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Fighting to Preserve a Nation's Soul: America's Ecumenical War on Poverty

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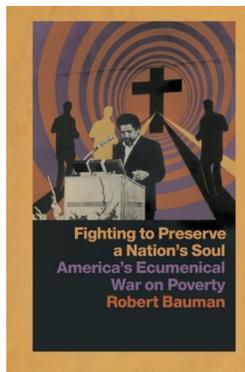
Descriptions and pictures of the houses Leila Ross Wilburn designed abound in the book. The interesting “List of Plan Books and Publications” lists her nine plan books *Southern Homes and Bungalows*, *Brick and Colonial Homes*, *Ideal Homes of Today*, *Homes in Good Taste*, *New Homes of Quality*, *Small Low-Cost Homes for the South*, *Sixty Good New Homes*, *Ranch and Colonial Homes*, and *Bran-New Homes*. The Appendix Leila Ross Wilburn’s Custom Commissions and Non-Residential Work discusses the eleven apartments, one church, and one realty company headquarters Ms. Wilburn designed. Two apartment complexes are Rosslyn Apartments in Atlanta and Atlanta’s Piedmont Park Apartments listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The work explains numerous house design words like ranch house, southern home, colonial revival, Cape Cod house, English Tudor revival style, stucco, dormers, gables, trellis, bungalows, in-a-dor folding beds, sleeping porches, and porte cochere.

Included are lovely photographs and the names of streets and neighborhoods in Atlanta and Decatur Georgia where the homes Leila Ross Wilburn designed are located. A few examples are Adams Street, Jefferson Place,

The recommendation for audience is architects and individuals interested in styles of houses and design plans, as well as visitors to Atlanta, Decatur, Athens, and Forsyth Georgia who want to see pretty and enchanting houses and neighborhoods. This accomplishment on Leila Ross Wilburn architect and house designs in Atlanta, Decatur, Athens, and Forsyth Georgia is recommended for academic and public libraries. This work is a wonderful trip through numerous neighborhoods of Atlanta, Decatur, Athens, and Forsyth Georgia.

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Fighting to Preserve a Nation’s Soul: America’s Ecumenical War on Poverty. Robert Bauman. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2019. ISBN 9-780-8203-5487-3 (Hard: \$54.95); 9-780-8203-5486-6 (eBook: \$28.95). 228 p.



What is poverty? Today’s political conversations are dominated with the issues of poverty in our neighborhoods, our cities, our states, our regions, our country and the

world. Some of our most beautiful and inviting cities now have “tent cities” that have sprung up with homeless families, homeless youth, and homeless refugees. Suffering with disease, hunger and the loss of personal dignity, Americans in poverty is a current national concern. This is 2019 and Robert Bauman takes us back to 1964 and offers us a look at poverty in our country by his research into the ecumenical war on poverty in America.

In this thoughtfully presented text Bauman explains “all aspects of religion’s and government’s role in the struggle against poverty ... which included the Roman Catholic Church, mainline Protestant churches, Jewish groups, and ecumenical organizations such as the National Council of Churches” along with the efforts of President Johnson’s declared “War on Poverty” and its “OEO—the Office of Economic Opportunity”.

Emerging from all Bauman’s research is a most interesting chapter, Chapter 4, “The Black Manifesto”, Challenging the Ecumenical Antipoverty Coalition” (p. 87). “At 7 pm, April 26 1969, an unassuming, middle-aged black man, his hair graying at the temples, approached the microphone at the National Black Economic Development Conference, (James Forman) “We have come from all over the country, burning with anger and despair not only with the miserable plight of our people but fully aware that the racism on which the Western World was built dominates our lives.” (p.87)

As his speech goes on, Forman says,” we are therefore demanding of the white Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues, which are part and parcel of the system of capitalism, that they begin to pay reparations to black people in this country. We are demanding \$500,000,000 from the Christian white churches and Jewish synagogues.” This became the Black Manifesto, a key document in the history of the civil rights movement. (p.88)

In Bauman’s “Conclusion p. 147-158) he says, “it seems likely that at least for the foreseeable future, anti poverty efforts will remain some sort of church-state hybrid, with religious organizations continuing to play a central role in the delivery of programs... or an ecumenical antipoverty coalition may be the only way in the near future that the War on Poverty will continue to be fought”.

Bauman’s book is recommended for students in social studies, African American studies, religious studies and women’s studies. Also a supplemental resource for assigned readings.

Included for historians and students are the Notes pg.161 to 164, Bibliography 165 to 198, Index to 199 to 208. Illustrations throughout pages 1 to 12.

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant

Homeplace: A Southern Town, a Country Legend, and the Last Days of a Mountaintop Honky-Tonk. John