

the old-stock middle class; although it was supported by some labor groups, the urban-labor-immigrant progressives disliked the reform and fought it. The old-stock middle class won the contest, however, because it constituted the backbone of progressivism and held disproportionate political power. But the key point is not that the prohibition movement was either rural or urban but that it was a middle-class reform supported by middle-class Americans in *both* country and city. Moreover, it won that support because it was firmly embedded in the aspirations of the Progressive movement.

Thus came prohibition to the United States. Middle-class Americans—striving to revitalize and preserve American democracy and to usher in a new era of humanity, achievement, and progress—turned to prohibition as one device to achieve their goals. Little did they realize in 1920 the ugly ironies involved in a dry utopia.

This book, then, is indispensable to students of recent American history. It is at once a brilliant description of the mind and aims of the progressives and one of the best explanations of why this country adopted prohibition.

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*Early American Homes for Today: A Treasury of Decorative Details and Restoration Procedures.* By Herbert Wheaton Congdon. (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1963. Pp. xi, 236. Illustrations, glossary, index. \$12.50.)

The growing interest throughout America in restoring old houses and the need for technical advice on how to do it properly have resulted in a number of articles and books on the subject. Herbert Congdon's new book, addressed to what he calls "the do-it-yourself man," is an informative and attractive addition.

The volume contains a large number of good illustrations—all the houses pictured are apparently in Vermont—of exteriors as well as of interior details such as doors, windows, stairways, and mantels.

For most residents of Indiana the instructions will be of little help because very few of our old houses date as early as those discussed by the author. We have no Colonial architecture in the state, and examples of the Federal style (about 1800 to 1840) are very scarce. Had Congdon placed more emphasis on the Greek Revival types of the 1840's and 1850's, and had he pointed out their characteristic features in contrast to the Federal and the Georgian Colonial ones, the book would serve a wider audience, particularly in the Midwest.

In reading the book one cannot avoid making comparisons to Henry and Otalie Williams' work, *Old American Houses*, that appeared about six years ago and that tackles the same problem. For one thing, the Williamses prove how useful diagrams of constructional elements can be to the remodeler who is not an architect or a carpenter. Mr. Congdon's descriptions of how parts of a building are put together would be clearer to the average reader if more diagrams and detailed drawings accompanied the text.

In the opinion of this reader, *Early American Homes for Today* is weakened by the author's repeated references to the low level of Victorian taste that, in Congdon's opinion, prevailed after the decline of the Classical Revival movement. Excursions into the arena of aesthetic judgments of styles do little to help the man who is faced with the extremely difficult task of restoring an old house. Everyone will agree that Victorian porches and other late nineteenth-century overlays should be removed from houses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; but, by the same token, "Colonial" doorways and pseudoclassical porticoes should not be allowed to spoil Italianate or French Mansard dwellings as they so often do when fine old Victorian mansions are converted into modern homes and funeral parlors.

These observations aside, Congdon's book will make a first-rate addition to the library of anyone interested in early American architecture, and it will prove to be a useful guide for the man or woman who wants "to make the most of a neglected but worthy old building" (p. 3).

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Wilbur D. Peat

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### Papers of James E. Watson Desired

Peter J. Thayer, Box 251, Wright Quadrangle, Bloomington, Indiana, is seeking information about the late Senator James E. Watson of Indiana. Letters written by Watson are few in number and widely scattered. Anecdotes, speeches, letters, newspaper clippings, diaries, or any other information dealing with the senator's public or private life are desired. This material is being gathered for a graduate thesis and eventually for a biography of Watson.