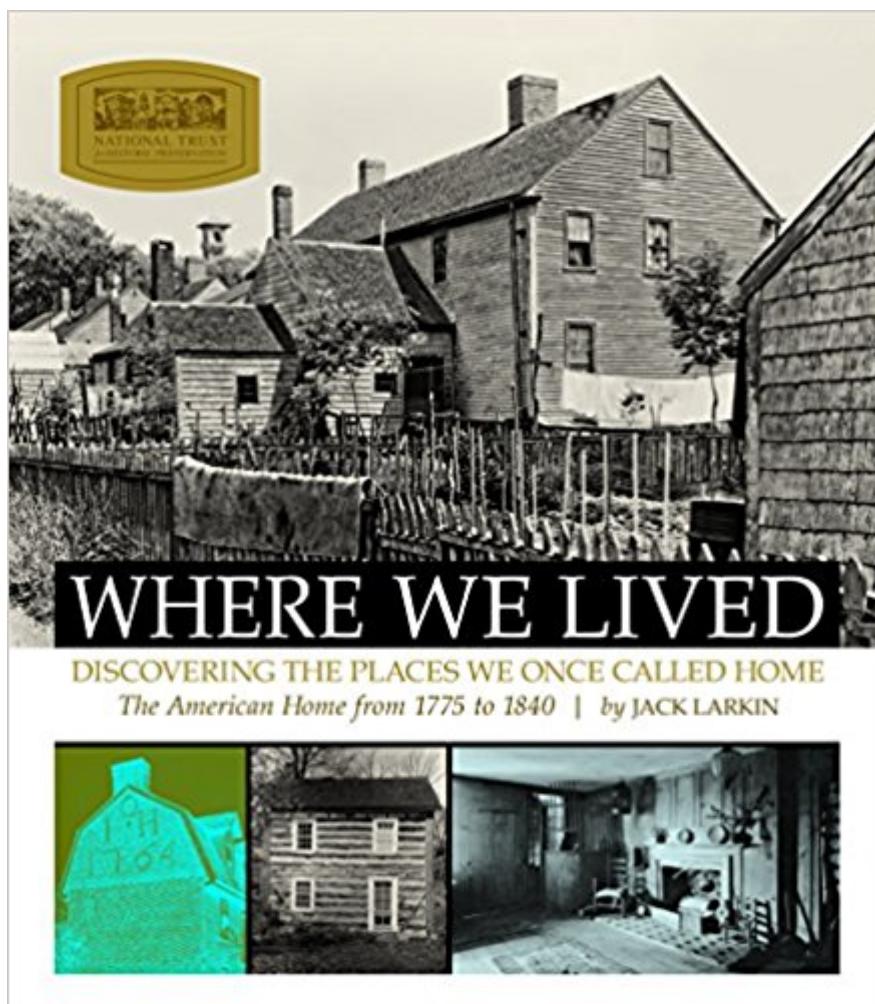


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# Where We Lived: Discovering The Places We Once Called Home



## Synopsis

The past has left behind only scattered clues that, on their own, provide little insight into how the people of early America lived and the details of their daily lives. The photographs in this book, the deeply informed narrative that accompanies them, and the eyewitness accounts of daily life that the author weaves throughout, provide a fresh perspective on our early American ancestors and the places they called home. This book is about how their houses and their life in them, from the wealthy to the impoverished, from New York City to the small farms and plantations of the South, from coastal fishing towns to the Western frontier of Indiana and Kentucky. The stories focus on the remarkably vivid differences from one part of the country to the next, class and culture, and the realities of everyday life for American families. These stories twine around a wide selection of HABS photographs of early houses, covering the variety and evolutions of house styles -- not by labeling the style but by explaining the style in the context of everyday life. Richly illustrated with handsome black-and-white photography of old houses from the Library of Congress Historic American Building Survey (HABS) collection and supplemented with period woodcuts, engravings, drawings, paintings, artifacts, and maps, the book is printed on a 4-color press for a depth of tone. Sidebar excerpts from diaries, journals, and letters inject graphic eyewitness descriptions, adding an additional layer of insight. The book also includes sidebars called Still Standing that traces the history of specific houses, from their origins to the present and includes information on the original family, how the house has evolved over the centuries, and how it's used today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In his new book, Larkin revisits the architecture of America from 1775 to 1840 and finds the values and dreams of the young republic recorded in wood and stone. Illustrated with amazing photographs from the Library of Congress Historic American Building Survey, the book opens a window on a time before indoor plumbing and electricity, discovering that the good old days, in some ways, were pretty good after all, despite physical hardships." --Kevin Markey, USA Weekend

Jack Larkin is Chief Historian and Museum Scholar at Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, as well as Affiliate Professor of History at Clark University. Debra Friedman is Head of Interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village.

I really enjoyed this book, and read it cover to cover the day I got it. One unfortunate reality is that only well-built houses survive - so we have minimal knowledge of how "the other half lived." But the author did his best to deal with this issue, and I , for one, was delighted that he did not waste pages going over well-trodden ground. Mount Vernon, Monticello, Montpelier, and other grand houses have already been covered in excruciating detail by other authors. In this book, the author concentrates on the homes of the "middling classes," and also on as much of the data as can be found on the huts, hovels, and cabins of the poor. The scope of the book is really the eastern seaboard and the original colonies, so the reader who is primarily interested in the architecture of the Southwest will not find it here. I wish that he had included some coverage of the Native American dwelling places indigenous to these areas of the eastern seaboard, and also perhaps some discussion of how Native dwellings changed in response to exposure to White ideas and building materials. (But that topic would properly fill an entire book of its own.) This was an expensive book, by my penny-pinching standards, but I consider it money well spent and it will be a permanent addition to my library. *Early American Houses: with A Glossary of Colonial Architectural Terms*  
*How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*

A fascinating account of the homes folks lived in 200 years ago and what each space and room in the home was used for. Mr. Larkin vividly describes by area (New England, the Middle States, the Southern States, and the Western States - as far as what was considered west by 1840), how the people of the past utilized their living spaces. It also describes in detail the many different styles of housing in the geographical areas mentioned, and how the Middle States structures may differ from the, say, New England area. As mentioned in other reviews, it truly is amazing how many human

beings could sometimes be squeezed into a small house with, most likely, little complaining. In addition to the lively, well-written text, there are many photographs - most taken 50 or more years ago and are in black and white - to enhance the reader's enjoyment. As an amateur social historian, I can honestly say this wonderful book is a great find to add to any collection. I am thankful we have historians like Jack Larkin to help us in our quest for real American History.

An awesome book! I have another equally good book of his on colonial america.

Some interesting detail and nice photos. Mostly referencing homes in the Northern US.

My mother wanted this book. It came with slight wear, great seller. She loved the book. Lots of pics as well. Interesting to look at. Good coffee table book.

You will not regret buying this book, which is stuffed with the little details of life which we so often overlook. Larkin illustrates his books with images from the Historic American Building Survey, a fantastic source. He complements with brilliant language which is easy to follow and understand, unlike most dense history books. I would get this for your old house lovers!

Photos, stories, views of dwellings from the past that are still with us. Important to recognize and appreciate the thought and skill that went into creating these enduring masterpieces of early architecture, similar but different with influences from the parts of the country where they are found.

I bought this book because I heard an interview with the author on NPR radio and he sounded very interesting. I am loving this book! I thought I would use it more as a reference book, but am finding myself reading it from front to back, gobbling up the photos and other interesting bits of information that he packs in to the pages and sidelines of each page. I love the historical journal readings that he has inserted to make points such as in the bed bugs section he quoted the Farmers Almanac "let a tired farmer be tormented all night" by bed bugs - and another traveler, Joseph Fowler in 1828 found "filthy beds swarming with bugs ... notwithstanding the repeated onsets of the bugs and other vermin with which I was molested." Very funny, written very well and extremely enjoyable historical book. I no longer yearn to live in the 1800's! And have a much deeper understanding of what our forefathers endured ... enjoy!

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