

## Book Reviews

ficial for those who consumed the products as it was for the hill farmers who profited from the crops. It was a typical railroad development effort as well.

*Railroad Development Programs* reveals a minute-scale patchwork of economic development efforts that continued from 1900 until the interstate highway system began turning the logistics of American transportation inside-out in the 1960s. That such agencies were necessary for so many years after the railroad laid its tracks, sold the farmer his land, and then carried him in with all of his possessions, probably would have amazed John Murray Forbes. The real role played by railroads in national development continues to unfold, and, as these recent works by Larson and Scott show, it is in the corporate strategies—the principal actors and their designs—that we are likely to learn the full measure of what the railroads wrought.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

JOHN C. HUDSON

*Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project*, by Mark Klett, Ellen Manchester, JoAnn Verburg, Gordon Bushaw, and Rick Dingus, with essay by Paul Berger. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984. ix, 211 pp. Duotone plates, maps, illustrations, notes. \$65.00 cloth.

The concept for *Second View* is elegantly simple. A group of photographers set out to imitate in every conceivable way photographs made in the late 1870s by the various government survey photographers. These new photographs would ape the originals in location, vantage point, focal length of lens—literally duplicating the originals, save for the passage of time. In lesser hands the simplicity might have been brainless, for there is nothing of particular worth in the simple exercise of relocating a given site and making a parallel picture. But this book, and the project that led to it, had conceptual underpinnings that transform a simple idea into a powerful experiment.

The book is deceptive in that it is really not about the pictures. Rather, it is about the nature of photography and, by corollary, time. Divided into four major sections, it first reports on the project concept and methodology in a preface by Mark Klett, the project's chief photographer, and in an essay by JoAnn Verburg, the project coordinator. The mechanics of determining the precise location, camera height, lens, and arrangement of camera standards was, in itself, fascinating. Moreover, the staff's precision casts new insights into what the original photographers were seeing and feeling about what they were photographing. These insights alone make the book valuable to those study-

ing the benchmark photographers—William Henry Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, John K. Hillers, Andrew J. Russell, and Alexander Gardner—whose survey work was the foundation of the rephotographic survey.

The essay, "Doubling: This Then That," by Paul Berger is the intellectual core of the work. It deals with the complicated ontological riddle of the interaction of photography, space, and time. "This triangulation is a demonstration of something that is fundamental to all photographs," Berger writes, "but difficult ever to show explicitly: that the meaning of the photograph does not reside in its physical structure, but rather in the dynamic and negotiating interaction between ourselves, our culture, and the image in question" (52). His essay charts a line of thought that is particularly significant in an age when most scholars involved with the study of history and culture punctuate their books and articles thoughtlessly with historical photographs. Because photographs so perfectly mirror reality it is easy to forget that they are *not*, in themselves, real, but rather abstractions. Used as evidence (or worse, as mere illustration) photographs can be, and frequently are, abused by invalid assumptions on the part of the user. In this regard Berger's essay has a transcendent significance to the study of history and culture. The scholarly community ought to read it as an evaluation of the nature of historical photographs, to serve as a basis for evaluating the worth of pictures to scholarship.

Following Berger's essay are the plates of the old photographs paired with the new ones. These are grouped by state and accompanied with a brief caption identifying photographer, location, and date. It is unsettling to look at these pairs; photographs of exactly the same thing separated only by the span of one hundred years or so. My first reaction was that it was like looking through a stereoscope, where the third dimension that was added was temporal rather than spacial. It is not unlike looking around a corner, but rather than seeing new vistas of space, one sees old vistas of time. The effect is jarring.

The final section of the book amounts to an appendix, with maps showing the location of each site, followed by a precise catalog of each image, containing the photograph number, date, original title, repository for the historic photographs, photographer, and precise U.S. Geological Survey map coordinates.

The book itself is handsomely produced, a characteristic in itself worthy of note because this is not an art book, but a book involved with philosophy and history. It is refreshing to see authors and publishers taking seriously the presentation of photographs which are other than works of art. I am tired of magnificently written and meticulously edited books that sloppily incorporate photographs for the idiotic reason

## Book Reviews

that they are only history books. Inarticulate design and poor production simply do not constitute good scholarship. They result in incomplete communication. *Second View* not only proves that we can produce such books, but also demonstrates the reasons to produce them. The organizations, public and private, that funded the project may be proud, for the project deserved wide attention and the book is equal to the task. Its beauty will make it welcome company for the finest art books, its content demands its inclusion on the shelf of any serious historian, and overall it will prove to be an important moment in the history of photography.

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JOHN E. CARTER

*A Culture at Risk: Who Cares for America's Heritage?* by Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984. xii, 95 pp. Figures, appendixes. \$10.00 paper.

*The Wages of History: The AASLH Employment Trends and Salary Survey*, by Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984. xii, 87 pp. Tables, charts, appendixes. \$10.00 paper.

Together these two books provide a striking message: Americans love history, create historical societies and museums aplenty to preserve and protect their "heritage," and apparently believe firmly in the value of the past. However, those same Americans are reluctant or unwilling to fund those museums and historical agencies adequately, and in the majority of instances they depend on volunteers or overworked and underpaid staff to operate the places wherein history is preserved and interpreted.

The net result, according to authors Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan, is a "culture at risk." Asserting that historical agencies and museums are "in the vanguard of collecting and preserving our cultural heritage," the authors declare that these organizations lack adequate resources to do the job for which they were created. As a consequence, "the physical remains of America's past—documents and artifacts alike—are in peril" (*A Culture at Risk*, 82). Proof of this overall conclusion is diminishing employment possibilities. Phillips and Hogan find a "profession dominated by young people . . . who came . . . at a time of hope and high growth" but who are now confronted by stagnating opportunities in a field that frankly cannot pay decently, provide the chance to advance, or employ younger, beginning-level people (*The Wages of History*, 75-76).

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.