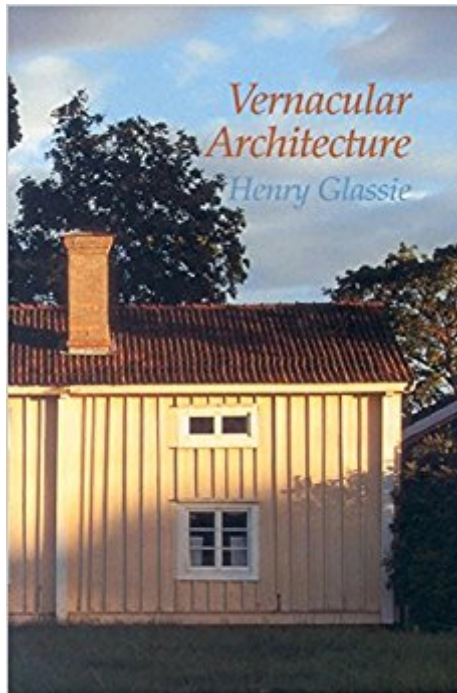




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Vernacular Architecture (Material Culture)



Synopsis

Based on thirty-five years of fieldwork, Glassie's Vernacular Architecture synthesizes a career of concern with traditional building. He articulates the key principles of architectural analysis, and then, centering his argument in the United States, but drawing comparative examples from many locations in Europe and Asia, he shows how architecture can be a prime resource for the one who would write a democratic and comprehensive history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An alternative title for Glassie's book might well be "A Thoughtful Ramble Through Euro-American Cultural History Using Old Buildings as a Starting Point." Rewriting and revising the fifth chapter of his recent Material Culture, Glassie discusses the complex ways humans organize their lives by analyzing the houses they build. The emphasis is on rural building in Ireland, Turkey, and the Eastern United States, although homes in Japan, Sweden, and Bangladesh are presented as well. The photos and drawings by the author are exceptional in both artistic and technical quality. Despite the inclusive title, this is not a far-ranging guide or overview but an interesting tour of Glassie's mildly Marxian analysis of changes in peasant village structure and land ownership in the northern reaches of Europe and the subsequent effect those changes had on house styles in New England and the Middle Atlantic States. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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This book works very well as an introduction to vernacular architecture. It does, indeed, offer a leisurely stroll through the scholarship on vernacular architecture by demonstrating ways to read buildings in relation to American history. The approach works very well as a way to train one's eye to look at buildings, and the focus provides good ways to connect the various elements of design to wider issues about social history and cultural change -- and continuity. It's also a beautiful book to read. I especially like the way that the photographs are integrated into the text. This type of layout takes a great deal of planning, and the illustrations really support and embellish the writing. There are numerous comparisons to show how American buildings are related to various styles in England, Ireland, Turkey, Bangladesh, and various and sundry places around the world. These comparisons are designed more to illuminate an understanding of American architectural forms and to show origins of various styles rather than to provide an in-depth understanding of global history. The overall method, however, can be applied to learning about buildings in any-place.

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