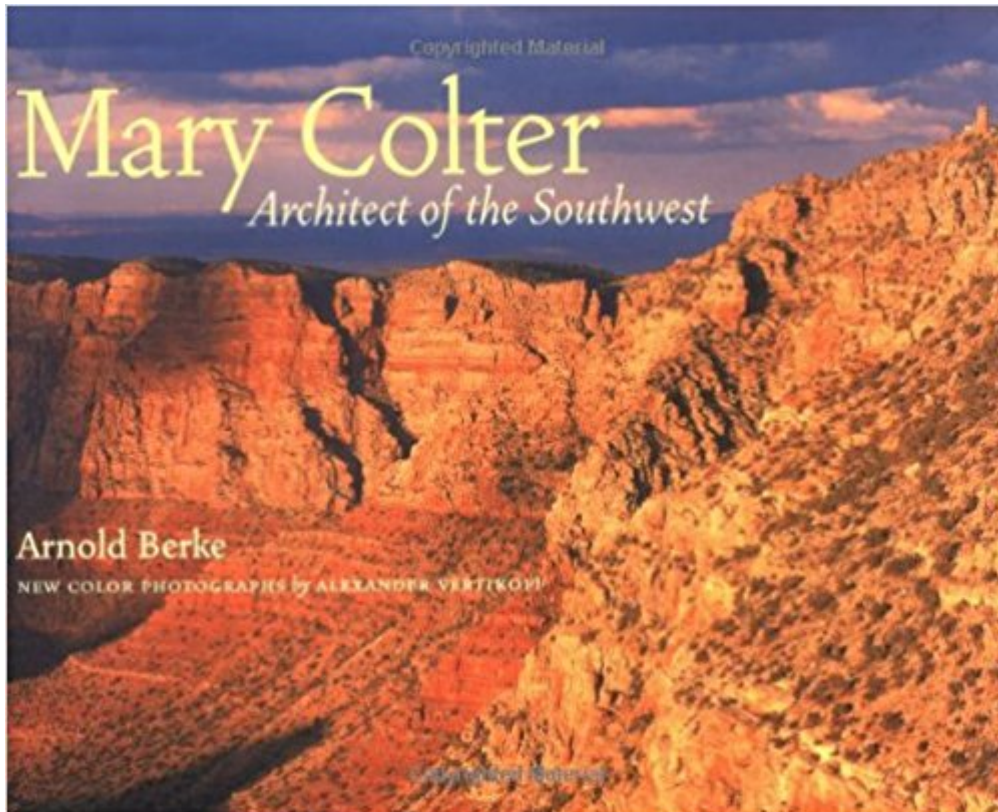




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# Mary Colter: Architect Of The Southwest



## Synopsis

Mary Colter may well be the best-known unknown architect in the world: her buildings at the Grand Canyon National Park—which include Lookout Tower, Hopi House, Bright Angel Lodge, and many others—are admired by almost five million visitors a year. This extraordinary book about an extraordinary woman weaves together three stories—the remarkable career of a woman in a man's profession during the late 19th century; the creation of a building and interior style drawn from regional history and landscape; and the exploitation, largely at the hands of the railroads, of the American Southwest for leisure travel.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fame is coming belatedly to American architect and designer Mary Colter (1869-1958), and this illustrated volume is the most detailed study of her career to date. If her name is not well known, her work certainly is. Colter was an employee of the Harvey Company from 1910 to 1948, and her main task was the design and decoration of Harvey hotels and restaurants along the Santa Fe Railway. A versatile designer who integrated authentic regional elements into strong themes, Colter was responsible for famous hotels such as El Navajo in Gallup, NM; La Posada in Winslow, AZ; and Painted Desert Inn in Painted Desert, AZ. Her rustic-styled buildings at the Grand Canyon, including the Hopi House, Bright Angel Lodge, and others, influenced National Park Service development, and the style became known as National Park Service Rustic. This sympathetic and well-documented book by Berke, an editor at *Preservation* magazine who also writes on historic

architecture, includes new photographs. The final chapter describes the fates of many Colter buildings, including the restoration of some survivors. Recommended for regional public and academic libraries. David R. Conn, Surrey P.L., BCCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mary Colter was a renaissance woman whose hand is evident in northern Arizona, notably at the Grand Canyon and in Winslow. Because of her sensitivity to place, northern Arizona enjoys a culturally relevant landscape that is as timeless as it is elegant. The photos are outstanding. -- Arizona Republic, May 25, 2008 "This long-overdue tribute is rich in desert scenery as well as quotations from friends and co-workers, who remember Colter as a feisty pioneer with, as one friend said, a tender heart and a caustic tongue." --The New York Times

The rise of feminist studies in the late twentieth century included the resurrection of previously forgotten American architects of the female persuasion, foremost among them being Julie Morgan, doyenne of the Hearst family and its connections. The result was that she has been afforded not one, but several biographies of varying qualities. Given the extremely limited number of such architects, there remained only a handful, at best, left to architectural historians. Mary Colter was chosen by Mr. Berke for this excellent biography. The book is a lovely coffee table style biography with lavish photography supported by a fine text. The niggling question, however, remains as to the exact quality of Colter's oeuvre. If one were to compare her work with that of her male peers one is forced to conclude that she, like them, was far from the cutting edge of architectural Modernism or of technical innovation. In actual fact, she is an excellent representative of the broad center of the architectural profession leading up to the middle of the century. The fact that she was a woman in a heavily male-dominated profession seems to be the single qualification for her to receive such attention. That said, the book itself is quite excellent and is recommended for those who wish to round out their understanding of Traditional architectural practice in the first half of the twentieth century.

What a wonderful, over-due publication and recognition of a remarkable artist. Certainly, Mary Colter was a pioneer who helped define "Southwest" style. I purchased this book hardcover to enjoy photographs, which are very beautifully done and well described, but to my astonishment, found this book to be highly readable and engrossing. I didn't think it was possible to not be able to put a book about architecture down, but that is exactly what happened. This history is fascinating, the artist

amazing.

Mary Colter was a woman ahead of her time --- an architect and interior designer when few women attempted it. She interwove rustic techniques, local materials and American Indian themes into buildings and designs well before that was accepted by others in her professions. Her rustic buildings at Grand Canyon National Park still survive to the delight of many visitors. Colter was at times a perfectionist, hard to get along with, a workaholic and extremely demanding of herself and her co-workers. Yet the author shows us her life and work with sympathy as well as depth. This book is well illustrated with color and black and white photos. Well researched. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. It answered all my questions!

A beautiful book, well-written, lots of photos. Living in New Mexico and Arizona, I had heard of Mary Colter but had never really known much about her. Read this lovely book and you will know (and enjoy) all about a true pioneer.

Fabulous!

Mary Colter was ground breaker in more ways than one. This book is richly illustrated and will engage the reader as one follows Mary's life story. What remains of her efforts can be enjoyed to this day and makes for a personal adventure for those who are interested.

Amazing woman and an amazing book. Very well written and insightful.

Mary Jane Colter is the first and most gifted woman in architecture; her work in what was considered only a MAN's profession put womanhood in place for ever!! She even designed Phantom Ranch, at the floor of the Grand Canyon NP!

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