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Five Points



Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 94 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Exceptionally readable, this book debunks some of the more extreme legends about Five-Points, while not shrinking from describing the very real misery and squalor the neighborhood. I particularly enjoyed the character sketches of residents of this area. The book also explained why things happened and how. The influence of the saloon keepers, how many politicians got their start in the fire engine companies, the election day brawls and the draft (and other) riots are covered in detail. I am performing genealogy research on Irish ancestors in New York - this is an invaluable resource.

I'm not a historian, but I have read some books on the history of New York. This is one of the best if you're interested in the Five Points neighborhood. The book covers the time period from approximately 1830 to 1860 in wonderful detail. For all the detail, it is not a dry read. You can get a great sense of what life was like in these few square blocks in the time before the Civil War. If you are interested in the history of New York, particularly some of the city's less glamorous areas and eras, you want this book.

As a native NY'er and someone who is very interested in the history of NYC, I highly recommend this book to anyone who shares that interest. Anbinder presents the history of the Five Points in an interesting, sometimes humorous, sometimes sad, but always interesting way that makes this book hard to put down. Its well researched and far from a dry presentation of facts. A great book for anyone interested in this topic.

Great insight into the life and times of turn of the century NYC, specifically the Five Points and Bowery area. Jumped around a bit and often went extremely granular when it came to local

elections and appointments which felt drawn out at times.

A detailed look at not only the Five Points area of New York and the extreme poverty of the inhabitants, but also a good look at 19th century immigration into the U.S. A bit tedious at times when the author goes into detail about the local politicians, but overall a great read.

This really was such a great read. I'm a very big fan of history, especially New York history. After watching lots of PBS specials on New York and the Gangs of New York movie, this book was such a gift. All the locations and areas mentioned in this book I have been there, though they are a lot different (buildings, parks, streets, etc.) then they were one hundred and fifty years ago. I enjoyed reading and going back in time and having a little imagination.

If you have read "Low-Life" by Luc Sante, "Gangs of New York" by Herbert Asbury, or "New York by Gaslight" by George Foster, and enjoyed them even slightly, this book will not disappoint you. I thought the organization of the book into different aspects of life in the Five Points, instead of chronologically, was fine. It didn't confuse and seemed a logical way to organize a socially-focused history book. The author has a gift for writing some very detailed accounts and brings to life all the vibrancy and yes, squalor, held in the Five Points. This book is guaranteed to please if you are a lover of NYC history.

Information intensive, long, but easy to read and follow the flow of history as it played out in the 5 Points. It synthesized how the various cultures, the politics and religions formed the NY of today.

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