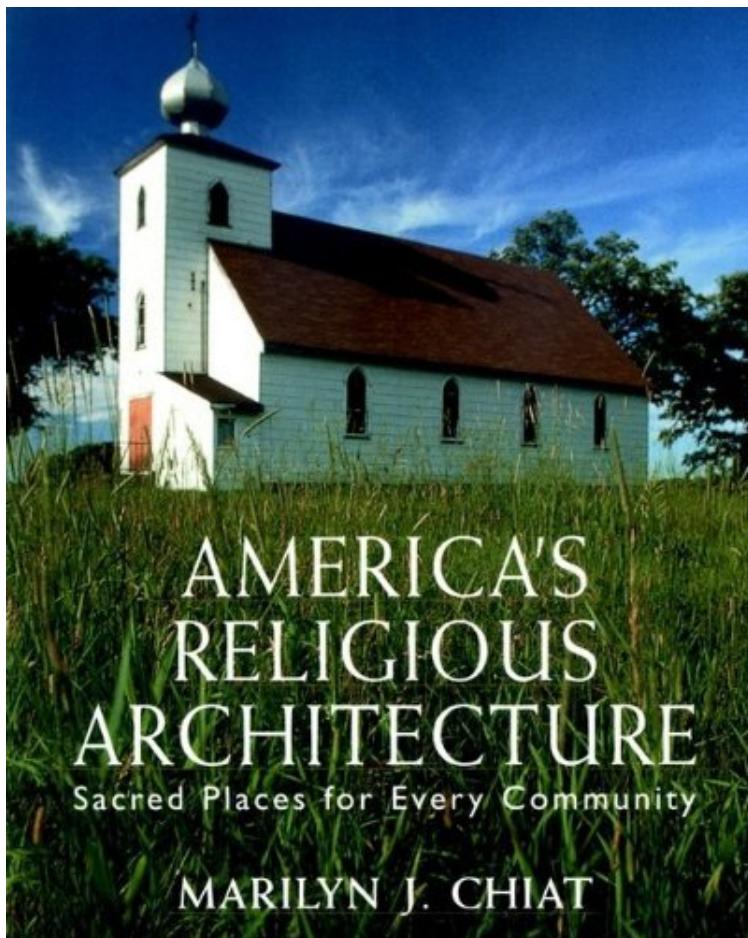


# America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community

*Marilyn J. Chiat*

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**Marilyn J. Chiat : America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Horrible Guide for architecture, more of a historyBy Direll thought this was something else entirely. There is no style guide or architectural vocabulary. I got this for reference but all it has are pics of churches and their congregation history8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An author responds to reviewsBy A CustomerAs the author of America's Religious Architecture, I would like to thank Hollis Giamatteo for the thoughtful comments on the book. I would also like to suggest to the anonymous reviewer from Pittsburgh that she/he read a book's preface and introduction before writing a review. Two errors to be noted: Bill Moyers did not write an introduction, and I am not the Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. I am the Director of the Center for the Documentation and Preservation of Places of Worship, and affiliate of the NCCJ, MN-Dakotas Region and adjunct faculty in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of

Minnesota. One last comment, as I noted in my preface, there are over 250,000 places of worship in the USA; I am quite sure I have around 249,500 of them angry at me for not including them in this book. I can only hope they will understand that the few represent the many. 9 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Disappointment. By A Customer It is hard to determine what America's Religious Architecture is supposed to be. The survey of religious buildings is idiosyncratic, to say the least. People who know a community likely will be puzzled why certain buildings were included, and other, better, candidates excluded. Many of the photographs are so poorly composed, exposed, or reproduced that they are useless for revealing architectural detail. I bought the book based on a flyer from Preservation Press implying it was an architectural reference, and returned it to .com because it is unusable as such. My apologies to .com for the inconvenience.

From the Moorish synagogue in small Texas town, to the New England meetinghouse nestled in the palm trees of Hawaii, this comprehensive historical survey of America's religious architecture celebrates the country's ethnic and spiritual diversity through the magnificent breadth of these community landmarks. The first comprehensive architectural and cultural history of its kind, the book features 500 places of worship nationwide, many listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Includes over 300 black-and-white photographs and foreword by Bill Moyers, creator of the PBS "Genesis" series.

.com Does America have its equivalent of Notre Dame or Chartres? In a way, it boasts just the opposite--no monuments to monolithic splendor, but instead has humbler tributes to cultural diversity. This volume, a kind of photo-history, reveals Marilyn J. Chiat's passionate advocacy for the preservation of our nation's religious architecture. Places of worship are for her "... the most visible and defining features of our rural and urban landscapes. From the Lower East Side of New York, where the decaying remains of synagogues still speak of the Jewish immigrants who once filled the tenements and labored in sweatshops, to California's coast, where Spanish missions still serve as reminders of the earliest Europeans to settle here, places of worship bear witness to our nation's diverse heritage." In large part, this volume is a celebration of America's immigrant past. The churches, synagogues, and meeting halls featured in America's Religious Architecture meet specific criteria--all are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; all represent an ethnic culture; all played a vital role in their communities; all have architectural merit. Chiat takes the reader on a tour through nine regions in the U.S., pointing out the creative combining of ethnic traditions with local building styles and materials. The entry on Maine, for example, reveals a diversity of that region that may surprise the reader. A province of Massachusetts until 1820, the Congregationalists were the bedrock, to be penetrated in the 1770s by the hardy German Lutherans (Maine's rough weather and terrain and its territorial battles discouraged settlement). Its two Anglican parishes would later blossom into an elaborately architected Episcopalianism, and it would see the migration of Acadian French Roman Catholics from Nova Scotia. This is a good representation of the book's format--a discussion of the significant ethnic arrivals, their faiths, and the subsequent buildings. There's a photograph (black and white) on every page, with the address of each building and the name of the architect and builder. In such a compilation, there are bound to be omissions which will jolt any reader who has his or her own favorite historic haunt. For example, there is no mention of the Moravians who settled Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in the 1700s and no images of their elegant, strikingly simple form. That religious community left behind a wondrous core of civic and religious buildings still vital to the community's spiritual and educational life. But America's Religious Architecture is an otherwise informative and well-organized tour, replete with fascinating tidbits such as this comment on the Rodef Shalom Temple in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: "The Moorish style began appealing to Jewish congregations in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a time when Jews were seeking an architectural style that would not be confused with Christian church architecture." A noble reference work, belonging somewhere between your crafts shelf and your coffee table. --Hollis Giannamatteo

From the Publisher

The Moorish synagogue in small Texas town, to the New England meetinghouse nestled in the palm trees of Hawaii, this comprehensive historical survey of America's religious architecture celebrates the country's ethnic and spiritual diversity through the magnificent breadth of these community landmarks. The first comprehensive architectural and cultural history of its kind, the book features 500 places of worship nationwide, many listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Includes over 300 black-and-white photographs and foreword by Bill Moyers, creator of the PBS "Genesis" series.

From the Back Cover

The complete historical survey of American religious architecture The United States has more houses of worship than any other country in the world: churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and meeting houses. America's Religious Architecture profiles 500 of these wonderfully varied places--each one a powerful living symbol of the religious freedom on which the nation was founded. You will find vivid details about the origin, architectural features, and social history of each structure, plus information on the patterns of religious settlement in every state. With hundreds of photographs of these distinctive buildings--many listed in the National Register of Historic Places--this book presents a fascinating portrait of the American spiritual landscape and the faith that sustains it.