

When built in the 1700s, meetinghouses were the center of both religious and civic life - concepts not at all separate in colonial New England. Working with four-by-five-inch sheet film and a wooden field camera, photographer Paul Wainwright has collected a wealth of images of New England's surviving colonial meetinghouses that go beyond mere documentation of what these buildings look like - they explore the feeling of "presence" that exists in them. Employing only natural light, the photographer has captured his sense of intimate wonder that he gets whenever he enters one of these structures. These meetinghouses not only present a fascinating glimpse into our nation's colonial history, but are beautiful as well. An accompanying essay by noted colonial historian Peter Benes elaborates on the communities that built and used these meetinghouses, and traces a narrative rich in the history and architecture of New England.

77 duotone images with historical essay

"Sitting in a colonial meetinghouse is as authentic an historical experience as you can find in New England, though few choose to experience it. Through Paul Wainwright's photographs readers will understand why they are the souls of the region." - *Yankee Magazine*