If no unified design emerges from the patchwork quilt of experiences, the individual selections are nonetheless worthwhile.

Among the best in the collection are the pieces by James Stevens, Edna Ferber, Harry Mark Petrakis, and Hugh Sidey. The Stevens story, "A Prairie Town," reawakens memories of the camp meetings and wonderful, itinerant frauds that were part of the excitement of a turn-of-the-century prairie community, especially for a latter-day Huck Finn who says that "all of this made a pretty risky environment for me, as I was not naturally a good boy" (p. 22). The Ferber excerpt presents a most moving sketch of a community of German Jews in Wisconsin on Yom Kippur. Petrakis reveals an unruly, impressionable South Chicago boy discovering the meaning of his Greek heritage through a Greek grocer who tells him: "You are a bonehead. You don't understand that a whole nation and a people are in this store" (p. 113). Sidey fully recreates the atmosphere of his small-town, family newspaper and the thrill of listening to his favorite sportscaster, Ronald "Dutch" Reagan, who "could make dull games bubble" (p. 157).

Andrews's sometimes lengthy headnotes for the authors are useful, if of uneven quality. (The ugly flower design used to begin the headnotes is balanced by the most attractive dustcover.) Cultural historians of the Middle West will be particularly interested in the fine historical photographs which accompany the stories.

Centre College, Danville, Ky. 

Milton Reigelman


Notes to Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County. By George H. Yater. (Louisville: Heritage Corporation of Louisville and Jefferson County, 1979. Paperbound, $3.50.)

Touted as "the first comprehensive history of its kind since 1896 . . . [and] an entertaining and informative journey down the main channel of two centuries of development" (dust jacket), this work was written under the auspices of the Louisville Area Chamber of Commerce and funded by a Louisville bank as a bicentennial commemorative of the chartering of
Louisville and the creation of Jefferson County. The author, a Louisville native, sought to explain "the dynamics of change" and "to avoid romanticizing the past into something it was not" (preface).

The reader might not be certain, however, what to make of this work. The dimensions of the book and its ample illustrations suggest, on the one hand, a pictorial history intended for a coffee table or a waiting room; that is, for casual reading. Unfortunately, the quality of photographic reproduction is uneven, and there is a paucity of maps to assist the nonlocal reader in understanding such matters as election patterns and neighborhood growth. Out of the several hundred illustrations, moreover, only about thirty deal specifically with women, blacks, or laborers. The bulk of the illustrations treat architectural and business history. Tables depicting population trends and election results would also have been helpful.

On the other hand, one suspects that the author intended to write an amply illustrated historical treatise. That effort is deficient for several reasons. The book fails to examine systematically the factors making for urbanization in the region; for example, the structure and dynamics of leadership or the evolution of neighborhoods. The author writes anecdotally and provides a number of fascinating stories about such episodes as the disputed election and nativist riot of 1855 but offers generally sketchy and loosely organized treatment of most issues. For example, the author devotes four lines to Charles Jacob, whom he defines—without explanation—as the city's most popular mayor, and surprisingly does not explain the development of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce. There is also a lack of balance here. Most of the work treats Louisville, not Jefferson County. Some vital subjects are given short shrift. In the chapter on the 1930s, for instance, labor history is given four lines, half that afforded the local symphony. Two brief paragraphs touch upon social changes produced by World War II. Only seven pages treat the crucial years 1945-1960, in which the rise of suburbs and the change in corporate control were making significant alterations in the nature of local decision-making. This reader also finds unusual the publication of a separate volume of footnotes, which the author states could not be included in the history that he wrote. This work does not, in short, explain much about "the dynamics of change." It offers little more than a series of glimpses into the local past of Louisville and Jefferson County.

Indiana State University Evansville
Darrel E. Bigham