

naive belief that abuses could be easily eliminated and virtue restored to a dominant place in American public life.

Although progressivism was destroyed by World War I, Danbom asserts that the seeds of the decline of progressivism can be found in the failure of these well-meaning reformers fully to comprehend the forces shaping twentieth century America. The movement must be understood as a noble failure that presaged a general decline in the quality of public life in America which continues to the present. "The United States," the author concludes, "has had precious little reason to be proud since the end of the progressive era" (p. 231).

Danbom's analysis is provocative but sometimes overstated and oversimplified. He uses terms such as "progressive" and "progressivism" without reference to the rich historiographical debate concerning the various meanings and connotations of these words. His suggestion that "progressive" and "liberal" are synonymous does not clarify matters. Readers never learn which figures or groups in this period fit into the categories of "Christian" and "scientific progressives." Danbom's commentary too often takes on a polemical quality.

"*The World of Hope*" recalls the idealism that pervaded this important period in American history, and it describes well the origins of this attitude. Although much of what Danbom says is not original, he has provided a framework through which aspects of this era can better be understood. The book falls short, however, of being a persuasive reinterpretation of reform efforts in this important period.

STANLEY CAINE is vice-president for academic affairs and professor of history, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana. In addition to his administrative duties, he teaches courses in American history on a part-time basis.

Urban America in the Modern Age, 1920 to the Present. By Carl Abbott. (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1987. Pp. viii, 181. Tables, maps, illustration, bibliographical essay, index. Paperbound, \$8.95.)

The study of modern urban history is a multifaceted discipline. Using traditional narrative sources and now, more frequently, statistics derived from a plethora of governmental and private studies, the urban historian must deal with issues as diverse as immigration and ethnicity, transport systems, and water supply. The investigation of any single city can be long and complex; it is therefore all the more remarkable that Carl Abbott has produced a well-balanced overview of American urban history since 1920 in his slim text, *Urban America in the Modern Age*.

Abbott's book, part of the American History Series under the editorship of John Hope Franklin and Abraham S. Eisenstadt, is noteworthy in several respects. Most importantly, Abbott avoids the common urban survey pitfall of limiting his examples to major cities such as New York and Chicago. Rather, he illustrates issues in urban history by using examples from cities as diverse in size, location, and background as Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, and Birmingham, Alabama. Within these cities and many others he touches upon a variety of urban themes, including the changing nature of immigration, business, industry, suburbanization, labor, and politics. Tables and maps help to illustrate issues such as population growth, population movement during World War II, and even racial tension; they are located adjacent to relevant portions of the text and are therefore quite useful. A three-part division of the time period covered (1920–1940, "The First Modern Cities"; 1940–1960, "Building and Rebuilding"; and 1960–1980, "A New Urban America") seems historically valid and moreover provides a strong framework for the variety of information in the book. Although not footnoted, the book includes a sixteen-page thematically arranged bibliographic essay that contains citations to the most recent works in the field as well as to classics in urban history. A fifteen-page index provides both subject and proper name access to the text.

While some urban history is made almost unreadable by the heavy use of statistics, Abbott's book is well written. The narrative is often enhanced by references drawn from classic urban fiction, such as Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*, Frank O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah*, and John Updike's Rabbit Angstrom series. The points drawn from these works fit neatly into the text and help to illustrate issues such as the conveniences of modern life, urban politics, or the deterioration of small urban centers (the fictional town of Brewer in the Updike series). In some instances, however, the use of illustrations from popular culture is taken too far. Offhanded references to Archie Bunker or Rocky Balboa may well be lost on some readers whose level of cultural literacy may not include the media phenomena of the 1970s.

These are, however, minor criticisms. *Urban America in the Modern Age* is an extraordinarily good short survey of modern urban history; and while directed toward the college classroom, it would make excellent reading for nonstudents as well.

JOHN J. GRABOWSKI is managing editor of *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) and co-editor (with David D. Van Tassel) of *Cleveland: A Tradition of Reform* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986). He is curator of manuscripts, The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.