

ket brought doubts to the idea of progress, the psychic need for the country school to protect basic cultural beliefs became a necessity. Populism, which sprang from the same roots as did the country school, failed because it lacked a world view. It is no coincidence that the educational reform of school consolidation followed the uncertainties brought on by economic depression and came at the beginnings of world conflict. Upon entering a restored one-room school today, who is not comforted by a momentary return to a belief that if you learn to read, write, spell, cipher, and, above all, follow the precepts of the country school, you can regain control over your own future?

Gulliford's celebration of the country school will be relished by readers for its enthusiasm, charm, thoroughness, and inspiration.

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Oberlin Architecture, College and Town: A Guide to Its Social History. By Geoffrey Blodgett. (Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1985. Pp. xxiii, 239. Map, illustrations, note on sources, index. Paperbound, \$9.95.)

Taking as his prescript a quotation from Woodrow Wilson ("The history of a nation is only the history of its villages written large."), Geoffrey Blodgett, a historian on the Oberlin College faculty, has prepared a useful primer and personal guide to the Ohio town and college more famous for its ideas—perfectionism, coeducation, and racial equity—than for its buildings. In a series of brief but lively vignettes of some 130 structures built between 1837 and 1977, the author surveys the history of an important midwestern environment, concentrating first on the experimental, *avante garde*, largely twentieth century campus followed by, and in contrast to, the traditional, plain style, mostly nineteenth century ambience of the village.

Blodgett's verbal sketches are drawn with precision and wit. *Fin-de-siècle* eclecticism is characterized as "the grand march of the stone elephants"; the International Style is dubbed "the age of Important Architectural Statements." His real estate and neighborhood history is well grounded in local census, income tax, and newspaper records. Only the miniscule (2" × 3"), often dark, photographs that accompany the sketches disappoint the reader interested in comparing verbal interpretation and visual evidence.

In addition to being a compact architectural history, the book represents a personal and professional odyssey of a kind experi-

enced by various American historians in the past two decades. Blodgett, well known for his scholarship on the political culture of the Gilded Age, notes that the upheavals of the 1960s strongly influenced his turning to social history. He admits that he “found the homely stuff of local history and the solid stuff of architectural history more and more alluring as an antidote to great leaders and great thinkers” (p. xxi). Working from the premise that buildings are an important environmental and social context in which people make many significant choices—about shelter, family, money, self-worth—he has written a lively overview of not only famous architects such as Cass Gilbert, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Robert Venturi who have practiced in Oberlin but also those obscure builders who designed the numerous wood-frame, vernacular structures that still comprise the built environment of a typical, small (8,500 population in 1980) midwestern town.

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Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago. By Roger Biles. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984. Pp. 219. Tables, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$20.00.)

In 1888 James Bryce’s *The American Commonwealth* appeared. In two hefty volumes Bryce essayed for Gilded Age America what Alexis de Tocqueville had achieved for the Jacksonians. Although Bryce’s work is little read today, two statements still echo: the chapter titled “Why the best men do not go into politics” and the sentence “There is no denying that the government of cities is the one conspicuous failure of the United States.” Taken together the statements could stand, by consensus, as the epitaph of Edward J. Kelly’s fourteen years as mayor of Chicago.

The son of a Galway man and a German girl, the oldest of nine children, Kelly was more Studs Lonigan than one of the “best men.” A grammar school dropout, he “rushed the growler,” cut trees on canal banks for the Chicago Sanitary District, and played the hero’s part—flattening a faultfinding Republican supervisor—in the obligatory fistfight. Active in politics before he could vote, Kelly, without formal training, rose to chief engineer of the Sanitary District in 1920. He was forty-four. A pluralist and a grafter who earned \$151,000 in salary from 1919 to 1929, he admitted to a net income of \$724,000 in those years. In 1933 Chicago’s Mayor Anton Cermak was shot in Miami by an assas-