

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Book Reviews
Updated 9/4/20

Notable Quotes

“Readers who value both beauty and history will enjoy this polished book of landmark photographs given historical context.” - BookLife

“This is the epitome of a coffee-table book: lovely to glance at, rewarding to spend time with, and full of good conversation starters.” - BookLife

“5 out of 5 stars...stunning photographs...filled with wonderful details explaining history and important events.” - San Francisco Book Review

“4 out of 5 stars...an educational and conversation starting coffee table book.” Manhattan Book Review

Full Reviews

BookLife

Chronis uses rigorous research to give context to these spectacular photographs of notable locations throughout the world. He writes that the history of a famous site is as important as the image of the site itself. Exploring both natural wonders and man-made structures, Chronis provides background for buildings as familiar as the Eiffel Tower as well as more obscure edifices such as Puerto Rico's Livingston Field.

Some descriptions in Chronis's work are more relevant than others. Although the Memorial for Peace and Justice is a worthy subject, the text discusses civil rights in general rather than the specifics of the memorial. Similarly, the image of a boat near Costa Rica's Playa Islita isn't particularly enhanced by a note on the high life expectancy in that area. The photo of Thingvellir National Park conveys a sense of the majesty of the region that has little to do with Iceland boasting the longest-running legislative assembly in history. However, Chronis dives fearlessly into religious controversy, provocative and potentially contentious historical assertions, and the human cost of constructing magnificent structures. His beautiful shot of the White House is given important perspective when he observes that slave labor helped build it.

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Book Reviews

BookLife (continued)

Bold photography choices contribute to the artistry of the work. The photo of Canada's Mount Jimmy Simpson is in black and white, emphasizing the mirror image composition of the mountain on the lake, while Saint Barthélemy's Anse Du Gouverneur is in color to highlight the brilliance of the sky coupled with the turquoise ocean in the cove. Chronis's incisive visuals and condensed but fascinating text give readers food for thought as well as a visual feast. This is the epitome of a coffee-table book: lovely to glance at, rewarding to spend time with, and full of good conversation starters.

Takeaway: Readers who value both beauty and history will enjoy this polished book of landmark photographs given historical context.

Great for fans of Publication International's *World Landmarks*, Paragon Books' *100 Landmarks of the World*.

San Francisco Book Review

5 out of 5 Stars

Imagine if you will that you have a beloved, well-read and well-educated uncle or aunt who had spent years traveling the world with a well-worn leather-bound journal in hand and a fine single-lens-reflex camera slung about his or her neck. Then imagine that this sweet relative sends you a box full of stunning photographs each accompanied with pithy quotes from famous people and writings from the journal that amplify the photograph. The writings are short, but they are filled with wonderful details about the place depicted, explaining its history and highlighting important events that took place there sometime in the past.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful gift, especially if you are:

1. stuck at home due to a world-wide pandemic that doesn't allow for any foreign travel and, in some cases, not even much in the way of domestic travel
2. a history buff who loves to learn about things new to you that will trigger more research.

That is pretty much what you will find in this beautifully crafted book. One can wander through the pages to find such a variety of places to visit from the spectacular Matterhorn in the middle of Europe to what some may think is a real

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Book Reviews

San Francisco Book Review (continued)

fountain of youth on an isle in Costa Rica, from the Hallsgrimskirk, an amazing church in Iceland that is many stories tall and would look like a mountain from afar to the turquoise waters of Lake Moraine in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada, from places everyone would recognize such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the White House in Washington D.C. to places few know about such as Livingston Field in Puerto Rico or the top of the Ixmaja Pyramid in Coba, Mexico. This is not a very long book. One could certainly read it all in a long afternoon, but you will not want to do that. You will want to linger on each beautiful photograph and savor the text that accompanies them. And, very likely, you will want to dig a little deeper into the subject matter – find out a little more history, a few more juicy facts about these fascinating places. There are only a bit more than thirty places to visit in the book, but you will want to spend some leisure time in each one. The writing is lively, friendly, and really quite personal, so reading this is rather like having a conversation with an old friend. Books such as this are rare and should be treasured, enjoyed, and kept handy for recurring visits.

Manhattan Book Review

4 out of 5 Stars

Hidden Lessons from History is Peter Chronis's attempt to educate readers who are ignorant of the backstory of many well-known buildings and landforms around the world. To the naked eye, these wonders are merely beautiful, but when the owner of said eyes does some digging into the past, they will find that there is more of a story to that location than they realize. Unfortunately, the stories don't always show people in the best light; but when compared to events of today, it does show that humans haven't changed too much since the beginning of time. Chronis includes pictures and short three-paragraph text of thirty-two wonders of the world. They include but are not limited to, the Colosseum, Pantheon, and St. Peter's Basilica in Italy, Mount Jimmy Simpson in Canada, the Notre Dame in France, Old San Juan in Puerto Rico, Anse du Gouverneur in Saint Barthelemy, Buckingham Palace in England, The White House and Castle Geyser in America, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Greece. In his introduction of the book, Chronis explains that he has visited each of these sites but, at the time of arrival, had never previously known their history, aka what makes them extra special. The backstory of these attractions contains historical, and sometimes saddening facts about the location; interestingly, many of the spots had a history with Christianity, for better or worse.

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Book Reviews

Manhattan Book Review (continued)

The pictures included in the book are professional and show-off the location's beauty; I love their colors and angles. I appreciate what Chronis is doing with this book; too many people (myself included) don't even know about all of the sites in his book, let alone their backstory. When people are made more aware of the beauty that lies within their grasp, there becomes a deeper appreciation for what we have available to us. By learning the backstory, we as a whole can work toward not making the same mistakes as those in the past to ensure a better future for ourselves. I can understand the number of sites included in other countries, especially with their rich history; maybe someday we can see a book of sites just in the United States to be able to understand our own country better. Being in the History category, this is a shorter book; however, I don't feel like much is missing in its content. For readers who like short, concise history lessons, this is the right book for you. I would liken *Hidden Lessons from History* as an educational and conversation-starting coffee table book that can be displayed year-round.