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North Carolina Architecture



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Synopsis

This stunning book portrays the wide range of North Carolina's architectural heritage from colonial times to the beginning of World War II. North Carolina Architecture addresses the grand public and private buildings that have become familiar landmarks, but it also focuses on the quieter beauty of more common structures: farmhouses, barns, urban dwellings, log houses, mills, factories, and churches. These buildings, like the people who created them and who have used them, are central to the character of our state.For most of its history, North Carolina has been a rural state without concentrated wealth or great cities, and its architecture has subtle and at first unprepossessing beauty. Sometimes untidy, often utilitarian, and only rarely magnificent, it is most remarkable for its variety, masterfully reflected here in 436 black and white and 18 color photographs by Tim Buchman. The result is an extraordinary portrait of North Carolina and its history unlike any we have seen before.Published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., North Carolina Architecture depicts representative buildings that, in turn, evoke images of hundreds more in communities across the state. Catherine Bishir discusses construction and design and locates structures in their cultural, political, and historical contexts. Characteristic arrangements of farmsteads and a few principal building types are illustrated with site and floor plans, many drawn especially for this book by Carl R. Lounsbury. Historic photographs document lost landmarks and outstanding examples of buildings that cannot be satisfactorily photographed today.The urbanization and new construction of the present day have dramatically altered our built landscape. However, this comprehensive look at North Carolina's architectural heritage will help ensure that the modest buildings of the past will not be lost for the next generation, and it will serve as a model for architectural histories in other states.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Comes closer than any work before it to being a model history of the architecture of an American state.Thomas S. Hines, "New York Times Book Review"

Comes closer than any work before it to being a model history of the architecture of an American state.--Thomas S. Hines, New York Times Book ReviewCatherine Bishir presents North Carolina Architecture with extraordinary affection, sensitivity, and knowledge. . . . Bishir's work will define and direct the architectural history of North Carolina for years to come.--Journal of the Society of Architectural HistoriansThe book is particularly important because it includes vernacular as well as high-style architecture, run-down as well as carefully maintained buildings, thus extending our vision of what architecture really is.--Historic PreservationThis book is a superlative accomplishment for its author and represents the highest standard for material culture studies.--Material Culture

Please forgive my vain metaphor, but you're not going to find a better single-volume study of historic architecture in North Carolina than this one, period.This book is a slightly abridged and slightly updated, portable volume of the full-sized hardback volume originally published in 1990. Even though this book is a distilled version of that older book, don't let its relative age put you off. This book is a wonderful chunk of architectural loveliness, and it hasn't lost ANY of its appeal since its original publication. Remember, if you want to buy the original book, make sure to buy the full-sized hardback from 1990, NOT the hardback version of this portable edition. The updates made by the author in 2005 for this portable edition are MINOR, including some expansion of the notes and bibliography.This project includes an all-star cast: Catherine W. Bishir, THE authority on historic North Carolina architecture, wrote the text; Tim Buchman provided the truly awesome monochrome photographs; and Carl R. Lounsbury drew the architectural diagrams and plans. Folks, it just doesn't get any better than that. This is your North Carolina architecture dream team.Now, a few words about the content. The book is written in a NARRATIVE style, not in AIA or architectural catalog style. There are no "entries" per se, but a continuous text divided into chronological chapters. Illustrations include excellent monochrome photographs, floor plans, elevations, and site maps. The photographs and diagrams are placed within the text in places appropriate for their viewing. The five large chapters cover about 500 sites in total, and they are well-chosen, important examples. The

buildings mentioned span the time period from 1700 to 1940, and include both high-style and vernacular sites from the coast to the western mountains. Almost every one of them is still standing, so this is not a book of "lost landmarks." For a book of 650 pages, it is remarkably comprehensive.As this book is not a "guide," nor a "catalog," there aren't any maps or listings. This is superb armchair reading, or a nice condensed reference work, but is ultimately intended as a research tool for architectural historians.Highly recommended for anyone with even a passing interest in historic North Carolina architecture, this book is a [multiple award] winner! If you're wondering about Mills Lane's book, this is, by far, the better of the two.

I ordered this book because of a building I saw in Wilmington when visiting family. When I Googled the name of the building, this book came up in the search results and had a piece on said building. I have enjoyed reading this book and looking at the wonderful images surrounding my home state's architecture.

This is a lovely book full of information. photos and illustrations. I purchased it because I found my great-great-great grandfather's cabin in it through Google Book Search. My ancestor was a former slave and to "see" his humble cabin in the hills of North Carolina and learn about it was an incredible find. I really appreciate the research and effort that went into this book.

This book is very detailed.

This book is beautiful. The photos are great and the text is very informative. All states should have a book that contains so much information about the history of their architectural heritage. Well done Catherine Bishir and Tim Buchman.

Please let me say from the outset that the reason for my 5 star rating is that my wife and I live in one of the houses mentioned in this book. Mainly, that's why we wanted it. The previous owners of our house had left a copy of the page on which our home is mentioned; we are thrilled to have the entire book in our library.If you have a particular interest in the various architectural styles in North Carolina, this book strikes me as a comprehensive source which you would at least want to consult. I have not read the entire text (again, I'm giving it 5 stars because I'm excited to have a copy of a book our home is in), but the sections I have browsed have been very informative and have included nifty curious tidbits. I'll try to update this review when I've had more time to experience the

book.

This is an exceptionally well written book on the various eras in the architectural development of what I consider to be the most architecturally diverse state in the union. I have lived in North Carolina all of my life and I have seen at least 3/4 of the structures mentioned in the book. Bishir does a great job of explaining the forces that lead to the development of these great monuments to society. The photography is quite good, but for some strange reason all of the color photos are in the back of the book out of the context of the writing. I don't like having to flip to the back to see a "pretty" picture (there are plenty less "pretty" B & W photos within the text). This is a huge book that you will have to have a custom bookshelf built for. If you wish to put it on your coffee table please reinforce it first. I've lost three tables due to is mass. All kidding aside, this is a definate must read.

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