from alcohol), churches, mutual aid societies, and a variety of cultural organizations. In the early years of the twentieth century, a more distinctive Finnish-American profile became visible. By the 1920s, Ross points out, "the church, radicalism, and cooperatives constituted, so to speak, the three-legged base upon which the Finnish American community rested."

Each of these three components has an interesting history of its own. Bitter conflict is one strand in this history. An apparently unbridgeable gap separated radicalism and the church, and intramural squabbling frequently disturbed the internal tranquility of both. In the late 1920s and early 1930s a struggle for control of the co-operative movement developed between Communist-oriented radicals and moderates. The moderates won a decisive victory, but before full reconciliation could be achieved, the Russo-Finnish war of 1939 renewed antagonisms between left-wing radicals and their adversaries.

Ross does not minimize the intensity of these struggles, but he insists that they be viewed in proper context. The participants, he writes, "rarely quarreled among themselves about the kinship of their past, but fought bitterly over the course of action they ought to pursue as Americans." Moreover, none of the three major institutional sectors defined ethnic preservation as its central goal, but the activity of all three contributed mightily to such preservation. Finnish socialists, according to Ross, "viewed cultural activity as the principal medium for promoting socialist propaganda," and, under radical sponsorship, "Finnish traditions of theatre, dance, music and Finnish language literature, flourished to the extent that ultimately the medium virtually became the message." To a lesser degree perhaps, the same may be said of activities promoted by the church and the co-operative movement.

In his concluding chapter Ross analyzes the decline of Finnish-American institutional structures, a process rendered inevitable by the exposure of more and more second- and third-generation Finns to the homogenizing pressures of American society. Again a common pattern is discernible. Finnish Lutheranism was assimilated into a broader American Lutheran fellowship; the co-operative movement's organizational arm, the Central Cooperative Wholesale, merged with Midland Cooperative; and the Finnish Workers Federation, by 1941 a mere remnant of a once-formidable socialist movement, joined the communist-led International Workers Order.

The demise of these structures as distinct ethnic entities did not, however, liquidate the "Finn Factor." Finnish Lutheran traditions became part of a multiethnic American Lutheran heritage, and the experience of Central Cooperative

Wholesale was now available to Midland. One might question the Finnish impact on the International Workers Order, but clearly the CIO wing of the American labor movement inherited the talent and support of erstwhile Finnish radicals and their progeny. The "Finn Factor" also survives, in the memories of old-timers and, more significantly, in the consciousness of those younger Finnish-Americans who in the 1970s are seeking their ethnic roots — a quest which Ross hopes is reinforcing efforts to create a new pluralistic concept of American society.

Reviewed by CARL H. CHRISLOCK, *professor of history at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, and author of The Progressive Era in Minnesota, 1899–1918.*

***America's Forgotten Architecture.* By Tony P. Wrenn and Elizabeth D. Mulloy.**

(New York, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1976. 311 p. Illustrations. Paper \$8.95.)

QUICKLY PAGING through *America's Forgotten Architecture*, one might get the impression that here is another nostalgic "coffee-table history," full of slick, eye-catching photographs, but containing little in the way of fine-print narrative. In a way, this first impression is quite correct, but there is a sort of magnetism that draws the reader forward through a series of vignettes toward a better understanding of that catch-all movement called historic preservation. Overall, the fine line separating romanticism from rationalism is extremely difficult to define, yet throughout the book, the reader becomes convinced that America's heritage is not merely a conglomerate of George Washington-slept-here monuments, but the day-to-day reality of our own communities. If anything, authors Wrenn and Mulloy have personalized the approach to understanding our heritage.

America's Forgotten Architecture is divided into three major areas which in substance echo the organizational pattern of approach utilized by historic preservation agencies throughout the country. Essentially, these areas concern (1) the development of research facilities and awareness necessary to deal with the subject matter, (2) the recording of tangible resources in a thematic, environmental, and historic framework, and (3) the analysis of survey results and the subsequent formulation of appropriate preservation programs. The bulk of the book is devoted to the second area, which effectively draws attention not only to the obvious architectural merits of fine residences and commercial blocks, but also awakens the reader to the not-so-obvious (but as historically important) contributions of the wide range of other buildings from mechanics' cottages to service stations which make up a "built environment" all too often taken for granted. The strength of this section — a superb photographic essay — could also be considered a weakness in that the text becomes lost within the profusion of photographs. The reader's mind soon wanders into the world of the pictures, and he embarks upon journeys far more exciting than ever possible through the written word.

The world of reality is regained in the third, and final,

section of the book. The dreams evoked through the photographic survey suddenly become "bricks and mortar" and "dollars and cents." In many ways the reader feels as though he has awakened from a dream and realizes that a part of his heritage has been robbed from him in the clouds of dust rising from an old building as it is bombarded by the wrecking ball. His first reaction is that of helplessness. However, as he reads further, he realizes that there is a favorable solution to his dilemma — a ray of hope. In the final chapters he sees the old building (and entire communities of old buildings) enter the realm of "recyclable resources," offering new and exciting opportunities for adaptive use, economic viability, and, above all, an encouraging future for our forgotten heritage.

The pendulum completes its swing, and the reader is brought back to the beginning, and a re-emphasis of the pervading theme — that the first and most important step toward the preservation of our heritage is through awareness. *America's Forgotten Architecture* is certainly a successful step in the right direction.

Reviewed by CHARLES W. NELSON, architectural historian with the MHS Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

***For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Edited by Michael G. Karni and Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (Superior, Wisconsin, Tyomies Society, 1977. 235 p. \$6.95.)**

THIS COLLECTION of interpretative essays, vividly describing the Finnish immigrant experience confronting the American industrial establishment, cannot fail to evoke sympathetic feelings no matter the audience. For, essentially, this is a

graphic description of the brutal suppression of dissent cast in the form of working-class ideology.

The authors, collectively, can be applauded for their diligence in unearthing from contemporary accounts the complex and deeply felt commitment to social change by the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Finnish immigrant. To say that, however, glosses over the myriad diversity of ideology presented in labor reform, education, ecclesiastical concerns, and women's rights. This collection is far more than a narrow focus on the contributions made by Finns and Finnish Americans to the then-expanding labor movement of the turn of the century.

One cannot help seeing in these essays the germ of a far more expansive research undertaking into the impressive ideological expression of the Finnish immigrant. Despite the implication conveyed that this was a preindustrial culture in confrontation with industrial America, Finnish immigrant leadership in fact was immensely knowledgeable of what they were up against. They were not naïve countryfolk (admittedly not a generalization perpetrated by the authors) overcoming great odds too often idealized in the immigrant literature. This leadership, no matter the form in which it was expressed, was deeply committed to change. For that concept — change — as articulated by the Finnish labor, political, and human rights advocates of the nineteenth century, was to collide head-on with the nativism of twentieth-century America.

This volume is of immense interest to those seeking descriptions of cultural conflict. One hopes that, with this primary research, we can look forward expectantly to a more definitive explanatory model to account for the immense cultural contribution made by Finns and Finnish Americans far beyond their numerical weight.

Reviewed by TUULIKKI JAAKOLA SINKS, teaching specialist in the department of Scandinavian at the University of Minnesota.

news & notes

WINNER OF the Minnesota Historical Society's \$250 Solon J. Buck Award for the best article to appear in *Minnesota History* in 1977 is George Tselos. His article on "Self-Help and Sauerkraut: The Organized Unemployed, Inc., of Minneapolis" appeared in the Winter, 1977 issue. Tselos, who received his doctorate in labor history at the University of Minnesota, is now archivist and historian at the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Winner of the \$125 Theodore C. Blegen Award (for MHS staff members) is Nicholas Westbrook for his essay, "Decisions, Decisions: An Exhibit's Invisible Ingredient," published in the Fall issue. Westbrook, co-ordinator of exhibits in

the educational services division, wrote the essay in connection with the MHS gallery exhibit, "The Clothes Off Our Backs: A Minnesota Collection," for which he and his staff were responsible. The Buck Award committee this year consisted of Fred Lukermann, chairman of the department of geography, University of Minnesota; Kirk Jeffrey, associate professor of history, Carleton College; and Kenneth Carley, editor of *Minnesota History*.

THE MINNESOTA Historical Society's annual meeting and history conference will be held Saturday, October 21, at the Sheraton-Ritz Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. Keynote speaker at the noon luncheon will be Fawn M. Brodie,

biographer of such diverse people as Thomas Jefferson, Sir Richard Francis Burton, Joseph Smith, and Thaddeus Stevens. She will speak on her current project, a psychohistorical analysis of the early years of Richard M. Nixon.

The rest of the conference will be devoted to a variety of papers relating to current research on Minnesota history. Russell W. Fridley will address the evening dinner session, speaking on the evolution of the MHS during his tenure as director.

ON THE COVER of *American Heritage* magazine for June/July, 1978, is a detail in color from Julius Holm's 1893 painting, "Tornado Over St. Paul," owned by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The

picture ties in with an article, "The Winds of Ruin," in which C. W. Gusewelle traces the terrifying history of tornadoes in America. Although the article does not discuss the July 13, 1890, twister that is the subject of the painting, it does mention briefly another one that hit Fergus Falls, Minnesota, in 1919.

The Holm painting as well as a photograph by William F. Koester on which it was based were both pictured in black and white in the Winter, 1977, issue of *Minnesota History*, along with Mark J. Meister's article, "The Man Who Painted the Lake Gervais Tornado."

A NEW BOOK by James S. Griffin, a deputy chief of the St. Paul Police Department, describes *Blacks in the St. Paul Police and Fire Departments, 1885-1976*. The 73-page, paper-cover book contains numerous illustrations and is available for \$3.50 from the author or from the MHS Museum Shop and bookstore.

In addition to amassing information about Black policemen and firemen through the years, the author, himself a Black, details his own career of more than thirty years as a St. Paul policeman. In the face of prejudice and other difficulties, Griffin was the first Black in Minnesota to hold the police ranks of sergeant, captain, and deputy chief of police — all promotions by competitive civil service examination. Griffin thinks that, when he became deputy chief in 1972, he "held the highest competitive Civil Service rank held by any Black in any metropolitan police department in the United States." A version of the police section of the book appeared in the Fall, 1975, issue of *Minnesota History*.

THE DISTINCTION between historians and geographers has been happily blurred in a new book by Hildegard Binder Johnson, professor emeritus of geography at Macalester College. *Order Upon the Land: The U.S. Rectangular Land Survey and the Upper Mississippi Hill Country*, the fifth book in the Andrew H. Clark Series in the Historical Geography of North America (New York, Oxford University Press, 1976, 268 p., illustrations, hard cover \$9.00, paper \$5.00), investigates the functional and visual impact of the rectangular survey's strict geometry on the rough hill country on both sides of the Mississippi from Galena, Illinois, to Hastings, Minnesota.

In this fascinating book, Johnson invites her readers to "direct their eyes" to the landscape. Foregoing generalizations

in favor of specific accounts, she describes the survey's effect on particular places — Winona, Money Creek, and dozens of other towns, farms, and roadways. Johnson traces the landscape created by miners, pre-emptors, and lucky townsite promoters who reached the hill country before the surveyors and considers how towns adjusted their streets and farmers their fields and wood lots to the survey's insistence on cardinal directions. She describes the activities of clearing land, building fences, and laying out roads in the surveyed hill country. Johnson brings her study up to the present, considering the impact of contemporary soil conservation practices, watershed districts, and state parks on the landscape.

In her later chapters, she discusses the moral and aesthetic implications of the rectangular grid and the traditional opinion that squares are necessarily ugly evidences of man, while what is curved is "natural." Johnson does not confirm or deny this. She neither dismisses the geometry of Main Street with the ironical distance of Sinclair Lewis, nor does she contend that square places are the best of all places in which to live. But, she says, despite and sometimes because of the survey's grid, the landscape of southeastern Minnesota is not monotonous. The physiography of the land is varied. Plows go up and down some fields and across others. In the spring the snow melts more quickly on stubbled fields than on clean ones. Some roads cut across townships diagonally while others follow township and section lines.

Order Upon the Land will be useful to historians, geographers, conservationists, and land-use planners. And, serious Sunday drivers who want a clearer understanding of landscapes through which they travel will also enjoy the company and assistance of Hildegard Binder Johnson.

JOAN SEIDL

EDITOR Sherna Gluck conducted oral history interviews with five suffragists to produce this book, *From Parlor to Prison: Five American Suffragists Talk About Their Lives* (New York, Vintage Books, 1976, 285 p., paper \$3.95). The five are a St. Paul woman who worked in the birth control movement, an advertising executive, a newspaperwoman, a Rumanian immigrant and radical, and a statistician for the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission and the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Of most interest to readers of *Minnesota History* is the essay about St. Paulite Sylvie Thygeson, who was born in Il-

linois in 1868, taught high school at age sixteen, and worked for her uncle, a judge in St. Louis, before moving to St. Paul where she met and married attorney Marcus Thygeson. In addition to raising four children, Sylvie Thygeson served as vice-president of the Women's Welfare League of St. Paul, an organization which gave lunches and banquets and worked to educate people for suffrage. Thygeson and other "women of standing in the community" also organized an informal birth control clinic in St. Paul at a time when such clinics were illegal under state law.

The essays focus on the women's commitment to suffrage but include extended discussions of family backgrounds, relations with men, jobs and careers, and what these women, who were elderly when they were interviewed, thought about old age and the future. It is unfortunate that the editor did not provide more basic biographical information about the women — one never learns Sylvie Thygeson's maiden name, for example — and dates when events occurred. But the essays are worthwhile nevertheless because they provide insights into the lives of relatively unknown women who came of age in the twentieth century and worked to secure the vote for women.

ANDREA HINDING

THE DIVERSE WAYS in which Minnesotans chose to celebrate the bicentennial are documented in a book published by the Minnesota American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in 1977. The book, *A Minnesota Mosaic: The Bicentennial in Photographs* (72 p.), is made up of photos that were entered in the commission's 1976 photo-essay contest. Included are black-and-white and color photographs from all over the state showing parades, picnics, plowing contests, fireworks displays, the ceremonial signing of declarations of independence, and other public and private events. The book is available in person or by mail for \$4.00 from the MHS bookstore.

FOUR PAMPHLETS recently published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin touch upon the ethnic heritage of that state. Entitled *Norwegians in Wisconsin* (39 p.), *Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin* (28 p.), *Germans in Wisconsin* (30 p.), and *Finns in Wisconsin* (39 p.), they contain numerous photographs and readable essays on their subjects. Two of them have short bibliographies (the ones on the Blacks and the Finns), and all four sell for \$1.25.

Since 1849, when it was chartered by the first territorial legislature, the Minnesota Historical Society has been preserving a record of the state's history. Its outstanding library and its vast collection of manuscripts, newspapers, pictures, and museum objects reflect this activity. The society also interprets Minnesota's past, telling the story of the state and region through publications, museum displays, tours, institutes, and restoration of historic sites. The work of the society is supported in part by the state and in part by private contributions, grants, and membership dues. It is a chartered public institution governed by an executive council of interested citizens and belonging to all who support it through membership and participation in its programs. You are cordially invited to use its resources and to join in its efforts to make Minnesota a community with a sense of strength from the past and purpose for the future.

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