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## Beaufort

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## **Abstract**

Marianna Cawley of the Charleston County Public Library reviews *Beaufort*, a book of photography by N. Jane Iseley.

## **Keywords**

Book Review, Beaufort, N. Jane Iseley (photographer)

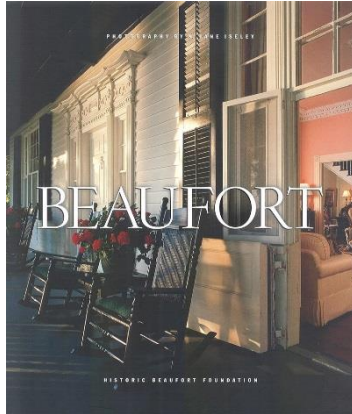
## Beaufort (Distributed for the Historic Beaufort Foundation)

Photography by N. Jane Iseley  
University of South Carolina Press, 2013,  
\$49.95

The description for this book starts “Consider this an invitation to enter the historic houses of the venerable city of Beaufort, South Carolina.” The book consists of descriptions and photographs of about forty-five 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in and around Beaufort, including four churches and several plantation houses, but the majority are houses in the city. With a few exceptions, the houses featured are private homes, providing views probably not open to the ordinary visitor to Beaufort.

This is a handsome volume; N. Jane Iseley, who provided the photographs, is an old hand at this type of book. As staff photographer for Colonial Williamsburg for nine years, she was “photographic author” of six books and has twenty-four additional books to her credit as a freelance photographer. These books include *Lowcountry Plantations Today*; *Charleston: City of Memory*; *Plantations of the Low Country: South Carolina, 1697-1865*; and *Savannah Secret and Public Gardens*.

The cover photo alone makes you want to find a rocker on a Lowcountry veranda somewhere. The houses featured are a nice mix; not just grand mansions but also cottages; some have been modernized or had additions to offer contemporary comforts. However, the emphasis is on the historic architecture of Beaufort. Founded in 1712, it is the second



oldest city in South Carolina, and though what was a humble cottage once is now probably a very expensive piece of real estate. There are more interior than exterior shots. At 128 pages, the authors can't go in depth on every building;

for most there is a page of text and a page of photographs, but some have more of each.

The text does have good descriptions, which sometimes include intriguing nuggets of information about how the construction of the building reflected the needs of the hot Lowcountry climate.

The introduction provides some background on the distinctive T-shaped “Beaufort Style” architecture, as well as a brief overview of the city's history up to 2001, including which architectural styles were most popular in different eras. The introduction and all the text display the expertise and knowledge of the Historic Beaufort Foundation. A general map of historic Beaufort would have been a good addition, allowing readers to better place the buildings described in their location.

The University of South Carolina Press has reprinted this publication, originally published in 2003, in an attractive hardback version. The Historic Beaufort Foundation has written or published around four guides to the city and a few works on individual sites. Public Libraries with demand for South Carolina travel or large South Carolina history collections who don't have the earlier edition will probably want this book. Beaufort is a popular location for visitors. If you have the ability or space to display this book well, patrons will most likely pick it up.

*Marianne Cawley* is manager of the South Carolina Room of the Charleston County Public Library.