

contributions to the national heritage of the United States is the Arbor Day festival, first celebrated in that state in 1872. So zealous were Nebraskans in their sylvan devotion that the legislature in 1873 passed a law protecting trees: "In those gun-toting days in Nebraska, if you had something against your neighbor, it was safer to whip out your gun and shoot him than to cut down his trees. You could plead self-defense when you shot someone, and often a killer got away scot-free; but no such subterfuge could be claimed by a tree mutilator. It was the penitentiary for him, according to the law" (p. 120).

Dick differs with Walter Prescott Webb's view that the windmill is best identified with ranchers on the Great Plains; rather, his research on Nebraska suggests that the prairie farmer deserves the credit for popularizing these devices. On another controversial point for which extant data are confusing, Dick contends that the temporary decline of settlement in Nebraska during the period from 1873 to 1877 owed more to the national economic depression than to the local grasshopper scourge. The volume concludes with an incisive analysis of irrigation and its effect on Nebraska's rural economy up through the recent 1950s.

In summary, the research for this volume is impressive, and it is written in a refreshingly exciting style. The book is a handsome addition to the *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications* series as well as to the general history of the frontier and Great Plains. It is truly a definitive study in which Dick and the society can take pride.

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*A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930.* By Kenneth L. Kusmer. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976. Pp. xiv, 305. Notes, tables, figures, maps, illustrations, appendixes, bibliographical essay, index. \$12.95.)

Rare are those studies which successfully bridge the varied specialty areas in American historical research. Kenneth L. Kusmer's *A Ghetto Takes Shape* is such a book. It is a valuable study on a city long neglected by urban historians. At the same time it makes an important con-

tribution to the field of black history. Following the approach established by Allan Spear in *Black Chicago* (1967), Kusmer develops a broad comparative framework within which he clarifies the origins and rise of Cleveland's black community. He retains, however, a sharp focus in discussing the details of that story.

After a brief introduction to pre-1870 black Cleveland, Kusmer divides his book into two large sections. The first, entitled "The Black Community in Transition, 1870-1915," explores such key topics as residence, occupation, income, and civil status among black residents during a period of growing uncertainty. By tracing shifts in black leadership, Kusmer illustrates how changing economic conditions and social attitudes on race undermined the traditionally conservative and assimilationist Negro middle class of Cleveland. By examining closely the important members of the old elite, such as Charles W. Chesnutt, John P. Green, and Harry C. Smith, Kusmer illuminates the values and tactics of this earlier leadership group. He shows how these individuals were then "challenged by a new group of black businessmen and politicians who relied primarily upon Negro patronage for their success" (p. 140). The newer leaders, whose actual differences with the older leadership were not that great, nevertheless accepted the emerging social and cultural separatism forced on the black community by deepening white hostility.

In the second half of the book Kusmer documents the impact of black southern migration on black Cleveland. The vital socioeconomic statistics are again analyzed, but this time they are examined in relation to a period of rapid population growth and expanding neighborhoods. In a final chapter Kusmer discusses the question of leadership in a ghetto, which is what the Cleveland black community became after fifteen years of demographic and residential consolidation. He concludes that the new conditions represented a paradox for black Clevelanders: greater group solidarity in the midst of broader social and cultural isolation.

This work has many attractive features. Kusmer provides extensive comparisons between blacks in Cleveland and other cities. He also compares similarities and differences between ethnic and black Clevelanders. Twenty-eight statistical tables, largely dealing with occupational data, and a

bibliographical essay further strengthen this book's claim for serious attention by all those interested in the black urban experience.

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*Eugene V. Debs*. By Harold W. Currie. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976. Pp. 157. Notes and references, selected bibliography, index. \$7.95.)

Based primarily on Debs' published writings, *Eugene V. Debs* is a contribution to *Twayne's United States Authors* series. Harold W. Currie disclaims any attempt at producing another full dress biography of the Socialist leader. His purpose is "to provide for the reader a brief but comprehensive discussion of Debs's ideas, both major and minor, with emphasis on those ideas and attitudes that are most significant in understanding the man and his thought" (p. 10). Currie points out that Debs was not only a great orator but also a prolific writer. Despite the extent of his writings, however, he neither sought nor earned a reputation as a party intellectual or theoretician. His essays were, as Currie phrases it, "colorful, direct, uncomplicated, aimed at the common man rather than at the scholar" (p. 7). With the possible exception of Julius A. Wayland, editor of the *Appeal to Reason*, Debs probably did more to popularize socialism among American workers than any man who ever lived. What he wrote, however much it lacked intellectual depth, therefore remains of interest to students of the past.

*Eugene V. Debs* is organized topically—each chapter dealing with a particular aspect of the Socialist leader's thought or career. Chapter four, for example, entitled "The Debs Style," is subdivided into "The Orator," "Debs's Use of Language," "Debs's Sense of History," and "The Optimist." Chapter five, "Socialism and the Labor Movement," contains "Socialist Ideas," "Debs and Violence," and "Debs and the Labor Movement." There is nothing in the volume that could not have been learned from Ray Ginger's *The Bending Cross* (1949), but, in fairness, Currie does not claim otherwise. The book is well written, and its careful organization makes it a convenient guide to Debs' views on most of the important issues of his time.