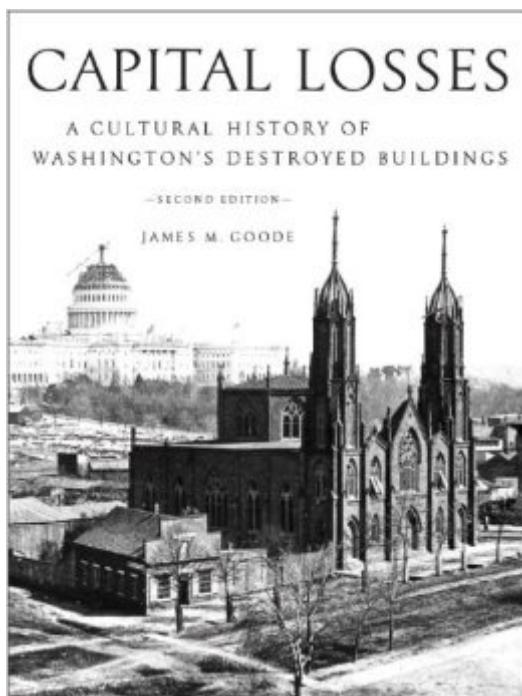


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# Capital Losses: A Cultural History Of Washington's Destroyed Buildings



## **Synopsis**

Before the passage of critical preservation legislation in 1978, the Nation's Capital lost an irreplaceable assembly of architecturally and culturally significant buildings. Wanton destruction in the name of progress—“particularly in the decades immediately following World War II”—resulted in a legacy forever lost, a cultural heritage destroyed by the wrecker's ball. By reminding us of things lost, James Goode's magisterial and poignant study represented a comprehensive call for action, a mandate for responsible stewardship of the architectural legacy of Washington, DC. Both the familiar public Washington of official landmarks and the private city of residential neighborhoods are paid tribute in this volume, dedicated to the vanished. At once a visual delight, a fascinating social history, and an eloquent appeal for ongoing awareness, *Capital Losses* reveals the Washington that was and how it became what it is today. This updated edition includes eighteen more treasures lost and ninety additional historic photographs.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Now in an updated second edition, *Capital Losses: A Cultural History Of Washington's Destroyed Buildings* by Washington history expert James M. Goode is a carefully presented documentation and chronicle of the great architectural and cultural edifices of Washington, D.C., which have been lost to the endless grind of urban renewal in the years prior to 1978. That was the year in which crucial preservation legislation was passed. Packed from cover to cover with black-and-white photographs, enhancing a text which is extensive in detail, history, unique historical insights, Capital

Losses is an exceptional architectural tour and a unique resource offering a kind of "window" into the architectural past of the nation's capital.

Unique and engaging, "Capital Losses" is a scrapbook chronicle of Washington, DC-- not as the "nation's capital," but as a collection of neighborhoods, people, and activities. The book memorializes dozens of buildings lost to the wrecker's ball. Each edifice is featured in a one- to two-page chapter that includes splendid vintage photographs. The accompanying write-ups always discuss design elements, thanks to the authors' encyclopedic knowledge in this area. The story of each structure is then expanded into a discussion of the designers, builders, and notable inhabitants. "Capital Losses" is a survey of history, intrigue, gossip as well as architectural styles. That's what makes this book so fun. The authors' sympathy for historic preservation is to a fault. Narratives hardly attempt to recognize the social, economic, and technological forces that so often make demolition inexorable. For example, the advent of central air conditioning initiated the doom of many hotel and office structures that could not be economically retrofitted. In addition, the post-war demise of downtown commercial areas also accelerated the decay and eventual destruction of many classic structures. To be fair, an analysis of causal forces was not the intention of this volume. It pays homage to Washington's folksier history in an elegant manner. This is a wonderful coffee table book.

I was given a copy of this book for my birthday several years ago and spent hours pouring over its prose and its historical narratives. I never grow tired of this book. Credit for this work goes to its author who has accomplished the near to impossible - an engaging and personal history of Washington DC told through the destroyed architecture and the people behind the buildings and their creation. The illustrations are gorgeous, but it's Goode's way with words that allows the reader to lose themselves in the history of the buildings profiled. I would imagine that this type of book in the wrong hands would become an academic tome, dry and technical. Goode brings the people of the District to life for the reader, and compels the reader to look for more. If the book fails, it is in the lack of a comprehensive map of the whole District of Columbia. If you are not familiar with the streets and layout of the city (itself genius) then the book can be confusing. Ideally, I would suggest this as a gift to anyone interested in history, city planning, government or historical architecture.

I saw this book at the National Gallery tagged at 100 Dollars. It was a heavy book and therefore I simply left it, but the pictures inside haunted me for a long time, and now finally a copy in for a

cheaper prize. Washington D.C. prior to the rise of modern buildings, (some of them were really ugly) was a very quaint city. Filled with beautiful houses and places of worship. However, the winds of modernization obliterated them and this was a terrible loss for the capital city. Highly recommended.

If you're interested in Washington, D.C., history and architecture, this is the book for you! Mr. Goode has documented dozens of properties which are no longer. A must-have for Washingtonian historians!

We are lucky to have this compendium of photographs. I was glad to find a used copy of this otherwise expensive volume. It was slightly more worn than I expected but it was basically in good condition and it will be used as a valuable reference.

As a native of Washington, D.C., I remember some of the edifices which have been 'replaced'. I was delighted to be introduced to it by another 'local' who is even a 'bit longer in the tooth' than I am. It's much more than just a coffee table reference. Glad I stumbled onto it !!Kathryn

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