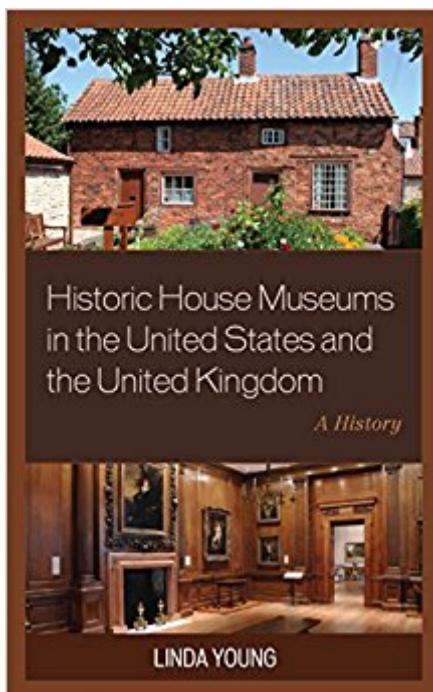


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Historic House Museums In The United States And The United Kingdom: A History



Synopsis

Historic House Museums in the United States and the United Kingdom: A History addresses the phenomenon of historic houses as a distinct species of museum. Everyone understands the special nature of an art museum, a national museum, or a science museum, but a *house museum* • nearly always requires clarification. In the United States the term is almost synonymous with historic preservation; in the United Kingdom, it is simply unfamiliar, the very idea being conflated with stately homes and the National Trust. By analyzing the motivation of the founders, and subsequent keepers, of house museums, Linda Young identifies a typology that casts light on what house museums were intended to represent and their significance (or lack thereof) today. This book examines: • *heroes*™ houses: once inhabited by great persons (e.g., Shakespeare™s birthplace, Washington™s Mount Vernon); • *artwork* houses: national identity as specially visible in house design, style, and technique (e.g., Frank Lloyd Wright houses, Modernist houses); • *collectors*™ houses: a microcosm of collecting *in situ* domestic, subsequently presented to the nation as the exemplars of taste (e.g., Sir John Soane™s Museum, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum); • *English country houses*: the palaces of the aristocracy, maintained thanks to primogeniture but threatened with redundancy and rescued as museums to be touted as the peak of English national culture; English country houses: the palaces of the aristocracy, maintained for centuries thanks to primogeniture but threatened by redundancy and strangely rescued as museums, now touted as the peak of English national culture; • *Everyman/woman*™s social history houses: the modern, demotic response to elite houses, presented as social history but tinged with generic ancestor veneration (e.g., tenement house museums in Glasgow and New York).

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Customer Reviews

This much anticipated book is a tremendously valuable contribution to the understanding of historical house museums. Linda Young successfully addresses the conspicuous absence of similar studies in the field with a rare blend of academic rigor and delightful readability. I predict this will soon be required reading for Heritage Conservation students, professional and volunteers alike, to ignite in us a better understanding of the paradoxical world of house museums and their "truths" (Edward Bosley, Director, The Gamble House, University of Southern California School of Architecture). Linda Young brings an extraordinary depth of knowledge and experience to her analysis of house museums. Young's insights are on target whether you are trying to understand where house museums came from and where they are headed, if you are working to make yours a success, or if you just want to make a list of fascinating places to visit. (Carl R. Nold, President and CEO, Historic New England) With *Historic House Museums in the United States and the United Kingdom: A History*, Linda Young shines a spotlight on the little understood genre of house museums and put them firmly on the museological map. In the time that I have worked on and in house museums no other writer has articulated their nature, potential and challenges so well, nor produced such an enjoyable read on the way. (John Barnes, Director of Conservation & Learning at Historic Royal Palaces in the United Kingdom, Chair of ICOM's international committee concerning historic house museums, DemHist, and a Trustee of the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, England.)

Linda Young is a historian by discipline and a curator by trade; she has taught aspects of heritage and museum studies for more than twenty years at the University of Canberra and Deakin University in Melbourne. Her research revolves around domestic and personal goods in the nineteenth century British world.

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