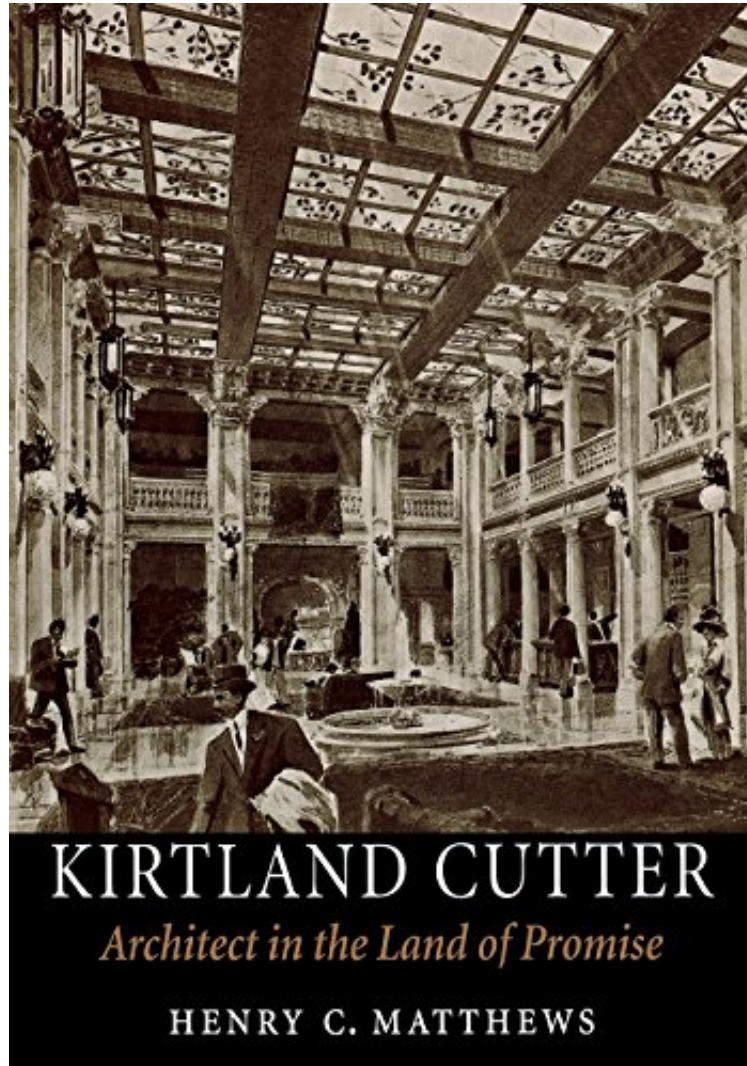


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Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise (McLellan Books)

Henry C. Matthews

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Henry C. Matthews : Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise (McLellan Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise (McLellan Books):

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comprehensive study of Cutter's work By Chefdevergue Almost everyone in Spokane recognizes the name of the architect Kirtland Cutter, who has been dead now for 65 years. Spokane considers Cutter to be theirs, but his work and influence go far beyond the Inland Northwest. For those people who say the TV-movie "Rose Red" a couple of years ago ---- yes, the house is real, not a stage set. It is mansion called Thornewood located in Tacoma, and was designed by Cutter. Over an almost 50-year career, Cutter designed homes, public buildings even bridges throughout the Pacific Northwest and down the coast of California, in a dazzling array of styles. Yet, studies of his work have been sporadic at best, and the study of the man himself almost non-existent. Henry Matthews has corrected all of this, with a biography and study of Cutter that is as close to comprehensive as you are bound to get after all of these years. Matthews is a good writer and is able to explain architectural minutiae in a manner that will not leave laypeople confused or bored. His 14 years of research on the subject have allowed him to compile a good list of all the Cutter projects (including houses and buildings no longer standing), including addresses. If you were to believe every claim found in the Spokane classified ads, there must be about 20,000 "Cutter homes" in Spokane. Being able to state that your for-sale house is a "Cutter home" adds a certain amount of cachet (not to mention a little extra value) to your home, so a lot of homeowners will claim a dubious Cutter pedigree. This book will let you know, by and large, just what of Cutter's work remains standing. If you are an enthusiast of Pacific Northwest history, this book comes highly recommended.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Spokane was singled out for praise in the West for the quality of its architecture and the impressive way it had rebuilt after the devastating fire of 1889. Major credit for the city's distinctive character was extended to Kirtland Kelsey Cutter for his "rare architectural force and genius for design." His remarkable career, stretching from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression, allows a fascinating study of the evolution of an eclectic form of architecture that was an inevitable response to rich regional and historical influences during a time of transition from frontier settlements to modern city. Cutter's influence was felt beyond Spokane--in Seattle, other areas of Washington, and in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. He was also responsible for buildings in the East and even for one in England. After financial problems ended his career in the Northwest, he began anew at age sixty-three in southern California, and worked there as an architect until his death in 1939 at age seventy-nine. Henry Matthews presents a comprehensive study of the whole body of Cutter's work, with ample photographs and illustrations. The book is based on exhaustive research in both the Northwest and California, revealing the influences on Cutter and his associates, the processes at work in the design and construction of the buildings, and the relations between the architect and the many people who commissioned his work. Particularly useful to Matthews's research was a collection of 290 sets of drawings, as well as office accounts, letters, and books from Cutter's library--materials acquired by the Eastern Washington State Historical Society. He also was able to interview former assistants and clients, who provided valuable insights on the architect and the way Cutter worked. In addition, many of the architect's residences, hotels, clubs, and commercial buildings are still standing. This book adds significantly to an understanding of Western urban and regional history. But Cutter's experimentation in many styles and the imaginative nature of his work make for a study that goes beyond regional limits and sheds light on national trends. Winner of the 1999 Washington State Book Award