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Great Plains Studies, Center for

Winter 1998

Review of *Fort Worth's Legendary Landmarks* By Carol Roark

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Wright-Steely, James, "Review of *Fort Worth's Legendary Landmarks* By Carol Roark" (1998). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2100.

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still houses county courts. A secondary downtown at the Stockyards Historic District is past its prime as a sprawling slaughterhouse but today is the thriving destination for herds of tourists. Even close-in historic neighborhoods remain vibrant, although their occupants long ago traded original trolley connections—just as most Texans swapped their horses—for automobiles (and pickups, of course).

While most American cities must mourn the urban fabric they've lost in the past fifty years, Fort Worth is still a place capable of inspiring a handsome book on its imposing survivors. *Fort Worth's Legendary Landmarks* illustrates, celebrates, and explains the city's architectural heritage using well-preserved buildings dating from the 1870s through the late 1930s. The community that thrived during this period on livestock and petroleum, as well as regional commercial service to the vast reaches of West Texas, provides a fine tableau of popular American architecture.

Yet amid the usual Victorian mansions, Mediterranean villas, Classical Revival monuments, and Art Deco high-rises stand many landmarks with few national rivals. Fort Worth's Beaux-Arts-inspired 1893 Tarrant County Courthouse emerged from the same granite quarry as the State Capitol in Austin, finished five years earlier, but here a more generous budget resulted in much finer embellishments. The 1902 Livestock Exchange Building with its neighbor 1907 Coliseum together push Mission Revival Style to a zenith of design and adapted function. And the massive Art Deco styled Texas & Pacific railroad office and warehouse begun in 1930, flanking the 1931 Federal temple (with cow skull capitals) Post Office, all form an enduring and beloved urban complex.

Author Carol Roark weaves an informative and easily-read text out of both her hometown knowledge and a comprehensive historic-sites inventory. Roark credits that ten-year survey project—plus resulting individual documents for designations as local and state landmarks, and listings in the National Register of Historic Places—as the source of the book's

Fort Worth's Legendary Landmarks. By Carol Roark. Photographs by Byrd Williams. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1995. Photographs, suggested readings, index. xi + 233 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Few substantial cities in the United States can boast of such an impressive aggregate of preserved pre-Second World War architectural wealth as Fort Worth, Texas. Downtown "Cowtown" is largely intact, featuring block after block of continuous shop fronts, brick streets, and terra cotta details scraping the sky. Business and nightlife abound in this vintage precinct, whose century-old courthouse

selection criteria and depth of detail. Photographer Byrd Williams combined his existing collection of recent photographs with images crafted specifically for this volume, often exposing his large-format negatives, ranging from 5x7- to 18x24-inch sheets, in cloudy-bright conditions and slow speeds for consistent lighting on all building sides. Many of his time-exposures for interiors and nighttime street scenes are stunning, especially when rain-glazed brick streets glow in the foreground.

While the book's architectural emphasis is amply balanced with a history-filled text, no maps are provided to relate geography and development. The selection of featured landmarks purports an extension to 1945, yet the youngest building's 1939 date prematurely discounts Fort Worth's definite visual and historical participation in the Second World War. Printing and photo reproduction are high quality, but the typeface is small (a growing complaint of an aging reader population), and property titles appear in platinum-color ink that all but disappears under incandescent light. In sum, nevertheless, the joy of experiencing a well-preserved American city is beautifully conveyed through this excellent work.

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