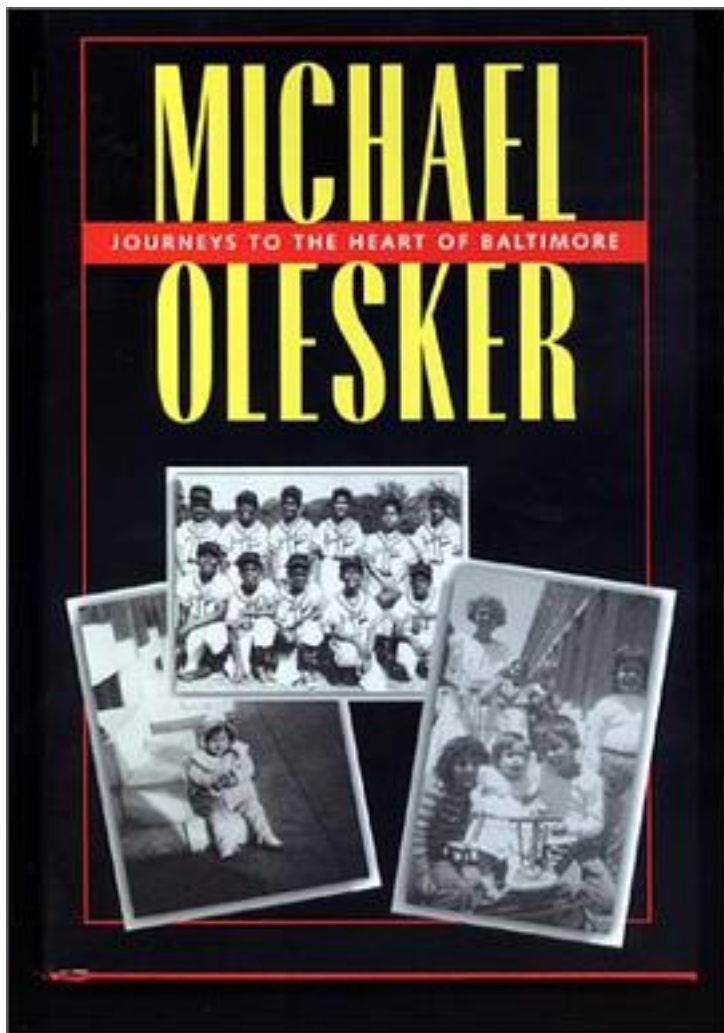


Journeys to the Heart of Baltimore



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著者:Michael Olesker

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In Journeys to the Heart of Baltimore, veteran journalist Michael Olesker writes of the

American melting pot-particularly Baltimore's-in all its rollicking, sentimental, good-natured, and chaotic essence. The stories come from neighborhood street corners and front stoops, playgrounds and school rooms, churches and synagogues, and families gathered around late-night kitchen tables. "Think of this as a love letter across the generations," Olesker writes. The D'Alesandro political dynasty comes to life here, and so do the legendary Baltimore Colts Lenny Moore and Artie Donovan. The old East Baltimore ethnic enclaves nurture youngsters named Barbara Mikulski and Ted Venetoulis, and out of West Baltimore comes the future Afro-American newspaper publisher Jake Oliver. Journeys to the Heart of Baltimore is a delightful reminder of the nation's ethnic and racial mosaic, where a future mayor named Martin O'Malley and a future Baltimore County executive named Dutch Ruppersberger first learn about the melting pot. Boys from Baltimore's Little Italy, like John Pica, go off to fight a war in Italy when they know their allegiance is being tested. And a city struggles through racial convulsions, remembered by those such as John Steadman and Father Constantine Sitaris. "We overlap-or what's the point of America?" Olesker writes. "We compromise, we shed the garments of the past. But we simultaneously strain to hold onto yesterdays. It is the hunger of memory."

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