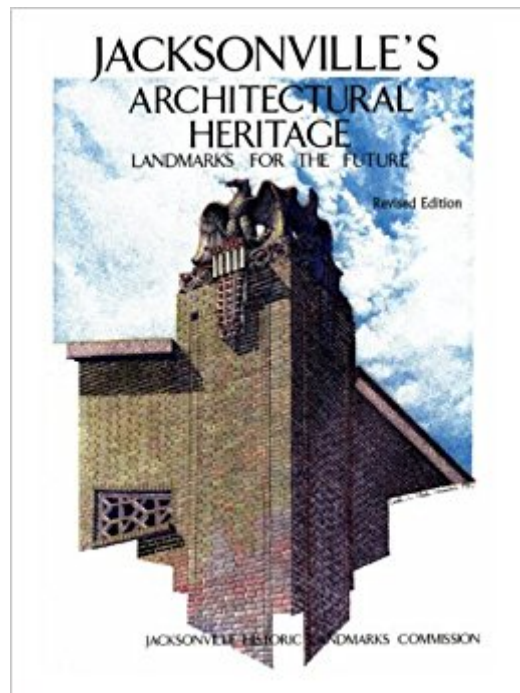


The book was found

Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage (Jacksonville Historic Landmarks Comm)



Synopsis

Book by Landmark Commission, Jacksonville Historic

Book Information

Series: Jacksonville Historic Landmarks Comm

Hardcover: 421 pages

Publisher: University Press of Florida; Revised edition (December 1, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813009537

ISBN-13: 978-0813009537

Product Dimensions: 12.3 x 9.3 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #579,934 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #117 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Historic Preservation](#) #287 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Regional](#) #1116 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > History](#)

Customer Reviews

First, I'll say a few words about Jacksonville, then a few more words about the book itself. For the first 100 years after its founding, Jacksonville was a backwater town on the Deep South coastal frontier. Flagler's railroad, air conditioning, and tourism changed all that, but it's still easy to forget that Jacksonville was a late bloomer. To help you put things into perspective, when the town was destroyed by the conflagration of 1901, it had a population of about 25,000. My point in this: If you come to Jacksonville looking for something like New Orleans or Savannah, you need to re-examine your history. Jacksonville has more in common with Norfolk (VA), Tampa, or even Houston (a smaller version) than it does with New Orleans, Nashville or Richmond. Those cities matured relatively early in their respective life cycles, and were substantial antebellum towns. Jacksonville couldn't even be called a city until well into the 20th century. The architectural fabric of the city is a representation of its history, and since the city was quite small when the big fire happened, not as much was lost as one might initially think. This book is a comprehensive guide to Jacksonville's historic and otherwise notable architecture, how it was in 1976. The revised edition (this one) was published in 1989, and is really just a record of what's been lost from the 1976 survey. There are no entries for structures built after 1976. There are about 500 well-chosen entries in this book, from beautiful public structures to private houses. Each entry includes a good black & white photograph

and a good descriptive essay. The photographs and essays are particularly good for landmarks of note, offering both architectural and cultural contexts.

This is a thoroughly researched book that digs into the history of the Jacksonville area with a heavy emphasis on the historic architecture of such architects including Henry Klutho, Louis Sullivan and the many other architects reared under the Chicago and Prairie schools of design. It is quite popular among locals, and should provide some interest for those familiar with the city whether a resident or visitor. Having said that, I would like to respond to gagewyn's comments in his review regarding Jacksonville. Jacksonville, in fact, has 5 public museums, not the 2 he references. And the city of Jacksonville is 700,000, not 1 million. That is not to say Jacksonville is a cultural mecca, but we have our strengths. And while I would agree that some buildings have been destroyed that were worth saving for their historical significance, I would challenge gagewyn to identify any city older than 50 years that hasn't lost buildings to the inevitable march of progress. Savannah, Charleston and Atlanta are 3 southern cities all who have had significant buildings torn down to accommodate the needs of the present. Finally, a bit of a grammatical correction for gagewyn, who stated, "Jacksonville was burned down in...". That is totally incorrect and a significant error when talking about southern cities (as so many were burned to the ground during the Civil War. Jacksonville burned as a result of an accidental fire at a mattress factory that began a chain reaction throughout the mostly wooden structures. gagewyn's take regarding multi-story building development also shows a lack of architectural understanding (or perhaps intelligence) as it is quite expensive to build highrise or any multi story building in Florida as the sub-surface material is usually one of 3 materials: sand, clay, or water.

A bit of background: Jacksonville was burned to the ground in 1901 in a city wide fire. It was already a large developed city at the time, and so there was a market for large buildings immediately after the fire up through the present. The city is not big on culture (more than a million residents and only two public museums) or any kind of preservation. When a building changes hands it is as likely to be demolished as renovated. Still if you know where to look it is possible to find representative buildings from each decade of the 1900's. Locals will be floored to learn that 128 buildings constructed before the 1901 fire remain. This book provides a short write-up of each building deemed historically important. There is a black and white picture of the building. The address, date of construction, architects and builders are listed for each. Two to four buildings per page makes this cramped or action packed depending on your perspective. Jacksonville is not big on

preservation and it shows: This book was originally compiled in 1976 to commemorate the US bicentennial. Entries for buildings that have been demolished since then have not been removed, but have instead been marked through with a large red demolished label. Let's just say there is a lot of red. This is a book with a very specific audience. Libraries in Florida and especially Jacksonville should have a copy of this or an older edition (and many do). This is an invaluable resource to any one doing a thesis in the Jacksonville/north Florida area. If you are into architectural history and in the area, then visiting some of the buildings in this book could be interesting. Be careful though. Many of these historic neighborhoods are run down crack towns.

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