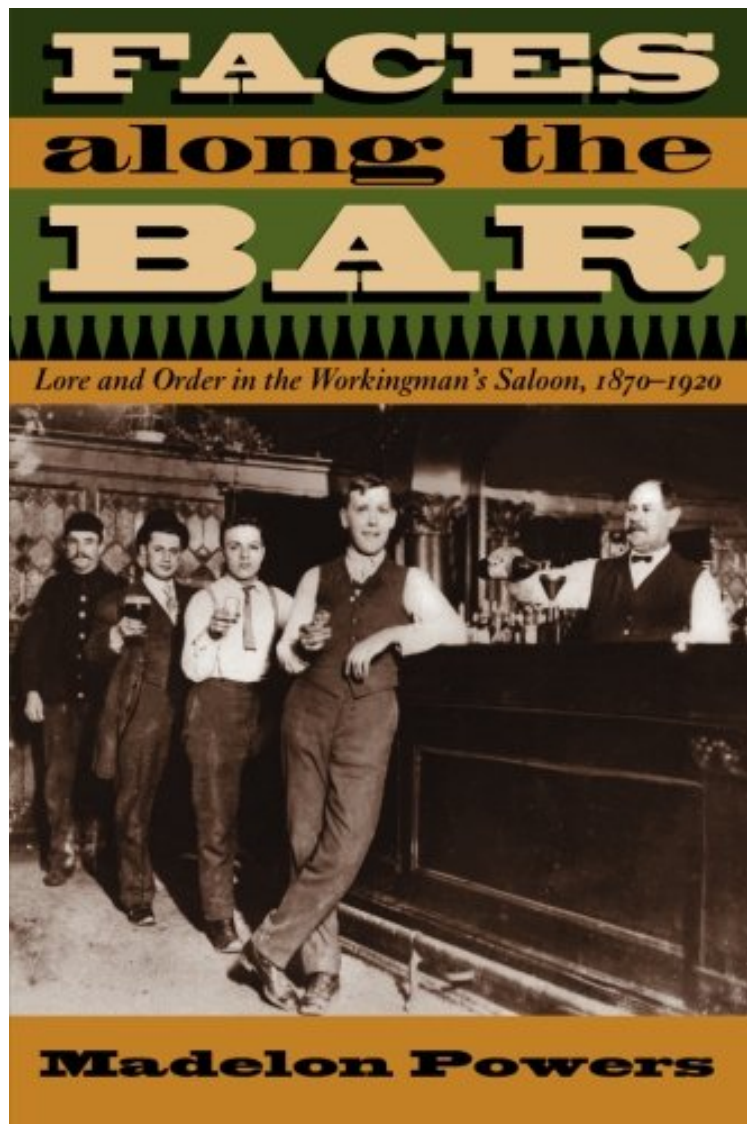


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## Faces along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870-1920 (Historical Studies of Urban America)

*Madelon Powers*

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**Madelon Powers : Faces along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870-1920 (Historical Studies of Urban America)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Faces along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870-1920 (Historical Studies of Urban America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Both through pictures and written composition, this publication takes ...By c kellyBoth through pictures and written composition, this publication takes the reader through a journey of early life and the progression of impact of the 'local bar' contributed to the growth of a nation.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great historical bookBy newmslmaMy cousin has a master's degree in Museum Studies. I bought her this book and she loved it. She found it to be not only a good historical text, but very interesting to read.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Most historians view saloons in such a negative light that it was nice to see a different point of viewBy Sarah PaulsonFaces along the Bar was an insightful novel. It was interesting how she wrote about such a controversial topic such as saloons. Most historians view saloons in such a negative light that it was nice to see a different point of view. The novel analyzed the workingman's interactions in the saloon from drinking, to the rules of being a regular, to the rules of clubbing by treat, to the temperance movement, to songs and games and dancing. Anything you could imagine about saloons she discussed in her novel. She did it with fine detail and really wanted to understand what it meant to be a man in the saloon instead of just judging it objectively. She wanted us to see the life of workingmen through their eyes and what the saloon did for them. It was a very intelligent and insightful novel. However it was a little boring at times and it isn't the easiest novel to read. What can be said in one or two sentences often takes a full paragraph to say. I also felt the author could have put more dialogue in the story instead of analyzing every little thing. Just some of my thoughts. But overall a very well written story and insightful. This book makes you think about a saloon in ways you never would have and makes you change your mind about what a saloon really is about.

In this lively and engaging history, Madelon Powers recreates the daily life of the barroom, exploring what it was like to be a "regular" in the old-time saloon of pre-prohibition industrial America. Through an examination of saloongoers across America, her investigation offers a fascinating look at rich lore of the barroomits many games, stories, songs, free lunch customs, and especially its elaborate system of drinking rituals that have been passed on for decades."A free-pouring blend of astonishing facts, folklore and firsthand period observations. . . . It's the rich details that'll inspire the casual reader to drink deep from this tap of knowledge."Don Waller, USA Today recommended reading"A surprise on every page."Publishers Weekly"Here we get social history that appreciates the bar talk even while dissecting its marvelous rituals."Library Journal, starred review"Careful scholarship with an anecdotal flair to please even the most sober of readers."Nina C. Ayoub, Chronicle of Higher Education

From Publishers WeeklyPowers has met with some incredulity when she mentions that she's a "saloon historian" Acolleagues snicker and the dean gets that faraway look in his eyes. Fortunately, Powers persisted in her study of a subject long overlooked by others on the grounds that it is frivolous or immoral, and the result is a detailed and thoroughly researched yet readable account of "how saloongoers promoted the process of community building in urban America from 1870 to 1920," the turbulent years in which the Industrial Revolution reached its peak and had its greatest effect on American society. Her chronicle of the "poor man's club" draws from observations by contemporary journalists (including photographers, sketch artists and cartoonists), by writers such as Jack London and by such progressive reformers as Lincoln Steffens and Jane Addams. What Powers learned was that the saloons provided a milieu in which the workingman could work out solutions to his own needs; her startling if useful analogy is that the barroom is like the school yard, with its own games, songs, jests, challenges and lore, all of which help the participant to accommodate the pressures imposed by the larger world of work or school. So here's looking at professor Powers, for a sober account, yet one with a surprise on every pageAsuch as the discovery that "The Streets of Laredo" is a version of an old English song about a sailor who dies of syphilis, a cleaned-up rewrite for these Puritanical shores. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis is not a book about the miseries of the drinking life but about the world that Americans built around the "workingman's saloon" from 1870 to 1920. Powers (history, Univ. of New Orleans) presents a counterpoint to the plentiful histories of the American Industrial Age and temperance movement with her portrait of a saloon culture that combined social escape with political organizing and sports gambling with storytelling while providing plenty of tipsy fellowship. Powers acknowledges the sober pointy-headedness that has kept many past academic historians writing about the Anti-Saloon League instead of the saloon itself. Here we get social history that appreciates the bar talk even while dissecting its marvelous rituals, from patrons' drinking games, tear-jerking songs, and favorite recitations ("The face upon the floor") to the history and varieties of round-buying: the honorable treat, the unrequited treat, the celebratory treat, the keeper's treat, the politician's treat. Pubs drained paychecks, for sure, but Powers also shows them serving the need for a working-class rival to the era's swank private clubs. Highly recommended for larger American history collections.?Nathan Ward, "Library Journal"Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sA fascinating, not to say spirited, study of the play of alcohol in Gilded Age history, focusing on the neighborhood bar. At the outset of her book, Powers (History/Univ. of New Orleans) defends her choice of subject, arguing that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries American saloons were the focal points for local politics, union organizing, and community-building. But, she continues, she is more interested in the way that those who frequented the saloon built a community around drink, a

community with its own lore, music, jargon, and customs. The saloon, which began as a somewhat high-toned alternative to the usual tavern, drew in large crowds of workingmen (and some women, and even some children), who found inside the swinging doors a place to escape from daily hardships and to cash paychecks and find a proverbial free lunch, that powerful and now long bygone enticement to spend one's lunch hour or evening wrapped around a mug and a shot glass. Powers studies the changing drinking habits of Americans through several waves of immigrants, with Anglo-Saxon hard cider giving way to German beer, Italian wine, and upper-crust French cocktails. She unearths wonderful, sometimes improbably sentimental drinking songs. She details the subjects of conversation in the saloon: religion, of course, and politics, and sports. And she examines the people gathered around the bar; the Irish were, of course, notorious for their hard-drinking ways, she writes, but were never so badly demonized as were rural, southern African-Americans, whose escape into drink has not been much studied. At each turn she has much to say about the changing face of American culture in a momentous time, and she says it with uncommon clarity. Social history with a hard edge, highly recommended. (16 bw photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.