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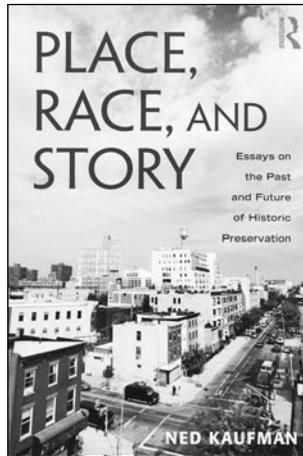
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Ned Kaufman. *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009, 421pp., black-and-white photographs and drawings, paper, \$39.95, ISBN 978-0-415-96540-8.

Historic preservation in the U.S. is an ever-changing discipline whose methodology is continually revised and adapted. Complex issues of “race and place” present today’s practitioners with a range of challenges — cultural, economic, and theoretical — critical to the vitality and sustainability of the movement. Author Ned Kaufman, an independent scholar and preservation activist based in New York City, has grappled with such issues for more than two decades. In this collection of essays, he unflinchingly confronts the field’s most problematic topics, such as healing cultural scars through site management and interpretation, identifying and protecting sites of conscience, and drawing diverse communities into mainstream preservation conversations.

The themes of “race,” “place,” and “story” run through this diverse collection of speeches and studies. All were authored by Kaufman from 1989 to the present; some have been published previously, while others are presented here for the first time. Kaufman draws heavily on his work in what he calls “Forensic History,” which he defines as the examination of events with the intent of solving planning issues at a historic site. Kaufman also draws on his understanding of the “Storyscape,” a preservation methodology that builds historic narratives from residents’ memories. Both types of interpretation

move beyond strict analysis of materials conservation to deepen public awareness of the themes of “race,” “place,” and “story” in preservation projects. Kaufman particularly aims at enhancing the inclusion of African American, Latino, and Asian experiences at historic sites.

Collectively, the essays ask preservationists to “think big.” Each chapter details lessons learned, provides analytical case studies, and efforts, all in an attempt to expand the sometimes myopic viewpoint of preservation advocates. Kaufman ambitiously addresses a variety of topics without hesitation. For example, a keynote address for a Pace University symposium on urban narratives, “Placing Preservation,” examines the defense of significant sites as places of cultural transmission, while a policy study for the National Park Service, “Eliminating the Diversity Deficit,” explores the twin efforts to “preserve a multi-racial past and serve a multi-racial public.” Although a number of the chapters are devoted entirely to preservation challenges in New York City, the operating home base of the author, other chapters survey the broader cultural landscape and discuss the implications of emerging “transnational” group identities for interpretation and advocacy.

The collection holds together well, with the exception of the two essays included in the section “Architecture In and Out of Place: Historical Perspectives.” Kaufman wrote both pieces to accompany exhibits. One discusses the history of international quests of discovery, which were the preferred way to study building methodologies before the widespread publication of architectural journals. The other focuses on architectural collectors, who created cultural vacuums by moving priceless pieces of art and building forms from their original sites to foreign museums. Perhaps Kaufman hoped that today’s preservationist could testify to the enduring value of saving architectural resources *in situ* after reading through these stories of the past. However, this chapter distracted from Kaufman’s larger, more compelling points, which were reiterated throughout the rest of the text.

Overall, Kaufman’s work is a welcome addition to the modern preservationist’s library. The text is both eminently quotable and productively applicable in practice. The author breaks down outmoded

conventions and inspires readers to question current methodologies for saving and interpreting historic sites. With this book in hand, advocates will be well prepared to address the critical intersections of preservation, history, and community.

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