

Draper is justly celebrated for his efforts in establishing the society and in building its collections, but it is Thwaites who emerges preeminent as the builder of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in its present form. Thwaites became associated with the society in 1885 as Draper's assistant. Two years later, upon Draper's retirement, he became "corresponding secretary," and until his death in 1913 served as the society's chief administrator. During these years the society secured its own building, enlarged and systematized its collections, developed a highly competent professional staff, established a firm relationship with the University of Wisconsin, and began a program of public education that extended to all parts of the state. While leading this growing enterprise, Thwaites wrote fifteen volumes and was responsible for editing 183. Quaife and later Schafer continued, and in some respects improved upon, Thwaites' scholarly activities, but neither had the administrative abilities to manage the complex organization which Thwaites had created, and the society, particularly during the depression years of the 1930's, went into a serious decline. Edward P. Alexander, who became superintendent upon Schafer's death in 1941, began the task of rebuilding which was to place Wisconsin again in the forefront of the historical society movement—a task that was carried to fulfillment by Clifford L. Lord, who became director in 1946 and who is much too modest in writing of his own accomplishments.

As Lord suggests in the preface, this is both an administrator's history and a family history. As such, it is burdened in spots with more detail than the non-Wisconsin reader will require. These spots are few in number, however, and generally the narrative sustains the reader's interest. As a definitive study of one of the nation's great societies, *Clio's Servant* makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the historical society as an institution.

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The Story of Grand Rapids. Edited by Z. Z. Lydens. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1966. Pp. xix, 682. Illustrations, notes, appendix, bibliography, indices. \$9.95.)

Z. Z. Lydens, veteran newspaperman and editor of *The Story of Grand Rapids*, is obviously proud of his city; his city has every right to be proud of this book. Produced under the auspices of the Grand Rapids Historical Commission, *The Story* is a cooperative project, with thirty-one persons listed as contributing editors. The remarkable unity, organization, and homogeneity of style should doubtless be attributed to the firm editorial hand of Lydens.

The first ten chapters, which trace the development of municipal government from pioneer days to the present, are organized chronologically. The remaining twenty-nine chapters are topical and include a broad range of city concerns—from hotels to cemeteries to sewers. The emphasis is on the twentieth century, with references to 1966 occurring from the very first chapters. No worshipper of the past, Lydens forthrightly describes such an unpalatable

phase of Grand Rapids' history as the water scandal of the 1890's. Nor does he dwell on only nineteenth-century controversies. Lydens notes the bitterness resulting from the resignation of a school superintendent in 1949, as well as the infighting involved in the appointment of city managers. Although the narrative is studded with dates, names, and facts, the author writes with verve and in a sprightly style. He skillfully weaves detail into many a fascinating incident. In describing the "piggeries," which performed the function of municipal garbage disposal well into the twentieth century, Lydens relates that one day the pigs "disposed" of peaches pickled in alcohol and got drunk.

Curiously, Lydens concludes that the history of Grand Rapids is "much like" that of other American cities (p. 8). Yet several distinctive features emerge from the book. A pioneer in the city-manager form of government, Grand Rapids has not been well served by city managers—"tribulations were manifest . . ." (p. 72). The nub of the problem, according to the editor, is that commissioners "delegate some of their sovereignty to a hired hand [the city manager] while remaining responsible for the hired hand's actions" (p. 72).

Though Lydens carefully emphasizes that Grand Rapids has always had a diversified economy, certainly the furniture industry has been preeminent and made Grand Rapids a synonym for high quality furniture. In part, the industry thrived because of the presence of skilled Dutch craftsmen. Some 30 percent of the city's residents in 1966, the Dutch have constituted the distinctive ethnic element in the population. Their austere, intense religious faith made their churches, as well as their parochial schools, central in their lives. The Dutch, conservative, strong in "purity of heart," with "fixed and burning eyes on sin" (p. 87), lived on the east side of the city; the political opposition, liberal Poles and Lithuanians, lived on the west side and "found it hard necessarily to equate fun with sin" (p. 87).

The book is not cluttered with footnotes. The preface and bibliography indicate that its principal sources are newspapers, earlier local histories, and materials donated or loaned by the public. Some 70,000 "item cards" based on these materials provided the "string on which the beads of the Grand Rapids story were strung" (p. ix). With the exception of some short quotations from Civil War diaries, no manuscript sources were utilized.

Technically, the book is impressive. Its attractive format results from wide margins, full-color illustrations, high quality paper, and excellent printing. The subject and name indices are helpful; the proofreading, meticulous. Concern for accuracy of statement is obvious.

The chairman of the Grand Rapids Historical Commission fixed among the purposes of the book: "to illuminate the past . . . to shed light on the present," and to aid planning for the future (p. xvii). Such a statement is peculiarly ironic since the year after publication, 1967, was also the year of racial riots at Newark and Detroit, and the short section of the book devoted to Negroes scarcely hints at racial difficulties. Such an omission in an otherwise excellent history is in itself a commentary on twentieth-century urban America.