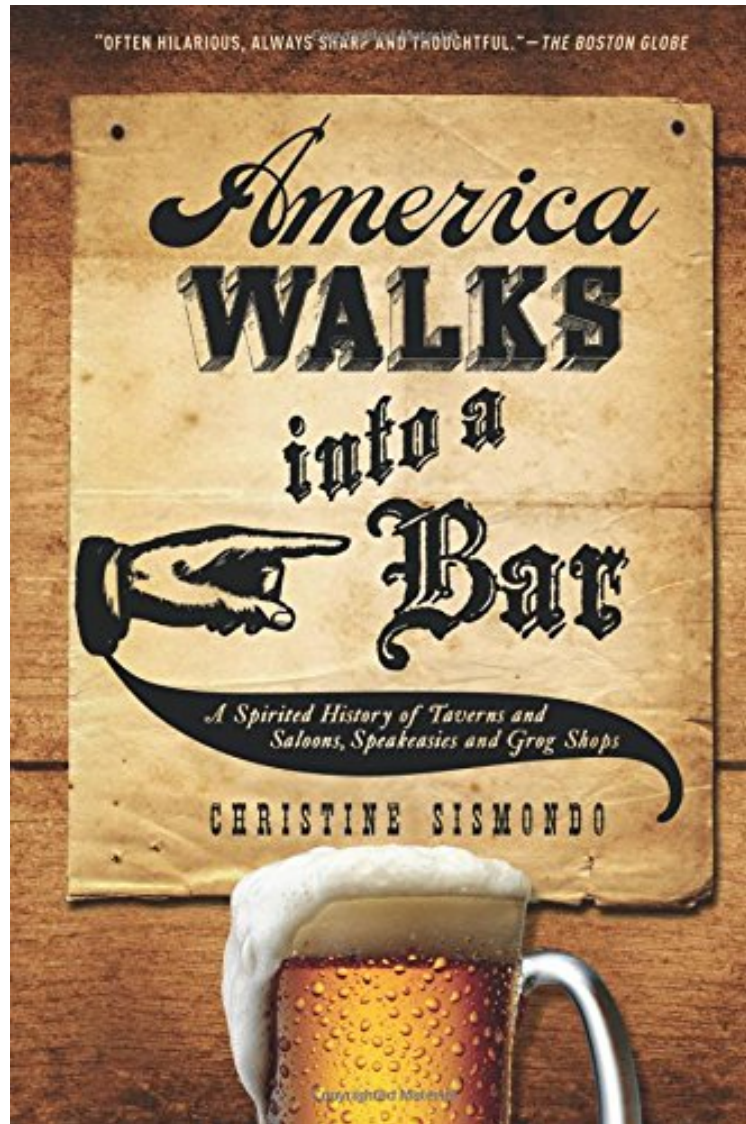


# America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog Shops

Christine Sismondo

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**Christine Sismondo : America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog Shops** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog Shops:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read; entertaining and enlightening history! By Brendan R.

TupaWow! As a student of American history, I was amazed to read such a frank and entertaining piece of what really occurred behind what you typically find in historical textbooks and biographies. This is a story of about the United States that delves into the lives of everyday people, behind the scenes politics, civil disobedience, and crafty maneuverings of citizens revolting against oppressive laws. When politicians create unjust laws to control society, in particular, the prohibition of enjoyment of life and the pursuit of happiness, e.g., the consumption of alcohol, citizens always seemed to find a way to thumb their nose at such oppression and continue such pursuits. This is a loveable, quick read for anyone interested in what life was really like for the common folk throughout America since the founding of the country.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great readBy ScarabFabulous history of saloons and bars. Well written and researched. Met the author in Toronto and she is very knowledgeable about the subject matter. Great read for anyone interested in the subject. I guarantee you will learn a lot about the saloon and its effect on history.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Informative and entertainingBy R. J. KarrisI am well pleased with this informative and entertaining book. Put in the hands of another author, this subject might have come up dry. But in our author's hands, the subject comes up refreshingly wet. This text is important for American history buffs as well as for those of us who study food and drink in America's past and present. I highly recommend this book.

When George Washington bade farewell to his officers, he did so in New York's Fraunces Tavern. When Andrew Jackson planned his defense of New Orleans against the British in 1815, he met Jean Lafitte in a grog shop. And when John Wilkes Booth plotted with his accomplices to carry out an assassination, they gathered in Surratt Tavern. In *America Walks into a Bar*, Christine Sismondo recounts the rich and fascinating history of an institution often reviled, yet always central to American life. She traces the tavern from England to New England, showing how even the Puritans valued "a good Beere." With fast-paced narration and lively characters, she carries the story through the twentieth century and beyond, from repeated struggles over licensing and Sunday liquor sales, from the Whiskey Rebellion to the temperance movement, from attempts to ban "treating" to Prohibition and repeal. As the cockpit of organized crime, politics, and everyday social life, the bar has remained vital--and controversial--down to the present. In 2006, when the Hurricane Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act was passed, a rider excluded bars from applying for aid or tax breaks on the grounds that they contributed nothing to the community. Sismondo proves otherwise: the bar has contributed everything to the American story. Now in paperback, Sismondo's heady cocktail of agile prose and telling anecdotes offers a resounding toast to taprooms, taverns, saloons, speakeasies, and the local hangout where everybody knows your name.

A Boston Globe "Best Nonfiction Book" of 2011 "A robust homage to the history and proliferation of bars and their vast and often overlooked cultural significance." --Kirkus s "Breezy, anecdotal, and pun-laden yet complete with a selective bibliography of print sources, Sismondo's book surveys a myriad of American drinking establishments, accenting their importance in social, political, and cultural history and discerning subtle differences over the centuries." --Library Journal "Displays both detailed research and wit..." --David Wondrich, *The Wall Street Journal* "Many of the author's anecdotes offer interesting glimpses into the history of the Americas and the important role drinking establishments have played in the development of our society." --Wine Enthusiast "A wide-ranging, often hilarious, always sharp and thoughtful look at the way our nation's drinking establishments have shaped and reflected our history." --Kate Tuttle, *The Boston Globe* "America Walks Into a Bar isn't a paean to drinking or a love letter to alcohol. It is an insightful, well-told look inside the unique thing that is the American tavern, and how the tavern has helped change American history. It is a worthy addition to the bookshelf of anyone who appreciates the nuances of American history and an occasional visit to the local watering hole." --Dan Murphy, *Buffalo News* "I found the history to be interesting... the level of detail spectacular, and the information on the changing bar formats and their ever-changing reputation fascinating. If you are interested in American history and bar history, this is your new favorite book." --Camper English, *Alcademics* "America, as we know it, was born in a bar." This is the thesis of a fascinating, informative, well-researched and well-written new book called *America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog Shops*. --Ted Scheffler, *City Weekly* "The book is a revelation." --American Interest About the Author Christine Sismondo is a writer and lecturer in Humanities at York University in Toronto. She has written numerous articles about film, literature, drinking, and vice, as well as the book *Mondo Cocktail*, a narrative history of cocktails.