

ning. This study rescues it from oblivion and also manages to steer clear of the condescension that sometimes characterizes the history of attempts that failed.

RUTH HUTCHINSON CROCKER is assistant professor of history, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama. Her research interests include social and economic history, social welfare history, and women's history. A book on the settlement movement is forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press.

*Main Street Ready-Made: The New Deal Community of Greendale, Wisconsin.* By Arnold R. Alanen and Joseph A Eden. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1987. Pp. x, 156. Illustrations, maps, figures, notes, bibliography, tables, index. \$20.00.)

Greendale, Wisconsin, like its siblings Greenbelt, Maryland, and Greenhills, Ohio, offers a unique arena to study the dissonance between American ideals and realities. All three New Deal experiments in town-building expressed in their planning the interwar generation's faith in "multi-cellular" and "garden" cities as solutions to a perceived crisis of threatening urban sprawl and a homogenization of people and communities resulting from urban industrialization. Planning advocates, including Lewis Mumford and his colleagues in the Regional Planning Association of America, designed a community which "enhance[d] the bio-social interdependencies within a particular geographic region" (p. 21). It is to the central question raised by this effort at planned communities that Arnold R. Alanen and Joseph A Eden address themselves: how, or to what extent, did these communities fulfill the vision of their planners?

Despite rhetoric advocating these greenbelt towns as the setting for grassroots democracy and proclaiming the residents as new pioneers, New Dealer Rexford G. Tugwell instead embraced the development of these garden cities as an appropriate relief program. The construction of the new towns promised work relief, low-cost housing, land rehabilitation, and a stabilization of urban communities hard hit by the deepening economic depression. The authors argue persuasively that the vision was breathed into the relief program by the staffs of the various projects, which in Greendale's case was led by Elbert Peets, Harvard-trained landscape architect and chief planner for the Greendale project.

Peets designed the environment to reflect his understanding of a "workingman's town," believing that "in actuality and in appearance it must be direct, simple, and practical, free of snobbishness, not afraid of standardization" (p. 38). This design would provide a setting and a framework for a social organization that would be equally direct, simple, and practical. The design sought

to balance privacy with communal areas of human proportions in backyards and public areas providing an arena for a "grassroots democracy," and it seemed to work—for a time. Community activity in the form of clubs and study groups, enterprises like newspapers and cooperative stores, and political action as in the case of a rent strike expressed the apparent success of the ideal.

The authors successfully lead the reader through the maze of actors who carved from the rural landscape a new kind of community. But they do not conclude their work on this relatively optimistic note. The task of dismantling federal ownership in the postwar era became mired in a changed and changing view of federal housing and notions of urban culture and life. The paradigm of interdependent groups within the city could not work in the context of rising individualism in the 1950s and 1960s. The authors discover that the ideal of Greendale "became, then, what the people themselves have wanted—not a utopia, but a town where changes could be carefully planned and where the problems of the city seldom intruded. Indeed, planning was used not so much as a directive for change, but as a restraint" (pp. 100-101).

If planning is, as the authors suggest, a conservative influence, then perhaps the vision of the planners has been fulfilled. This study demonstrates the need for comprehensive examinations of all the greenbelt towns—studies which go beyond the 1950s and question the social impact, as well as the influence on town design, of these experiments in urban engineering.

CAROL JEAN BLUM is currently working on the revision of a three-volume biographical dictionary of the *Women of Ohio* with Andrea Tuttle Kornbluh.

*Highlander: No Ordinary School, 1932-1962.* By John M. Glen. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988. Pp. ix, 309. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$30.00.)

A number of "folk schools" were established in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s to encourage agricultural cooperation and the maintenance of "traditional" rural values. The Highlander Folk School was not among these. Although John M. Glen of Ball State University acknowledges this in his text as well as in his subtitle, he seems uncertain about exactly what kind of school Highlander was. As he says, it was indeed "a school on the cutting edge of social change" (p. 5) and "a school actively committed to social and economic justice" (p. 223), but these descriptions do little to aid the reader.

Highlander was first of all, a group of persons—Glen is careful to talk about them as "staff" rather than "faculty"—who used the Highlander Folk School near Monteagle, Tennessee, as their base