

DEÁK, Gloria-Gilda

AMERICAN VIEWS: PROSPECTS AND VISTAS, by Gloria-Gilda Deák, with an introduction by James Thomas Flexner (Viking). Mrs. Deák, a special consultant at the New York Public Library, has chosen from that vast repository some fifty-seven color prints that variously depict the appealing look of (for the most part) early urban America, from the beginnings of Baltimore, around 1752, to the grand opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, in 1883. The artists, with the exception of Currier and Ives (represented by their Elysian "A Home on the Mississippi" and three others), are largely unfamiliar, and they are, most fortunately, as often attracted to the ordinary ("Broadway from the Bowling Green," "The Corner of Greenwich and Dey Streets," "Boston from Dorchester Heights," "A View of Reading," "Cincinnati on the Ohio") as to the grandeur of Niagara Falls and the pomp of William Henry Harrison's Inauguration. The draftsmanship in all of them is precise, the colors delicate, the feeling buoyant. Mrs. Deák supplies a restrained text of generous captions that describe and discuss each work as art and as history. Her book is a total delight. Nineteen dollars and ninety-five cents.

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