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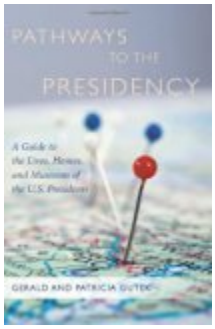
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Gerald Gutek, Patricia Gutek. *Pathways to the Presidency: A Guide to the Lives, Homes, and Museums of the U.S. Presidents.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011. Illustrations. 360 pp. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57003-997-3; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-57003-998-0.



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Several years ago, I took a short trip to Fremont, Ohio, to visit the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center. The Hayes Center comprises multiple buildings and facilities, including a library, museum, and the Hayes family home. While the guided tour of the home and the exhibits in the museum provided insight into the life of President Hayes and his family, I wondered about the history of the site itself and its evolution into a public history institution. Future visitors to presidential sites across the United States will be better prepared and more informed if they read *Pathways to the Presidency* by Gerald and Patricia Gutek.

In *Pathways to the Presidency*, Gutek and Gutek provide a resourceful and informative guide to the birthplaces, homes, memorials, museums, and libraries of all former U.S. presidents with a chapter devoted to each president. The chapters begin with a brief history of the president before, during, and after his administration. Given the necessary brevity of these sections, the authors are cogently thorough. After the biographical information, each chapter includes short histories of various sites associated with the president. The site descriptions note the significance of the site and its connection to the president as well as a short history of the site's preservation and interpretation. Gutek and Gutek occasionally outline potential future plans for the site in terms of restoration and renovation.

One of the book's many highlights is a list of useful information for each site, including address, telephone number, Web site, location, hours, admission fees, and facilities available at the site. The inclusion of such detailed material adds to the practicality of the book as a guide for tourists. Each chapter also conveniently includes exterior photographs of the homes. Interior photographs of the homes, however, would have helped support and supplement the meticulous descriptions of the various collections and furniture in each room.

There are a few minor omissions and oversights in *Pathways to the Presidency* that are worth noting. Perhaps the most troubling is the absence of an introduction. The book would have been bolstered with a clear outline of the authors' goals, their views regarding the purpose of the book, and their motivations for undertaking such a project. Why are these homes significant to the history of the presidency and how do they inform our understanding of the men who occupied the post? These are questions left unanswered without an introduction. The descriptions of the sites might have been more engaging had the authors infused their paragraphs with some analysis of the preservation and interpretative efforts at each site. By delving into these processes, the book might have shed more light onto the current status of public history and its connections to the popular memory of U.S. presidents. This sort of discussion, however, might fall outside the scope of the book and require the attention of other scholars. Gutek and Gutek also include very few citations, which would have not only helped to verify where they gathered their historical information but also given researchers an informal further readings list.

Another minor flaw within the pages of *Pathways to the Presidency* is that the authors sometimes attempt to simplify complicated men. This is, undoubtedly, the result of the confinement of available space but is still noteworthy. For example, the authors state, "Glorified in song and story as the victor of the Battle of New Or-

leans in the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson is an American hero" (p. 40). To their credit, Gutek and Gutek note the impact of Jackson's policy toward Native Americans on his legacy in their next sentence. The question remains, however, to whom is Jackson an American hero? Jackson's legacy in the twenty-first century is conflicted and complicated; the denotation of "American hero" belies that point. Perhaps providing more context to the complexity and intersections of popular memory, public history, and academic history would have been more beneficial.

Despite these minor limitations, *Pathways to the Presidency* stands out as a valuable and much-needed book in the historiographies of presidential and public history. All too often guides to historical sites are little more than atlases with interesting illustrations. This is not the case with this book. Gutek and Gutek seamlessly combine practicality and scholarly research in their book. The result is a work that will appeal to both heritage tourism enthusiasts and historians of the presidency. Whether you are planning a trip to Grouseland or content to read about it, *Pathways to the Presidency* is a worthy and engaging read.

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