

relate to still visible landmarks. They supplement the more eclectic illustrations in George Condon's *Cleveland: Prodigy of the Western Reserve* (1979).

Cleveland, in common with other eastern and midwestern industrial giants, has had its moments of progressive achievement. It also has survived extraordinary problems. Within the confining limits of this book's format, Miller and Wheeler have done a workmanlike job. The larger task—a modern narrative history of Cleveland—remains to be accomplished.

GEORGE W. KNEPPER, distinguished professor of history at The University of Akron, has written widely on Ohio themes. His most recent book, *Ohio and Its People*, was published in 1989.

*The Queen and the Arts: Cultural Life in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati.* By Robert C. Vitz. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989. Pp. xi, 322. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

The 1990 controversy over the exhibit of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center provides an ironically appropriate counterpoint to Robert C. Vitz's history of the arts during the "Queen City of the West" 's first century. Vitz ends his narrative with a question similar to that posed by Martin B. Green in his *The Problem of Boston* (1966): how did a city once seemingly so rich in cultural promise ultimately produce so little of enduring value? Vitz never answers that question fully but does provide some interesting glimpses into the problem.

The cultural history of nineteenth-century Cincinnati was shaped by the same forces that operated more broadly throughout what was then the "West." Local boosters brayed bravely, and philanthropists occasionally anted up generously, but geographical isolation—in the nineteenth century, especially, from Europe—intellectual myopia, and rampant commercialism made it difficult for artists, writers, performers, and impresarios to create and sustain a viable community as well as individual recognition and reward. Cincinnati, more particularly, rapidly lost its regional primacy to Chicago and never attained a sufficient critical mass of tolerance, enthusiasm, and economic support to encourage more than a complacent enjoyment of the traditional, usually with a Germanic flavor.

Vitz does a good job in chronicling the expressive life that did, if often only temporarily, find a home in the Queen City. He describes the fortunes of the Beecher family, Rookwood Pottery, the painters Frank Duveneck and Henry Farny, and the eccentric journalist Lafcadio Hearn. Vitz is at his best in narrating a good story of conflict and does so in his accounts of the stormy career of Theodore Thomas as orchestral director as well as of the early days of



ELIZABETH NOURSE, "LA MÈRE," 1888

Courtesy Procter and Gamble Collection, Cincinnati.

the Cincinnati Art Museum and its rivals. Although he covers most of the (not overly numerous) high points in literature, painting, and music, he oddly neglects architecture almost completely and has little to say about the role of religion—especially Presbyterian and Roman Catholic—in shaping the city's cultural ethos.

*The Queen and the Arts* is a valuable and an enjoyable book. One wishes, though, that the author had addressed the basic questions of urban cultural vitality more deeply and more systematically, exploring the ways in which religion, ideology, ethnic and class questions, and economics interact to nurture or discourage the flourishing of artistic expression, as did E. Digby Baltzell in *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia* (1979). On the whole, though, scholars and general readers concerned with Cincinnati and/or with nineteenth-century cultural life should find Vitz's volume rewarding.

PETER W. WILLIAMS is professor of religion at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and is the author of *Popular Religion in America* (1980) and *America's Religions* (1990). With his Miami colleagues Elliott J. Gorn and Mary Kupiec Cayton, he is editing the *Encyclopedia of American Social History*.

*One Woman's War: Letters Home from the Women's Army Corps, 1944–1946.* By Anne Bosanko Green. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989. Pp. xxiv, 308. Notes, illustrations. \$22.50.)

By the end of World War II over 200,000 young women had enlisted in various *separately* created military organizations. The placing of nearly a quarter million women in military uniform in a direct chain of military command, albeit in separate units, was no small event in American military and social history. Absent that event, Americans would not now be engaged in a great debate about women in combat. The military has long since abandoned a separate female command structure.

In June, 1944, Anne Bosanko, a twenty-year-old college sophomore from Minnesota, enlisted in one of the military units that had come to be called the Women's Army Corps (WAC). The bulk of *One Woman's War* covers slightly more than two years of private personal writings from Anne to the members of her family.

One has the right to interpret past personal experiences in terms of present predispositions. If one simply reads these fascinating letters without reference to later editorializing by the writer, and without the insightful comments of the foreword, it is somewhat difficult to find any truly deep-seated ideology, aside from an abiding love for family and a strong, straightforward, uncomplicated patriotism. What stands out is a youthful cultural and intellectual curiosity that is all over the field. Bosanko is perfectly willing to read the left-leaning *P.M.*, as well as the New York