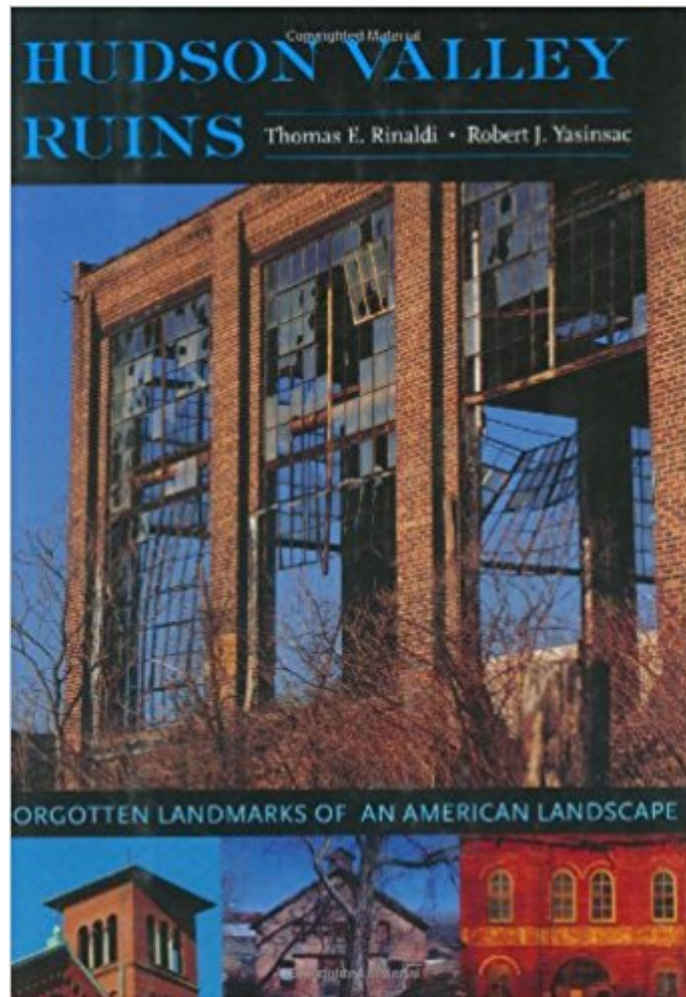


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Hudson Valley Ruins: Forgotten Landmarks Of An American Landscape



Synopsis

Countless books have been published on the historical sites of the Hudson River Valley. But these books have focused over and over again on the best-known, best-preserved places. Every bit as valuable are dozens of other historical sites that haven't fared as well. Many of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historical Places, and a few are even National Historical Landmarks. But in spite of their significance, these structures have been allowed to decay, and in some cases, to disappear altogether. In an effort to raise awareness of their plight, Hudson Valley Ruins offers the reader a long-overdue glimpse at some of the region's forgotten cultural treasures. In addition to great river estates, the book profiles sites more meaningful to everyday life in the Valley: churches and hotels, commercial and civic buildings, mills and train stations. Included are works by some of the most important names in American architectural history, such as Alexander Jackson Davis and Calvert Vaux. The book is divided into four parts that correspond to the upper, middle, maritime, and lower sections of the Hudson River Valley. Sites have been selected for their general historical and architectural significance, their relationship to important themes in the region's history, their physical condition or rustic character, and their ability to demonstrate a particular threat still faced by historical buildings in the region. The Dutch Reformed Church at Newburgh tells the story of the Valley's oldest religious group; the Luckey Platt department store in Poughkeepsie was for decades the leading store of the Hudson Valley; and the ruins of the West Point Foundry at Cold Spring are all that remain of what was once one of the river's most important industries. Taken together, these places present a broad picture of the region's past that is relevant to its present and future. This book was published with the generous support of Furthermore, a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

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Customer Reviews

Ruins (mainly abandoned buildings): eyesores or "romantic embodiments of a historical past"? The authors, in this superbly written and magnificently illustrated book, argue passionately for the latter, and have chosen 85 sites found in the Hudson Valley between Albany and Yonkers to prove their point. Old mansions, mills, manufacturing plants, railroad stations, even Sing Sing prison are described in historical detail and lovingly photographed; scores of black and white photos and a center section of nearly 20 color prints accompany the text. And it's the text that really makes this a stand-out book in the field of local history: the historical sketches for most of the sites are thorough and elaborate in scope. In tracing these ruins of the Hudson Valley, which are many and varied, the authors also trace the history of "ruin appreciation" itself, from early artistic projections to modern debates over urban renewal vs. preservation. This is local history at its best.

This book is chock full of information about abandoned places (obviously within the Hudson Valley Region). I honestly wish there were some more detailed photographs of some of these places, but I imagine I might be able to find them on the internet somewhere. Don't get me wrong. There are a lot of photographs of the locations and places, and a color plate section in the center but they are like brief narrations of places that could be shown in so much more detail. I can honestly recommend this book to anyone interested in urban decay, preservation of old places, or interested in those abandoned places from times past. Urban Explorers might also find this book of some use as well.

This book is full of information about declining structures in the Hudson Valley...some I knew and some I had not heard of or seen. The photography is excellent, and the text informative and well written. Good descriptions of what is left of structures from the past secondary to the changing tastes and needs of an ever evolving lifestyle and its needs. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the history of the Hudson Valley. Another good buy from . I liked this book very much and it will be a part of my library for future reference.

What a wonderful book. If you have a mild interest in the Hudson River Valley you must have this as a carry along reference guide. I've lived near Albany most of my life and I am amazed on all the

things there is to see within a day's ride that I didn't know existed. Particularly like the bibliography and how the subject matter is documented. This book could actually be used as a text book in anyone's research of this area. Loved the tie in of architecture to the fine arts and how they both helped shape the commerce and culture of the Hudson River Valley.

Very interesting book, describing in detail many off-the-road historical points of interest in the Hudson Valley that one driving through would surely otherwise miss. A "must" purchase for readers interested in what was there before all the current shopping centers and housing developments.

The Hudson River Valley is a diverse and historic region that never fails to delight in regard to its vistas and historic buildings alone. Toddle up to just Hyde Park or Poughkeepsie and you can spend days wandering through guided estate tours, historic cemeteries, state parks, etc. The inherent value in this book is that it celebrates the rapidly eroding underbelly of the rich history of the HRV by looking at its ignored mansions, buildings, factories, and even a prison. While there are satisfying views of these monuments to history/ urban decay, I wish there were more. I love this stuff and I am interested in architectural preservation and (unfortunately) its downside. If I can get access to these places, I inevitably will visit exercising caution. When I can't, books along this vein prove to be the next best thing. I found this book to be immensely interesting with its high attention to detail and history as well as its photographs. I'm returning to the HRV soon, and plan to go off the road more traveled and enjoy the less known treasures before they disappear from the American landscape.

If you have a love of the Hudson River Valley and you wonder what happened to structures you've heard about, but can't find, then you'll enjoy this book. I was also fascinated to learn of buildings I never knew existed and what is being done to save some derelict buildings still standing that are near collapse. This is a very well researched book too. I'd call this a savory read if old structures or the Hudson River shoreline is of interest to you.

For Westchester County history buffs, this is a well documented book that is easy to read and informative. If you've attended Kings College in the early years as I have, you will appreciate the section on the now non-existent Briarcliff Lodge.

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