

however, he exhibits a rather strong progressive view throughout the book in highlighting the accomplishments of the last two hundred years. More could have been made of the indecision and uncertainty that inevitably arose in dealing with many confounding medical crises over the years. Mention is made, for example, of the search for pure water supplies, but little discussion is presented about the intense battles to find an effective way to deliver those supplies to the public.

Duffy also raises some tantalizing issues in the conclusion to *The Sanitarians*—most notably his reference to medical ethics, “which was largely medical etiquette for much of its history and which accepted medical experimentation on the poor with but few questions until well into the twentieth century” (p. 316). Unfortunately, because the years after World War II are treated so briskly, readers get little benefit from Duffy’s experience and perspective on medical ethics, the AIDs epidemic, and the impact of the environmental movement on public health.

These criticisms aside, *The Sanitarians* serves as a good introduction to the history of public health through the mid-twentieth century. Duffy highlights many significant themes and events and offers helpful comments on the available literature in the field. This is a good companion volume to his previous study, *The Healers* (1976).

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America’s Favorite Homes: Mail-Order Catalogues As a Guide to Popular Early 20th-Century Houses. By Robert Schweitzer and Michael W. R. Davis. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990. Pp. 261. Illustrations, figures, charts, table, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$49.95; paperbound, \$24.95.)

This book represents an attempt to develop a stylistic taxonomy of American popular housing in the first four decades of the twentieth century by focusing on mail-order catalogue houses. The book is organized into three sections. In the first, nine short chapters contain overviews of such subjects as styles at the turn of the twentieth century and the history of prefabricated housing. The second section, “The National Period, 1900–1920,” outlines ten styles the authors associate with this time period, ranging from “transitional colonial revival” to the “box house or foursquare.” The third, “Academic Period, 1920–1941,” does the same for the pre-World War II era, identifying, for example, “Five Types of

Modern Tudor," and the "Modern Georgian Revival." For unclear reasons a chapter on "Vernacular Homes" is also included in this section.

The most useful part of the book is the section on the history of the Aladdin company, based on archival material and local history; here the authors rightfully establish the importance of that firm. As the partial list of the book's contents perhaps suggests, however, the authors otherwise achieve only limited success in accomplishing their goal. The style labels that the authors have chosen will probably not stick, any more than terms for nineteenth-century styles have been standardized. And while style is undeniably important, the primary significance of catalogue homes is in their relevance to social history, which the authors do not explore in any depth. For the subjects they do tackle, they attempt too much and compound the problems by writing for an audience that consists both of professionals and lay people. Thus, in order to put style labels on catalogue homes, they are compelled also to discuss the history and characteristics of architectural styles more generally; the result is sometimes impossibly superficial. The focus continually shifts between catalogue homes and more general topics, for example in the discussion of construction techniques and of precursors to catalogues. Moreover, these discussions are not coherently related. The result is that the book itself all too nearly approaches the catalogue format. The volume's usefulness for its projected audience, then, would seem to be limited.

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