of the farm records shows that her butter-and-egg business produced 25 percent of the farm income each year. Margaret's feelings of contentment and self-worth are evident throughout.

An introductory chapter sets the background for the diaries, providing genealogical information on the family and geographical information on the county, township, and town near which the Gebbys lived. A short epilogue describes Margaret's life after she ceased to keep her diaries. A glossary and notes, plus interesting illustrations, complete the book. If one must quibble, one could wish for a more coherent arrangement of topics. Further the notes in the back of the book are difficult to integrate into the reading experience. But such a complete set of diaries is priceless, and McCormick's editing has made them easy to read and understand. In an age that seeks either to beatify or to pity the farm housewife of another era, it is refreshing to see a straightforward account of life as it was actually lived.

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The fact that Thomas J. Schlereth describes the period between the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition and World War I as Victorian and not Progressive speaks volumes about his scholarly intentions, for "Victorian" is a term most closely associated with pure style. It conjures up fuzzy images of rooms—dark, faintly musty ones—crammed to the picture rails with bric-a-brac and stiff horsehair sofas and handmade antimacassars. It attaches itself readily to manners and mores, including fashions in dress that reflected the period's rigid codes of sexual decorum. As the bright young moderns of the 1920s used the word, it connoted things that were old-fashioned, quaint, hopelessly stuffy, and un-modern: the ideas and the ethics of their elders were "Victorian" and therefore despicable but so were the brooding, irregular shapes of their houses and self-important public buildings, the exuberant too-muchness of their taste in hotel lobbies and billiard parlors on steamships.

Progressivism identifies political processes. Victorianism gestures toward the world of objects. Schlereth realizes that material culture holds the key to the era in which a modern mass culture of abundance and consumerism was forged; thus, his text is shaped by a prologue, an interlogue, and an epilogue describing the three great American World's Fairs of the period—Philadelphia (1876),
Chicago (1893), and San Francisco (1915). These expositions served as showcases for the innovations in transportation, communication, and production that, as much as any changes in ideology or political sentiment, fundamentally altered the ways in which Americans worked, played, shopped, tooted across vast spaces as avid commuters and tourists, and generally went about the business of living an everyday life fundamentally different from anything dreamed of by earlier generations. It is in their cars, their typewriters, their mail-order bungalows, their temperance posters, their department stores, and their time clocks that Schlereth finds the texture and meaning of the American experience at the turning of the last century. As a corrective to the received pieties of conventional men-and-movements history, *Victorian America* is
valuable; as an account of how ordinary people rushed and staggered and slipped into the future, it is wonderful.

One could wish for more pictures, for more leisurely analysis of precisely how the object under consideration sheds new light on current debates about the period, but the fault lies with the compact format of the series (on Everyday Life in America) of which the present book is the fourth volume. The reader can only hope that Schlereth will return to his subject soon, on a broader canvas.


New Deal scholarship has undergone an interesting change since the 1960s when the New Left indicted it for failing, as Barton J. Bernstein put it, "to transform American society." Recent scholarship has taken a more realistic turn, and younger scholars, who have produced several fine monographs in recent years, have tended to be far less critical. Unlike the New Left revisionists they are evaluating the New Deal in the framework of an extremely conservative American society that would not have tolerated radical change. As Roger Biles notes in his introduction, there is now "an emerging consensus regarding the limitations of New Deal reform and an understanding of the realities of politics and the resistance to change in local and state politics" (p. 3). A New Deal for the American People "mirrors that consensus" (p. 3). The author breaks no new ground in this well-written account of the successes, failures, and limitations of the New Deal. Instead, making use of a prodigious command of secondary sources, he provides a well-written, scholarly overview of the new scholarship.

Biles's chapter on the relief program is particularly illustrative of the innate conservatism of the American people and their political system. It is easy to condemn the New Deal for doing too little, but many of the states were unwilling to do anything. At the height of the depression six states refused to cooperate with the federal relief program, and Harry Hopkins was forced to federalize their operations. In 1937 nine states, including Indiana, "contributed nothing for relief but paid some administrative costs" (p. 112). With millions out of work in 1935 polls indicated that 60 percent of the American people thought relief spending was too high. One of the most important legacies of the New Deal was the formation of relief agencies by state and local governments. These agencies,