

In some cases this new data calls into question popular assumptions, such as the assumptions that women quilted on the overland trails and that there is an identifiable African-American quilting aesthetic.

Analysis of data from all of the state projects has underscored the difficulty in defining state or even regional styles in quilting. Although the eight essays contained in this volume use data collected in Kansas, they reflect contributions to social history and quilt history applicable throughout the Midwest and the nation. Essays on nineteenth-century red and green appliqué quilts, on fabric and conversation prints, on Mennonite and African-American quilting, and on traditions of quilting groups augment the growing body of scholarly work exploring this American cultural tradition. Other essays put quilting within the context of Kansas social history. The book also pays well-deserved tribute to the Kansas leaders who fed the national quilting frenzy of the 1930s, such as Carrie Hall and Rose Kretsinger. This thought-provoking book helps readers uncover the rich cultural meanings wrapped in quilts.

*Railroad Postcards in the Age of Steam*, by H. Roger Grant. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994. xiv, 208 pp. Illustrations, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JAMES C. HIPPEN, DECORAH, IOWA

This album of railroad postcards begins with an annotated essay on "The Picture Postcard Phenomenon," followed by five sections of postcards, reprinted in black-and-white, grouped by subjects: "Trains and Rolling Stock," "Depots and Railway Structures," "The Railroad Corridor," "People and Railroads," and "The Lighter Side of Railroad-ing." The 162 views represent thirty-nine states, with the largest number from Iowa and Missouri.

Such a book might be expected to provide a guidepost for students of railroad history on the local level. Unfortunately, its deficiencies are numerous. There is little on the methodology of using postcards as sources for railroad history. Indeed, the postcards are reproduced on such inappropriate paper that much of the original detail is lost. The captions on each page are usually quite short. Brevity, however, has not always been compensated for by accuracy. A Frisco freight along the Spring River in Arkansas is marked "unidentified" (32). The Santa Fe station in Oklahoma City is misidentified, even though there is a large Santa Fe sign on the tower (70). Too often the captions merely describe the scene, rather than offering the interpretation and analysis needed by those who are not railroad

specialists. None of the sections of postcard views, although grouped by subject, are prefaced by any interpretive remarks. One wishes that H. Roger Grant, a well-known railroad historian, had produced a historical essay showing how postcards can tell us about railroads, rather than just an album showing postcards.

*American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870–1940*, by Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. xxiv, 438 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$32.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY FRED W. PETERSON, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA–MORRIS

This study assumes the comprehensive task of documenting and analyzing interior architectural designs of commonplace buildings in the United States from 1870 to 1940. Based on information collected from trade books, magazines, plan books, advertisements, and government publications as well as field work with actual structures, the study's authors identify and illustrate basic elements of interior design (windows, doors, trim, walls, light fixtures) and related support systems (heating, plumbing, ventilation). Analyses or evaluations of ways builders selected and composed design elements and used support systems provide the basis to discern four aesthetic preferences that determined overall design: the ornamental (1870–1910), the classical (1895–1910), the artistic (1902–1923), and the colonial (1890–1940).

Hundreds of line drawings provide clear, concise documentation of design elements that builders used to complete the interiors of American houses, commercial buildings, and churches. The annotated illustrations provide a wealth of factual information about items from window types to door knobs to faucet fittings. The designation of aesthetic preferences in only four historic periods avoids what could be a needless multiplying and dividing of styles or fashions. Although the nomenclature for building types is at times confusing, the isometric illustrations of types of house interiors does aid in understanding the kinds of interior architectural spaces in which builders expressed their aesthetic preferences for design.

*American Vernacular Interior Architecture* will become an essential reference work for persons involved in architectural restoration as well as for historians unravelling the many strands of technology, design principles, and styles that formed the exterior and interior architectural worlds of Americans when the nation became one of the largest industrial producers in the world.

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