

Alvin Rabushka and Bruce Jacobs. *Old Folks At Home* (New York: The Free Press) 1980, 202 pp., \$10.95 clothbound.

This book systematically chips away at many myths about the elderly. The authors draw upon many studies, including their own HUD funded study of 1575 elderly homeowners. Despite the common idea that most of the elderly are in poverty, they point out that according to some estimates, once you count the value of all government transfers, only six percent of the elderly are in poverty. The elderly, especially elderly couples, tend to own their own single family homes, and they would like to continue doing so.

The authors use their data to illustrate the needs/preferences mismatch — the elderly live in housing with many defects, but they do not perceive these defects as problems, and they do not want to borrow money to make repairs. The authors survey existing programs for home repairs, and also the awareness and attitudes of the elderly about these programs. They conclude that these programs need better marketing. The authors also suggest that reverse annuity mortgages may help some of the elderly, as would offering the elderly the option of deferral of property taxes, with recapture of taxes and accumulated interest upon sale of the house. (Of course, many of the elderly resist such ideas because of their “irrational” desire to leave something for children who are better off than they are.) The authors also suggest better targeting of services to the truly needy. The book has an important message in this present era of budget cutting. (The authors thank Martin Anderson, a Ronald Reagan policy advisor, for his suggestions, so it is possible the ideas may be taken seriously.)

There is little formal statistical analysis in the main section of the book, but there is a statistical appendix with a structural model containing two regressions for market value and housing condition (number of housing conditions with critical defects). The purpose of this model was to ascertain the determinants of housing condition, including the effect of financial condition of the owner on the housing condition. The authors state that one component of financial condition is the owner's equity, which in turn depends partly on the housing condition, so there is a simultaneous relation-

ship. They present only the regression result for housing condition, which shows that location, race, health of owner, age of house and financial condition (income and assets taken together, but not individually) all had significant effects on housing condition. Neither age nor education of the owner has significant direct effects on housing condition.

This book is clearly and simply written, and would be useful for graduate and upper level undergraduate housing courses. It covers many important policy and research issues, and would be useful even for people not interested in housing for the elderly.

Sherman Hanna
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Martin Mayer. *The Builders: Houses, People, Neighborhoods, Governments, Money* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company) 1978, 468 pp., clothbound.

Martin Mayer has written popular books about bankers, Wall Street, lawyers, schools and other topics, and in this book he turns his attention to housing. Although the short title implies coverage of only the building part of the housing process, the subtitle conveys a taste of the broad range of topics Mayer covers. There are many interviews, anecdotes, personal opinions, and clear analyses of complex issues. This would be an excellent background reading for anyone who desires some extra depth and breadth in housing.

Sherman Hanna

Robert H. Socolow (ed.). *Saving Energy in the Home: Princeton's Experiment at Twin Rivers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Co.) 1978, 330 pp., clothbound.

This book reports on experiments and studies of behavior in some New Jersey townhouses. The editor claims that the study has revealed how to save 75 percent of the furnace energy use in “quite ordinary, reasonably well-built townhouses,” with measures that are economically justified. Most of the techniques

can be used for other types of housing. Much of the book covers technical aspects of energy saving, with heat loss equations and other dry stuff, but there are three chapters on behavioral aspects of energy conservation. There is considerable variation in the energy used in identical townhouses due to differences in occupant behavior, and energy wasters can be encouraged to become much more efficient with quick feedback from monitoring devices. Although I think that economic motivations are the most effective long run methods for increasing energy efficiency, the authors discuss methods to speed up the increase in energy consciousness. This is a useful book for serious students of energy and housing.

Sherman Hanna

Falcone, Joseph D. *How to Design, Build, Remodel and Maintain Your Home* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.) 1978, 597 pp., \$18.95 cloth.

The range of information covered by Joseph Falcone is indeed vast. My experience with designing, building, and maintaining my home allows me special expertise in reviewing this book. Also, I have shared this expertise with my design clients when they have been remodeling their homes. Building a home or just a portion of one's home is an immense and multi-faceted task. Joseph Falcone addresses many of these issues in a thorough manner. Though, it is impossible to cover every facet of his topic in one book that the average person could carry. He does well with over 1,000 illustrations and 586 pages of text.

As a professional and practicing interior designer, I greatly appreciate the emphasis Falcone puts on interior furnishings at the planning stage. More than one home has been built only for the owner to realize that the furnishings seemingly shrink the room size and/or don't fit at all. In considering furnishings, the homeowner can then define the use of the rooms by identifying these familiar objects. As the author well explains, a home provides shelter for a multitude of family activities.

The attention spent in this book to the design process is limited to one chapter. Falcone presents good ideas like having an exhaust fan in the dining room for after

dinner smoking. But his rule of no wood finish flooring in the kitchen or dining area overlooks the convenience of some of the new wet-mop finishes for wood. Also, Falcone presents scaled drawings of common furnishings; this is vital for user-participation in housing design. But it would have been more helpful to indicate or label what the scale was. Also it is refreshing to see design criteria for the handicapped.

This book could be an important reference for home owners and owner-builders. It could help the home owner also, who bought their home as a completed package in order to better understand the parts of this expensive package that one lives within. Also this book could be a core reference book for the people who set forth in the task of building or remodeling their own home. A self-help library would need to contain more than just the book but should not leave it out.

Footnotes are nowhere to be found by the academic. Though, the thirty-nine chapters present the construction process in an orderly manner. Also, there is a helpful glossary of terms. For a book of vernacular architecture and/or self-help housing, Joseph D. Falcone has given the housing field a visually strong and well-organized book. From the discussion of tools to legal agenda, one finds many vital keys to the success of designing, building, remodeling and maintaining your home. This book is a good reference book for undergraduates and graduates alike.

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The Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation. *The Plan for the Restoration and Adaptive Use of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979) spiral bound softcover, oversize, 87 pages with line drawings and photographs, \$25.00.

Historic preservation has been a means of maintaining a sense of architectural, cultural and social evolution in cities and towns across America. Civic groups, neighborhood organizations, and, in general, concerned citizens have adopted the preservation crusade as a viable part of community heritage and education. Though the preservationist movement has