than has been supposed. Footnote 33, however, turns out to consist entirely of the following: "This persistent legend has yet to be confirmed by primary evidence." Surely such an argument explains why Tim Hilton feels so strongly about returning to the original documents.

Edward Kaufman’s essay is both cautious in its use of evidence and extremely stimulating in its suggestions. Kaufman sidesteps the question of Ruskin’s influence, suggesting instead that he is merely using some of Ruskin’s ideas to illuminate the practice of such Victorian architects as George Truefitt, John Loughborough Pearson, and George Edmund Street. This is commendably cautious, but the issue of influence does not go away. Nearly all the architects Kaufman discusses are on record as admiring Ruskin, and it is natural to wonder how much of what they designed can be traced to what they had read.

The special merit of Kaufman’s essay is that it puts both Ruskin’s work and a group of too-little-known churches in a new light. It reminds us that Ruskin’s emphasis on mass has been neglected in favor of his Lamp of Beauty, and it shows that buildings can be in some sense Ruskinian without either Venetian borrowings or extensive use of decorative detail. Like the best work that appears at the beginning of a cycle, Kaufman’s essay is satisfying on its own terms while opening up further areas of inquiry. It is essential reading.

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AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

JOHN C. VAN HORNE and LEE W. FORMWALT, editors, The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Volume 1, 1784–1804, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, xxxviii + 612 pp., 18 illus., 4 maps. $60.00.

Unquestionably Latrobe was the most important architect of his era in America. He was the most clever, the best educated, and the one whose influence spread the farthest by introducing the revival of Greek architecture to this country. He was acquainted with public men of the period including General Washington, Jefferson, Aaron Burr, James Madison, Admiral Decatur, and a host of others. The publication of his papers is therefore of immense interest to architectural historians and many others. This volume is the first of three to be devoted to Latrobe’s correspondence. Previous volumes have published his journals and engineering drawings.

In the Preface the editors have given, along with a number of interesting facts about Latrobe’s early life, their reasons for publishing only a portion of the known Latrobe papers. For the early life, before he left for America, only ten items have been discovered, although surely there are some that have been overlooked; all ten are published here. From 1796 to the end of his life in 1820 about 6,000 letters are available, from which the editors intend to select only one-fifth for publication. Their rationale may satisfy some people, but there are scholars who will deplore the decision. For whom, we may ask, are these thick volumes published? They are not novels or biographies. They lie in none of the categories for the general reader. In the unlikely event of archival disaster, they preserve material which might otherwise be lost to future generations. Surely the main reason for their publication is as a scholarly effort for the use of scholars. Scholars doing research need to look at all the material available on a given subject, not just a small percentage of it. Publishing puts into the hands of scholars material that is difficult to consult in any other way for reasons of time and expense, but partial publication does not meet the requirements. If time and money were a factor of publication, it would have been better to publish the correspondence with great accuracy, but to give less time to annotation and long discourses on special topics in the editorial notes. These additions consume a very large amount of research time. They are admirably written, but do we need them if the choice is between notes and a larger number of published documents? In fairness it should be mentioned that the entire collection of letters has been published on microfiche; but again, this means of publication does not match the handy quality of books and is costly to buy, so that only better endowed libraries will possess the microfiche.

As a child Latrobe was placed in the Moravian school at Fulneck near Leeds, for his family were of that sect. In 1776, at the age of 12, he was sent with several of his classmates to a Moravian school in Germany. This was normal for Moravians whose sons were destined for the ministry, although the elder Latrobe believed it advisable for his son to leave England for an additional reason: married to an American wife, he feared trouble for his son owing to strong prejudice during the Revolutionary War. Latrobe’s education in Germany was exceptionally broad and thorough, but he rebelled against certain tenets of Moravianism and returned to his family in London in 1783 without having completed his course of instruction.

Although there are enough documents to give us some notion of Latrobe’s activities during the next decade, we are not well served by them in a number of ways. It is certain, for instance, that Latrobe worked in the architectural office of Samuel Pepys Cockerell, but none of the extant papers of Cockerell mentions his name. Doubtless the great Sir John Soane had heard Latrobe’s name mentioned, as Soane was a good friend of Cockerell, but not once in the vast number of documents at the Soane Museum is Latrobe named. Latrobe is supposed to have worked under the famous engineer John Smeaton, but again, nowhere in the papers of Smeaton has the name of Latrobe appeared. In later letters and in his journals, Latrobe tells us himself that he knew or worked for the above-named men—and very likely he did. As to his own architectural work in England, it was scanty indeed. The sum total is two country houses and repairs or renovations to a few other houses and some London public offices. Yet when Latrobe arrived in this country he would have his adopted countrymen believe that he was a seasoned professional. His lack of real credentials led to serious problems when he began to criticize unfavorably the designs that Dr. William Thornton had made
for the Capitol. Thornton was furious and investigated Latrobe’s English career sufficiently to uncover the young man’s lack of previous experience. This caused Latrobe great embarrassment and created a breach between him and Thornton which was never healed. This and numerous other incidents related in the correspondence contain so much about American life in his era that Latrobe’s papers have become almost indispensable to anyone interested in the Federal period.

In spite of difficulties in his profession, such as those mentioned above, Latrobe managed during the six years in America covered by this volume to accomplish an extraordinarily large amount of architectural and engineering work. Outstanding among these projects were the completion of the Richmond, Virginia, State Penitentiary; the designing and building of the Philadelphia Waterworks (the first in America to supply good water to a city); the Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia; Old West at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; the new designs for the United States Capitol; and several lesser works. In a country of unstable economy, undeveloped resources, and political innocence, it is surprising that such projects as these could be carried out at all. That they were completed, and in a tasteful manner suited to the ambitions of a new nation, is in large measure owing to the talents and hard work of Latrobe.

Although one may not be in entire agreement with the editors and their board as to the number of documents published or their selection, it must nevertheless be said that generally speaking the editors of this volume have carried on the high level of scholarly publication that has been seen during the past few decades in the publication of the papers of such persons as Thomas Jefferson and the Adams family. The price per volume of the Latrobe papers will seem unreasonably high to many potential buyers, however.

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JOHN R. STILGOE, Common Landscape in America, 1580 to 1845, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, 429 pp., 30 illus. $42.00 (cloth), $12.95 (paper).

JOHN R. STILGOE, Metropolitan Corridor; Railroads and the American Scene, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983, 397 pp., 179 illus. $35.00 (cloth), $15.95 (paper).

In less than two years’ time, John Stilgoe has given us two remarkable books. Common Landscape and Metropolitan Corridor have elicited much praise and, to their credit, some controversy. Stilgoe covers topics that are of interest to people in a number of fields; his ability to create vivid images through seemingly effortless prose should earn these books a large popular audience as well. For some readers, perhaps for many, the two books offer a new perspective on the man-made environment; for others, portions of the texts will traverse familiar territory or at least do so in a familiar way. It is a mistake to assess these substantial studies of American culture in terms of innovation; both books employ methods that have been developed in several disciplines during the past decades. Rather, the value of the author’s work lies in his capacity to synthesize approaches unself-consciously, to span broad topical ranges, and to give the results clarity and purpose. One may find fault with details, areas of emphasis, or interpretations, but such matters do not undermine the essential worth of the products.

Many people have contributed to the intellectual perspective offered in these books, but among the biggest debts is to Stilgoe’s mentor at Harvard, J. B. Jackson. Jackson has always insisted that he is not a historian—at least not in the usual sense. His seminal writings differ from most of those associated with urban history, architectural history, history of landscape design, social history, geography, anthropology, folk-life, or the multidisciplinary pursuits in American studies. He has drawn from all these spheres, and no doubt others as well, and has in turn had a profound impact on practices in some of them. Jackson is an essayist who since the 1950s has focused on ordinary things in the environment. His approach is empirical and is premised on looking at those things very carefully. Work in the field is enriched by incessant forays into a vast spectrum of printed matter ranging from obscure philosophical treatises to trucking magazines. All this is assimilated to offer analytical observations on why aspects of the environment have taken certain forms. Jackson’s writings and lectures are almost never tinged with polemical overtones, nor do they evidence a topical bias. He seems equally at home exploring Renaissance gardens, Thoreau, rural free delivery, or Lubbock, Texas. If there is a common thread, it is that many of the topics are, or were, overlooked, even disdained, by others. Long before the automobile strip, Main Street, or the garbage became accepted subject matter Jackson was exploring them. The aim of his inquiry is not assessment either in aesthetic or social terms, but rather to help understand the existence of a given phenomenon. The fact that the sectional grid or the trailer park is a widespread component of the landscape is sufficient to justify the effort.

Common Landscape is in many respects a Jacksonian book. Stilgoe shares Jackson’s concern with everyday things, his imagination in seeking to explain the forces that shaped them, and his persuasiveness in presenting ideas. The volume has been described, I suspect now on numerous occasions, as an elaborated echo, but this type of characterization misses the point. As much as anyone, Stilgoe has demonstrated that Jackson’s observations on the environment constitute a solid basis for scholarly endeavors. To support his points, Stilgoe has marshalled an array of sources that is impressive by almost any standard. There are approximately one thousand entries in the Bibliography and nearly half as many notes to the text. Unto itself, quantity means little of course. What does count is the resourcefulness and care with which this material is used. Common Landscape successfully brings Jackson’s interests together with ostensibly more rigorous techniques employed in fields such as cultural geography and cultural history.

The book’s scope is no less consequential. Spanning a period of more than two and a half centuries, the text seeks to identify salient patterns in the American landscape that predominated until the eve of the Civil War when, the author maintains, industrialization and urban development began to assume a more conspicuous presence. Wisely, there is no pretense at offering a complete picture, but Stilgoe is concerned about delineating a full range of landscape components. The book ranks not only as one of the most ambitious studies of the American environment, but as one of the best in relating it...