

## Book Reviews

*"City of the Century": A History of Gary, Indiana.* By James B. Lane. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. Pp. xi, 339. Map, illustrations, bibliography, sources and notes, index. \$12.50.)

James B. Lane has put together a human interest story of Gary, Indiana. Drawn from Lane's popular weekly newspaper column in the *Gary Post-Tribune*, the book strives to tell the city's story in dozens of chronologically arranged vignettes. Beginning with the founder, Judge Elbert H. Gary, Lane recounts colorfully and zestfully the trials and triumphs of individual Garyites.

Founded as a company town by United States Steel in 1906, Gary has remained a one-industry town for all of its short seventy-year history. Lacking an important state or regional function, not serving as a transportation hub or educational center, and not functioning as a market center for agriculture, Gary's primary purpose has been to transform raw iron ore into steel. Overshadowed by other metropolises such as Chicago and dwarfed even by Indiana's own metropolis, Indianapolis, Gary never grew beyond its founding purpose.

One of the results of this peculiar dependency upon one industry was that Gary, the "instant city," passed from birth to adolescence to middle age and into old age and decay in a mere seventy years. Lane does not address these macro questions as such but instead focuses on human interest stories of people who lived through these growth phases of the city's history. Seeking representative residents of the city for each period, he writes of the Arlene Draves murder case, of Tony Zale, John Dillinger, and Tom Harmon in addition to dozens of less renowned citizens. Therein lies both a strength and a weakness of the book. The vignettes hold the reader's attention nicely but sometimes fail to convey the big picture effectively. Lane could have connected his word portraits more directly to the demographic and economic realities of each period.

One of the most interesting and valuable parts of the book chronicles the political era from Mayor George Chacharis to Mayor Richard C. Hatcher. Seen up close, the "warts and all" picture of Hatcher is considerably less flattering than is his national image. Like most politicians of his time, Hatcher promised more than he could deliver, and his 1960s rhetoric sounds quaintly out of key with the realities of the 1970s. No urban wizard but probably an improvement over his predecessors, Hatcher did the best he could with difficult circumstances. Even so, the stubborn and unyielding character of the urban

malaise soon deflated the mayor's campaign promises. "In 13 months," Hatcher declared, "I've learned there are some problems that have no solution" (p. 295). Perhaps Hatcher's frustrations over Gary lie in the fact that, as Lane writes, the city was founded on high expectations as an "experiment in industrial urban planning, but the city never fulfilled the hopes of its pioneer boosters. Rather in its travail, it came to symbolize the plight of the twentieth-century cities" (p. xi).

Lane's book makes available at a reasonable price the modern story of Gary.

*University of Illinois, Chicago Circle*

Melvin G. Holli

*Illinois: A Bicentennial History.* By Richard J. Jensen. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., for American Association for State and Local History, 1978. Pp. xix, 191. Maps, notes, illustrations, suggestions for further reading, index. \$8.95.)

Most books in the *States and the Nation* series, of which *Illinois* is among the latest, have been greeted by the scholarly community with tolerance at best and ridicule at worst. Too personal, brief, episodic, and unanalytical to be good history, they were relegated to that wide readership known as the popular audience. Richard J. Jensen's book is an exception.

Jensen explains Illinois' history in terms of modernization theory. He emphasizes personality types: the southerners who invaded the lower part of Illinois and who constituted a predominantly traditionalist element, and the northerners, predominately modernists, who settled north of where Interstate 70 is now located. Jensen also attempts to relate the traditionalist-modern model to ethnoreligious groups (the Jews do not fit). He also postulates a postmodern model with evidence derived for the recent past. All of this is heady stuff for a book in a series funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and intended to provide narrative history or biography.

The real question is, does Jensen pull it off? Well, he does a fairly good job; he makes a lively case, but in the end he is unconvincing. This may not be his fault. He probably had a shoot-out with the editors of the series and had to compromise by introducing Illinois' better-known personalities. (Social scientists have pejorative things to say about practitioners who try to make individuals fit generalizations.) Nevertheless, Jensen certainly raises the level of discourse above that of the