

gious and social pluralism, the Masonic Lodge presented white, middle-class men with a preserve for the traditional values of sobriety, respectability, prudence, honesty, and industry that, even in Victorian America, they feared were disappearing. In the second part, with a focus on the watershed decade of the 1920s, Dumenil examines the accommodations of Masonry to the modern temper, with particular attention to its new senses of nationalism, to erosions of its ritualistic character, and to its increasingly civic and social emphases. Moving from enclave into the cultural mainstream and in the process changing from "temple" to "club," Dumenil points out, Masonry insured its temporary life in its new secular formations but surrendered some of that exclusive identity and distinctive character that had made it a powerful and respected organization in the years before World War I.

Produced from the author's doctoral dissertation, this clean and well-ordered book is both generally accurate and informative, but it remains far too cautious about itself. The basic contention—that Masonry over this fifty-year period "mirrors" American culture generally—is perhaps sound, but it is certainly not startling. And, since Dumenil relies heavily on general depictions of cultural and religious history in this era, it is not in the least surprising to discover that the "mirror" of Masonry follows and reflects the by-now-well-worn path of "secularization."

The book, then, perhaps frames itself too tightly with its mirror-device and, thus, relents too quickly to the more or less conventional reflections to be found therein. For instance, disdainful of any challenge to the pat "secularization thesis," it fully ignores the antinomous charge of the Masonic order in a modern society: the book lacks subtlety in its failure to imagine that the very structures of nineteenth century Masonry posit a means for sustaining, in this enclave group, permutations of the covenant "virtues" and theocratic contents of old Puritanism; thus, it cannot measure the ways that Masonry, especially in the 1920s, might be considered a vehicle for "civil religion" in America. Refusing opportunities to vaunt any risky interpretation in these and other areas, Dumenil, although instructive on continuity and change in Masonry, teaches nothing new about American culture.

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The Care of Antiques and Historical Collections. By Per E. Guldbeck; second edition revised by A. Bruce MacLeish. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1985. Pp. xiii, 248. Illustrations, notes, suggested reading, appendixes, index. Paperbound, \$14.95.)

Everyone is a collector, and for those whose collections include articles of historic value Per E. Guldbeck's book has been

a standard reference. At a recent seminar on collections care a museum expert announced: "Guldbeck's *Care of Historical Collections* should be your Bible. And if the answer's not in Guldbeck, you're in over your head—get professional advice." While still sound counsel, thirteen years have passed since the initial publication of Guldbeck's work, and much has changed in the field of museum conservation in those years. A. Bruce MacLeish's "fully revised and greatly expanded edition" both addresses and recognizes this change.

MacLeish follows Guldbeck's format, with the first third of the book devoted to general discussions of environmental conditions, storage and security precautions, and appropriate equipment for a collections workroom. The rest of the book contains specific recommendations for types of objects, arranged in chapters based on their materials of construction. New and timely is a chapter on photographs and their care. Each chapter is followed by a selected bibliography for further reading.

The fact that fully three-quarters of the bibliographic citations provided by MacLeish have been published since 1972 reflects the great changes and increased research in the field of collections care. In addition, much of the advice that professional conservators have grown increasingly uneasy with over the years has been eliminated or moderated by MacLeish. Gone are some of the rather cavalier references to insecticides and fumigants now known to be much more hazardous and to have longer-lasting side effects than previously thought; the encouragement to dry-clean woolens and antique textiles routinely is now hedged; and some of the finish treatments for wooden objects, and immersion as a treatment for soiled paper, are now discouraged.

Not only has MacLeish expanded the scope of the book and revised it in the light of more current knowledge, the addition of "Antiques" in the title indicates that he is seeking a broader readership. This is appropriate for Guldbeck had subtitled his book "a conservation handbook for the non-specialist," both within and beyond the museum field. Very few of the techniques and procedures are beyond the means of a private collector or the small historical collection. The emphasis remains on the development of a sound program of preventative care and maintenance, with attention to proper storage conditions. Should repairs seem necessary, they ought to be minimal, reversible, and subject to the following question: "Consider for a moment whether the repair you have in mind is essential to the survival of the object. If it isn't, then leave well enough alone" (p. 120).

Almost every museum object ultimately comes from someone's home or private collection. If persons in the museum field

do not want artifacts hopelessly stained or embrittled by improper storage containers, photographs curled or faded from basement storage, or tools and furniture skinned of their old finishes, they should be prepared to share advice and accessible alternatives within and beyond the field. This revised and expanded edition of Guldbek's handbook for all the nonspecialists provides a common ground of procedures and priorities and belongs on the bookshelf of everyone collecting material history.

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