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Review of "Pennsylvania Architecture: The Historic American Buildings Survey, 1933-1900" by D.S. Burns and R.J. Webster with C.R. Stern

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Pennsylvania Architecture: The Historic American Buildings Survey, 1933–1990 by DEBORAH STEPHENS BURNS and RICHARD J. WEBSTER with CANDACE REED STERN. Harrisburg, Penn.: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2000; xvi + 632 pp., photographs, illustrations, appendices, index, bibliography; clothbound, \$85.00; paperbound, \$65.00.

Since 1933, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) has employed architects, photographers, and historians to record the nation's historic buildings and structures. The legacy of the survey and its related program, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) is a vast collection "of measured and interpretive drawings, large-format black and white and color photographs, written historical and descriptive data, and original field notes" documenting more than 37,000 structures and sites (HABS/HAER Web site, <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer/coll/index.htm>>, accessed 4 May 2001). The state of Pennsylvania, with its long and rich history of architectural design and construction, has the greatest number of sites recorded by HABS, "over 1,600 recorded up to 1990" (p. 1). The 1976 publication of *Philadelphia Preserved* (Richard J. Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved: Catalogue of the Historic American Buildings Survey*) provided the first extensive catalogue of the HABS collection documenting architecture in Philadelphia. With the publication of *Pennsylvania Architecture: The Historic American Building Survey, 1933–1990*, the entire state has a complete catalogue, up through 1989, of the sites in the state documented by HABS.

The book is well organized and informative. After an introduction presenting a brief history of HABS, an extensive essay by Richard J. Webster discusses the architectural and historical development of Pennsylvania, placing the buildings of the state into the larger context of national design movements. The remainder of the book is divided into six chapters, each corresponding to one of Pennsylvania's six historic preservation planning regions. Webster has also written introductory essays for each region, setting the stage for the catalogue entries written by Deborah Stephens Burns. The entries provide descriptive and historical information about each building, as well as information on the HABS documents recording the structure. The exception to this format is the catalogue section for Philadelphia architecture, which only includes abbreviated entries. Readers are referred to *Philadelphia Preserved* for further information on these buildings. Though the decision to rely on information included in another book may have been a practical one to keep the size of *Pennsylvania Architecture* from becoming unwieldy, it is unfortunate that more information on Philadelphia was not included here, as *Philadelphia Preserved* includes HABS documentation only up to 1976.

Producing a book of this scope and making it as up-to-date as possible is a struggle. The authors acknowledge this fact in the preface, but it is not clear why it took ten years to publish the book after the completion

of the manuscript. To make some amends, the authors note significant relevant books published in the early 1990s and state that the bibliography was brought up to date through 1995. Nevertheless, readers wanting information on buildings documented since 1989 will be disappointed. The Library of Congress, the repository for the HABS/HAER collection, has been digitizing histories, photographs, and drawings of the collection through its National Digital Library Program and making the digital images accessible through its American Memory Web site. Though only a small portion of the collection is online at this time, eventually all HABS/HAER materials transferred to the Library will be viewable. This web-based collection has an advantage over the print catalogue as it can be constantly updated.

Despite the lag time between the completion of the manuscript and the publication of *Pennsylvania Architecture*, the essays and entries provide information that will be useful to historians, architects, architectural historians, and historic preservationists who want more specific information regarding buildings or structures in the state. In his essays, Webster points out the strengths and weaknesses of the HABS records; for instance, he notes in his essay for Region 1 on the Great Valley and Piedmont that the “materials on eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century buildings, especially vernacular buildings, are excellent,” but little has been recorded on nineteenth-century high-style architecture (pp. 205–6). In his overview essay on Pennsylvania architecture, Webster points out areas for further research, many of which are still relevant, such as the long-standing debate concerning whether Scandinavians or Germans introduced log construction to the state and to eastern North America. The essays are accompanied by large, sharp reproductions of HABS photographs and measured drawings. Lay readers, however, may find the book too narrowly focused. A glossary of architectural terms, as well as some more detailed maps, showing geographical features, such as mountain ranges and rivers, and the location of towns would have been welcome additions.

This book, as a catalogue of HABS documentation of Pennsylvania buildings, should not be considered a definitive compendium of the state’s architectural heritage; however, it does serve as the only state-wide reference work to a variety of building types and styles and, therefore, provides a starting point for further research on Pennsylvania’s architecture. With the continued publication of more focused studies and the forthcoming two-volume *Buildings of Pennsylvania* to be published by the Society of Architectural Historians and Oxford University Press, *Pennsylvania Architecture* will serve as an important resource for public historians who deal with the built environment.

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America’s Public Holidays, 1865–1920 by ELLEN M. LITWICKI. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000; x + 294 pp., photographs, notes, index; clothbound, \$39.95.