Nineteenth Century Home Architecture of Iowa City

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ignores the larger picture of the war itself, and Meyer is guilty of much overwriting, but each crucial source is addressed and explained. The book suffers from an amateurish layout, but anyone with a few facts, such as the name and regiment number of their particular subject, should achieve satisfactory results following Meyer’s guidelines.

The book is of particular interest to Iowans, but the methodology is so basic and understandable that readers from other states will find it easy to adapt Meyer’s advice to their own resources.


REVIEWED BY JAN NASH, TALLGRASS HISTORIANS L.C.

The reissue of Margaret Keyes’s 1967 book on nineteenth-century residential architecture in Iowa City is welcomed by all whose copies of the original edition are worn and dog-eared. This “silver anniversary edition” expands the text of the original book with research taken from Keyes’s dissertation on an additional nineteen houses, and provides new information on several more. Keyes includes a new chapter devoted to current preservation efforts in Iowa City and her own concerns about the survival of historic architecture. She has updated photographs of houses demolished since 1967, and a town map and indexes have been added, immensely improving navigation through both the book and the town. Hang onto the original edition, however, because its photographs are far superior to the muddy images in the new edition. The original edition also contained a chapter on ecclesiastical architecture that has been eliminated from the new edition.

_Nineteenth Century Home Architecture of Iowa City_ is a valuable reference tool for those interested in Iowa City’s historic buildings. Impeccable original research and a clear analytical framework, plus excellent photographs, have made the book useful well beyond Iowa City. It serves as a model for the study of domestic architecture in other Iowa communities, and invites comparison of architecture between midwestern towns. Unfortunately, the revision missed the opportunity to bring the study more in line with now well-accepted American architectural classifications. Also, a short discussion of architectural style verses vernacular construction would have deepened the reader’s understanding of these houses. Still, this work will undoubtedly remain the benchmark for the analysis of Iowa City’s historic nineteenth-century residences. Now we need a similar study of its twentieth-century architecture.