

THE GREAT FIRE IN PICTURES

The Great Chicago Fire, Herman Kogan and Robert Cromie, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1971.5-237, maps, diagrams, sketches, photos, index.

Herman Kogan and Robert Cromie offer an unique view of Chicago in their history of the Great Chicago Fire- a pictorial view. The book is a series of pictures which tell the tale of the biggest natural disaster to ever hit Chicago in its almost 200 year history. The two hope their "selection [of pictures] constitutes...a vivid pictorial account of what happened in that relatively brief but horrible period in the city's lifetime." (5)

In that, they have succeeded. Throughout the books 200 plus pages, hundreds of photographs fill the pages. Not a page goes unturned without the reader viewing some picture. The book's pictures, sketches, and maps provide vivid detail and aid the reader's understanding of the book. By seeing a picture, the reader can now link an image to the topic at hand. That is a tool with immeasurable value for it enhances the understanding of the reader. To be able to implement visuals to create a deeper comprehension of the subject makes our job as the reader much easier.

Not only are the visual aids helpful, but so is the corresponding information. With every picture, map, or sketch, there is a brief but informative synopsis of the depiction and how it relates to the Great Chicago Fire. Detailed with quotes, the captions for the pictures give you all the information needed to fully grasp the subject. With the pictures and explanations by them, the reader can better integrate the two and

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determine the importance of that idea to the Great Chicago Fire. The visual aids are well researched- as much research as a regular book would have used. This makes Kogan and Cromie's work all the more admirable, for it is very hard to get a hold of pictures and sketches from 100 years ago and then do the amount of research alongside the graphics.

The book is arranged in chronological order which makes the tale easy to follow. Important and not-so-important people and events are included in order to give a well-rounded picture as to what really happened in that dreadful year of 1871. Overall, the Kogan and Crombie do an excellent job in presenting the Great Chicago Fire pictorially.