

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 60 | Number 3 (Summer 2001)

pps. 278-278

The Making of Milwaukee

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Buenker, John D. "The Making of Milwaukee." *The Annals of Iowa* 60 (2001), 278-278.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.10487>

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The Making of Milwaukee, by John Gurda. Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999. ix, 458 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer John D. Buenker is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. His latest book is *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 4, *The Progressive Era, 1893-1915* (1998).

Inspired by Milwaukee's sesquicentennial in 1996, historian/columnist/photographer/lecturer John Gurda has produced the most ambitious of his baker's dozen of books dealing with various aspects of life in his beloved hometown. Cogently written, brimming with *bon-mots* and trenchant one-liners, and enhanced with hundreds of illustrations woven into its lively text, *The Making of Milwaukee* consists of nine chronologically organized chapters, which cumulatively trace the evolution of the Cream City from "its obscure beginnings as an Indian settlement" to "its gradual (but never complete) immersion in national and global affairs" after 1967. Intervening chapters focus on successive time spans of approximately twenty years, demarcated by defining economic, demographic, or political developments. Thematic continuity is provided by Gurda's ongoing efforts to "uncover Milwaukee's civic bedrock—the shifting foundation on which individuals have built their lives and the community has constructed its identity" and by his insistence that "the operative question throughout the book is 'Why?'"

Although Gurda insists that "choice and circumstance have combined to produce a community that is unique in all the world," and although the book will appeal primarily to those with some emotional tie to or intellectual interest in Milwaukee's history, he also clearly succeeds in his stated ancillary purpose of adding "a useful historical dimension to the ongoing conversation about . . . American cities in general." Anyone interested in that discourse, or in learning more about the development of the upper Midwest through the history of one of its most colorful cities, will find this a highly informative and entertaining read.

Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer, by Nancy C. Unger. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. xiii, 393 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer John D. Buenker is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He has written several books and articles about the Progressive Era, most recently *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 4, *The Progressive Era, 1893-1915*.

When Robert M. La Follette Sr. died in 1925, just months after his unsuccessful third-party campaign for the presidency, fellow progressive Republican Senator William Borah observed that "it's hard to say the

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