

Building for the Centuries: Illinois, 1865-1898. By John H. Keiser. *Sesquicentennial History of Illinois*, Volume 4. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, for the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission and the Illinois State Historical Society, 1977. Pp. xvi, 386. Notes, maps, tables, bibliography, index. \$12.50.)

John H. Keiser's *Building for the Centuries* is part of the sesquicentennial history of Illinois. It presents a plethora of detail regarding demographic, economic, social, and political developments in the post Civil War era. The appendix includes good maps, indicating by county which party won in the elections of 1864, 1880, 1892, and 1900. Also given are tables showing by decade the foreign-born population in the state, the native-born population and its sources, comparative growth in manufacturing, and the occupation and nativity of employed persons. All of this is very useful in a book intended as both a reference work and a general treatment. Keiser's thesis is explicit: Illinois' economic and political direction for this century was almost predetermined by its modernizing era.

Pungently critical of the emerging business and political leadership of the era, Keiser is at his best in dealing with individuals and groups for whom he has sympathy. For example, the book's title is taken from a speech by John Peter Altgeld; and much of Keiser's view of the period reflects the values of Altgeld and Jane Addams, albeit they are not always reconcilable. He does explain the contributions of the state's business élites, especially Chicago's meatpackers, merchants, and industrialists. The problem is that Keiser tends to see the men in a social rather than business context. What Keiser has to say about minorities and women is refreshing, and his ways of presenting the information could well be emulated by other scholars. He is not patronizing, and he fits people into society in a meaningful way. His opening chapter—"Of People and Places"—is a fine example of this and an excellent way to begin a book. In part, also, he escapes the major pitfall of the state historian, the tendency to give ideas and events significance by trying to fit them into a national context.

This is not traditional narrative history. Keiser has chosen to analyze the structure of Illinois society. The wisdom of this decision is obvious because he can treat various topics—agriculture, industry, labor, politics, and culture—in separate chapters. But there are weaknesses in this approach. Repetition is inevitable. Moreover, since events are more important in one context than another, Keiser is forced to mention persons and

events before he explains them. A reader unfamiliar with the state's history could find some of this heavy going.

The book has other shortcomings too. With so much good illustrative material available, it is unfortunate that there are no pictures. They would surely have enhanced the reader's appreciation of both urbanization and industrialization. Unfortunately, too, Keiser has not treated politics and social mobility in a more modern manner. In a sense this seems to be the result of his research design. His bibliography indicates a heavy reliance on materials published before 1970, and he has not made use of essays published in non-Illinois magazines. As a result, for example, there are few references to Joel Tarr, Humbert Nelli, or Richard Jensen. The works of these authors and others would have forced Keiser to think differently about his subject.

This is good state history. Well written, intelligent, and pointed, it makes a useful volume available for layman and scholars alike. It is certainly the peer of recent volumes prepared in Indiana and Ohio that cover the same period.

Henry E. Huntington Library,
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Martin Ridge

Founding Principles of American Government: Two Hundred Years of Democracy on Trial. Edited by George J. Graham, Jr., and Scarlett G. Graham. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977. Pp. xviii, 395. Notes, table, bibliography, appendix, index. \$17.50.)

The thirteen essays contained in this volume investigate and assess the principles upon which the United States political system was laid and trace their evolution over the last two hundred years. It is fitting that Charles Hyneman, whom the editors identify as providing the stimulation for the volume, contributed two essays. The first, "Republican Government in America," provides an overview of the political system; the second, "A Call for Political Theory," contains a plea for the development of a modern political theory to guide the people in a period of profound constitutional change. Among the topics discussed in other essays are separation of powers, popular consent and popular control, the Presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, political parties, and the government and the economy. Most of the essayists provide a succinct and accurate survey of a complex portion of America's political heritage, usually with more emphasis on the origins than the evolution.