

sion is of a general nature with little space available to probe particular points in great depth. On the other hand some of the chapters, especially those dealing with the colonial merchants, state promotion of business enterprise, business and education, and the business bar and bench are masterful summaries. The book's only major fault is Cochran's deliberate decision to separate his theoretical framework from the actual material dealing with business. His introduction is provocative and fascinating; the book would have been much more exciting had his theory been made explicit in each of his chapters. Cochran's book should be ideal as an assignment in courses in business and economic history, as well as a splendid introduction to the subject for the general reader.

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*The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City.*

By Sam Bass Warner, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972. Pp. xvii, 303. Notes, illustrations, figures, bibliographic guide, index. \$12.50.)

In few subjects today has the American electorate greater interest coupled with less knowledge than in the field of urban problems. Demands for action, often based more or less upon ignorance of the city's past, echo and reecho in Congress and the press, on radio and television. Most historians would probably agree that a major weakness has been implicit in the sadly neglected store of knowledge found in urban history.

It is Warner's stated intention not to present much new factual information, but rather to attempt a "broad canvass of American urban history" (p. xv), constructed from known materials. In consequence, he has based his study heavily upon secondary sources, published collections of documents, and memoirs, largely without further investigation of the extremely extensive primary sources on the subject. The quality of his treatment of a given aspect of the urban past thus varies directly with the degree to which it has previously been investigated by other scholars, with the result that the various chapters of the work are correspondingly uneven.

The first two chapters establish the author's philosophic position as he testifies that, to him, the giant cities of America are "vast incomprehensible places" (p. 3). Moreover, he holds

that "the inherent nature of our capitalistic system has bestowed differential and cumulative rewards so that the successful exercise a disproportionate control over the city and the lives of its residents. Consequently, the strong prey on the weak, and to him that has shall be given" (p. 5). The work successively deals with the demise of New England folk planning, the tradition of land management, the development of urban economy as illustrated by the cases of New York from 1820 to 1870, Chicago from 1870 to 1920, and Los Angeles from 1920 to the present, and the antecedents of urban class, race, and religion. The last three chapters attempt to analyze the reasons for past failures in coping with the urban environment, pointing out the futility of pouring more money into hopeless old institutions, and offer some choices for the urban environment of the future. In this latter regard, several of Warner's statements appear to be one sided and narrow: "Class and racial segregation and class, racial, and sexual discrimination lie at the root of almost all the pathologies of the current city. As manifestations of our nation's deepest feelings, of our long racist, capitalist, and sexist traditions, such behavior is both the most grievous, and the most difficult of all the burdens which the past has fastened upon the present. The essence of our urban history has been rapid growth and pervasive change working within the confines of ceaseless exploitation of white over black, rich over poor, men over women" (p. 268). Many might take issue with such oversimplification of cause and effect.

Warner's solutions include: the government should become a major builder of houses to provide for the third of the population with the lowest income; the government should enter into the metropolitan real estate business on a massive level in order to harvest speculative profits and coordinate public investments; the government should inaugurate a policy of full employment with a living wage for all; finally the merits of a highly progressive tax structure are extolled. In short, Warner believes: "To the extent that the American city is now rotten it is rotten at the top, not the bottom" (p. 276). Although some evidence would support these solutions, the categories singled out for reform appear unduly rigid.

In spite of these criticisms it should be emphasized that the book is a significant pioneering effort in urban history

and urban social science. Warner has obviously read voluminously in the contemporary social scientific literature of city planning, urban geography, and community organization. By this means he demonstrates a constant strengthening of the historical data which he employs. Despite the author's unrestrained political bias, the work will focus attention upon many problems previously neglected, and it will take its place in the vanguard of the growing literature concerning urban historical causation.

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