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Lost New York



Synopsis

Coney Island's Dreamland destroyed by fire in 1911, Metropolitan Opera House demolished in 1967, Moondance Diner moved to Wyoming in 2007. A celebration of the cherished parts of New York that are no longer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be an amazing tour through architecture that made New York great many years ago, from the original Grand Central Station and Metropolitan Opera house to Coney Island in its heyday. Each item shows one or more photographs of the building or attraction and describes its history, with a short sidebar on why it was eventually torn down and what it was replaced with. I gave this book to a family member who grew up near New York City and could remember a few of the later buildings. I can remember Coney Island from my childhood. The book spans a long time period, from the late 1800s to the 1950s and '60s. It's a fascinating look at the past, suitable for those who are familiar with "the city" and for those who'd like to know more about it.

Lost New York is a beautifully presented archeological type study of NYC architecture lost during the City's rapid expansion over the the last century and a half. Of note is that it wasn't until the late 1950s that the City government finally put preservation ordinances in place to save the buildings whose misfortune it was to be on very valuable land. As such, quite a bit of important history was

torn down in the first half of the century. The book presents each building/site with at least two pages - one page with text featuring background information (of the building, the builders, architect, or owner) and then another separate paragraph about the demise of the building. Each building story also has a few supplementary photos. The book is beautifully laid out with clean design and descriptions with enough information to be interesting but not overwhelming. Each history is well worth a read. Buildings range from hotels (Astoria), venues (Madison Square Garden (x2)), private homes (Schwab mansion), amusement sites (Children's zoo, Steeplechase), and transportation (piers, trollies, elevated railways). So there is a good mix in the book to create the story of what New York City has lost. If I have a complaint, it is that I really wanted to see the current view of the sites as well as maps (there are no maps at all). I ended up having Google maps open while reading and also did some searches for the current buildings. It made the book much more meaningful that way. Received as an ARC from the publisher.

As a current as well as native New Yorker, this book intrigued me. How much of New York City's wonderful architecture has been lost over the last century? As this book attests, a heartbreaking amount. Fantastic selection of photos from The Tombs (three versions with the original built Egyptian mausoleum style, hence the name), Coney Island in its various incarnations, Penn Station, Grand Central Railroad Station, Wall Street and lower Manhattan, as well as many mansions of the gilded age. Of course, and sadly, the Twin Towers is probably the most recent and most significant subtraction from New York's famous skyline. Very nicely put together, and my only criticism would be the yellow type of the introduction (which is difficult to read) and the fact that some of the photos could have been punched up contrast wise to emphasize the architectural elements.

Lost New York is a book for those who love New York City, architecture, or the history, in black and white, of buildings we cannot visit anymore. Like Penn Station, pictured on the cover, these grand old structures became victims of time and the wrecking ball. They were built in an age of careful detail, from keystones atop grand windows to gargoyles and grotesques. Along with public buildings, homes of the fabulously rich are included: a Vanderbilt mansion here, an Astor domicile there. Lost New York catalogs these all pictorially and in text, relating tales of buildings men made of stone, replaced today by the glass and steel of skyscrapers. A veritable, virtual tour of another era.

New York City provides endless eye candy to the world. It is the stage of countless feature films and

television series. Its legendary figures are known worldwide. The shelf of books extolling some aspect of New York never stops expanding. Lost New York is a worthy entry, collecting the images of architecture long gone, by design, by fire, or by redundancy. When your quiet residential palace finds the entire neighborhood in retail, the streets clogged 24/7, and the taxes (now Commercial) quadrupled, well you just have to let go. Each locale is described in detail, with its own story â “ who wanted it and why, how it came to be, and how it came to pass, followed by photos. The one thing missing is a map. In Rome, you can buy a poster on pretty much any streetcorner, depicting a map of Ancient Rome as a fully inhabited, lively city. All the ruins are fleshed out, the streets all connect. This book could benefit greatly from a map showing where all these great places were, with aerial views correctly positioning them. Because we donâ™t all live in New York. Some can only dream of it. Roosevelt Island? Show me. Polo Grounds? Show me. A map would put all these wonderful images and stories in perspective. One thing Ayn Rand said was true: cities are the highest expression of mankind. The constant turnover of even brilliantly designed buildings is what keeps New York as the most exciting city to visit or live in. Lost New York proves it. David Wineberg

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