al, it is a book whose strengths of editing and layout are even more apparent. Along with being a clear and absorbing narrative of the events of 1892, it is an excellent casebook on the historical process: on how events occur in the context of the values and attitudes of a time, and how the recording of those events shapes how they are understood, then and in the future. This, I think, is this book’s chief interest for the general reader and for the student: it displays how the historical record is assembled, and how a historical perspective is arrived at. What happened in Homestead in 1892 was a turning point in American history, an episode of high drama and consequence. But it is also an illustration of how chance and reputation, accident and misstep, as much as individual will or group demographics, are decisive in the outcome of events. All of that comes across very well in this book.

So what’s missing? What more can a reviewer legitimately ask from a book on this subject?

This past year has seen one book in each of the likely categories for a publication about Homestead and its famous strike: a successful illustrated compilation, an outstanding scholarly analysis of the origins and issues in the 1892 lockout (Krause’s, mentioned previously), and a good popular history of the town and its industry. Homestead and 1892 have now been covered from every angle: events, issues, town. So what’s left?

None of these books, I’d say, even though it’s a bit of a cavil, manages in any memorable way to communicate a sense of atmosphere and place, the “mentality” and aesthetic of steelmaking, and the particular combination — and more often, confounding — of those elements in everyday life: the patois of valley life. This is something more than valley pronunciation or any “local color” features, and is more than ethnic tradition or even the pervasive presence of heavy industry — although that has very much to do with it. What shift you’re on this week and what year you were hired when the mill’s laying back; whether you live downtown or on the hill, in town or in one of the hollows; what “nationality” your family is, and how many generations you’re in this country. It’s something more than ethnocentrism, though, or that old derogatory charge of a “hunkie mentality,” and more like the whole toll of mill life, the dulling and finally the defiance of the aesthetic sense, summed up in the generic valley word “ignorant” — ignernt, minus vowels.

What I miss in these books is the unusual blend of squalor and grandeur, the combined feeling of de-spondency and exaltation, that I remember feeling myself growing up in a valley town — the experience of thinking that here was the most spectacular, most consequential place on the earth to be, and at the same time knowing you were going to have to do something on earth you could escape it. Steel town life has been written about many times, of course, most memorably in Thomas Bell’s novel Out of This Furnace, and more recently in John Hoerr’s And the Wolf Finally Came, and most interestingly I think in a children’s book called No Star Nights, by Anna Egan Smucker, which is set in Wheeling, W. Va. But this particular gaudy feeling is something I’ve seen described only one time in a book, in passing, in Edie: An American Biography (New York, 1982), Jean Stein’s oral biography of Andy Warhol’s friend Edie Sedgwick. Photographer Duane Michals describes growing up in McKeesport during the time Andy grew up in Pittsburgh: “Because our rivers were orange I thought all rivers were orange. At night the steelmills lit up the sky; it was always this incredible kind of inferno. The mills made a lot of noise; you could hear the cranes dropping enormous things and booming all the time. There was a certain drama about it, kind of scary, too. When I was a kid, I thought it was terrific...just the best place to live.”

A terrific place to live. The valley was that, and more, in its heyday, and there came out of the industry that worked there, not an enrichment, but a congruence to daily life, so that people living there now have to feel a vacuum. “He said the silence was loud as the noise used to be,” William Serrin, in the final line in his book, quotes a salesman who came back to Homestead for the mill closing in July, 1986. Those old days of steelmaking, of mining and coking coal, the days of the Mon Valley river trade, are all passing now, their stories and their ethos, the skills and traditions they carried, soon to be extinct. Much of what all that sounded like, felt like, is still unrecorded; and the final book about the valley and the great age of steelmaking is still unwritten.

Harrisburg Industrializes: The Coming of Factories to An American Community
by Gerry Eggert

IVE years ago, when I first came to the Historical Society of Dauphin County, Gerry Eggert had already been hard at work for some time in our archives and library. At that time, I was rather skeptical of this Penn State professor writing a history of my town. Harrisburg has been blessed and cursed with a wide range of works on various themes in local history. My thoughts were that Professor Eggert would write just one more name-calling work against the rich but seemingly foolish industrial giants who ruled the city in the nineteenth century. Even worse, he might spend countless hours studying various sub-communities without ever understanding the bigger patterns which have governed the history of Pennsylvania’s capital city. Was I ever wrong.

Harrisburg Industrializes is a monumental achievement for not only American industrial and business scholars, but also for Harrisburg. Like countless others, I have pondered the historical reasons for
Harrisburg’s present state. It is now a city ruled by four different governmental presences with an industrial belt (now a rust belt) passing through the midst of the community, a booming poverty rate and equally depressed tax base. It is a community that has re-invented itself countless times in just the last 100 years. Yet, it is also a city that has been at the center of many of Pennsylvania’s most important industrial and political achievements. Harrisburg has been the state capital since the early nineteenth century, and its citizens have long taken — or taken for granted — a more active participation in state government than perhaps any other area in the state. Just south of the city is the Bethlehem Steel plant which was the first commercial steel works in the United States. Local companies have built a reputation beyond the city and include the former Harrisburg Car Co., now HARSco, and Hickock Manufacturing Co. (makers of many things including cider presses).

As both a center for regional agricultural markets and a crossroads for westward and southern migrations, Harrisburg probably could have remained and prospered throughout the nineteenth century. Yet between 1849 and 1860, a Roman Candle of economic development, entrepreneurial spirit, ethnic diversity, and business growth was lit, bringing to town the Pennsylvania Railroad, iron furnaces, a cotton mill, a rail car manufactory and a host of other enterprises. Almost simultaneously, the capital’s ethnic population dramatically grew and changed. Significant numbers of new African-American, Irish and German laborers, and their families, came between 1850 and 1870.

Amazingly, this radical growth and change in the city’s economic and social structure occurred in a short time for no single, easily identifiable reason. This clearly puzzles Eggert. He poses several possible answers. First was the availability of capital among wealthy entrepreneurs who sought to develop industries in their own backyards. Some, like the McCormicks, built their empires upon a prosperous farming heritage. Others like the Camerons were self-made men who shrewdly saw the benefits of doing business in the state capital. All realized the potential of Harrisburg as a center for production linked by railroad to other markets.

The Pennsylvania Railroad not only tied those industries to faraway outlets for finished products, it also hooked them to distant suppliers — iron beds in Cornwall, coal seams in Schuylkill County, clay fields in New Jersey. As a result, most Harrisburg products were virtually unknown to most of its citizens. Changes in manufacturing technologies, the ongoing influence of the Pennsylvania Canal, and close access to major cities, were important, too, but Eggert concludes that the new entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with the power of the railroad, ignited the city’s industrial fires.

To understand the complex relationship of politics, industry and society in present-day Harrisburg is to have read Eggert’s book on the nineteenth century roots of the city. As a local historical society, my agency is not only committed to preserving the past but also interpreting it for the benefit of our community. *Harrisburg Industrializes* is the answer to many of our needs.

**Harrisburg Industrializes is a monumental achievement for not only American industrial and business scholars, but also for Harrisburg.**

By this point, it may seem obvious to note that I think the book is probably the finest work written about this community since Luther Reily Kelker’s 1901 *History of Dauphin County*— quite a feat for someone who is not even a Harrisburg native! The core of this book is Eggert’s monumental achievement of studying nearly every extant source available on Harrisburg’s industrial heritage.

Not only does he examine the biographies of the rich industrialists, but he also pours through the voluminous, often boring, minutes of their meetings. As a result, he not only chronicles the rise to power of the McCormick family (bankers, iron masters, etc.), but he also shows exactly how they accomplished this within one generation.

In a similar vein, he examines the broad lives of individual craftsmen and workers (like cigar maker Charles R. Boak), and the collective patterns of the entire industrial community through a complete dissection of the 1850-70 federal census of the city. Thanks to modern technology, Eggert was able to sort through the copious data on Harrisburg during its key period of industrial growth. While he found some amazing items, such as the apparent “fact” that the daughters of Presbyterian ministers seemed to age at a slower rate than the remainder of the population over a 10-year span, he also discovered that Harrisburg had the largest African-American population, in relation to total population, of any city in the state during this period. In 1850, Harrisburg had 11 percent blacks, with Philadelphia second at 9 percent, he notes (p. 378). By 1870, 10 percent of Harrisburg’s population was black, followed by Norristown, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport, each with about 4 percent.

This startling statistic, like so many others hidden within the charts and tables of this book, has encouraged my agency to take another look at local history as it relates to the African-American community. This statistic challenged two important points in my own mind: first was that Harrisburg had a large, albeit somewhat hidden African-American presence which has received minimal attention from local scholars; second is that this population was larger in the pre-Civil War period than during the southern Reconstruction era. My own assumptions were that Harrisburg’s black population was
chiefly composed of southerners migrating north after the war. Clearly, this book has much to teach everyone.

While this work is a monumental achievement, there are two points which require special comment. Given the incredible amount of in-depth research which went into the book, it is regrettable that several flawed sources were utilized for background material. George Morgan’s _Annals of Harrisburg_ (published first in 1848 and reprinted _ad-nauseum_ before and after the author’s death) and William Henry Egle’s _History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon_ are two works which are extensively quoted in early chapters. Morgan, a man of questionable mental stability, invented many of Harrisburg’s greatest legends. Egle, a brilliant antiquarian, collected and published extensive notes on a wide range of topics without much interpretation or questioning of sources. Perhaps the one problem most embarrassing to me relates to the specific information concerning the history and ownership of the John Harris and Simon Cameron Mansion. (John Harris Jr. stockaded the trading post complex during the French and Indian War rather than his father, who had no reason to be in a defensive posture against the Indians. Harris Sr. did build a portion of the present mansion which was subsequently enlarged by his son in 1766.) While these little details on such a subject may seem trivial, the Harris/Cameron Mansion has been the museum, library and archives for the Historical Society of Dauphin County for more than five decades. As such, it is surprising to see such information printed concerning the building where Professor Eggert did some of his research.

My only other concern is that not enough people will have the opportunity to experience the amazing information in this work. I do not criticize price, distribution, marketing or any other technical aspect of the book but rather the lack of interest and willingness of the local community to read this work. In writing this review, I look out my window toward Bethlehem Steel’s near-failing steel plant in the adjoining town of Steelton. Gerry Eggert surmises that the leading cause of Harrisburg’s industrial demise was the failure of the business leadership to part with much-needed capital to retool local industries. As a result, the majority of local heavy industries ceased to be competitive and eventually just ceased to exist by the mid-twentieth century. The rusting steel plant out my window is an ongoing reminder that we still need to learn the lessons which Gerry Eggert teaches in _Harrisburg Industrializes._

_Peter Swift Seibert, Ex. Dir., Historical Society of Dauphin Co._

**The Puzzle People: Memoirs of a Transplant Surgeon**
by Thomas Starzl

No one expects surgeons to write well; scalpels and sutures are their tools, not words. But here is the exception. Starzl, the son of a midwestern newspaper editor, winner of a Latin competition in high school, hero surgeon to Pittsburgh and the world, has a sense for language that moves his extraordinary story at an appropriate clip and produces fine vignettes of colleagues and patients in a sentence or two. Often his use of words approaches poetry: The liver is “hostile to surgeons;” “the most defiant of all organs;” “a textbook of biology is by definition an ode to the cell;” “this disease was worth hating.” In describing his father after a severe stroke, “the sentence was life imprisonment. Although his brain remained in its dungeon for almost 14 years, the messages that were smuggled out through the typewriter never contained a hint of sorrow or bitterness.” Good perceptive writing.

His literary abilities can also be seen from quite another vantage point. Translating medical information from the language of the expert into prose understandable to the layman is not an easy task and many writers have fallen by the wayside. In this case the information is complex for physicians, and one is left to wonder whether even Starzl’s expertise is enough to sustain the medically naive reader’s interest.

Although referred to in some reviews as an autobiography, this book should more appropriately be described as the dual evolution of a process and a man, the author-hero an omniscient god, surprisingly beneficial considering the intricacies of the politics involved (both academic and legal). However, this generosity towards colleagues results in one of the book’s flaws — names drop page after page and fill the index so that it resembles a “Who’s Who of Surgery.” Everyone has a moment of mention and often names clog the pipe of the story.

But the story itself is an adventure tale. A brilliant young surgeon fastens onto the concept of transplantation, first of kidneys and then of livers. He arms himself with tedious painstaking research and infinite study of metabolism and rejection. He mounts his white horse, hoists his spear and rides into battle against medical and political odds that would have haunted a less committed, less obsessed warrior. His often exhausted troops gather behind him and sally into skirmishes; adversaries drop bleeding. Some of his rescue attempts of captive maidens fail, but finally the day is carried and well-deserved medals are handed out.

From his earliest school days he was an intrepid battler. When one of his high school teachers thought he was systematically cheating in his Latin studies, she was finally reduced to a sobbing apology when he wrote a perfect examination and won the prize. He concludes the story with,