

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Walter Darrell Haden

Herbert L. Harper, Editor. *Houston and Crockett, Heroes of Tennessee at Texas: An Anthology*. Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1986.

This collection of seventeen articles, almost evenly divided between Sam Houston and David Crockett, was published to celebrate Tennessee Homecoming '86 and the Texas Sesquicentennial. The year 1986 marked 150 years since Crockett's death at the Alamo and Houston's victory at San Jacinto and his election as the first president of Texas.

In addition to the biographical material on Houston by Ernest C. Shearer, Susan Ford Wiltshire, Stephen V. Ash, Paul H. Bergeron and David Rankin Barbee, there is included a Centennial address which was given by Tennessee Governor Hill McAlister in 1936 at Sam Houston's grave in Huntsville, Texas.

I especially enjoyed Shearer's "Sam Houston and Religion." Houston was rejected for membership in the Presbyterian Church due to his sudden, unexplained separation from his first wife. After a period of time with the Cherokees and his move to Texas, he became a Catholic, but was not an active communicant. Later, at the age of forty-eight, he married Margaret Lea, a young lady from Alabama who was the daughter of a Baptist minister. Sam began to attend church out of respect for this third wife. He joined the Baptists and was immersed in Little Rocky Creek, where he was reported to have remarked that if his sins were all washed away, then he was sure that all the downstream fish had been killed. Despite this and other amusing stories about his conversion, his letters to Sam, Jr., and Nannie, two of his and Margaret's eight children, contain profound advice on personal religion and indicate that he understood more from his experiences and Bible study than many folks learn in seminary.

The Crockett biographical material consists of an introduction by Michael A. Lofaro and articles by Stanley J. Folsombee, Anna Grace Catron, and Robert McBride. Other articles are "A Study of Some David Crockett Firearms" by Texas Jim Cooper; an address by Temple Houston Morrow, delivered at Trenton, Tennessee, at the unveiling of the Crockett bust; and "Memorial Remembrances of David (Davy) Crockett in Rutherford," by Marvin Downing.

Dr. Marvin Downing, History Professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has given us an excellent account of the efforts of local citizens to rebuild Crockett's last home. In 1975 he interviewed several men and women who recalled the original log cabin before it was torn down in 1934, and who played a part in its reconstruction and dedication on the Rutherford School grounds in 1956. From these talks with Fred P. Elrod, Oliver Gibbons, and others and from his research of the correspondence of former State Senator Broeck Cummings relative to this project, Downing pieced together the complete story, including the fascinating account of Father Casey's providing the monument for the grave of Mrs. Rebecca Hawkins Crockett, the mother of David Crockett. Sources are identified and facts documented in his extensive footnotes. Local and area historians, Crockett descendants and fans are indebted to Dr. Downing for this work.

This anthology is usually entertaining and always informative as it recalls the fiery, unpredictable Sam Houston and the witty, adventurous David Crockett, and tells how each is remembered in both home states. The several previously published pieces contained in this one convenient volume would be hard to find elsewhere. It should make a welcome addition to your library.

Joe Bone

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Frank F. Mathias. *G.I. Jive: An Army Bandsman in World War II*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982.

When Frank Mathias was inducted into the U.S. Army in 1943, he wasn't planning to write a book. He was a nineteen year old Carlisle, Kentucky, boy who enjoyed playing his saxophone with a local dance band. Even though he enjoyed the attention from the young ladies which that activity brought, he welcomed the draft as a way to get out and see the world.

Young Frank had formed some good habits which would serve him well. These included writing to family and friends and keeping all their letters that he received. These hundreds of letters were invaluable when a much older Frank Mathias, now a history professor, began to write about his part of World War II.

Here then is history from the perspective of a young participant with the big picture researched and painted in by himself after many years of training and reflection.

I had escaped my small home town for what must be  
a life of adventure. I was with the youngest group in  
the Army, kids who believed things and put up with  
things older men could never accept.

Bandsmen were attached to Headquarters Company, where they heard more of what was "going on" than the average G.I. did. The musicians who had other, less pleasant duties than playing music, were like "thrushes nesting in a half track."

Mathias resorted to barracks language for realism as he described the peculiar ways of the Army; repeated the terse commentary of the non-coms and trainees; and told a couple of outlandish tales which have become part of military folklore.

Frank was shipped out to the Pacific where he experienced life on the "Lizard's Tail", (the mountainous jungle of New Guinea), and later became a part of the 37th (Buckeye) Division. It was with these Ohio neighbors that he took part in the invasion of the Philippines and the Battle of Manila. He suffered malaria and jaundice and lost several friends in combat. He was touched and angered by the suffering of the civilians at the hands of their Japanese captors.

Mathias remembered the admiration of the soldiers for their Division Commander, Gen. Robert Beightler, and their love-hate feelings for Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He, like MacArthur, was captivated by the charm of Manila. This feeling became evident as he described the wedding of his girl

friend's sister in an old Spanish cathedral in that city.

After the surrender, the band began to play for special ceremonies honoring released prisoners, and the musicians played at night for entertainment. He recalls playing polkas with a combo in Cabanatuan, a town that had housed prisoners of the Bataan Death March—

G.I.'s started dancing, others shouted and clapped, but a growing number simply stood in front of the bandstand with tears streaming down their faces!—We gradually understood that our music was blowing the dust of war out of their souls. Most of the audience was of Polish descent, lads suddenly realizing they had survived to make it back to the polka bands and dances of Dayton and Akron.

Frank Mathias also made it back to Kentucky and Ohio, and he has given us a well written, significant account of his life as a young soldier.

Joe Bone

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Richard Nelson Current. *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy*. Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 1992.

Very little has been written about white Southerners who fought for the Union during the War Between the States, and nothing has been published about the group as a whole. Richard N. Current, in *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy*, now fills that void.

More than 100,000 of these men served in various Union armies, thus strengthening the Union and weakening the Confederacy. They did affect the outcome of the war. Every Confederate state, except for South Carolina, did provide at least a battalion of white troops for the Union forces. Current explores the history of the loyalists in each Confederate state and finds that Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia provided over seventy percent of the loyalist forces.

Tennessee furnished, according to "federal Rosters," about "40,000 men who belonged to Tennessee outfits and were mustered into the U.S. Service." This does not include the names of Tennesseans who left the state and enlisted in out-of-state regiments and were thus credited to other states. Most of the men came from the most pro-Union division of Tennessee—the eastern division. Even as early as 1862, when the Confederacy still controlled East Tennessee, six East Tennessee regiments of infantry and two of cavalry were raised. In Middle Tennessee, during this same time span, one infantry regiment and one of cavalry were raised, as well as a battery of artillery.

In West Tennessee, in 1862, one regiment of infantry and two of cavalry were raised. In 1863 the middle and western sections remained a battleground, even after Bragg's Army of Tennessee was withdrawn from the Murfreesboro region. These regions did not become entirely secure until the Battle of Nashville was

fought on December 15 and 16, 1864. Thus, the area accessible for Union recruiting fluctuated with the fortunes of war. Recruitment did continue in West Tennessee.

In September, 1863, General Stephen A. Hurlbut from Memphis, the commander of the XVI Army Corps, directed division commanders in Kentucky and Tennessee to see to the recruiting and organizing of home guards. Someone in each West Tennessee county was to be authorized "to recruit and organize a company of mounted men to be denominated Union Guards, the object of which shall be to operate offensively and defensively in the suppression of the rebellion and all free-booting and marauding combinations which have been or may hereafter be found. . ." In addition to these home guard units, there were thousands who volunteered for service in units that were mustered into the United States Army. These men served at Shiloh, Union City, Jackson, Lexington, Fort Pillow, and in many other battles that were fought in West Tennessee and in the two other divisions of the state.

These loyalists served in many different capacities. Whatever the role, each Southerner who joined the Union army constituted a double loss to the Confederacy—a subtraction from its own ranks and an addition to the Union's. Undoubtedly, these 100,000 loyalists did play an important, though not a decisive, role in the final Confederate defeat. *Lincoln's Loyalists* is a well-written, well-researched volume that should be in the library of every college and university.

Lonnie E. Maness

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Melba Porter Hay, editor. *The Papers of Henry Clay: Supplement, 1793-1852*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992.

This supplement to *The Papers of Henry Clay* by Melba Porter Hay contains documents that were discovered too late to be included in the proper chronological order in previous volumes. This volume spans the entire length of Clay's adult life and brings to an end, as Robert V. Remini states, "one of the most important published projects undertaken by a University Press."

The new material covers such things as Clay's early years in Kentucky, his legal practice, service on the peace delegation that negotiated the Treaty of Ghent, his service to the Bank of the United States, and material dealing with Andrew Jackson's charge that there was a corrupt bargain between Clay and John Quincy Adams in 1825 that gave Adams the presidency and Clay the office of secretary of state. New and exciting information is provided on the Nullification Crisis, the controversy with the Creek Indians, the presidential election of 1832, 1840, and 1844, his support for internal improvements at federal expense, his attitude toward the Jackson and Van Buren administrations, his religious views, his attitude toward his slaves and slavery in general, his support for Latin American independence, and a wealth of other information. Much of this new information supplements what has already been published in prior

volumes of Clay's papers.

Furthermore, it contains a calendar of Unpublished Letters and Other Documents that may be examined in the Special Collections Department in the Margaret I. King Library of the University of Kentucky at Lexington. It also contains an essay and calendar by Clifford Amyx, Professor of Art, Emeritus, University of Kentucky, on Clay artwork—busts, paintings, full statues, engravings, and daguerreotypes—as well as a comprehensive bibliography of works cited in the full series. More Clay material will undoubtedly surface, but, as Dr. Hay states, "It is doubtful that it will provide any startling new evidence about the man whose life and career is so thoroughly covered in these eleven volumes."

This supplement, as Robert V. Remini states, "is a magnificent achievement." It is an essential addition to the earlier volumes of *The Papers of Henry Clay*, volumes that are indispensable to those who would do research on Clay's life. This entire series should be in every college and university library because, to understand American history from 1812 through 1850, one must have a knowledge of the Sage of Ashland, a politician who practiced the art of the possible and was involved in every major controversy during this period of time.

Lonnie E. Maness

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Brian Steel Wills. *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.

The life of Nathan Bedford Forrest was full of poverty, toil, responsibility and great excitement, especially during the Civil War years. Forrest was, without a doubt, an untutored military genius. Brian Steel Wills, a Virginia born professor of history at Georgia Southern University, fully covers the life and career of this famous general in *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*.

"Brian Wills knows more about Forrest," Emory M. Thomas states, "than any previous biographer." He "recites, indeed invigorates, the incidents of Forrest's life and military career. He tells the old stories with a fresh voice. . . . Thanks to Brian Wills, we can see the whole Forrest and Forrest whole." Indeed, Wills has covered the full scope of Forrest's life quite well. In many places he has added to the body of Forrest knowledge, particularly his pre-war and post-war life.

However, this book is seriously flawed concerning many aspects of Forrest's life. Space will not permit a detailed accounting of shortcomings. However, a few examples will be given. Concerning Forrest as a slave trader, Wills cites plenty of evidence to support the contention that Forrest was a humane and kind slave trader. He then draws the conclusion that this was so because of "economic self-interest." This conclusion is true as far as it goes. Forrest was, I believe, a good, kind and humane slave trader also because he was a humanitarian. This can be seen in the slave pen operations, and it can be seen as a thread running throughout Forrest's life. At age sixteen, when his father died,

he took over and aided his family and continued to do so even after riches came his way. He cared for the slaves on his Mississippi plantations and his slaves admired and respected him. Even the slaves in his slave pens wanted to be used on his plantations. During the Civil War forty-five of his slaves served him faithfully, driving his supply wagons, serving as cooks, and in other capacities. Sometimes they operated behind enemy lines. Only one deserted, and Forrest set the other forty-four free before the war ended. Then on his plantation after the war was over, Forrest risked his life in order to save the life of a black woman who was about to be killed by her husband. Forrest's previous biographers correctly supported his humanitarianism.

Wills also makes the point that Forrest made his fortune in the slave trade business. Again, this is part of the truth. From the time of his days as a businessman in Hernando, Mississippi, Forrest made a great deal of money by other means—the sale of livestock, real estate, land, and cotton that was grown on his Mississippi plantations and by a variety of other business enterprises.

The failure to take Dover, Tennessee, on February 3, 1863, was laid at Forrest's door. As Wills stated: "The assault lacked nothing of courage, but demonstrated the difficulty Forrest had acting in tandem with others." In other words, Forrest could not follow orders. The facts do not bear this out. Forrest fought well at Fort Donelson under an incompetent general; he fought well with the Army of Tennessee as it invaded Kentucky in the fall of 1862; he fought well with the Army of Tennessee in the Chickamauga campaign, and he led all of the cavalry of the Army of Tennessee under John Bell Hood as it invaded Tennessee in November, 1864, and successfully fought a delaying action which allowed the army to retreat from Tennessee. He could and did work effectively in tandem with higher authorities even when he did not respect their leadership. At Dover, while Forrest did not want to attack for several reasons, Wheeler did, and that attack turned out badly even though Forrest, using his battlefield discretion, fought hard in trying to win a victory.

Regarding the capture of Fort Pillow on April 2, 1864, Wills states that Forrest did not order a massacre of black and white Tennessee troops but that he "lost control of the battle. . . and control of his men" and that a massacre resulted. Again, the evidence simply does not support this conclusion. A careful reading of my Winter 1986 article in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, "The Fort Pillow Massacre: Fact or Fiction," and my book, *An Untutored Genius: The Military Career of General Nathan Bedford Forrest* (1990), will convince all fair-minded readers that a "massacre" did not take place and that Forrest did not lose control of the battle or of his men. He never lost control in any other battle that I know of. Why should it have been any different at Fort Pillow? If one closely examines how Forrest took Fort Pillow—how the battle progressed—and how quickly it was terminated after the Confederates stormed the inner works of the fort, one can understand why the casualties were as heavy as they were. Considering everything, one must really wonder why the casualties were not even greater.

And so it goes throughout this book, Wills goes from one battle to another and in many cases draws conclusions that are correct as far as they go or only partially so. But he fails to draw other conclusions that are just as evident, and in this reviewer's opinion more correct, that would put Forrest in a much better light. He does the same thing in regard to Forrest's postwar life. In many ways, I think that Dr. Wills is trying very hard to be politically correct.



The Wills volume is a well-written work that does add something to the body of Forrest knowledge. Though it is recommended reading for students of the Civil War, it should be read very carefully.

Lonnie E. Maness

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Penny M. Miller and Malcolm E. Jewell. *Political Parties and Primaries in Kentucky*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990.

Political Scientists Penny M. Miller of Temple University and Malcolm E. Jewell of the University of Kentucky have collaborated to examine closely political parties and their primaries in the Commonwealth. Naturally they focus mostly on the Democratic Party, which is easily the majority party there. At the same time they examine the strengths and weaknesses of Republican ranks, especially as they relate to the state's recent proclivity to vote Republican for national offices, essentially in Presidential and in some Senatorial races. They focus largely on the 1970s and 1980s although sometimes they do delve into historical results in early and late chapters as they examine voter patterns and turnout. Basically, however, they concentrate on the 1980s and state matters, particularly the election of the governors. Yet highly surprising is the extent to which Democratic governors have relied upon and emphasized themselves and re-election rather than promoting their party.

Miller and Jewell directed attention chiefly to the Democratic primary because Kentucky is such a heavily Democratic state. Traditionally, if there is really going to be a hotly contested gubernatorial election, it occurs in the Democratic primary. Of course, an exception happens during those rare times when Republicans have both an attractive and strong nominee.

Like other students of government, the authors are handicapped by the lack of scholarly studies of Southern primaries over both a decade and even longer term. Inherent in the process, greatly recognized and definitely stated by Miller and Jewell, are the series changes in Kentucky and Southern politics brought about by more expensive contests, a factor resulting in large part from transportation and communications costs, in particular television.

Not surprisingly, of the twelve chapters four examine the Democratic Party, and two of those zero in on the 1987 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary and that year's primary for statewide offices. In many ways some of the most interesting coverage deals with the biographical sketches and examination of the major gubernatorial candidates. Those parts make fascinating reading because of the different skills and styles of such candidates as John Y. Brown, Jr., Steve Beshear, Grady Stumbo, Julian Carroll, and Wallace Wilkinson. Their liabilities and assets, sometimes including television, are extensively scrutinized, perhaps even too closely for the interest of some readers. Among other things, that 1987 primary proved that "the most important change in primary campaigns, of course, is the new importance of television advertising."

Miller and Jewell devote two chapters specifically to Republican matters.

Although most Southern and border states have witnessed a trend toward Republicans, in Kentucky that progress has been in presidential races, not in gubernatorial contests. In reality, Republican presidential nominees carried Kentucky in seven of the nine elections from 1956 onward. Occasionally Republicans have not had attractive gubernatorial candidates, but in other races for the governor's mansion Democrats were just too proficient for their GOP counterparts. Kentucky's Republicans face the giant hurdle of not running full slates of candidates and the equally formidable inability to perpetuate incumbency because of the dearth of victories and office favors. Further, like Democrats, successful Republican candidates frequently are more interested in perpetuating their incumbency than building the GOP. To the authors, "If there is any prescription for Republican success, it would be to elect a governor who is deeply committed to party-building activities."

If a reader wants an analysis of Kentucky politics at the state level over the past decade, then he should start with this book.

Marvin Downing

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Martin F. Schmidt. *Kentucky Illustrated: The First Hundred Years*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992.

In the era before photographs became the main illustrations in popular media, various types of artistic black-and-white prints served that purpose—woodcuts, etchings and engravings, and lithographs. These differed widely in quality, accuracy of representation, and means of production. The best of them reveal artistic merit and impressive verisimilitude, and even the worst have naive charm. In *Kentucky Illustrated* Martin F. Schmidt—a librarian at the Louisville Public Library and the Filson Club—reproduces a range of such prints dating from about 1790-1890 and having Kentucky life and culture as their subjects. Most prints he chooses are American, but a few are European. There are prints from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, but also from advertisements and even sheet music covers.

Though Schmidt's purpose is to illustrate bygone life in Kentucky, he has conscious secondary interests in the medium of printmaking itself and in the topic of what we would now call media bias. Schmidt wisely does not purport to be fully representative, especially because nineteenth century periodicals outside Kentucky focused inordinately on picturesque scenery, Mammoth Cave, Daniel Boone and the Indians, and—when the time came—the melodrama of what Kentuckians called the Brother's War. Even the Kentucky printers were more apt to show handsome columned buildings and span-stretching bridges than scenes of ordinary life. Thus, while Schmidt's use of old prints gives the book its main appeal, it also imposes important limitations. The inherently "opaque" and subjective qualities of even the best black-and-white print always seem to leave a reader at one remove from the reality of the subject represented. Since the volume is mainly a good picture book with informative captions, the risk is



strong that one will merely turn through it, and at an ever progressive rate, much as if it were an old issue of *LIFE* at the dentist's office. Readers without interests in early architecture and military history may find real dead spots in the book.

The appeal of the collected prints, however, is strong, and some individual pictures are stunning: familiar and little-known images of Daniel Boone, full-spread representations of Civil War events, scenes of hangings and natural disasters (including the 1883 flood), and a beautifully lyrical 1887 "genre" engraving (p. 117) of a country schoolmaster with his pupils arched beside their log-cabin school reciting their lessons. Natives of the Purchase area will find their area skimpily accounted for—an understandable fact because the West was relatively late being settled. But Civil War era views of the Columbus-Belmont venue (pp. 139-42) and a panoramic spread showing the federals' "bridge of boats" at Paducah (pp. 132-33) have particular local fascinations.

The primary materials Schmidt starts with are, by their nature, inchoate. The necessary order he imposes is mostly topical—seven chapters with such titles as "Religion and Education," "Roads, Rivers, and Rails," and "Making a Living." Concurrently, an intuitive and functional sense of chronology governs the book—with early chapters called "The Frontier Years" and "The Natural World," and closing sections titled "The Civil War" and then "The Rural and Urban Landscape." The treatment of the War also respects the chronology of events in the state during 1861-63.

Schmidt's book is handsome, well-written, well-edited, and scholarly without being stuffy. Its page layouts combine text and pictures attractively. It has useful frontmatter explaining its purpose, rationalizing its choice of materials, and setting its limits. A brief prefatory comment by state historian James C. Klotter and an explanation by Joe Nickell of printmaking techniques also add substance. The bibliography and captions carefully credit the sources of the prints. An oversized format and even the off-white paper also seem right. All in all, *Kentucky Illustrated* meets the classic test: It entertains, it enlightens. With but 213 pages, however, the book is rather slim to me. Its sixty-dollar price tag seems likely to make it something one will want to check out at the library rather than buy for the coffee table. Old print fanatics, Civil War buffs, and well-heeled collectors of Kentuckiana may take exception to this generalization.

Roy Neil Graves

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John H. Ellis. *Yellow Fever and Public Health in the New South*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992.

The yellow fever epidemic in the Mississippi Valley during the summer and fall of 1878 has inspired numerous works by historians and novelists alike over the years since the disaster. A scholar primarily interested in the history of medicine in the South, John Ellis has traced with painstaking care and detail the effects of the 1878 epidemic on the development of public health policies in three

cities: New Orleans, Atlanta, and Memphis. In most chapters, Ellis provides information about the efforts of local officials in all three cities to deal with the 1878 epidemic and subsequent outbreaks of yellow fever. In other chapters, he focuses on the political climate in a particular one of these cities. In each city the slogan "Public health is public wealth" motivated the board of aldermen and local physicians to improve sanitation.

Ellis' use of primary sources is impressive. Over fifty pages of notes provide bibliographic information as well as exposition. Unpublished sources include a variety of information ranging from manuscript notebooks of an oil drilling contractor in New Orleans written in 1854 to minutes recorded by the secretaries of such groups as the State Board of Health of Louisiana and the Howard Association, an organization founded in New Orleans in 1837 "to provide food, medical attention, and burial for the poor." The index is adequate, though references are only to items in the text and not to details in the notes.

Reprints of drawings from such illustrated newspapers as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* are graphic reminders of the disastrous effects of yellow fever in certain communities and of the chaos that developed when authorities tried to enforce quarantine ordinances. One print shows the public health movement personified as Pallas Athena, an allusion not common in the popular press of today. "Yellow Jack," as the disease was called, is depicted as a skeleton.

Being river cities adjacent to swamplands, both Memphis and New Orleans were more susceptible to outbreaks of yellow fever than Atlanta. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the carrier of the virus that causes the disease, was less common in Atlanta than in New Orleans and Memphis, where breeding grounds for the mosquito were abundant. Ellis emphasizes the point that, despite the differences in topography and ethnic components in these cities, the leaders in all three wanted desperately to make their cities more attractive to commerce.

Though concentrating primarily on the effects of the 1878 epidemic on the three largest cities of the South at that time, Ellis also tells of the effects of the disease on such river communities as Hickman, Kentucky, and such railroad towns as Grenada, Mississippi. Approximately half of the residents of Hickman fled the town after the first cases of yellow fever were reported, and five of the town's six physicians died of the disease. That same year, after nearly half the inhabitants of Grenada had fled the town, the local authorities unlocked the cell doors in the jail, allowing those incarcerated to leave.

Most of us who live in the towns and cities of this country take for granted relatively clean drinking water and a dependable sewerage system. This book reminds us that it was not without a great deal of effort and sacrifice that the Southern cities featured became more healthful places in which to live. In a time when pollution of our water, air and soil is common, it is encouraging to read of the impressive accomplishments of community leaders in Atlanta, Memphis, and New Orleans as they struggled against great odds a hundred years ago to improve the sanitary conditions in their cities. Ellis' book is an important reference for those interested in concrete information about a dynamic period in Southern history.

Robert G. Cowser