

Houses Without Names: Architectural Nomenclature and the Classification of America's Common Houses

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health initiatives from the beginning. It is a fine point that ought to be argued more prominently and creatively to enliven a narrative that often suffers under the weight of detail.

Because of its length and detail, the work is best suited for use as a reference tool. It includes a descriptive table of contents and is also searchable by keyword. This resource will be of particular interest to legal scholars, historians, public health policy experts, and those with an interest in gaining a detailed understanding of how one powerful industry can corrupt democratic politics.

Houses Without Names: Architectural Nomenclature and the Classification of America's Common Houses, by Thomas C. Hubka. Vernacular Architecture Studies. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013. x, 112 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Fred W. Peterson is professor emeritus of art history, University of Minnesota, Morris. He is the author of *Homes of the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses in the Upper Midwest, 1850–1920* (1992) and “Tradition and Change in Nineteenth-Century Farmhouses” (*Annals of Iowa*, 1993).

Houses Without Names presents a method for identifying common houses across the nation according to 14 generic house types and the respective floor plans most frequently used to divide and allot functions to interior spaces in each type. This method corrects the failure of guidebooks on American houses that overlook common houses by classifying dwellings according to architectural styles such as Federal, Gothic Revival, or Queen Anne.

According to Hubka’s methodology, fieldwork surveys result in noting dominant generic house types in a particular locale or region. Identifying structures representing a specific generic house type allows one to interpret the interior floor plan on the basis of observing and analyzing exterior shape, form, and massing of the house. Location of the kitchen reveals the arrangement of adjacent rooms. The ability to interpret type, size, shape, and placement of windows confirms location of living room, dining room, bathroom, and bedrooms.

A survey of Muscatine and Keokuk counties in Iowa would reveal a dominant house type that is identified in various locales as Hall and Parlor, I-House, Center Passage, or Single Pile, but in Hubka’s nomenclature these titles can be designated as #2 Two-Room & One Room Deep Plan Types. This classification designates a single nomenclature that furthers study by researchers wherever the house type is located in the nation. Assigning a name to a common house recognizes its existence in time and place, establishes relationships to other house types,

and establishes a basis for interpreting and evaluating the house in the context of regional, state, and local history.

Others Had It Worse: Sour Dock, Moonshine, & Hard Times in Davis County, Iowa, by Vetra Melrose Padget Covert and Chris D. Baker. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013. xi, 124 pp. Map, illustrations, bibliography. \$17.50 paperback.

Reviewer Ginette Aley is a Carey Fellow at Kansas State University and teaches history at Washburn University. She is the coeditor, with J. L. Anderson, of *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War* (2013).

For millions of struggling farm families, the Roaring Twenties meant privation and poverty, not the excess and prosperity typically associated with the era. In *Others Had it Worse*, Chris D. Baker shares and interprets his grandmother Vetra Melrose Padget Covert's recollections of her impoverished rural childhood during the 1920s in southern Iowa. Hard times and harsh circumstances formed the backdrop for complicated family relationships that often bore the brunt of Covert's father's participation in an illegal liquor trade.

Readers glimpse another, more gritty Iowa in these pages, not unlike the tensions described in Nebraskan Mari Sandoz's *Old Jules*. Students of the history of Iowa and the rural Midwest will gain fresh perspectives on a poor young woman's sense of the place and time, as she reflects on it later in life in rather brief, simplistic, and pragmatic terms. Coauthor Baker frames the topics in relatable headings such as Family Life, Getting By, The Neighbors, Moonshine, and Social Life, which are complemented by revealing photos. One cannot help but be drawn in by Covert's persistence among such difficulties and meager pleasures.

The Negro in Illinois: The WPA Papers, edited by Brian Dolinar. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013. The New Black Studies Series. xliii, 286 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Julia Mickenberg is associate professor of American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of "Left at Home in Iowa: Progressive Regionalists and the WPA Guide to 1930s Iowa" (*Annals of Iowa*, 1997).

It was like a blast from the past when I was asked to review *The Negro in Illinois: The WPA Papers*. Back when I was in graduate school, I wrote a seminar paper on the "The Negro in Illinois," a project co-directed by the African American writer and librarian Arna Bontemps and the white proletarian writer Jack Conroy, both of whom, as Brian