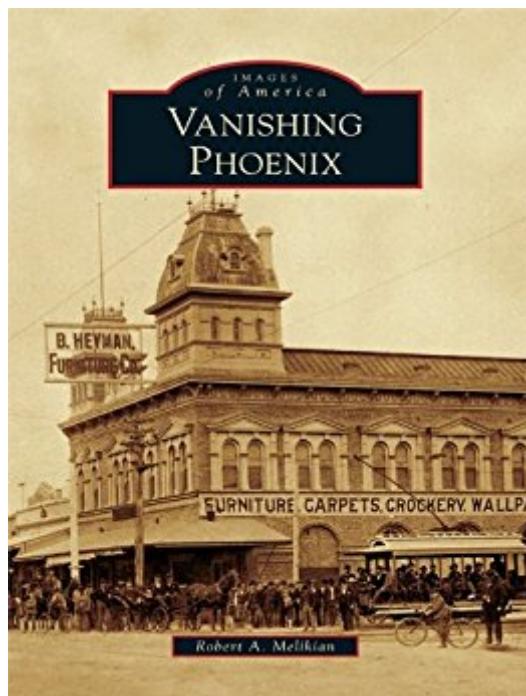


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# Vanishing Phoenix (Images Of America)



## **Synopsis**

Lord Darrell Duppa, along with his friend Jack Swilling, suggested the name "Phoenix" for the city he had cofounded because it described a city born from the ruins of a former civilization. Settled on the ancestral lands of the Hohokam Indians, Phoenix was thriving by the early 1920s when craftsmanship and attention to detail were the orders of the day. Buildings were designed to welcome residents and travelers alike. Today the Fox Theater, the Clark Churchill House, the Kon Tiki Hotel, and the Fleming Building exist only in photographs and in the memories of Phoenix residents. The National Register of Historic Places and the Phoenix Historic Property Register have heightened public awareness and appreciation for the community's historic landmarks, but much has been lost already. Remembering these buildings and landmarks is essential to understanding this remarkable city.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a great picture book with brief but thorough descriptions of what you're looking at. The Kindle version I purchased had clear beautiful photographs that I could zoom in on and explore details.

This book will be reviewed many times. Worth the money.

Downtown Phoenix is dead, and this book shows why in an extensive collection of great pictures showing the vanished structures of eloquence and local pride that once attracted people to the heart of the city. It's not a wordy dissertation about the decline and fall of the downtown; instead, it's a collection of photographs with brief captions showing what Phoenix officials destroy and allow to be destroyed. One heart-rendering example is a section devoted to the Fox West Coast Theatre, a classic great movie palace that was even better than the Los Angeles version. It opened in 1931, and was bulldozed in 1975 to make way for a bus parking lot. The words of Woodrow Wilson never rang more true, "A nation which does not know what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do." It sums up Phoenix, stuck in the worst of the 2008 economic downturn with nearly 30 percent downtown office vacancies even in 2010. Bulldozers and wrecking balls are the fate of many classic buildings in downtown Phoenix, where civic officials place a higher aesthetic value on empty parking lots than on elegant quality and classic design buildings. It's a testimonial to the years when Phoenix had pride in local efforts; since 1972, when I got to Phoenix, retail business has been chased out of downtown and billions of tax dollars invested in fortress-like office complexes designed to separate employees from the homeless. Almost 30 years ago, Sen. Barry Goldwater moved his Arizona office out of downtown Phoenix because too many people were afraid to hazard a trip to the downtown area. Many downtown employees went only from secure parking garages to their offices and back, reluctant to ever use the streets. Conditions have not improved. Melikian comes by his pride in historic buildings naturally; his father restored a classic downtown hotel which is now a boutique alternative to the plastic and plywood blandness of modern hotels. He offers no judgments in this book; readers may either look and conclude "Interesting, but good riddance" or more likely be confirmed in their reasons never again to go downtown. The Melikians put their efforts where their hearts are; their San Carlos Hotel is the last interesting walking venue of the downtown. The rest of the old downtown is either blank stone walls that are somewhat less interesting than walking through an abandoned stone quarry; or not that, in many instances its empty store fronts and dusty parking lots. It's a wonderful book. It's not often the destruction of what might have been a vibrant downtown area is so eloquently presented.

Great book on the changes in Phoenix.

Very interesting and informative! The book was very nostalgic for me and reminded me of many

many wonderful times I had living in the Phoenix area, Valley of the Sun.

I enjoyed the book very much. Many of the buildings I remember. The author, Robert Melikian, tries to make a case for saving these old buildings. I think he failed. Most, if not all, of these buildings needed to be razed. My feeling is; you don't save something just to be saving it, it needs to be worth saving, these buildings weren't.

I was fortunate enough to see the author, discuss his book, on local TV. I am an architectural history buff, and this history of buildings, in Phoenix, was terrific. If you have lived in Phoenix for a while, and remember many of the great old buildings, this is a book you'd be interested in!

Purchased as a gift for my sister. We remember quite a few of the old buildings shown in the book.

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