

Book Review and Advance Notice: Spires in the Sun by Jonathan Rich CONT.

The churches presented in *Spires in the Sun*, erected when Florida was still America's raw southeastern frontier, are notable architecturally for having breathed the romantic sensibilities of England's stone parish churches into a new medium: wood. Together with their Carpenter Gothic counterparts elsewhere on the nation's frontier, they elevated the American wooden church to new heights of historicity, imagination, and beauty.

Distinctive enough as exemplars of vernacular architecture, the churches also serve as time portals through which we are able to meet the men and women who built them. Readers may be surprised to learn that more than half the profiled churches were built under the leadership of Victorian-era women, one of whom was abolitionist-novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe. One of the churches was sponsored by a Civil War widow whose star-crossed youthful romance with her husband has been called Florida's answer to *Romeo and Juliet*. Another was constructed to serve the crowds arriving by train to attend the nationally celebrated Florida Chautauqua series. And one, raised by an African American master carpenter and his sons, is today Florida's oldest Episcopal sanctuary historically led and attended by African Americans.

A *cri de coeur* for architectural preservation, *Spires in the Sun* fulfills the dictum of conservationist Baba Dioum: "We will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught." Fresh, authoritative, and comprehensive, it will be considered the definitive work on Florida's Carpenter Gothic Episcopal churches. From its pages, both newcomers and those who already cherish these architectural gems will gain fascinating insights and come to love them as never before.

Spires in the Sun's author, Jonathan Rich, is a retired attorney who during his professional career represented publicly held companies, major banks, and Florida's principal economic development organization. He is currently chairman of the board of a national trust company. He has also served in leadership positions for several non-profit organizations devoted to the arts, jobs training and the sport of rowing. A third generation Floridian, he has studied Florida human and natural history for decades. He lives in Winter Park, Florida with his wife, Beth.

The book's photographer, Phil Eschbach, a commercial photographer specializing in architecture and travel, has maintained a studio in Winter Park for many years. His photographs have appeared in national, regional, and local publications. He has served on the board of a non-profit organization dedicated to architectural preservation in Central Florida and is a past president of the Winter Park Historical Association. A ninth generation Floridian, he lives in Winter Park with his wife Elizabeth.