

price is due to subsidies from the Canada Council and other sources. Photographs of fifty representative leaders, and of an equal number of meetinghouses, would have added to the popular appeal of the book.

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*American Classic*. By Laurence Lafore. (Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Department/Division of the State Historical Society, 1975. Pp. 96. Illustrations. Clothbound, \$5.95; paperbound, \$3.95.)

Laurence Lafore's *American Classic* is a narrative and photographic tour of houses and buildings in Iowa City, Iowa, which was founded in 1839 as the first capital of the state. Through text and pictures he seeks to demonstrate the value of architecture as a means of learning "about our past, present, and future, about our ancestors, ourselves, and our heirs" (p. 5). Using architecture as a measure of values, attitudes, and beliefs, Lafore traces the progression of styles found in houses and public buildings from the classical simplicity of Plum Grove to the modern Iowa State Bank and Trust Building, a drive in bank that is "an artistic triumph not at all inappropriate to a society where automobiles and interest rates count so heavily" (p. 95). The founders of Iowa City drew their inspiration from classic models; later residents chose others; and in our time, technology and functionalism provide the predominate models. Any street, Lafore concludes, with its mixture of classic, Gothic, Italianate, Victorian, and modern architecture, is "a picture album of the family of man" (p. 95).

A novelist as well as historian, Lafore writes in a sprightly and engaging manner which, when he feels particularly close to a house or architectural style, becomes almost poetic. In discussing trademarks of the Gilded Age, he writes: "Bay windows . . . recurred in profusion, like the petals of an opening flower" (p. 47). Careful selection of words for their descriptive qualities, as when he speaks of buildings as "the genes of a community" (p. 5) is an attractive quality of the work. The author's penchant for just the right word and the creation of the well turned phrase occasionally produces surprising constructions. In describing the

idiosyncratic design of Ardenia, he writes: "There is nothing like it anywhere in Iowa City, or elsewhere for the matter of that" (p. 74).

Successful as Lafore is in describing architectural styles and identifying values and attitudes that lay behind them, his work lacks consistency in its architectural characterization and identification. In describing a house built in 1846 or a little earlier, Lafore notes that "the very low-pitched roof is novel" and suggests it may be the result of the hazards of high winds in Iowa (p. 33). However, the houses to which he refers more likely reflect the low pitched roof feature of Federal and Greek Revival styles. Both styles were popular earlier in Illinois and Indiana and were doubtless carried west by Iowa City's early settlers. Lafore does not even use the term Federal until late in the work and only then in a passing reference to a "Federal past" (p. 72). The magnificent Old Capitol he merely identifies as "in the classic style" (p. 35) without any indication that a distinction exists between the Greek and Roman phases of that style or that the Old Capitol is an exquisite example of the former. Lafore's failure to identify precisely architectural styles, which is the major weakness of the study, may be explained by his desire to write more for the layman than for the student.

The virtue of Lafore's essay and the aspect that gives it its lasting value is its emphasis on the continuous evolution of tastes, beliefs, and knowledge as measured through architecture. The study should serve as an inspiration to others of what can be done in their own communities and state. In Indiana, for example, one thinks most readily of New Harmony and Madison as communities with an equally rich architectural history.

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*Leadership in the American Revolution.* Papers presented at the Library of Congress Symposia on the American Revolution, May 9 and 10, 1974. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1974. Pp. 135. Notes. \$4.50.)

When Lyman Butterfield opened the third (of five scheduled) Library of Congress symposium on leadership in the American Revolution he posed the following question: are