de existence now were gone and so was much of the need to move materials or build defenses. All these factors played upon and against a company that was proud, omnipresent, yet struggling and desperate at the same time to keep up with a rapidly changing economic climate.

This book is much more than just a collection of pictures that could have been taken recently: it is a living history through time of the locomotives, cars, bridges, structures, and track that make up a railroad. The text gives details of the relevance of each item to the overall story. Highlights of the pictures include numerous aerial views, which allow the viewer to relate seemingly disconnected points of the landscape which may be familiar to him in a way that one cannot get from standing on the ground. Very few people are depicted in the photos; the ones that are seem to be merely incidental. The book stands out as a massive tribute to the PRR, as big as the railroad itself, depicting in clear, unadorned black and white glory the gritty guts of a system that played a large part in our lives. Much of the nation's steel and strength was derived from this region of the country in the last 100 years, and from this work we begin to see how it was formed and how it was held together.

Two maps provide excellent insight into the railroads' prominence in the Pittsburgh area. The first map depicting freight traffic density gives an idea of where freight was moving through the city and why certain crossings, stations, and interlockings were important to that movement. A large, pull-out map shows the actual trackage of the PRR and many connecting lines, and is detailed enough that one can see individual industrial sidings, passing tracks, and classification yards. The final chapter is a dizzying spin through the last hundred years of the railroads' evolution, and without the authors' expert navigation through this collage of names and dates it would be difficult to make any sense of it at all. It is the perfect capsule summary and full of the most important facts that a person could pull out of his head at a cocktail party and come across as knowledgeable. Probably not meant to be a scholarly work, the book has no bibliography or credited references. It is, however, a thoroughly enjoyable read and a quick-paced compilation of facts and photos that chronicles the PRR in Pittsburgh the way many of us would choose to remember it. Truly a work that both the novice and experienced train watcher can appreciate. 

Living In The Depot: The Two-Story Railroad Station
by H. Roger Grant.

by Kevin A. Butko

Railroads and depots seem to go together; one cannot imagine one without the other. What is less imagined is that a family would live in a depot building. But that is exactly what historian and Clemson professor Grant has found to be the case in thousands of examples — early railroads provided housing for agents and their families right in the depot building. Maybe because I'm from the East, my usual image of a train station is a large, grand, imposing commercial structure, first wooden, then later of stone, but here we learn that in much of the country, especially the Midwest, lonely outposts were the norm and provided the only link between the surrounding populace and the rest of the world, via the railroad. The Pennsylvania Railroad, as well as the Western Maryland, is well-represented in this book with numerous photos and references in the text. In fact, on the Gettysburg branch of the WM, an antebellum stone house was pressed into service as a functional, if not elegant, depot. We also find the Erie, Reading, and Lehigh Valley Railroads represented here, employing everything from single-story stone structures to two-story station-houses to huge station hotels.

The book is presented in three sections: the depot and its relationship with the railroad, the depot and its relationship with the agent, and an album of photographs. The black & white photos give the "long ago and far away" feeling that is so important to good reminiscing about the railroad. The author credits collector J. Vander Maas with providing most of the photos; his extensive collection and deep interest in this one specific genre is probably unexcelled.

Early on, Grant makes the distinction between a station and a depot. A station usually includes the site, storage sheds, water tower, and the depot building itself. Yet people did and still do use the terms interchangeably, and early roads took quite some time to define exactly what would become known as the "standard" depot. Each railroad expended effort to standardize designs that could be erected quickly and cheaply, yet were adapted to the particular kind of business that the road was engaged in.

A depot manned around the clock provided assurance that freight or messages would be handled as soon as they came in. This was important before the days of widespread telephone use, or even radios. Communications in the 19th century moved via telegraph wire to only the connected locations — anyone wishing to communicate had to go there to do so. Modern commercial and personal communications devices have completely done away with the need to go to a central location to receive news or messages. Likewise, railroads long ago gave up delivering less than carload lots, and today's ubiquitous package delivery services make it seem downright absurd that one must leave his home to go "down to the depot" to pick up goods shipped to him. To fully appreciate this book, the reader must put himself in the place of our forefathers and imagine how far away even 30 miles from the nearest town must have seemed.

This scholarly work is well researched and documented. A bibliography and extensive notations on nearly every paragraph ensure that the information can be traced to a publication or other factual reference of the time period. The accounts are lively and full of recollections and anecdotes; however, they sometimes become pedantic in their thoroughness as Grant attempts to find a reference to prove every known variation of a theme. The casual reader can still enjoy this book, as well as the railroad or
social historian. The well-captioned photographs elevate it to double duty as coffee-table material for occasional browsing, in addition to its serious nature as a chronicle of the blending of workplace and residence as related to the railroad industry.

Doo Dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture
by Ken Emerson

by Lynne Conner

In Doo Dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture, author Ken Emerson analyses Stephen Foster’s lingering musical legacy through a variety of culturally-informed filters: race; class; economics; and finally issues of taste and style in American society. By looking at Foster through these filters, Emerson provides a clear narrative structure not only for telling Stephen Foster’s life story, but, more importantly, for helping to put to rest the myriad pieces of misinformation about America’s first professional musician that have collected over the 20th century. Two years ago, when I began researching his life for a theater project, I was astonished to discover only a small handful of Foster biographies — all of them written before 1952. Among them was Morrison Foster’s self-serving My Brother Stephen, published in 1932. Morrison Foster was the song-writer’s older brother, and there can be no ignoring his blatant public relations agenda—an agenda that resulted in the white-washing of many critical aspects of Foster’s personality and experiences. Other Foster biographies, including Harvey Gaul’s The Minstrel of the Alleghenies (besides being out-dated and old-fashioned) use My Brother Stephen as a primary source. The result of this paucity of solid documentation and critical analysis is that Foster, who died young and left very few personal records, has been for many years a repository for too much praise, or too little.

With the publication of Doo Dah!, Stephen Collins Foster has at last been given his due: a biographically-driven analysis notable for bringing contemporary standards of historiography to bear on this remarkable man’s life and art. Well-written, interesting, and sometimes illuminating, Doo Dah! is neither a paean to the songwriter, nor a condemnation. It attempts rather to look critically, thoughtfully and imaginatively at the evolution of the use and the meaning of Foster’s music in American culture. Along the way, it also manages to talk insightfully about larger issues of our society, most notably race relations in the 19th and 20th centuries.

As Emerson makes abundantly clear in his introduction, it is entirely appropriate that a Foster biography should become the site for a discussion centered on American race relations. He points out that through the years, Foster has been used as a poster boy for progressive thinking and practice (argued by those who Lynne Conner is Director of Stages in History, the History Center’s resident theatre group. see his plantation songs as compassionate evocations of slave life) and as a perpetrator of racism (argued by those who see his plantation songs as exploitive of African American culture). But Emerson also points out the ironic fact that in his day, Foster wrote about the lives of Southern slaves with an unusual level of compassion and pathos while at the same time belonging to the anti-abolitionist Democratic party. To his credit, Emerson recognizes that it is just this kind of inherent contradiction that makes Foster such a fascinating subject.

Doo Dah! goes beyond the issue of race to other discussions, most notably Emerson’s suggestion that Foster’s life as an artist serves as the prototype for the tortured American pop icon. Foster had an unstable and largely unhappy childhood and an even more unstable adulthood that included bouts of severe depression, chronic alcoholism, and unyielding economic crises. More provocatively, Emerson points out that, like his rock-n-roll descendents (most notably Elvis Presley), Foster took elements of black culture and used them to create a new pop form for white consumption. Anyone interested in contemporary approaches to cultural studies will appreciate these strains of research and analysis in this much-needed study of the life and art of Stephen Foster.

Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America
by Richard V. Francaviglia

by Philip Langdon

Until a quarter-century ago, no self-respecting town could have done without its Main Street. That central thoroughfare, whether beautiful or drab, was where you found the community’s leading institutions: sober-looking banks; old, established churches; retailers that attracted customers from throughout the hinterland; public buildings like the library and the post office — and maybe even the high school, if the board of education hadn’t blindly decided to build a new school on some dull-as-dishwater acreage at the edge of town.

It’s no secret what happened. Main Street gradually gave up most of the things that once made it the powerful, magnetic center of daily life. And yet, in the face of all the sharp reductions in its functions, Americans still feel great affection for the traditional, tightly built Main Street — a convivial place capable of bringing together every segment of the populace, from the elite to the eccentric. Richard Francaviglia, a history professor and director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography at the University of Texas at Arlington, has studied small towns and their centers for more than three decades, and his new book explores the changes Main Street has undergone through the years.

Philip Langdon’s most recent book is A Better Place to Live: Redefining the American Suburb, recently released in paperback by the University of Massachusetts Press. He is a writer and editor in New Haven, Conn.