

Iowans who are interested in nearby history and who want to enhance their ability to research local government and politics will find this book rewarding.

The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, by Richard Longstreth. Updated edition. American Association for State and Local History Book Series. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000. 155 pp. 220 photographs, notes, glossary, bibliography, information sources, index. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewer Molly Myers Naumann is an architectural history consultant in private practice. In addition to working with property owners and local governments, she participates in the Artists in the Schools program.

First published in 1987, *The Buildings of Main Street* provided what had not existed before: a concise, coherent typology for identifying commercial buildings. Richard Longstreth developed a set of eleven compositional types to physically describe and understand the individual buildings along America's main streets. Each type is based on a simple design, or pattern, that describes the façade. His typology works equally well with high-style or vernacular buildings, as the basic form stays the same regardless of size, material, or decorative elements. More than 200 photographs from across the country illustrate the various types, ranging from big city skyscrapers to banks in small county seat towns. Longstreth's typology was quickly adopted by many preservation professionals as the standard for identifying and classifying commercial buildings.

The 2000 edition contains the original text and photographs with a new preface and bibliography. Longstreth's preface provides an update on what has been happening in downtown preservation during the past decade, citing the National Trust's Main Street Program and developers' use of investment tax credits for commercial rehabilitation as examples of success stories. He stresses that education and knowledge are the greatest tools preservationists have for preserving their heritage. "The introductory view afforded by this book to a vast, complicated, and engaging subject is a modest step in that direction" (5). The updated bibliography illustrates the increased interest in America's main streets. Of the 149 entries in the general bibliography, only 34 are carryovers from the 1987 edition.

Longstreth's commercial typology works equally well to identify buildings in Chicago or Ottumwa, Iowa, and is as significant today as it was when introduced in 1987.

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