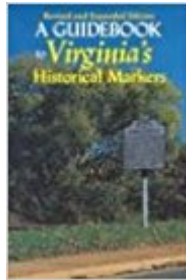




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A Guidebook To Virginia's Historical Markers, 2nd Ed.



Synopsis

This new, revised and expanded edition includes 212 new markers, many of which reflect the Native-American, African-American, and social history. A Guidebook to Virginia's Historical Markers brings together the texts of more than 1,600 official state historical markers that have been placed along Virginia's highways since 1926, including even those markers that have been removed. A grid map and three separate indexes assist the reader in locating each marker. One index is alphabetical by title, one by subject matter, and one by county and independent city. Travelers along Virginia's highways will find this guide both useful and informative. The great legacy of Virginia's past is revealed on these markers, making this book both a handy reference and a stimulus to greater study of the history of the commonwealth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My son is a lover of history. Over the years he has made comments about the black and white signs that are here and there along the roadways being too small to possibly read from a moving car and that there never place in areas where you can pull off the road to read them. He was excited to see that I had found a book all about them.

Not an architectural survey, not a travel guide, and not a pretty coffee table book, this book is simply a directory of Virginia historical markers as they existed, verbatim, in 1993. That's 1993, not 2010, so keep in mind that this book is somewhat dated. Potential readers should know that there is a fourth edition, published in 2007, which brings us up to date with a lot of "culturally sensitive"

material. For all that, it is the ONLY guidebook to Virginia landmarks in which I can find reference to Ampthill, the still extant (though relocated) 18th-century plantation house in Richmond's West End. It's time for the fifth edition of the Virginia Landmarks Register! The book includes some useful cross-reference material as well.

Virginia has one of the most extensive highway marker programs of any state in the nation (North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Texas are close rivals). Although this book details around 1,500 markers, there are many markers situated across the state that are not included. From the introduction: "The traveler should be aware that, while there may be other historical markers that resemble the state's in shape and design, only markers formally approved by the state are included in this book." Why unapproved markers that copy in shape and design approved ones should be allowed is an interesting question, but this review will confine itself to the book at hand. Most VA historical markers (there are about 30 exceptions) were designated by letters (usually corresponding to a major highway) and number. The first part of the book lists all the markers and their texts alphabetically by this letter designation. Realizing this would not be particularly useful to the traveler, the second part of the book arranges the markers by three additional categories: subject, county, and straight alphabetical order by marker's title. Any marker can be found quickly and easily in the guidebook. Travelers in the state with an interest in its history will do well by this book, despite the frustration of not finding all the markers out there listed. It's also fun to look through sitting at home in your favorite chair. A good guide to local history in Virginia.

If you're reading this review, then you probably already know that Virginia has a very rich collection of historical markers. There are so many, in fact, that if you were to stop to read each one every time you took a road trip, you'd never make it to your destination. That's why a guidebook to the markers should be an indispensable car accessory. This isn't that book, however. On a recent trip along Route 15 from Leesburg to Charlottesville, at least /half/ of the markers weren't listed in the book. Nowhere. Not Oatlands Plantation. Not the Old Carolina Road. Not any of the signs starting with "Z" (e.g. Greene County, Madison County, etc.) Admittedly, the book states in the introduction that it covers only /official/ markers, i.e. those that have been approved by the state commission. But there's no explanation of how to identify official ones, nor are the signs that we saw probably unofficial--they all have letter/number designations that fall within the gaps in the book's listing (except for the aforementioned "Z-" signs). It's very disconcerting to speed by a sign, take note of its number, only to find that it's not in the book. What a disappointment. Unfortunately, there doesn't

seem to be any other option--the Margaret Peters book is superceded by this one. On the positive side, the book's indices are quite handy. Signs can be looked up by county or by historical events, such as famous battles.

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