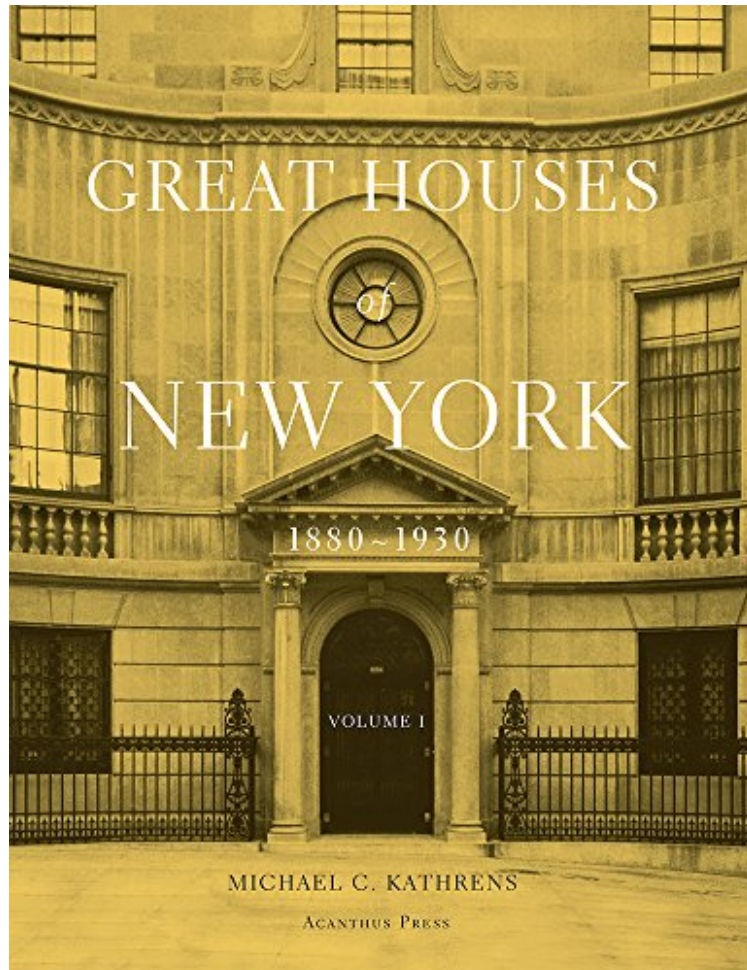


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## Great Houses of New York, 1880-1930 (Urban Domestic Architecture)

*Michael C. Kathrens*

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**Michael C. Kathrens : Great Houses of New York, 1880-1930 (Urban Domestic Architecture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Great Houses of New York, 1880-1930 (Urban Domestic Architecture):

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Another treasure by Acanthus! By R. MacI have purchased all the books in the Acanthus architectural series. This volume is another treasure. It is a thrill to be invited inside these many fine houses, particularly, and poignantly, for the houses long gone. For these latter homes, the author offers an invaluable service: resurrection. Other reviewers have noted an issue with the image quality. Well, I agree about the uneven quality, but do not agree that this is an issue. I would rather have grainy images than no images! Such critiques imply that the author did not, you know, work hard enough to find images of perfection. However, this criticism overlooks an annoying thing called reality. For example, with the fabulous Tiffany mansion I have exhaustively

researched this long-lost house, only to be saddened by an inescapable conclusion: for so famous a structure there is scant archival information available. There is but a single floor plan (reproduced in the book) and only a handful of interior images - all of poor quality, and originally published in a magazine. The glass plate negatives of these rare images simply do not exist so one has no choice but to reproduce from the poor quality magazine images. However, even these less-than-ideal images reveal the extraordinary nature of the Louis Tiffany apartment under the titanic-sized roof. Luckily, there are many exterior images of the Tiffany mansion. The author has chosen a particularly fine one, and splashed large across two pages. Yummy. The same is true for the even more fabulous (and also long lost) Havemeyer mansion. There are no plans extant (which is why none are in the book) and the interior images of this impossibly luscious, dazzling, and unique interior are reproduced from the ONLY source: another old magazine. The glass negatives? They do not exist. So, should the author have simply ignored these two extraordinary houses (and others) just because pristine images taken directly from glass plate negatives were not an option? Well, I am quite delighted that he did not. In addition, the author has admirably included not only information about the houses but also informs the readers about the original owners (and sometimes subsequent owners). Critically, the author lets the reader know the fate of each house. Extant and cherished? Extant but brutalized? Destroyed? This is an admirable gift to each reader as one is not left with that lingering, painful question: what happened to this fine house? It is amazing how many authors are not as considerate. To me, anybody interested in the architecture of New York City's great houses would, without question, want to own Volume I and this second volume. Both are fine additions to a fine collection by a fine publisher. 13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. does not measure up to volume one By billy Beware of glowing reviews that appear to come indirectly from the publisher. While this book is just as fascinating as the first volume, it fails badly in one area: the photos. Many of them are downright poor and most of the others are barely acceptable. I don't think it is a printing problem, I think the original photos are too poor to reproduce successfully. If you liked the first volume, then buy this one, just be aware that you won't see good, clear photos of the houses. If you don't have either one, get the first one, as it is much better. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great Houses of NY, V. 2 By Lilly Ford This is another beautiful addition to Acanthus spectacular series on fine historical architecture. The book serves as a sequel to Great Houses of New York published in 2005. In this volume the author details 37 historical residential structures scattered across New York. The book contains a comprehensive introduction to put the various buildings into a wider historical and architectural context. The text is accessible to both professionals and casual readers. This is followed by a detailed tour of the houses where each structure's significance and history are briefly explained along with clear and large archival photographs. Each house has a clear detailed floor plan. All the photos are b/w except the last two houses which are presented in glorious contemporary color shots. The book ends with brief biographies of the architects documented in the text. Like all Acanthus publications, the book is very well-made, printed on high quality paper and the photos are really attractive given their age. This is a highly recommended addition to all those interested in fine architecture.

GREAT HOUSES OF NEW YORK, 1880-1930 presents the stories of 43 most elegant houses built in New York. With over 300 archival photographs and floor plans and a decade of research, Michael Kathrens profiles New York houses known only for their magisterial presence on the city's most elegant boulevards, some of which still exist today. IN the book the lavish rooms are brought to life again polished black and white columns reflect in the marble floor of a grand entryway, Dutch master paintings line damask walls in the second floor reception room, a crystal chandelier softly lights a dining room whose boiserie glows with paintings by Boucher evoking the elegant private life that has become a trademark of the wealthy New Yorker.

"Thoroughly delightful, beautifully illustrated survey of the opulent private palaces built in Manhattan is absorbing. -- Jared Paul Stern, The New York Post" The American plutocrat may not have had a polish of the centuries old European aristocrat, but he did learn to live in equal splendor -- Quest Mr. Kathrens trump cards are the period photographs he has found that reveal the true splendour of both exteriors and interiors. -- Apollo "The American plutocrat may not have had a polish of the centuries old European aristocrat, but he did learn to live in equal splendor -- Quest Mr. Kathrens trump cards are the period photographs he has found that reveal the true splendour of both exteriors and interiors. -- Appolo "The American plutocrat may not have had a polish of the centuries old European aristocrat, but he did learn to live in equal splendor -- Quest Mr. Kathrens trump cards are the period photographs he has found that reveal the true splendour of both exteriors and interiors. -- Appolo From the Publisher In 1869, when Edith Wharton's aunt Mary Mason Jones (immortalized as Mrs. Manson Mingot in "The Age of Innocence") finished her French classical house at the corner of 57th Street and Fifth Avenue - in a block for which her father paid \$1500 forty years earlier - she was considered an adventuress for building so far uptown. By 1882, just down the avenue at 52nd Street, William K. Vanderbilt finished his limestone mansion, ushering in the era of the lavish New York Great House, modeled after the London houses of English aristocrats and their Parisian counterparts. "Great Houses of New York, 1880-1930" presents the stories of the most elegant houses built in New York. Michael Kathrens profiles New York houses known only for their magisterial presence on the city's most elegant boulevards, some of which still exist today,

including the houses of Otto Kahn (Convent of the Sacred Heart), Andrew Carnegie (Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum), James B. Duke (NYU Institute of Fine Art), Morton F. Plant (Cartier), and William Starr Miller (Neue Gallery). About the Author Michael Kathrens has studied the history of American houses and their residents since his early teens. His unique perspective on the subject weaves a rich history of clients and architects, and the social milieu in which it all transpired. He previously wrote the first monograph on the houses of Horace Trumbauer (Acanthus Press, 2002) and is currently working on a book of the great houses of Newport, to be published by Acanthus Press in 2006.