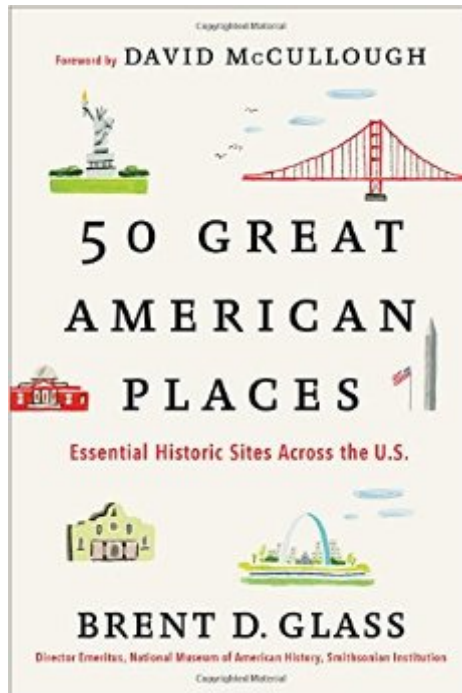


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# 50 Great American Places: Essential Historic Sites Across The U.S.



## Synopsis

A one-of-a-kind guide to fifty of the most important cultural and historic sites in the United States guaranteed to fascinate, educate, and entertain—selected and described by the former director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. From Massachusetts to Florida to Washington to California, > takes you on a journey through our nation's history. Sharing the inside stories of sites as old as Mesa Verde (Colorado) and Cahokia (Illinois) and as recent as Silicon Valley (California) and the Mall of America (Minnesota), each essay provides the historical context for places that represent fundamental American themes: the compelling story of democracy and self-government; the dramatic impact of military conflict; the powerful role of innovation and enterprise; the inspiring achievements of diverse cultural traditions; and the defining influence of the land and its resources.>Expert historian Brent D. Glass explores these themes by connecting places, people, and events and reveals a national narrative that is often surprising, sometimes tragic, and always engaging—complete with photographs, websites for more information, and suggestions for other places nearby worth visiting. Sites you would expect to read about—in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC—are here, as well as plenty of surprises, such as the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, or Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, or the Village Green in Hudson, Ohio; less obvious places that, together with the more well-known destinations, collectively tell the story of America. For families who want to take a trip that is both educational and entertaining, for history enthusiasts, or anyone curious about our country's greatest places, this book is the perfect guide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a wildly idiosyncratic and essentially random collection of some well known and some fairly obscure historic sites. We get Yellowstone National Park, but then we get the Cahokia Mounds and James Naismith's tenure as the only losing basketball coach at the University of Kansas. Each site gets two or three pages and a few small stock photos. The site information essays are just as random, so Gettysburg as the retirement location for Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower gets more ink than the Gettysburg Address. There was no overarching theme, (geographical or historical or cultural), that I could see in the book's organization. The book is not without its charms and some of the factoids are of passing interest, but overall I didn't quite see the point. The references at the end of each essay to neighboring points of interest and further sources of information might be of interest, but weren't anything special. (Please note that I received a free advance will-self-destruct-in-x-days Adobe Digital copy of this book in exchange for a candid review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

I enjoyed this book. I found the background material about each site and the surrounding areas very interesting. Even though I am not well traveled, I noted that I had actually been to a great many of these places. Most fascinating to me is how I didn't even know it at the time. Had I read this book prior, I would have paid more attention. My main takeaway from his education book is that there is so much history and interesting places all around us and I wasn't even aware of it. I am much more aware now and I will drive a couple of more miles and get out of the car in the future.

50 Great American Places by Brent D. Glass, was received direct from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. I have to ponder, "Why wasn't this book written before?" or if it was, "How did I miss it?" I have heard of, been to, or at least driven by many of these historical sites but I never was as fully aware of them as I am now. Excellent research book and every family should own this book to read to and teach their children about non revised/unedited American history. Each entry even has web links to to get more in depth information on the site. One of the fifty sites is about the Church of Latter Day Saints (The Mormons). I had heard of Brigham Young but I had never in my middle aged life heard of the "Mormon war" that occurred around modern day Salt Lake City. If you want to know more about your country or if you have young children, grab this book and learn some things.

Mr. Glass's book is a collection of fifty 2-4 page essays, each on a national park or historic site, and

each a marvel of terse description packed with information and background, yet elegantly written...NOT a laundry list. It's an easy and delightful read, with lots of interesting factoids you never knew before, even if you think you are versed in American history. The issue is which out of the nearly 400 units under the National Park Service did the author choose to highlight. Some reviewers on this site have been disastified because not every chapter was about a Bryce, Zion, or Grand Canyon-scale park. But that was not the author's intention. His stated goal in the preface, in which I think he has admirably succeeded, was to--in effect--provide a brief outline of America's history and social/economic development, as well as some its greatest scenic wonders--all as they are interpreted through the many and varied national parks and monuments which are a crown jewel of the US and which portray that scenic wonder and that history, including industrialism, civil rights, scientific invention, Western settlement, atomic development, and so on. So this book is both a graciously written and easy-to-absorb history lesson, and also a travel guide to those who wish to explore our national parks/monuments....including a number of the less obvious yet still worthwhile ones. It also, by the way, is a testament to how well the National Park Service in its varied acquisitions has fulfilled its mission to preserve our scenery AND our history.

Although this book is marketed as a travel guide, I prefer to view it as a primer on American history that is presented simply and beautifully by one of our country's great public historians. The genius of "50 Great American Places" is that Dr. Glass chose sites which are authentically important to America's identity without concern for how popular or well-known they are. His easy writing style can make you forget that each one of these 50 stories is packed with facts and soul. Anyone who reads this book will come away learning something new and with an appreciation for the diversity of the American experience. The bonus is that we can believe that Dr. Glass knows what he is talking about: he is the Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History, as well as a consultant to numerous cultural and historic institutions.

I loved this book-it is an easy read with information on places I never would have thought to visit as well-I often use travel guides by Rick Steves-this book reminds me a bit of his style as it has many off the beaten path recommendations-I like the references to history and cultural significance-I plan to use this book as I travel often with my young kids-the references to web sites is also helpful especially for me because I am an obsessive planner and love to learn all I can before visiting a place-travel should be a meaningful adventure-this book definitely helps you do that and more-Highly recommend!

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