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Abandoned America: The Age Of Consequences



Synopsis

Originally conceived as an examination of the rise and fall of the defunct state hospital system, Philadelphia photographer Matthew Christopher's award winning website Abandoned America rapidly grew to encompass derelict factories and industrial sites, schools, churches, power plants, hospitals, prisons, military installations, hotels, resorts, homes, and more. Through his collection of writing and photography, Christopher has spent the last decade documenting the ruins of one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known: our own. The locations presented are the monuments to America's great ambition and crumbling future. They are the remnants of a nearly forgotten past. They are some of America's last standing vestiges of our industrial age, the buildings that put our forefathers to work. Now, broken and ruined, these places are documented in Christopher's book, *Abandoned America: The Age of Consequences*. Exploring sites like the charred remains of the Hotel Do De, the rusted cells of the Essex County Jail Annex, the majesty of the Church of the Transfiguration, or the eerie and dilapidated remnants of the New Castle Elks Lodge, the work spans architectural treasures left to the elements and then all too often lost forever. With 240 pages of beautiful photographs, a foreword by celebrated author James Howard Kunstler, and detailed historical background on each site, *Abandoned America: The Age of Consequences* is sure to captivate anyone with an interest in the modern ruins in our midst.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having seen several similar books and owning some it seems to me they fall into two formats: those

that are just photos with the shortest captions (location and maybe a date the photo was taken) and those where the photographer has taken the trouble to research some background detail about what is shown in their picture. Fortunately Matthew Christopher is of the latter group and this gives his photo much more credibility because the text here adds to what we see. Another great feature of the book is the range of ruins, admittedly mostly in the eastern US but you'll see factories, churches, prisons, power stations, hotels, hospitals, schools and more. The choice of structures reveals something about societies attitude to abandonment, the Bell Labs building in Holmdel, New Jersey (designed by Eero Saarinen in 1959--1962) was an office block and the photos show a deserted, tidy interior. Basically the contents were easily removed but turn over the page to the next ruin, Carrie Furnaces in Rankin, Pennsylvania and this huge industrial building was just left to rust away in the countryside. The Bell Labs could be used again, Carrie Furnaces really just needs to be (expensively) scrapped but in fact remains as a visitor attraction with guided tours. I thought the most fascinating photos are those of factories where everything remains but slowly falling apart. The Scranton Lace Company just stopped mid-shift in 2002 and the eight photos reveal machinery still in place. Lebow Brothers Clothing in Baltimore closed in 1985 with hundreds of suits and coats still on the racks, they were still there when Christopher took the photos in 2008. He makes the point that it's just too much trouble to sell off clothing.

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