

Claiming the City: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in St. Paul, by Mary Lethert Wingerd. Cushwa Center Studies of Catholicism in Twentieth-century America. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. xiii, 326 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Bill Silag, an independent historian and editor, is writing a history of Des Moines. He is an editor of *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838–2000*, published in 2002 by the State Historical Society of Iowa.

Mary Lethert Wingerd's history of St. Paul, Minnesota, in the period 1838–1934 focuses on the interplay of sociological categories such as ethnicity, religion, and class in the formation of local culture over time. As suggested by its inclusion in the book's subtitle, the idea of "place" is central to Wingerd's approach. In her view, ethnicity, religion, and class—whose interactions she terms "place-based cultural processes" (2)—must be considered in the context of "the social and physical geography in which they are experienced" (2).

Claiming the City shows how fruitful the place-based approach can be for historians eager for something more than another of the structural analyses of local populations so familiar in the literature of American urban history. To be sure, labels such as *Irish*, *Catholic*, and *tradesman* remained meaningful in St. Paul throughout the period under study here, but the fascinating parts of Wingerd's story are about the ways the city's residents—men and women of diverse backgrounds and with different personal aspirations—transcended these labels and came together to find common ground for concerted action to achieve community goals. In showing the delicacy of intergroup relationships, Wingerd reveals the extraordinary skill of St. Paul's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century civic leaders in maintaining a balance among various ethnic, religious, and class interests. Over time, Wingerd argues, that balance of interests became the city's culture, its parts perhaps generic in ethnic, religious, or class terms, but utterly distinctive in their local combination.

At several points, Wingerd compares the social harmony evident in St. Paul with the aggravated class-based politics of neighboring Minneapolis. She notes that to a large extent the distinctive social character of the two cities can be explained in terms of their differing economic histories, with Minneapolis developing a sizable industrial manufacturing sector and St. Paul remaining the mercantile center it had been from the outset of settlement. St. Paul's treasured social harmony would disappear briefly in the early 1920s, but it was restored as soon as business and labor leaders saw that an alliance between them gave St. Paul its best chance of surviving the economic difficulties looming on the horizon even before 1929. In Wingerd's view, St. Paul's long

tradition of amicable business-labor relations enabled leaders on both sides to pull together quickly and to revive a "civic mutuality" that valued the economic welfare of the community as a whole more than the self-interested "victory" of one social group over another in an economic tug of war.

Many years ago in the *Iowa Journal of History*, Samuel P. Hays called for detailed studies of the past that considered the impact of major historical phenomena—such as industrialization—on the social organization and behavior of ordinary men and women. Since then, many historians have addressed such issues, but few studies in recent years have addressed them as thoroughly as this one does. *Claiming the City* is encumbered in places by passages of postmodernist newspeak, such as "the social text of the city was woven from multiple negotiations over power" (7), and slippery generalizations, such as "the geography of the city was both cause and effect of its social tensions" (69), that momentarily diminish the presentation's effectiveness. Nonetheless, the book is a tour de force of exhaustive research and rigorous analysis. If the prose is dense at times, readers' efforts will be rewarded, for they will find insights and interesting information on nearly every page.

Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History, by Rebecca Conard. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002. xv, 247 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95 cloth.

Reviewer Page Putnam Miller is distinguished visiting lecturer at the University of South Carolina. She served from 1980 to 2000 as the executive director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, the national advocacy office in Washington, DC, for the historical and archival professions.

In *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History*, Rebecca Conard has written a useful and intriguing book. Shambaugh, an Iowa historian of the early twentieth century, is well worth studying. Conard adeptly makes the connections between his thought and career and the national public history movement of this century. A bright, personable young man, Shambaugh advanced quickly from his freshman year at the University of Iowa in 1888 to become a professor and head of the political science department there in 1900. In 1907, less than a decade after his academic appointment, he also became the head of the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI). He remained a pivotal figure in the university and the historical society until his death.

Conard adopts an unusual format to present the career of one of the early advocates of public history. The book has three significantly different components. First, a long opening chapter provides the broad

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