Baltimore: The Building of an American City

Professor Sherry H. Olson

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The unique appeal of an older city lies in its history and diversity--the mix of events, peoples, styles, and circumstances that give a place its special character. As the city of Baltimore celebrates its bicentennial in 1997, its citizens can look with renewed pride and interest to a heritage that includes a colorful history, architectural treasures, diverse ethnic neighborhoods, world-renowned institutions, and a reinvented waterfront that combines tourism and industry. First published in 1980 -- at the height of the city's acclaimed "renaissance" -- Baltimore: The Building of an American City offered a lively, well-illustrated history of the city's growth, development, and challenges. In this expanded bicentennial edition, Sherry H. Olson brings Baltimore's story up to date with a new chapter and new illustrations. Olson describes the "boom and bust" urban development that makes Baltimore's experience typical of urban centers around the world. She also notes the ongoing search for solutions to problems such as poverty, unemployment, racial tension, labor disputes, and the inevitable conflicts between the public and private sectors and urban and suburban interests. This new edition of Baltimore: The Building of an American City helps us understand why the city has always won the hearts of residents and visitors -- and fascinated historians and students of urban development.

"Discover how and why the city grew as it did... [An] exhaustive book which should be of interest not only to scholars but to all Baltimoreans and in fact to all city dwellers--for the light that Olson throws on the city's past could well help to indicate some of the choices we ought--and ought not--to make for the future." -- Baltimore Sun

"Olson's book is a serious, handsomely designed and produced history. [With] its large format and its many, effectively used black-and-white photographs and illustrations, this book is intended to be read and not just skimmed." -- Washington Post Book World

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