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Review of America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups That Built America

Carroll Van West

Middle Tennessee State University, carroll.west@mtsu.edu

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America's Architectural Roots is an introduction to the remarkable diversity of ethnic building traditions that have shaped the American landscape. Dell Upton takes a broad view of the tricky term "ethnic" and includes selections on Native American, English, midwestern German, and French architecture, along with eighteen other examples of ethnic architecture. Chronologically organized, the book first looks at groups that have influenced American architecture nationwide, then surveys groups that shaped regional architectures. Most of the book's Great Plains selections focus on the vernacular architecture of the region's many ethnic groups.

For example, Michael Koop demonstrates that German-Russian architecture in the Dakotas comprises "the richest and most significant collection of vernacular architecture in the northern Plains." William Tishler stresses the importance of the German fachwerk house from Missouri to Wisconsin. These two essays reflect the book's comprehensive treatment of the Great Plains ethnic landscape. Essays by Tom Carter on the Danes, David Murphy on the Czechs, Matti Kaups on the Finns, Darrell Henning on the Norwegians, Lena Palmqvist on the Swedes, John Lehr on the Ukrainians, Joe Graham on Southwestern Hispanics, and Peter Nabokov and Bob Easton on the Native Americans broaden the reader's understanding of the region's vernacular architecture.

America's Architectural Roots serves historians, historic preservationists, and general readers as a significant collection of the best new scholarship about America's ethnic-influenced architecture.

CARROLL VAN WEST
Center for Historic Preservation
Middle Tennessee State University