

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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