
In any field of human knowledge there are certain books which must be considered indispensable to even an elementary knowledge of the subject they illuminate or even, by the largeness of their presence, exemplify. In its own province, Mr. Stotz's large quarto The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania first published in 1936 is such a volume and the University of Pittsburgh's splendid reprint just issued, not only testifies to the importance of the work but also underlines its seminal significance. It was the pioneer work of its kind in the western part of the state and now under its new title — The Architectural Heritage of Early Western Pennsylvania—it continues (whatever future scholarship may add to the record) to occupy a unique position in the chronicle of the building history of Pennsylvania.

The present reviewer who has long counted the book as the invaluable friend and companion of his own scholarly researches welcomes this occasion not only to pay tribute to Mr. Stotz as a revered colleague but also to salute him as the dean of all architectural historians in western Pennsylvania. All who have followed in the paths he has so spaciously charted have reason to be grateful to his book which is a monument of humane and unforced scholarship as solid and forthright as some of the architecture it commemorates.

Mr. Stotz was well qualified for his task. A native of Pittsburgh he had written much about local architecture even before he undertook the book project and he was one of the strong supporters of the magazine Charette in its early years. The son of a prominent local architect, the late Edward Stotz, he was for many years a partner in the firm of Charles M. and Edward Stotz, Jr., and he is now a senior partner with the firm of Stotz, Hess and MacLachlan. A Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, it was in connection with that organization that he undertook the work that resulted in the book under review.

For many years Mr. Stotz has been a member and trustee of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and he has written a number of articles for its magazine. At present he is one of the vice-presidents of the Society. An authority on eighteenth century military architecture, he published in 1958, under the Society's aegis, a definitive study of the forts at the Point in Drums in the Forest — a
book co-authored by Professor Alfred P. James.

In addition to his writing he is a practicing architect who commands an equal facility in the fields of both modern institutional construction and historical restoration. He has directed virtually all the prominent architectural restorations in western Pennsylvania during the past thirty years, the most notable being those at Old Economy and Fort Ligonier. His informed and knowledgeable discussion of the techniques and practice of modern architectural restoration is one of the most valuable features of his new introduction written for the reprinted book.

Mr. Stotz as a scholar and writer is a notable example of that vanishing humanistic breed — the scholar-architect. Nowadays when the architect has largely become simply a designer and technician, Mr. Stotz's accomplishments as an architectural historian are all the more commendable. Beyond the meticulous scholarship, however, the book has another dimension in that the author writes about his material with real feeling and close comprehension of all the factors that made early Western Pennsylvania architecture what it is. The volume was obviously a labor of love as the author has himself stated in his text and his dedication.

Since the beginning of the 20th century an interest in local historic architecture had begun to emerge in the Pittsburgh region. In 1930 Mr. Stotz was chairman of the Committee for the Preservation of Historic Monuments formed by the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and this committee became in 1932 the nucleus of the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey that, under a grant from the Buhl Foundation, undertook to gather material for the book which was published four years later.

The Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey is not to be confused with the Historic American Buildings Survey which was organized in 1934 under the public works program of the Federal Government, although it used in the Pittsburgh region the same director — Mr. Stotz — and much the same personnel. After a long period of local inactivity the HABS was reactivated in 1960 and its Measured Drawing Program is now a part of the curriculum of the Department of Architecture at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Of course many changes had taken place in the western Pennsylvania landscape since 1936 and many buildings had been demolished or altered. A new completely revised edition would have been desirable, but in view of the many difficulties in the way, such an edition was not absolutely necessary, and it was decided to reprint the original
with a new introduction by the author which would bring the story up to date. However, the book must be used with caution as a guidebook to extant monuments, even if all important changes have been noted in the new foreword.

The book, it must be said, was never intended to be a guidebook anyway — its sheer physical bulk (which has been admirably retained in its new dress) would have prevented that. We rejoice simply to see it as a reproduction of one of the old grand monuments of the elder architectural dispensation, a production quite in consonance with a recent trend among American publishers to reprint and once more make generally available to the reading public the earlier landmarks in the architectural literature of this country.

Although many readers of this magazine are probably familiar with the book it will do no harm to recapitulate a few facts concerning it. All the original text (with the exception of the revised foreword) has been reprinted and the original illustrations have been reproduced including 416 photographs of every type of building from houses and churches, through banks, mills, and arsenals, to barns and outbuildings, bridges and even iron furnaces. Many of these photos were taken by the late Luke Swank, the famous photographer, thus adding considerably to the visual artistry of the book, although alas, it must be admitted that the process by which the pages of the original volume were reproduced has done something less than justice to many of the illustrations. The dark areas in many of the photographs have taken on a curious tenebrous quality and one sometimes feels that one is looking at the familiar buildings through dark glasses.

The eighty-one measured drawings in the volume still shine forth, however, with an admirable crisp clarity and they show the buildings in their original condition with such details as window sashes, shutters, cornices, and roof. Floor plans of each structure are shown (an essential often omitted from historical-architectural books) and profiles of moldings and ornamentation are given in single-line silhouette. Signature stones and hardware convey the quality of the early craftsman’s work. Quite aside from their value as historical records it is often forgotten now how valuable such books could be in the actual practice of architects of the Eclectic period prior to 1940 — as sources for ideas or details. As historical architectural restoration comes more and more to the fore nowadays, they will certainly become necessary again.

In addition, the author places the architectural history of western Pennsylvania within cultural, geographic, and economic perspective
both local and national. In a series of introductory essays he discusses the methods and materials used by local builders and he comments knowledgeably on architectural style before 1860.

It is appropriate that the province of the book should end with 1860. Research in post-1860 architecture was still meager and rudimentary in the early 1930's. Nor was the time ripe for any just evaluation of it. The Industrial Revolution had brought enormous changes, with many of which we have only recently become reconciled; in architectural history we are now beginning to understand the later nineteenth century in the light of that Revolution and the complex cultural factors of that most difficult of centuries.

The story of the later Victorian period in western Pennsylvania is a story for other voices, other hands, and this reviewer hopes to tell part of it in his own soon-to-be-published book on the landmark architecture of Allegheny County.

But Mr. Stotz's book abides in the large and liberal latitudes of the old humane tradition, and the light by which his text must be read, his pictures viewed, is a very grand one. Anyone native to our rugged land, our familiar hills, knows the buildings about which he so feelingly writes — those houses, barns, and mills which call home the heart to the essential verities of our life. Beyond architecture, his fine stone walls, his solid timbers live for us finally under the aspect of eternity.

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JAMES D. VAN TRUMP


As the author points out in the introduction, the name Hopewell Village was used rather than Hopewell Furnace because "the term 'Village' emphasizes the social and economic factors rather than the industrial ones." "Village," in this book, means not only the community immediately adjacent to the furnace but also the miners, woodcutters, colliers, teamsters, farmers, nearby merchants, agents and suppliers in distant cities, and even customers. Hopewell products were sold as far away as Harrisburg and York to the west, south to Baltimore, north to Albany and east to Portsmouth, New Hamp-