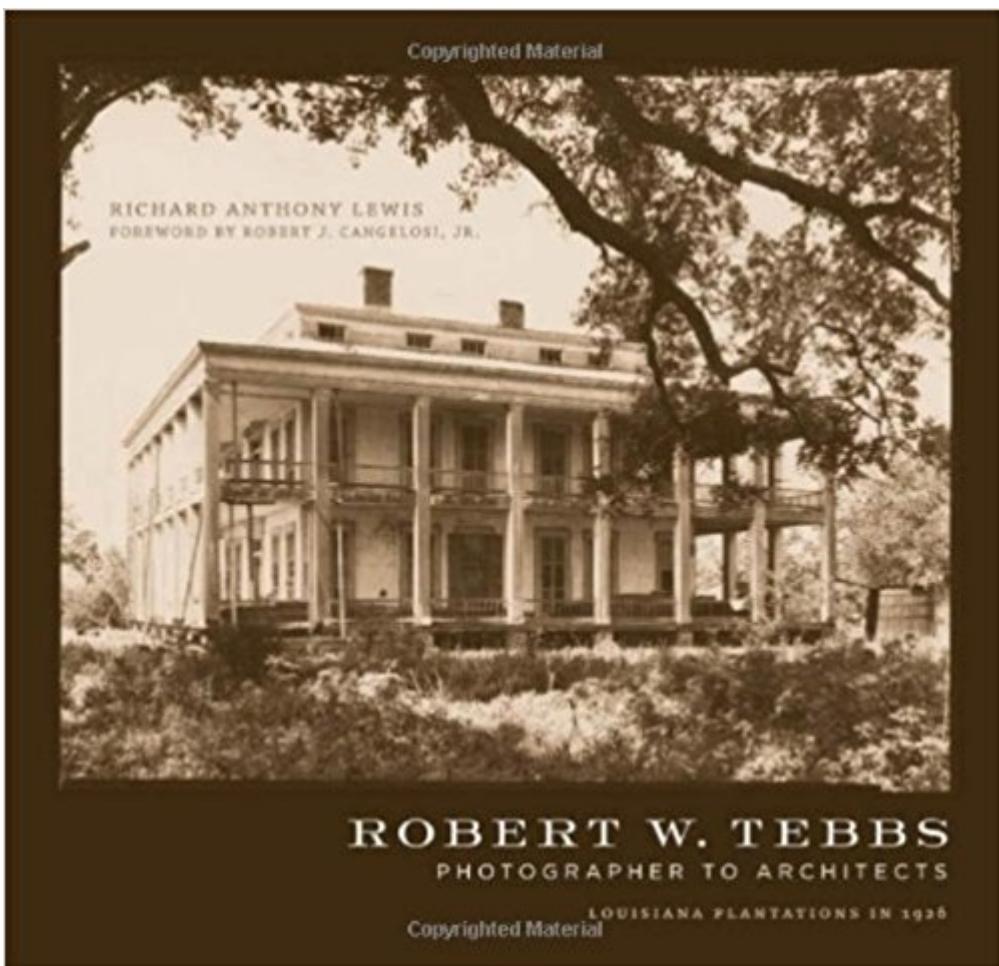


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# Robert W. Tebbs, Photographer To Architects: Louisiana Plantations In 1926



## Synopsis

One of the finest architectural photographers in America, Robert W. Tebbs produced the first photographic survey of Louisiana's plantations in 1926. From those images, now housed in the Louisiana State Museum, and not widely available until now, 119 plates showcasing fifty-two homes are featured here. Richard Anthony Lewis explores Tebbs's life and career, situating his work along the line of plantation imagery from nineteenth-century woodcuts and paintings to later twentieth-century photographs by John Clarence Laughlin, among others. Providing the family lineage and construction history of each home, Lewis discusses photographic techniques Tebbs used in his alternating panoramic and detail views. A precise documentarian, Tebbs also reveals a poetic sensibility in the plantation photos. His frequent emphasis on aspects of decay, neglect, incompleteness, and loss lends a wistful aura to many of the images -- an effect compounded by the fact that many of the homes no longer exist. This noticeable vacillation between objectivity and sentiment, Lewis shows, suggests unfamiliarity and even discomfort with the legacy of slavery. Poised on the brink of social and political reforms, Louisiana in the mid-1920s had made significant strides away from the slave-based agricultural economy that the plantation house often symbolized. Tebbs's Louisiana plantation photographs capture a literal and cultural past, reflecting a burgeoning national awareness of historic preservation and presenting plantations to us anew. Select plantations included: Ashland/Belle Helene, Avery Island, Belle Chasse, Belmont, Butler-Greenwood, L'Hermitage, Oak Alley, Parlange, RenÃ© Beauregard House, Rosedown, Seven Oaks, Shadows-on-the-Teche, The Shades, and Waverly.

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## Customer Reviews

One of the finest architectural photographers in America, Robert W. Tebbs produced the first photographic survey of Louisiana's plantations in 1926. The images, now housed in the Louisiana State Museum, and never before widely available, consist of 110 plates showcasing fifty-two homes. Author and curator Richard Anthony Lewis explores Tebbs's life and photographs, revealing in both a new awareness of historic preservation.

Richard Anthony Lewis is the curator of visual arts at the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans. Robert J. Cangelosi, Jr., is president of Koch and Wilson Architects in New Orleans.

As sad as it is to see so many stunning structures that are long gone, it is fascinating to see what they once were. This volume is an excellent record of many of the fine old homes of antebellum Louisiana, and a few in Mississippi. The significance of this particular group of images is that it shows how they looked in the early 20th century before they were either lost or thoroughly restored. The photos are so atmospheric, as though if you looked hard enough, you could see all the way back to the early nineteenth century when these houses were brand new. Some of these images were seen previously in "Ghosts along the Mississippi" but many are, to my knowledge, published here for this first time; at least, that is, in a format that is widely available to the public. I treasure this book for the visual documentation that it preserves of what was doubtlessly the golden age of domestic architecture in America. This volume comes highly recommended to those interested in architecture or history. Do yourself a favor and add this to your library.

This book is absolutely beautiful! Bought as a gift for a friend who not only loves old architecture but values where we have been and where we're going, just as I do. The pictures are amazing and it's so sad to know that some of these beautiful homes don't exist anymore. The reason I didn't give this book 5 stars is because I got it for a gift. When I received it and unboxed it, it was torn in the left hand corner and on the bottom back was wrinkled (the outside jacket made of paper) other than that the book and its contents are great.

I buy a lot of architecture books, especially ones about the south, and this book has some of the best photographs of any I've seen. The photos are evocative while still communicating important

information about the vernacular styles of the buildings presented. Tebbs' images featured in this book go beyond the typical pictures from the Historic American Buildings Survey familiar to any scholar of southern architecture, including new photos of important structures that have long since vanished.

As a lover of old Southern plantations, when I thumbed through this book, I knew that I had to buy it. The photography is amazing and so haunting in black and white. Some of these plantations still exist and have been restored. Since I have toured some of them, it is amazing to note the difference from 1926 to now and wonderful that they have been restored. So many are gone or abandoned. Getting the history of these plantations and seeing them through someone else's eyes is amazing. A great book for the southern historian.

Nice addition to my collections.

Photographs are satisfying for recording direct portraits of each house. The photographs include provocative details inviting speculation of lives lived and of implied history. Beautifully written. A treasure.

Beautiful book with the most amazing vintage photos. Excellent composition. Wonderfully written. Feels like you could just step back into time. A must for lovers of old southern plantations. Smooth speedy delivery.

I've always been fascinated with old homes, especially the plantation homes. This book shows me photos and lets me read about these wonderful, old homes. It takes me back to a different time and allows me to experience how life was at that time. I've thoroughly enjoyed the book and I'm sure I'll go back to it many more times.

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