

Nevertheless, as "a small book dealing with a large subject" (preface), Irvin's study is a useful start toward recapturing the past of Kentucky women.

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*Tales of the Ohio Land.* By Jack Matthews. (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1978. Pp. xiii, 187. Illustrations. \$11.95.)

Whatever the historian may think of the short stories in this book, he should find the introduction an effective argument for the use of fiction in the study of history. The author, a professor of English, sets forth an interesting explanation of how myth and legend give "distance and dimensionality" to the past (p. xi). The present, he says, is often "petty, trivial, even grubby" (p. xi); but the storyteller, starting his tales from reports of real events or merely from a specific time and place, invests the past with a "more exalted, more legendary" (p. xi) but yet, paradoxically, "more real" character (p. xii). Matthews "invents" his stories for an Ohio Land—they are set usually in the early nineteenth century—that was largely rural and small town, before, he says, communications began to break down its peculiar identity. In his tales tying together myth, legend, and a smattering of history, he seeks to "visualize" a "reality that is called the Ohio Land" (p. xiii).

The reader may not be as certain as Matthews that a peculiar Ohio Land ever existed, one, for example, that was noticeably different from a Hoosier Land. Matthews does not really define unique attributes of Ohio. His tales, nevertheless, seem to recreate the tenor of everyday life in Ohio—even though occasionally they strike a Bierce-like, macabre note. They fall into no particular groupings, but to a greater or lesser degree they do impart a kind of reality to individual experiences that make up a collective past.

Two tales are particularly engaging and instructive. In one, "Lucinda Hill Is Born Again," Matthews rescues Johnny Appleseed from stereotyped, syrupy characterizations by portraying him as a tough-minded theologian-psychologist who enables a sixteen-year-old girl to come to terms with her feeling that she has died. Though a little tedious, "The Burial" illustrates how successive generations twist the facts of a singular incident.

Whatever the literary merit of Matthews' stories, they do leave one with a greater appreciation of the role of imagination

in recreating history. No less than the contrafactual models constructed by professional historians, they are, quite possibly, a useful means of understanding the past.

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*Sanitation Strategy for a Lakefront Metropolis: The Case of Chicago.* By Louis P. Cain. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1978. Pp. xv, 1973. Tables, notes, maps, illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$15.00.)

Louis P. Cain's book is an admirable contribution to a dimension of urban history ignored by scholars until recently. At one time the literature of this field was confined largely to social, political, economic, and ethnic topics. During the past decade, however, historians have begun to explore intensively the evolution of urban public-works infrastructures. In addition to studying mass transit, street, and water supply systems, some scholars have been "getting into" sewers. This murky and complex subject is fundamental to understanding the forces that shaped the quality of urban life.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cities waged relentless—often losing—battles against fouling their own nests. Sewers were built to collect and carry away organic wastes and thereby to stop epidemics of cholera and typhoid that frequently ravaged urban areas. Guarding the public's health, therefore, involved the construction of vast wastewater systems that required sound engineering and the expenditure of large amounts of public funds.

This book is one of the few good case studies of urban sanitation. It surveys the evolution of Chicago's sanitation strategy from the time of the city's founding with respect to water supply, sewage disposal, and drainage. The community was fortunate to have an inexhaustible freshwater supply at its doorstep—Lake Michigan—but the natural terrain and drainage system posed the constant threat of pollution. Cain builds his book around five major policy decisions that Chicago adopted in order to maintain pure domestic water supplies and rid the city of wastes.

Chicago grew rapidly in the 1880s, but it suffered from poor natural drainage and became a quagmire after heavy rains. In 1855 a sewer system had been built. However, the outflows polluted Lake Michigan, creating a serious public