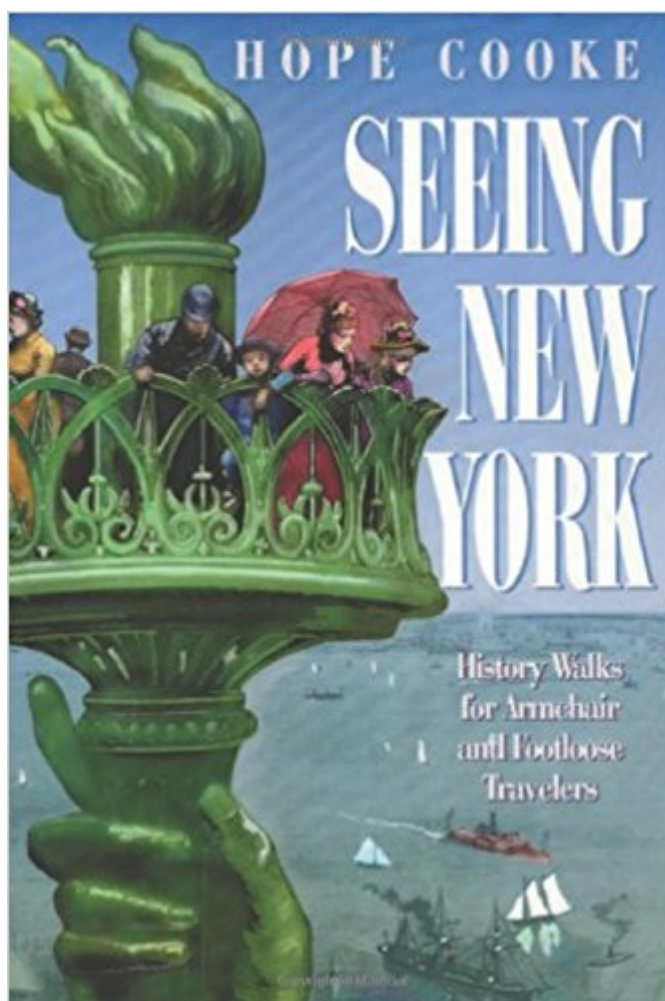


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Seeing New York: History Walks For Armchair And Footloose Travelers (Critical Perspectives On The P)



Synopsis

Since the 1700s, various ethnic and immigrant groups have been shifting and negotiating their place in New York City. Hope Cooke also struggled to find a 'correlation of space' and 'sense of belonging' when she returned to the city after spending her adult life living in a place in the Himalayas, the Queen of Sikkim (a tiny kingdom near Nepal). Abroad for so long, she returned with an urgent need to rediscover this city, to 'find her way home'. It was not always a comfortable journey for Cooke: 'On the days I felt secure, Manhattan's maelstrom was pure energy. On shaky days, the boundlessness made me yearn for limits, or, failing that, at least a vantage point'. The book that has emerged is an entertaining and integrated account of New York City's social history, architecture, physical space, and culture. Starting with the American Indian settlements and the early days when the southern-most tip of Manhattan held little more than a bleak outpost of Dutch fur traders, Cooke tracks the economic development and journeys north, from the Village's beginnings as a refuge from dreaded summer fevers to the present day Dominican enclave of Washington Heights. Written for armchair enthusiasts and walkabout adventurers, this book travels fourteen of the city's distinct and significant neighborhoods. Cooke's guide will make a historical sleuth out of local residents and tourists alike. Her off-the-beaten-path insights and witty observations help decode the urban landscape and reveal how social changes have reworked the city's terrain. Enhancing the narrative are 140 illustrations, including old engravings, maps, and current photographs. Author note: Hope Cooke is a writer and urban historian. She has lectured widely on New York history, directed the walking tours program at the Museum of the City of New York, and written a weekly column for the "New York Daily News". Her essays, short stories, and reviews have appeared in such popular periodicals as "Redbook", "Travel and Leisure", "The New York Times", and "The Chicago Sun Times". Among her previously published books is her acclaimed autobiography, "Time Change".

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Customer Reviews

"She really is 'Hope Cooke, the guide to New York.' And though her newest book traces the destinies of immigrants, bankers and writers, it also marks another passage--her own." --New York Times "Cooke's observations, steeped in the social and cultural detail that makes space into place, are poignant and telling." --Metropolis "Useful as it is for the visitor, the book is also a gift to the resident pedestrian." --New York Magazine "As if taking us by the hand and conducting us from street to street, Ms. Cooke evokes the sights and smells and sound of all those earlier New Yorks. In a hundred unexpected places, she unearths clues to the transformation of a grubby fortified trading post into the greatest of cities. The many levels of ancient Troy are far easier to make out than the many levels of contemporary New York; we have reasons to be grateful to Ms. Cooke for opening our eyes to its accumulated wonders. Wherever she leads us, we are happy to follow." --Brendan Gill "Hope Cooke is a witty and encyclopedic walking companion whose knowledge and enjoyment of the City will infect you. After reading her account of the City's social and architectural legacy, you will never see New York in the same way again." --Peg Breen, President, New York Landmarks Conservancy

An off-the-beaten bath tour of New York that transcends the usual guide book --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have used this book for interesting reading and as a practical, useful guide while walking around NYC. It is a little dated (published 1999, I think) but still my favorite.

A deep exploration of the social and architectural history of Manhattan with a few highlights in areas of other boroughs, e.g. Brooklyn Heights, "Asian Flushing", Sailors' Snug Harbor in Staten Island. Before I read this book, I thought I knew a lot about the history of much of the architecture and public spaces of Manhattan, but there are a few things in here that were new to me. This is pretty impressive when you consider that I am a life-long New Yorker and the authoress lived in NYC as a

child and returned after a long absence. Writing this book, collecting the material and information in order to do so, was a learning & orienting experience for her, and ultimately a labor of love. I plan to take this book with me sometime when I have an unlimited amount of time to go to Manhattan (yeah, right!) and walk in her footsteps. The book is designed with such an endeavor specifically in mind: it starts out at the southern tip of Manhattan, and gives background information on Battery Park and some of the monuments and features therein as well as the surrounding edifices, and continues northward through all significant areas of Manhattan. Warning: this book is dated. A number of old buildings which are listed in various areas, and for which historical and cultural information are given, are now long gone. A prime example of this is Luchow's restaurant, which used to be a prominent and conspicuous building in Union Square, and of which there is now no trace.

This book is a very interesting exploration of old New York, written by an interesting woman, Hope Cooke, who among other things was married to the prince of Sikkim, and (enjoyed?) much publicity in the 60's. I read her autobiography after reading this, but actually, she come across as being much more interesting in this scholarly book. I wish she would write more on the subject of old New York.

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